

Monographs on Bilingualism No. 15

All Grown Up: The Bilingual Adult

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A collection of articles about the paths taken to achieve competence in two or more languages, written from the perspectives of the individuals concerned, their parents and researchers.

This monograph is one of a series produced by the Bilingualism Special Interest Group of the Japan Association for Language Teaching. The group aims to encourage research projects into bilingualism and to disseminate their findings. It also acts as a base for mutual support between group members.

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Introduction

This monograph explores the paths that over thirty individuals and their families have taken to achieve the ability to function effectively in two or more languages and in the cultures where these languages are spoken. The monograph has been divided into four sections to help readers locate topics of particular relevance to their own situation, but we recommend that you read every story and research paper, as they all include fascinating insights and practical suggestions.

The first section focuses on families and individuals who use three or more languages in their daily lives. The focus of the second section is about the experiences of children of monoracial couples who were raised in another country. The third section looks at the issues faced by families in which one parent is Japanese. Most of the articles in these three sections are first-hand accounts. The last section is somewhat different in that the authors interviewed others and report their findings.

Throughout the monograph, there are a variety of voices. Some writers addressed the questions sent out in the Call for Contributions (see Appendix on page 77.) Many articles are written by parents of bilingual /multilingual children looking back on their experiences. For readers who don't consider themselves bi- or multilingual, perhaps the most fascinating articles will be those written by people who have acquired more than one language.

The variety of experiences shared in these pages show that there is no one direct, fool-proof route on the journey to becoming a competent speaker of more than one language, but that there are many factors which contribute to reaching this goal. We hope that you will find this monograph as informative and encouraging as we have, and we recommend that you explore more deeply some of the issues touched upon in other monographs published by the JALT Bilingualism Special Interest Group.

The Editors

Section 1: Multilingual/multicultural families

The Ratzlaffs:

Living With Three Languages

Editors' Note: *The first three articles were written by members of the same family, and offer special insight for three reasons. First, they allow us to see the perspective of both a parent and children in a multilingual family; second, they offer insight into dealing with more than two languages, and third, they provide the perspective a family in which both parents are foreign-born. Our portrayal of the Ratzlaff family begins with the mother's perspective, as Françoise Ratzlaff answers the questions posed in our Call for Contributions. The questions are presented in bold type, with Françoise's answers following them in regular type.*

The Mother's Perspective: Françoise Ratzlaff's Answers

- 1. What is your background? Briefly describe your family, the languages you used while your children were growing up and the languages you use now.**

I come from France. My husband is American. We both spoke each other's language, but only our own mother tongue to our two daughters, who were born in Osaka and spoke only Japanese in school. We still function the same way when we meet. No language mixing. When we are in France, we often use Japanese as a secret language on the street.

- 2. Did you have a specific plan for bilingualism from the beginning, for example, minority language at home or one parent one language, or did you create your path as you went along?**

We wanted our children to speak, read and write three languages.

- 3. How do you relate to your adult children now?**

We meet twice a year and often talk on Skype.

How have the language dynamics changed?

Still the same.

Are you and your children living in the same country now?

No. We live in Japan. One daughter lives in France, one daughter in England

If you are all in Japan, for example, and your adult daughter has married a monolingual Japanese man, how does your family's minority language fit into your daughter's life now?

There is no such problem. We all speak the boyfriend's language.

Are you afraid of your child losing his or her minority language and then losing part of your connection?

I guess I would learn the language I need to know...

4. If your children have children, are they raising them in more than one language? What is your role, if any, in raising your grandchildren in your language?

We still do not have grandchildren.

5. Many parents of young children worry about their children not being able to communicate as an adult in either language. What advice would you give to them?

Do not hesitate to teach your child your mother tongue, even if you live in Japan and Japanese is overpowering it. For example, send your child to an English-speaking country, to an English-speaking friend's house. Read fun books in English to him, watch a lot of kids' movies.

The Oldest Child's Perspective: Allicent Ratzlaff's Story

Expressing Myself in Three Mother Tongues

My father is American and my mother is French. When they came to Japan in 1973, they had no idea of what would happen later: raising a trilingual, tricultural family. My sister and I were given a chance to speak, read and write three languages, and, for my part, I am very grateful to them for having done that.

My parents were strict about having us speak only English to Daddy, French to Mommy, and coping with the Japanese educational system on our own. They had and still have much interest in the Japanese language and culture. They are both linguists, and for many years, they have dedicated themselves to Japanese culture; my mother learnt ceramics, my father, Japanese *enka*. They did their best to make us fit into Japanese life, too—especially me, the oldest daughter, who had to face not only all the good sides of this kind of education, but also some difficulties which I now feel were spared my younger sister, who didn't have to clear the way.

As foreigners, my parents approached their new style of life in Japan from above; that is, they were completely aware of their need to try to reach the core of that culture which was so different from their own. On top of that, they already had the experience of having had to adapt to each other's cultures because of their two nationalities. They felt quite at ease living in this new culture because their married life had made them ready to approach another culture. I must admit they did a very good job of adapting to Japan. For them it was just another game—a quite pleasant way to enrich their perspectives on life.

For me, their first child, the story was quite different. I was born in Osaka. I had a wonderful Japanese grandmother to take care of me when my parents were working. I was sent very early to *hoikusho*, the nursery school ten minutes away from home. I was literally soaked in Japanese culture, like all Japanese children were, with the difference being that alongside this Japanese immersion, I was also influenced by my parents' views on Japan as a foreign country.

This carried with it some “surprising” aspects, which were for me both completely familiar (I felt myself completely Japanese), but also different when seen from my family's point of view, which I respected and trusted as a child. For example, cheese is not a Japanese specialty, and processed cheese, presented in a wrapper like candy, was not my mother's idea of cheese. When I had to take a *bento* to school, my mother did her best to include a few Japanese items, but, since she is French, she would add a piece of *camembert* or some home-made *quiche*, which of course I loved, but which made the *bento* look very different from the standard type. My *onigiri* were made of brown rice, which was in those days considered as food for the poor. Things have changed in Japan, and this might not anymore be the case. At that time, sandwiches were also out of the question, although, six years later, they started being fashionable and sometimes replaced *onigiri*. These changes had taken place by the time my sister went to elementary school. Now, even a *bento* from a convenience store is probably accepted! At the time, however, my *bento* meals were always surprising to my classmates.

I had trouble keeping my balance. I had two main worlds to deal with, and, one of them was already double: the two countries my parents come from are, as a matter of

fact, extremely different. At home, I felt these differences between the United States and France: Thanksgiving, Halloween stories, etc... versus *la galette des rois*, *la chandeleur*, *les crêpes*.

Also, I was annoyed by constantly being reminded of my being different: being tall with blond hair and three languages. What was “I” different from? I myself was not a “different” person. I was a person like everybody else. Children don’t have a sense of borders, nations, of belonging to one culture—even to the one they are said to belong to. A Greek child hears, “we have all we need in Greece: olives, tomatoes...” A French child hears, “we live well in our country, we have got everything we need: cheese, wine...” I never heard anything of that sort. In fact I loved the “Wizard of Oz” and its final phrase, “there is no place like home.” Home for me was my house with my family, my piano and my cat. As a small child, I did not have the slightest idea of cultural differences, of who is Asian, African, European or American. What does it all matter? In fact, I still don’t have a good answer to that question. I can say, though, that I tried to understand and find an answer.

Still, I struggled. I felt terribly lost in my Japanese middle school, which had disciplinary practices similar to those in the military service. We learnt during gym class how to turn like soldiers when they change direction. (I guess that school was especially hard because many of my Japanese friends also bitterly complained). One night at 2 A.M., I ended up begging my parents to let me escape the Japanese school system and change to an international school. They agreed, and I switched to the Canadian Academy, two hours away from home.

Commuting to Kobe was nothing compared to the new kind of air I could breathe. I was among classmates from various backgrounds; also, with many Japanese. In order to perfect my English, my parents forbade me to speak Japanese at school. They wanted me to be accepted in the more advanced class of English monolinguals. I did not have any understanding of that and would have preferred to keep speaking Japanese because, outside of the house, my life had always been in Japanese.

I later changed schools again, this time to Osaka International School, which had just opened, and enjoyed the fact that the school was just a few minutes away from home. However, upon graduating, after so much schooling in “just English,” I decided to perfect my “written” French, because my language triangle hadn’t been completed. I had attended school in one oriental language, one occidental language, but not in my third language. I decided to go to Paris. I thought it would make my education complete.

There, I first studied piano, and then a couple of years later I entered the Sorbonne to follow the entire stepladder, until, last year, I obtained my doctoral degree with highest distinction in French Literature. My research was done on a French poet of the 19th century, Jules Laforgue. So maybe, I can say now that I feel like I have a total grasp of all three languages.

And then there is piano. I have always practised a lot of piano, along with my studies at the university. This long period where I applied myself to thinking, reasoning about literature, art, philosophy, and language—all these years convinced me that too much of one language can become suffocating. I need three—or maybe just one: The language that unites all people and has no borders is really the “language” of music, which, luckily,

I had studied from my earlier years. Music is intellectual and physical, multicultural and universal.

I remember how shy I had been, often worrying that my language ability might not equal that of monolinguals. However, I was able to give piano concerts in Paris and obtained three prizes. This helped me gain a lot of confidence to help overcome the “differences”. I realized that I have to be a real individual to cope with the difficulties. Now, playing piano in public is my way to feel solid in three cultures—in fact, in all cultures I meet. I also feel comfortable trying new languages, the ones I must learn! They help me be myself.

Also, I avoid talking about my background. I sometimes don’t even tell people that I was born and raised in Japan, because “differences” seem to provide a chance for exotic interest and false knowledge. Being reminded of my ability to communicate in three languages made me question if it was a good thing or a bad thing. Trying to express myself in new languages and playing music really helped me balance out the triangle. Playing Rachmaninov’s 1st piano sonata in a concert hall, or trying to understand a new language—in fact, all of my experiences—have gradually increased my self-esteem. Without them, my consciousness of being multicultural and multilingual could have taken another course and made me lead an artificial life—made of me a *gaijin* of the world.

I would like to recommend to parents of multicultural children to give their children a chance to learn various kinds of arts or sports, to let them develop a passion that will for sure put them on the right track to find their own individual “un-divided” person. This is the way to give them the chance to express themselves completely. I must add that the complexity at the start will ease later and as a whole become quite rewarding. This has been the exhilarating experience of multilingualism and multiculturalism which I have been able to draw upon in my life so far.

The Second Child’s View: Alexa Ratzlaff’s Story

Building an Identity in Three Languages and Cultures

I was born and raised in Osaka, and having a French mother and an American father, I grew up speaking three languages fluently. I went to a local Japanese public school, where I was completely immersed in Japanese culture, until I was 13. Although I spoke French and English with my parents and frequently went on holiday to France and to the U.S., my dominant language was Japanese. In order to learn to write in the other two languages, I changed to an International School in Mino. While the transfer was hard for the first two years, as a 13 year old, I adapted quickly and soon felt confident reading and writing—first in English, then in French. (The International School was very small and offered little French, so it was

essential for me to take additional correspondence courses through a French high school in France.)

When I was 19, I passed my IB (International Baccalaureate), which opened the possibility for me to go to college either in the U.S. or in France. I decided to go to Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania, a strong liberal arts college that offered courses in Architecture. Thanks to my SAT scores in French and my IB scores, I managed to earn a year's worth of advanced placement credits, and that helped me finish my college education in three years. This then gave me the opportunity to attend supplementary classes at universities such as the University of Pennsylvania, Columbia University, and the University of Copenhagen. After completing my BA, *magna cum laude*, I decided to move to Paris to pursue my career in Architecture.

While in the process of acquiring my architecture license, I worked for several architecture offices as an apprentice. My three languages gave me the opportunity to work for local firms and international ones, such as for the Japanese architect Shigeru Ban, who was designing the Pompidou Museum in Metz at the time. In this firm, I was able to take advantage of my language ability to the fullest, successfully juggling French, English and Japanese.

In 2005, I received my French architecture license. In that same year, I met my partner, David, who is an English architect. He convinced me to move to England, where I live and work now.

Although I mostly speak English while in England, I usually only speak French and Japanese on the phone with my family and friends. There are very few French and Japanese people where I live in England, and sometimes I feel like I am the only one of my kind and that I am not taking full advantage of my language skills. I also often feel homesick for my native country, Japan.

However, being a trilingual has always provided opportunities, and I am very grateful for having grown up speaking three languages. Because I speak them fluently, they are all my "mother tongues", and I believe that each culture has built me into what I am now—especially the Japanese culture, which is ingrained in my character and mannerisms.

I do not know what the future holds for me. I hope to someday run my own architecture practice with my partner, either in Europe or in Asia. I also hope that my children will benefit from my trilingual background and experiences, and that they, too, will someday seek to speak multiple languages.

Note: Alexa Ratzlaff participated in the roundtable discussion at JALT 1997 which was transcribed in monograph 6: *Growing Up Bilingually: The Pleasures and Pains*. More of her thoughts on growing up with three languages are provided there.

Growing Up With Four Languages

Debjeni Ray

This article is about a Japanese-Romanian adult who was raised with two main languages—Japanese and English—plus two European languages as his family moved between Japan and several countries in Europe. I would like to describe how his languages developed during various stages of his life. At the same time, this is also the story of a European woman who married a Japanese man and raised a child bilingually. This case study is based on an interview I conducted with a woman who I will call Anna Noguchi. To protect the privacy of the family, real names will not be revealed here.

First, I'll give a brief description of Anna's background to show the language dynamics of her own life and of her husband's as well. Born in Romania to a Hungarian mother and a Romanian father, Anna was raised in Hungary until she was six, and she considers Hungarian to be her first language. About the time she was ready to enter elementary school, her family moved back to Romania, where she started schooling. She began learning Romanian at primary school, then a year later, English was added as a foreign language. After her college graduation in Romania, Anna worked in that country until she met her husband and came to Japan with him. She began learning Japanese in her mid-twenties in Japan.

Anna's husband, Toshio, is a Japanese national who was born and brought up in Japan. His first language is Japanese and he learnt English as a foreign language at school. He studied Romanian before going to Romania for his job. After their marriage, Toshio and Anna lived in England for two years and Germany for four years. When they had a son, Tomoyuki (henceforth "Tomo"), they agreed to raise him bilingually. Tomo is now twenty-six and can deal with Japanese and English in any given situation, while he also has intermediate proficiency in German and Hungarian.

Now I'll describe the process of Tomo's language development through his upbringing. He was born in Japan and started speaking both Japanese and English at home. Anna and Toshio followed a rather lenient one parent - one language policy, not worrying too much about consistency because both of them were able to speak more than one language themselves. Tomo grew up speaking Japanese with his grandparents and neighborhood children. He used Japanese and sometimes English with his father. He spoke English with his mother and with some American neighbors. He also used Hungarian with his mother sometimes. However, Anna did not force him to learn Hungarian because she felt three languages might be a little too much for a child to cope with, and she did not want him to use it as an excuse for not learning English. She preferred that he learn English more than any other language, as she felt that it was more useful as an international language.

Before he entered kindergarten, Tomo started taking English lessons at a local language school in Japan. Basically, these lessons involved doing different activities and projects with the school's native English teachers.

Then the family moved to Germany with for two years. There, Tomo attended a local kindergarten, which was basically a playschool where the children were under no

pressure to learn anything. Tomo played happily there with local German children. After two years, the family came back to Japan for a year. This time, Tomo went to a private kindergarten where he was enrolled in a special English program.

After a year, however, Toshio's job pulled the family back to Germany, where Tomo spent his first two years of elementary school. Anna says Tomo learnt German swiftly and easily and had no trouble with school or classmates.

When the family returned to Japan after this second stay in Germany, Tomo faced initial adjustment problems, but nothing too serious. Anna says that at first, Tomo would not speak in Japanese at school, or in any other language either. In other words, he would not speak at all. Then slowly, he started speaking in Japanese, and when he did, he started speaking mostly in Japanese, including at home. He finished his elementary education without much trouble and went on to a private junior and senior high school in Japan. At this school, students could choose which of several foreign languages they wanted to study; Tomo chose to study English.

During the long summer and winter school holidays during elementary school and junior high school, Tomo often went abroad with his parents or just with his mother to spend time with relatives in Hungary and visit other places in Europe. His Hungarian language proficiency developed a great deal during these visits, and he also spoke in German when needed. This pattern of spending vacations in Europe continued for about seven years. Tomo's favorite pastime there was going fishing with the neighborhood children or playing around the nearby farm.

Then one year when he was in junior high school, Tomo participated in a camp in the United States, and after that, he chose to go to the States during his vacations, as these trips were "parent-free" and allowed him to make a lot of friends. These visits to America boosted his English ability.

As a child, Tomo had difficulties expressing his thoughts and especially, his feelings, in his different languages. Each language has a set of sophisticated vocabulary describing and explaining different complicated feelings and emotions. Often they cannot be translated directly from one language to another. They are not easy to internalize by any standard. For a child it must have been hard to deal with all of these very different languages, so Anna says that Tomo did not talk much about his feelings. By the time he graduated from high school, however, he had somewhat outgrown these difficulties and was much more confident. Now Tomo is an adult who has the skill to juggle several very different languages.

As an adult, Tomo has less verbal communication with his parents. When he speaks, it is usually in Japanese, even if his mother speaks in English or Hungarian to him as before. Nonetheless, he reads more books in English on his own now. Sometimes Tomo and his parents talk about sports, movies, books, or current events and, depending on the topic, the language changes from Japanese to English and vice versa.

When Tomo was little, Anna sometimes faced a dilemma. She was concerned about his becoming "too" Japanese and was afraid that she might lose him. At the same time she was very worried about his developing a non-Japanese personality and having difficulties fitting into Japanese society because of it. Fortunately, Tomo did not have

much trouble adjusting in Japan after he moved back from Europe. He managed to adjust to life as a bilingual/bicultural person in Japan quite well. He has maintained a healthy relationship with his parents and continues to be a bilingual—or more accurately, a multilingual. Anna says that this did not happen overnight and added that parents of bilingual children have to be patient and should give their children as many opportunities as possible.

This is a brief description of the language development of Tomo during the different stages of his life. He and his parents made every effort to ensure successful language acquisition. He learned to use four languages through play as well as serious study. To become proficient in different languages at an advanced level is not easy and is rather time consuming. It seems that allocating a lot of time and energy to continue studying languages is the key to success. It can be said that it is important for parents to give opportunities to their children and it is important for children to maintain their efforts to take advantage of these opportunities. At the same time, Anna warned, parents must not forget that their children are not mere tools for research on languages and social behavior.

Section 2: Children of a monoracial couple living in another country

Negotiating Paths to Bilingualism

Marilyn Higgins

It was 30 years ago that my husband and I, both Americans of European heritage, arrived from the United States with our two sons (then 7 and 3) to take up a job teaching English as a second language in Western Japan. Today, our children (including our daughter, who was born two years after we arrived in Japan) live and work comfortably and competently in either Japanese or English. We are sometimes asked how we negotiated their path to bilingualism when we, ourselves, are not particularly fluent in the Japanese language. In this short piece, I reflect on the turning points as I remember them.

Speaking on the topic of bilingualism, I recall one speaker at a JALT conference making the point that children seem to become more (or less) fluent in languages depending on how the expectations about the purpose of their language learning are conveyed by their parents and in their community of learning. Our children often heard us say that they were “ambassadors” and “bridges between East and West.” The expectation of fluency in both Japanese and English was natural within our circle of friends. We know a number of excellent role models who operate seamlessly between the languages, and we worked to the extent we could to gain proficiency ourselves. We cheered the children on as their fluency far surpassed ours early on. While they seemed to pick up

Japanese without “barriers,” our brains put up “rational roadblocks” trying to reason through the new grammar and sounds.

But even before coming to Japan we had begun the language learning process in a spirit of adventure and enjoyment. I remember posting labels around the house: “*isu*” on the chair, “*tsukue*” on the desk, “*reizoko*” on the fridge. I remember the great laughter of the children when they learned that in Japanese “*haha*” meant “mother” and “*mama*” meant “so-so!”

We thought we’d learn along with them and after we got to Japan, we tried to work on their homework together. The most important point is that there was the expectation that learning assignments should be done as well as possible. Soon their proficiency was beyond ours, and we were not able to help as much. But we could and did arrange for competent native help as needed.

On the English side of things, within three months of our arrival of Japan, we noticed that our older son—who had been reading and writing at above grade level in the school he attended in the U.S.—had forgotten how to even write his own name in English. We therefore instituted English focus times each day. Most of the day they could play and communicate in Japanese or English as they wished, but at the dinner table, the only acceptable language at our house (unless we had Japanese guests) was English. This new rule meant that there were times when dinner was a bit quiet! Nevertheless, nearly all of our conversation with the children was in English. We had early morning prayers and consultation in English, as well as after-dinner English story time and writing exercises in English. We did our best to provide an English environment for at least part of each day.

We also tried to take advantage of what little English TV was available for kids in Japan at that time. Even back in 1978, when we arrived in Japan, NHK broadcast Sesame Street in English. There were occasional English movies. Our daughter was three years old when we were able to buy our first video machine (1983), and broadcast satellite TV brought wonderful new language selection possibilities to us. We sometimes joke that our daughter’s first English teacher was Mel Brooks, because at that time we loved “de-stressing” while watching his hilarious movies. She would pick up phrases from the films and repeat them with sometimes surprising (occasionally embarrassing, but always humorous) results at odd times.

In our area (Yamaguchi) there were no international schools. That was fine with us, as we were happy to send the kids to the local Japanese schools—at least in their early years. After elementary school, we found we had to be more selective, after our first son became embroiled in a school that was rife with bullying. After a year of trying to work with the school to ameliorate the increasingly serious problem, we decided our best path was home-schooling through high school for him. That meant that we had to do some intensive work at home bringing his English level up to the level needed for his assignments.

During what would be considered his “junior year” in high school (11th grade, or 2nd year of high school) he did spend one year in the U.S. and attended a public school. During that year he developed a passion for photography. With that strong sense of mission, he returned to Japan, finished up his home-schooling course, then applied to and was accepted at the Japanese university of his choice. He graduated from that college

with honors four years later. He became a photo-journalist and is fully capable of writing and/or translating as needed in both languages.

Today, he works in Tokyo and his photos and writing regularly appear in national Japanese magazines. He has a Japanese wife who has some English fluency, and they have two children. The language in their home is mostly Japanese, although English is often used as an “alternate” language and is spoken quite naturally with English-speaking guests who are not fluent in Japanese. English books, videos and other media are enjoyed by the children and the family in general. Their children (age 10 and 6) attend weekly English lessons and are able to use simple English, though at this point their receptive ability exceeds their English language production. As grandparents, my husband and I are encouraged to speak as much English as possible with them, and we believe that time and experience will lead each of them to be able to function quite well in English as well as their native Japanese.

Our second son chose to stay in the Japanese school system until he graduated from junior high school. (We had moved to another town about that time, and the junior high he attended did not have the dysfunctional elements that had led to bullying in his older brother’s school.) In fact, because he observed how to build unity with his school-mates and avoid or overcome the teasing that can turn into full-blown conflict, our second son was elected the student-body president and became known throughout Japan (thanks to the media) as the “*aoi-me seito kaicho*” (blue-eyed student body president).

For high school, he was able to go to an international school in Canada. He then went to China to study Chinese, and after a year or so, he returned to Japan to attend university. Halfway through his university course in Japan, however, he felt he was not making the progress he was looking for, so he transferred to a U.S.-based distance learning course and then went on to finish a Master’s program in Conflict Resolution in an English-medium university based in Europe.

Today, he is living in the United States and works at a job where he uses his Japanese as well as his Chinese language skills. In fact, his wife is Chinese and their children (a boy age 9, and girl 6) use English, Chinese and Japanese in that order of fluency. They seem to enjoy games and situations that require them to switch between languages.

When our daughter reached junior high school age, some friends in Kyushu had started a small international school (English-based, but also with Japanese components). She made her own inquiries and convinced us to send her there. After completing her high school in a bilingual environment, she chose to go to university in the United States. Her path led her to marry into a Mexican-American family. They have three sons, ages 8, 6 and 3. They lived in Japan for a time as a family when the boys were quite small and may choose to do so again. Although my daughter’s husband does not speak much Spanish, the language and culture is alive and well in their extended family. Our daughter has studied basic Spanish and continues her own Japanese studies at an advanced level while she encourages the boys (as well as her husband) to learn the basics in the hope that they will be able to appreciate the Japanese culture as a part of their family heritage. The three boys are primarily English speakers at present, with occasional bits of Spanish and Japanese thrown in.

Our children each took different and unique educational paths. We never really paid attention to those who feared that they would not be able to “pass entrance exams” or get into “high-standard colleges.” We knew, from our own experiences, that colleges and universities are opening and expanding their paths to entrance. There is more than one path to education. Our children were aware that the more skill and proficiency they gained, the more opportunities and paths would be open to them, to take a useful place bridging the East-West gaps in a “globalizing” world. From their essentially “monolingual roots” (and parents who tagged along and may have attained by now a stage of “one-and-a-half-lingualism”) our bilingual children are producing a generation for whom a multi-cultural/multi-lingual mindset is natural.

Acquiring English as a Japanese Living in America

Luke Ishihara

“Do you think in English or Japanese?”

“Do you consider yourself American or Japanese?”

Questions like these are often posed to bilingual or multilingual individuals. For me, it took a while to think about and formulate answers for such questions, but I think I have come to my conclusions. However, a short explanation can’t really describe how one develops into a person who has to think about such questions. Therefore, in this monograph I would like to share my life story and the decisions that have made me into the person I am today.

Family Background

The lives of all people are shaped by the life patterns of the parents that bring them into the world. I was born in Minokamo-shi, a city in Gifu Prefecture. My Japanese parents met each other while studying at a Bible college in Tokyo after both had become Christians. Their set of values and beliefs as Christians influenced many of their own life decisions and subsequently had deep impacts on mine.

My father felt a calling in his heart to become more proficient in theology after his time at Bible College. After discussion with my mother, he decided to move our family to the United States and enroll in a seminary there. That was in 1980. I was three years old, and my sister was two. The four of us were a typical monolingual Japanese family except for the fact that my father was atypically gregarious, outgoing, and adventurous—perfect traits for living in the United States. After our move, we first lived in Oklahoma City for six months before settling in St. Louis, Missouri for the next four years. It was during the first year of living in the U.S. that my parents would watch my sister and me

interact with each other or with other children and excitedly whisper, “Look! They’re talking in English.” From then on, my Japanese language abilities quickly decreased, and I became more of a monolingual English speaker than a bilingual.

Memories of Growing Up Bilingually and Biculturally

My father worked on his English by taking ESL courses for six months and was later accepted to a seminary. I suspect that international student requirements at his seminary were not very stringent at the time, as his grammar and pronunciation were still not very good. He did, however, tell me he had gotten a TOEFL score of over 500 at the time. I often watched him pore over his textbooks and type on his electronic typewriter. He would talk to me in Japanese, and I would answer in only English.

My mother didn’t really speak English at all, and even now, after twenty-seven years in the United States, my mother’s English level is not much more than what it was when we first moved to the U.S. Without much ability in English, my mother tried to instill Japanese language in my life by reading me Japanese books and teaching me hiragana. I cannot recall her ever speaking to me in English, although my father spoke to me in English when he wanted to get his point across, and still does so to this day.

My father would find it necessary to get his point across especially when my sister or I disobeyed him. When we misbehaved, my father’s first flash of anger would come in Japanese: “*Nani shiteiru—omaera!*” Then, as if it was because of a bad memory that we did not obey him, he would say in his accented English, “Again and again I told you, no [insert type of misbehavior here].” This was obviously not very effective to kids with short memory spans.

Up until I was 8 years old, I didn’t have a lot of exposure to Japanese outside of my parents, and so I probably didn’t really think it was important to differentiate between the two languages in my mind. I think I could tell the difference because no one seemed to understand my parents and me when we talked in Japanese. Although I understood my parents’ Japanese, it wasn’t until we moved to California that my bilingualism really took root.

My father had graduated from the seminary in Missouri, so he decided to take our family back to the motherland for a vacation and to let my grandparents see my sister and me. As she and I had gotten accustomed to speaking only in English with the people in St. Louis and even with our Japanese parents, it was quite a peculiar thing when we first arrived back in my mother’s hometown of Yokohama. Our grandparents would speak to us in Japanese, and we would answer back in English, but they would not understand what we said. My two cousins also spoke to us in Japanese, and although we understood most of what they said, they had no idea what we were saying. My sister got so frustrated with this lack of communication that at one point, she screamed at them in English, “Don’t you understand what I’m saying!!!” That brought a great laugh to my father.

After a week in Yokohama, my father took us to his hometown in Gifu Prefecture. Here, he placed my sister and me in a Japanese elementary school for the next few weeks to make friends with other students. By this time, our Japanese language ability was picking up steam, and we were able to communicate with others in Japanese—an ability we had long forgotten during the 4 years of English-only environment in Missouri. We made friends quickly as we played with the other students, and they marveled at our differences. A local newspaper even picked up the story of children born of a local man who had moved his family to the U.S. We were semi-celebrities.

Like everyone else, I got a uniform, *radoseru* standard school backpack and the requisite textbooks, and I tried to do the homework, but it was still mostly beyond me, except for math. We weren't really expected to do much in school, but in my classes, I tried to do what I could. If I didn't do it, it was no big deal, and if I did it, people took me seriously and our teacher called on me when I raised my hand. After the six weeks or so that I spent there, I had to leave, and my classmates gave me nice little presents and notes to keep in touch. Our family packed up our things to start a new chapter of our lives in San Jose, California.

By this time, my Japanese speaking ability was back on track. My father had been commissioned to start a Japanese church in San Jose, and so there continued to be more opportunities for me to speak and listen to Japanese. Among the new parishioners was the Yamashita family, a family that had two sons about my age named Andy and Eddie. Andy and Eddie were born in the U.S., so they were truly Japanese-American. They spoke English just like all of the other American kids at school. However, their mother was keen on making sure they kept their Japanese language ability alive. To facilitate this endeavor, their mother gave them all kinds of Japanese books, movies, and toys to play with. It was here that Andy gave me my first comic book, *Doraemon Volume 1*. Up until this point, my father had often taken us to the local library, and I had had plenty of opportunity to read in English, but reading in Japanese was new to me. Nonetheless, I was able to read the *hiragana*, and was aided by *furigana* whenever I encountered a *kanji* character. I enjoyed the fact that I was able to understand and enjoy the book, and it opened the door for further reading in Japanese.

The next summer, my father sent my sister and me back to Japan again. This was the first time for us to travel to Japan alone—a 9-year-old and a 7-year-old on a trans-Pacific flight. Over the course of my life as a dependant, my father sent me back to various locations in Japan over 10 times. He said he wanted his parents—my grandparents—to get a chance to know their grandchildren, but more importantly, he wanted us to come in contact with different cultures, especially Japan's.

This is further evidenced by the fact that during our four years in St. Louis, Missouri, my father took our family on road trips all over the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Because of those trips, I was able to see, taste, and touch the cultures of 46 of the 50 states as well as those of our northern and southern neighboring countries. Even though he didn't earn very much as a minister, he invested his money in an education that allowed us to learn through experience with our whole selves.

My Three-Pronged Japanese Language Education in the U.S.A.

One thing that sped my Japanese language education was a Japanese supermarket called “Yaohan” (now renamed “Mitsuwa”) that opened up in our city. Adjacent to the supermarket was a Kinokuniya bookstore (now “Asahiya”). There my mother purchased the monthly comic magazine *Korokoro Komikkusu* for me. I happily devoured its pages every month and was able to keep up with all of the pre-pubescent trends in Japan. As I grew older, I continued to read *Korokoro*, but I also started to read *Jump* Comics. I was privileged to be able to read *Jump* during its “Golden Years” (my name for the era) when it contained very popular comics series such as *Dragon Ball*, *Slam Dunk*, *Rokudenashi Blues*, *Yuyu Hakusho*, and a few others. I actually learned most of my honorifics in Japanese (*keigo*) from reading *Rokudenashi Blues*, a series set in a high school! Because there is a hierarchal system even amongst high school ruffians in Japan, the series contained many dialogues between the older and younger members (*sempai* and *kohai*) of the gangs in which the junior members would address their *sempai* adding *-san* to their names and *ssu* to the end of sentences.

At the same time, my father started bringing in Japanese high school students who were boarding at a local private school to his church. The teens were a few years older than me, and they taught me all kinds of new words and expressions while also passing on information about J-pop—Japanese popular music. As I grew older, I would listen to these new songs that students would bring and try to decipher the meanings of the expressions used in their lyrics. Most of the lyricists used higher-level Japanese that could only be really understood with a proper Japanese education because they used more mature language. I felt slightly frustrated, but more than that, I was motivated by not being able to understand all of the material I had.

With the new stimuli of Japanese comic books and J-pop music, I began searching for materials to facilitate my new longing to study the Japanese writing system in more depth. Again, I went back to the rows and stacks of books at the Kinokuniya book store, and this time I found what I was looking for: *5-Minute Drill* books which were designed to help Japanese elementary school students with their kanji memorization and usage. They were a Godsend because each lesson was only 5 minutes long. I didn’t need to do too much to get in the necessary practice I needed to understand the kanji in the drill books. I blazed through these workbooks, but they did not help me understand the lyrics of Japanese pop songs. Therefore, I began to simply ask the owners of the CDs what the song words meant. They happily obliged, and so I learned, among other things, that *setsunai* means “bittersweet feelings”, *boseki* means “grave stone,” and *hokori* means “pride.”

My father had also purchased a “Nintendo Family Computer” or “*Famicom*” (called the Nintendo Entertainment System in America) for me during my first summer back in Japan—an act he probably regretted later. Thousands of hours were spent in front of the television with a Nintendo controller in my hands as I played all kinds of action video games (to my father’s ire). However, as I entered my junior high school years, I picked up the game “*Dragon Quest III*”, which had been left to us by a homestay student who had finished the game. Unlike other actions games that revolved mostly around finger dexterity, “*Dragon Quest III*” was a role-playing game (RPG)—a game that involved

“talking” to people to get information and using that information to solve puzzles. It also involved commands such as “fight,” “magic,” “run away,” and “protect.” As this was still the age of 8-bit gaming without real voice-over like we have in today’s video game consoles, I had to read all of the “conversations” as well as all of the commands in Japanese. Fortunately for me, this first RPG was scripted completely in *hiragana*, which made reading everything much easier. It wasn’t until my mother had unwittingly repeated my father’s mistake by buying me a “*Supa Famicom*” (Super Nintendo in the U.S.) and I was playing “Dragon Quest V” (after finishing Dragon Quest IV on the “*Famicom*”) that I had to use kanji characters to play. I had also played and finished “Final Fantasy VI,” another popular RPG, as well. With the continued stream of video games purchased for my Japanese consoles, leading gradually to higher-level Japanese language medium games, my Japanese continued to improve.

More Language Practice and Education

As time passed, I continued to read comic books, listen to J-pop, play video games, and visit Japan during my summers, but I was getting a little too old to spend my summer in Japan playing while all of my peers were busy studying for college entrance exams and other such things, so I started working at part-time jobs. It was at my part-time job at Sakai Moving Center that I really had to put all of the *keigo* honorifics I had studied into practice.

Soon, I enrolled in a college far from home in Oklahoma, but I still visited Japan regularly. After I graduated from university, I decided to spend a whole year studying Japanese in Japan. Up until that point, I had never stayed in Japan longer than three months; I was eager to see if I could raise my language ability to that of an ordinary Japanese person. During my year of study of Japanese at Nagoya’s Nanzan University, I became enamored with every element of studying. I admit the studies were easy for me (being a native speaker of the language), and being confident, I tried to make as many friends and learn as many names of people as I could. To further my Japanese culture studies, I joined the university’s karate club team. Through the club, I learned about ultra-conservative Japanese power distance and further use of honorific language. This eventually would prepare me for work in Japanese environments.

Bilingualism’s Effects on My Life

I got my first job, albeit a short-term contract, about a month after my return from Nagoya to San Jose, California. The job entailed translating and interpreting for New United Motor Manufacturing Incorporated (NUMMI). A joint venture between Toyota and GM, the company was preparing to launch two new car models that year. As the project was enormous by Toyota’s standards, they needed more translators/interpreters to help the Japanese engineers and technicians explain things to the American staff, and that’s where I came in.

My job was to translate documents Americans had made into Japanese and to interpret at large and small meetings. With the aid of my dictionary, I was able to make light work of the translation, but found it boring. I hated sitting behind a computer all day. When the Japanese engineers and technicians needed an interpreter, they called one of us out to the floor with them. Armed with the experience of watching my father interpret for countless American preachers and gifted with his same love of the spotlight, I effectively and efficiently interpreted countless exchanges between the Japanese engineers and their counterparts. I quickly absorbed the technical nomenclature necessary for my job, and I became more and more effective in larger meetings because of my ability to speak up and to speak clearly. Eventually, I became the go-to interpreter for large meetings of 100 or more people.

At such meetings, an American man would speak into his microphone and I would speak into my microphone, but his voice was carried over large speakers while mine was carried into the headsets and ears of the 10 Japanese engineers. He would not stop for me to interpret for him because he was on a schedule, so I literally had to interpret simultaneously. I became a language conduit, with his words going through my ears, and my brain instantly reacting and spitting out Japanese words into the microphone. Honorifics were of no concern here because it was the accuracy and the speed of the transmission of information that mattered. Time and again I was called upon, and though I liked the thrill of being in front of people, I knew the words that came from my mouth would never be my thoughts; they would always be the speaker's. They were not words that really inspired me either, so I gradually grew bored with the work and promptly left when I could opt out of my contract, even though the job paid handsomely.

I also had other motivations to leave. Teaching English to Japanese speakers at a university had been one of my goals since college. I had helped a high school student in Japan with his English homework, and when he finally understood the answer, he had what teachers might call a "light bulb" moment, and the expression on this face was priceless to me. Getting back to this goal was a priority to me, and since I had already been accepted to a graduate school in Chicago, I was eager to make new friends near the school.

Interpreting, however, was a skill that I took with me. I had never had formal training in it before that contract, but now I could call myself a professional interpreter. When I moved out to Chicago for graduate school, I found a Japanese church in the area to interpret in, and currently in Osaka, I interpret regularly for my church. I occasionally interpret at my job in Kwansai Gakuin University in Hyogo Prefecture. As the only full bilingual among the contractual staff and the only trained interpreter, I try to make myself useful by being the bridge between our staff and Japanese people who are completely monolingual.

The Beginning of Multilingualism

Growing up, I didn't have many friends who were bilinguals, although there were many bilingual people around me in my father's church. When I moved to Chicago, however, I made my own friends, most of whom were bilingual in Japanese and English.

I was also able to make a Taiwanese-American friend named Dave. Dave helped change my life from that of a bilingual to a budding multilingual. I had previously been interested in learning Chinese, as it was one of the most widely spoken languages in the world. However, I didn't want to start studying it until I had improved my Japanese. After I passed level 1 of the Japanese Language Proficiency Exam, I felt I had reached my goal and had nothing else to prove. Around that time, Dave gave me the inspiration to start studying Chinese.

Dave actually was himself a budding multilingual, as he spoke Chinese at home with his parents but also was studying Japanese at the same time. His father spoke Chinese and English, but was also fluent in Japanese because he had studied in Japan. Meeting his father and talking to him in Japanese, I was convinced I could also become trilingual. I audited a Chinese language course at a local university two times a week and worked hard on my homework. By that time, Dave was one of my housemates, and I had another Taiwanese housemate named Willy. Willy checked my homework and helped me with my phrases. Although they helped me when they could, there were obvious limitations to such study. As I pondered studying abroad over the summer, Dave convinced me to study in Taiwan instead of China.

In Taiwan, I was pleasantly surprised by how kind Taiwanese people were to me. It may have been due to the fact that I was both Japanese and American in a way; Taiwanese people generally seem to have a respect for both nationalities. This aided my Chinese study because whenever I wanted to practice my Chinese, people seemed affable and gracious. I committed to being a good language student by conversing in Chinese often without being afraid of making mistakes, always doing my homework, and not spending time with people who often spoke my native languages. I only had three months to study, and it would barely be enough to gain conversational proficiency.

I did have certain advantages as a bilingual over other students in terms of Chinese language study. Chinese grammar seemed to me like a simpler, more intuitive form of English grammar, with its SVO form. I could understand many of the Chinese characters because they were so similar in meaning or sound to the Japanese kanji I had studied in the past. Facilitated by these advantages, I was relentless in my practice of Chinese and carefully chose to spend time with other students who were of the same mindset. My friends included three other Japanese students, a Korean student, and an American student—all of whom would not talk to me in English or Japanese—using only Chinese. My Chinese language ability was fueled by their friendship. I am indebted to their patience and kindness, as I left Taiwan that year with more than a conversational grasp of Chinese, but also a lot of great friends and memories.

My Family Today

Even while I was studying in Taiwan, I was in negotiations to get a job in Hyogo Prefecture, Japan as an English instructor at Kwansei Gakuin University. This had been my goal, and I was excited to see its realization. I knew that I would start a new chapter in my life, and with it I would find new friends and gain new memories. The contract

was for four years, and I was sure that I would be able to get the experience I needed to further my career.

However, even after I had started my new life in Japan, my heart and mind could not let go of one of my friends in Taiwan—the Korean student. Her name was Kayun. As I began my job, I e-mailed her in Chinese and English, and she wrote back in English because she figured I could better understand her feelings in written English. I asked her where she had studied English, and she replied that she had to learn English in Taiwan whether she wanted to or not because all of the other foreign students studying Chinese had no other medium of conversation until their Chinese ability reached a certain level. And since she wanted to make friends, she was forced to use the English she had not so seriously studied during high school and college. By that time, her English ability was more than enough for us to communicate.

After months of e-mails, conversations using video Skype, and visits to Japan, we decided to get married. There were many factors that led to the belief that she was the one for me, but one factor was definitely her talent for languages and interaction. I was able to envision myself taking Kayun to other countries like China, Korea, Taiwan, or the United States if my career called for such moves. I was also able to envision her being a mother who demonstrated and instilled the importance of language and communication in our children. Our wedding symbolized that, as it was done in three languages—English, Japanese, and Korean—and we now speak English and Chinese at home. Since then, Kayun has proved as able a language learner as one could hope for and has quickly gained conversational Japanese ability. Whenever we talk to my mother or new friends who are not keen on speaking English, Kayun accommodates them with her new, budding ability in Japanese. She is on the road to becoming quadra-lingual.

Final Thoughts

In response to the questions I raised earlier, I would say I think in English when I spend long periods of time with English speakers or using English. When I spend my time exclusively with Japanese speakers for considerable amounts of time, I begin to do all of my thinking in Japanese and react in that language. It is a phenomenon I can't really articulate or understand. I also consider myself 80% American and 20% Japanese in terms of thinking because of the long period of my life spent in the United States. Other bilinguals will probably come to different percentages or views on their identity.

In closing, I'd like to mention that Don Snow stated in his book *Teaching English as Christian Mission* that learning the language of a culture is one of the best ways to promote peace and understanding. The learner is humbled, as every person in that culture is a potential teacher. I hope to keep my mind open and ready to learn as I come across more cultures and become a better global citizen. Hopefully, my future children will also enjoy and appreciate the vast number of cultures in the world, and learn to celebrate those cultures by speaking their languages.

Section 3: Children of one Japanese and one non-Japanese parent

Two Languages, Two Children—Two Stories

Ms. A

I am an American and my husband is Japanese. I am fluent in Japanese and don't feel any handicap in expressing myself in that language, so my husband and I have always spoken Japanese together no matter where we've lived.

Our two children were born in New York City during an expat posting there. We knew that we would not stay in the U.S. forever, and I continued to speak to my husband in Japanese. However, when my son was born, it just felt natural to speak to him in English. I therefore spoke English to the children when my husband wasn't there, but switched to Japanese when he was.

My son, the older of our two children, went to daycare in New York while I worked full time, and his main language was English. He had a passive knowledge of Japanese from speaking with his father. We returned to Japan when he was four and he started Japanese *yochien* as a *nenchu-san* (middle class student) right away, yet to this day, he has an American accent (although he never “fixed” his childhood “th” sound and still says “sinks” instead of “thinks”).

I have always spoken English to my daughter, too, but she was just 18 months old when we returned to Japan and never had a chance to develop her English skills in an English-speaking environment. Thus, she sounds Japanese when she speaks, making Japanese second language learner errors.

It was a constant battle to try to maintain the children's English while they attended Japanese schools (and they knew that Mom spoke Japanese!). We couldn't afford to send both children to international schools and decided that it was better for them to have a strong grounding in written Japanese anyway—feeling that the English would come later, as it eventually did. We also decided that it was more important for them to be able to travel to visit family in the U.S.—something that we would not have been able to afford if we were paying international school tuition.

To support their English, I organized English playgroups until they were both in elementary school. Then I organized English tutoring on Friday evenings, usually together with friends from the playgroup: an hour of study, then play (usually in Japanese) and dinner with friends. There were various levels of resistance to English at different ages, and I tried hard to remember that it was more important to have a good relationship than it was to be bilingual, but I never switched to Japanese myself. By the time the kids entered junior high, they seemed to realize that it was an advantage to be

bilingual in Japanese and English and they had loving relationships with their U.S. relatives to support the effort.

When my son was just about to start college and my daughter was about to enter high school, we were transferred to Singapore. My son had already chosen to go to college in Japan because he wanted to play basketball. He had looked at schools in the U.S., but figured that he wasn't tall enough to play basketball there but would be all right in Japan, so that was his motivation. We therefore left him in Tokyo when we moved to Singapore.

My daughter decided to move to Singapore with us and started at the Singapore American School. She was in the ESL program for the first year and was mainstreamed the next so that she could graduate within 3 years. She worked really hard, especially in science—her chosen field. The language for her science classes was so specialized that I couldn't even help her with her textbooks, so she had to do it all on her own. After high school, she went to the U.S. for college and graduated in 2006. Her English vocabulary now surpasses my son's by miles, but he still sounds more natural.

My son is pursuing a career in music and writes lyrics in Japanese, with some English thrown in. He also works part time in a media job that he got because of his bilingual abilities. He is now almost 28 and not following a “salaryman” path. We are waiting for his big break!

My daughter is applying for medical school in the U.S., but her MCAT (medical school entrance exam) scores were pulled down by her verbal score. We are not sure if she will be accepted; if not, she will probably pursue a doctorate in Japan. She wants to do research. She still struggles with English—composition especially—and her thought process is definitely Japanese.

For both of our children, Japanese is their dominant language but their English is also strong (well, maybe not spelling....). Nowadays I have relaxed my guard and when we talk, even I switch back and forth between our languages with them.

I don't know what is in store for either of them in terms of relationships and/or marriage ... it will be interesting to see!

One Experience of Bilingual Child-Rearing in the Contemporary World

Charles Fox

I am a white American male who came to Japan in 1973 on a contract to teach English for two years. I knew no Japanese and had, as well, no capability in any other foreign language, had never studied the Japanese language or culture, and thought at the time that I would return to the U.S. at the end of my contract either to look for work in publishing or to go on to graduate school in English literature, which had been my

undergraduate major. In those two years, however, I began teaching myself Japanese, and the longer I stayed in the country and interacted with various Japanese people, the more focused I became on the language, so that by the end of my contract, I was determined somehow, some way, to make my way forward economically doing something that made use of the Japanese language skills that I was trying hard to acquire.

During that first two-year stint, I met my future wife, though we were slow to make the turn toward marriage and starting a family. We did marry, though, in 1981, and in 1982, our twin sons were born. Though the marriage was planned, children a little less than a year later were not. After all, I was a graduate student in Japanese Literature at an American graduate school having to work desperately to maintain a high grade point so as to receive continued funding. But plans often wilt and disappear before the power of biology.

This is all by way of saying that my wife and I did not have a detailed plan for how we would raise our sons; everything really seemed a day-to-day decision by necessity. Our primary consideration, though, was that they always know and feel that they had two countries, two families, and two languages, and that they feel comfortable in either of those contexts. My wife's English, though all learned in school in Japan, was quite functional, but neither of us was a native speaker of the other's language and, perhaps more important, neither set of grandparents to these twin boys could speak to each other except through us. It seemed vitally important that we make sure that our sons were never cut off from any of these very important people in their lives. We decided in the beginning, therefore, that my wife would use only Japanese to the kids while I would use English.

Though we had made the decision to raise the kids bilingually, we could not really plan for school, if only because there was no telling where we would be at that point. I had a dissertation to plan, research, and write, and then there was the academic job application process to go through after that. When the twins were three, we returned to Japan for what we thought would be two years of research for my dissertation. I had fellowships and therefore did not have to work on anything other than my dissertation-related activities, and that gave me adequate time both to go about my research and also to spend a lot of time with the kids. One of the most important things that I did in order to make sure that their English did not fade away in these early years, when they were separated from an English-speaking community, was to read to them constantly, which they seemed to enjoy. Early on, it was an important playtime activity, and as the boys got older, it became a bedtime ritual that both they and I looked forward to. Though I of course started with easy stories like *Goodnight, Moon* and various kinds of picture books, we moved steadily into more difficult text-dependent stories, things like Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*, and after that into juvenile novels and beyond. The bedtime reading continued all the way through their elementary school years, and eventually we read wonderful and wonderfully complex things like the Madeline L'Engle's *Wrinkle in Time* series and even the entire *Lord of the Rings*.

We stayed on in Japan beyond the fellowships both because it was good for my research (to say nothing of my Japanese) and also because it was easier to make a decent living here, through part-time university teaching and private teaching and translating. My wife's hands were full with the kids, and she had no career that she particularly

wanted to pursue, so it really came down to where would be best for my work. I had subjected all of us to some pretty severe poverty while in grad school in the States, so it seemed best from every perspective for us to stay put in Japan, where we could at least be comfortable. That decision also meant, however, that the onus was on me to make sure that the kids kept advancing in English.

The TV and the VCR quickly became important tools in our quest to keep the kids current in English. That my parents sent us VHS tapes of *Sesame Street* and *Mr. Rogers's Neighborhood* helped greatly. The kids loved these shows, and we put no limits on their TV time, but what was important was that we tried as much as possible to watch these programs together with the kids. As a result, from early on TV watching became a highly pleasurable family activity and was never a way of giving ourselves a break from them. As the kids got older, and as video rental shops became more common and reasonably priced, we began watching a tremendous number of films both old and new, and the ones that they particularly enjoyed we tried to get copies of so that they could watch them repeatedly, which they seemed to want to do. I feel that this activity was vitally important for their English language ability, and because we did these things together as much as possible, it never became an activity that shut anyone out; rather, these films as well as the books that I read to them from were constantly providing subjects for family conversation.

As it happened, the university in Japan with which I was affiliated for my dissertation research made me an offer of a full-time, tenured position. Though we were not sure that we would stay long-term, we were happy that we could at least start the kids in a Japanese elementary school. Though I had done no concentrated research on the topic, I had read somewhere that acquiring the basic knowledge needed to function at a minimal level in society took six years in the U.S. but nine years in Japan. Now, I have no idea whether that is really true or not, but it struck me as probably fairly accurate, if for no other reason than because of the necessity of learning so many *kanji* (Chinese characters) in order to be functional in Japanese. We believed that it would probably be easier for us to teach the kids English at home than Japanese, and both my wife and I generally liked the Japanese approach to elementary school, which was relaxed in terms of passing and failing, and devoted a fair amount of time to music education especially, something that eventually became quite important to our kids. We were somewhat worried about possible bullying of the kids—a problem that was beginning to get a lot of attention at the time (the late 80s)—but we thought that they would probably be all right.

Looking back now, neither my wife nor I regret our decision to stay here. Circumstances, however, took the decision of schooling temporarily out of our hands. We had thought that after the kids graduated from elementary school we would probably enroll them in an international school because neither of us liked the emphasis in junior and senior high on multiple-choice entrance exams for the next level of Japanese education. My wife's view was that of an insider; she was a graduate of the system and had taught both junior high and high school prior to our marriage. My own view was based on my own educational philosophy, which put much more emphasis on individual thought and expression. The concentration on multiple-choice tests necessarily meant, it seemed to me, that neither an individual thought process nor the individual expression that resulted from that process—whether written or oral—would ever, indeed could ever, be the focus of the educational experience. That seemed to us to be too great a loss and

not worth the Japanese language linguistic advantage to be gained from matriculating in the Japanese public educational system.

In preparation for the switch into English that entry into an international school would entail, I had begun teaching the twins English at home starting in the second grade of elementary school. I did not start earlier because I thought the transition to school was probably difficult enough and that they did not need added pressure on top of that. Once they reached the second grade, though, I thought they could manage it, so I began a reading program at home with very easy books of various kinds after I had taught them the basics of the alphabet. On trips back to the States I made it a point to go to educational stores and pick up materials of various kinds to use in addition to the many books I had read to the kids when they were younger and with which they were already quite familiar. I set them daily reading goals and eventually added short writing assignments as well.

As anyone who has attempted home schooling knows, it is very hard to teach one's own children. I was firm with the kids, but I had no interest in making them hate me or English. I counted myself lucky that in front of their friends they had never pretended that they could not understand what I said to them, but I also never insisted that they speak only English to me, either. My reasoning was that I did not want them to become overly self-conscious about language, and because I spoke Japanese around them, they were well aware that I could understand most anything they might say to me in what was then their stronger language. Therefore, for a number of years, our conversations were a back-and-forth volley of English (from me) and Japanese (from them), with absolutely no pauses and no awkward silences. When they had to speak English because the person they were speaking to could not understand Japanese, they would manage it somehow, but what came out of their mouths, though native, was very unnatural.

They needed more input than I alone could give them, and they needed as well the kinds of expectations placed on them that only someone outside of the family could provide; therefore, we arranged for them to participate in a private class held by a qualified American grade school teacher who was taking time off from teaching in a local international school in order to start a family herself. She had a class for seven native English-speaking kids: our two boys and five others, all of whom came from the same sort of linguistic circumstances. In addition, we had an American student studying in Japan at an American junior-year-abroad program in Kyoto for which I taught part-time come to the house once a week to coach the kids in drawing but to do it entirely in English—in other words, to make using English seem like play rather than work.

The other major initiative that we undertook to keep the kids' English alive was to travel back to the States every summer for an extended period, regardless of the cost. Of course we visited family, but we tended to choose our long-term hunkering-down spot according to whether the situation guaranteed that there would be a number of kids their own age around to play with. For example, since the kids had begun playing ice hockey in the third grade, we arranged to put them in an ice hockey day camp in Champaign, Illinois, on the campus of the University of Illinois one summer. I had a very good, very old friend on the faculty there who invited us to stay with him for the entire summer if we wanted, and we took him up on it. In the neighborhood, there were many kids the same

age, and our friend's faculty colleagues also had a number of kids who quickly became our kids' friends. That was a great stimulus to the twins in their language development.

We thought, therefore, that we were headed eventually toward the international schools in Japan, but my Japanese university changed those plans by choosing me to go and teach as a visiting professor in a joint program they have with the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. One month into the sixth grade, the kids were withdrawn from their Japanese school and taken off to Canada. They were deathly afraid of the idea of school in English, simply because they had never done it. Our conversation about it went something like this:

Me (in English): Come on, what's the big deal?

One of them (in Japanese): We can't speak English.

Me (in English): What do you mean? You understand everything that I'm saying right now, don't you?

One of them (in Japanese): Yeah, but you're Dad.

Me (in English): Give me a break! I'm just like the teachers you'll have over there.

The scene was comic, but their fear was quite real.

Vancouver is an interesting place for more reasons than one. In the 90s, it was the preferred destination for many wealthy Hong Kong Chinese looking to leave the city before it reverted to China from Britain. As a result of that and other factors, the elementary school age population of Vancouver at that time was more than 50% non-native English speakers, and the ESL/EFL operation in the city was huge. We worried that our kids would be placed in this operation rather than in among the Vancouver native speakers, but the results of the battery of entrance exams that the twins were put through placed them at above grade level in both English and mathematics. If truth be told, that result says much more about the Vancouver school system than it does about my kids' preparedness, but what it also suggests is that the kids had a soft landing in the English-speaking world. They loved their two years there, especially since they were ice hockey players before they went and now suddenly found themselves in the middle of Ice Hockey Central.

Our decision about schooling upon the twins' return to Japan was based on our desire that they go to university in the U.S. and not in Japan. Again, my wife and I were agreed on this, but for different reasons. She had graduated from university in Japan and came away thinking little of the education she had received. There had been little depth, she thought, and much going through the motions only. She was never inspired and looked upon it as an extension of a much disliked high school experience. I myself had taught long enough in Japanese universities to see that little in the way of independent thought or expression was either taught or encouraged, and neither faculty nor students had much desire to change that situation. University seemed a four-year playground before the real world of some sort of company job reined the young people in. In the States, on the other

hand, it was the intensity of the education that I had received at university, and the real sense of individual challenge that it had extended me, that had made me want to go to graduate school and aim for university teaching in the first place; therefore, I hoped to have my kids experience something of the same. As a result of these two thought processes, both of us felt that since the kids had already made a more or less successful transition to school in English, they should stay in English for the next stage as well. For this reason, we made application to Osaka International School prior to returning to Japan in the fall of 1995, when they were about to enter the eighth grade.

The twins spent the next two years at OIS, and they looked on it then and still see it now as a very happy time. In those difficult early teen years, they found it comforting and comfortable to be among a group of kids who were from similar linguistic and economic circumstances as they themselves. There was only one class per grade, so they got to know their classmates very well and received much individual attention.

The only drawback, and it was a big one, is that they fell steadily behind their age peers in Japan in terms of Japanese reading and writing ability. Here I think that my wife and I should have pushed harder, but teens are teens and have minds of their own. Again, as when they were in elementary school, our main concern was that they not reject either of their languages for any reason. We knew that because they had received a basic elementary education in Japan, they could, if sufficiently motivated, make up for what they had missed later on independently if necessary. After all, I myself was a self-taught speaker and reader of Japanese, and I had had friends in graduate school who been through a similar experience to that of my twins; therefore, I was confident that with their background they would be all right.

The next step in my sons' education was decided by their determination to play ice hockey competitively in their high school years. They were convinced that they had to be in North America to do that and therefore lobbied to be allowed to return for that purpose. I did not want to let go of them that early in life and knew also that it would cost a small fortune that we did not have. Therefore, because they were determined and it had been completely their own choice, we agreed, but made our agreement subject to the conditions that they be accepted by a good school and that we receive sufficient financial aid as well. Since they had no relatives who lived where hockey was played seriously, the boys would necessarily have to attend a prep school in order to do what they wanted to do, and that is the type of school to which they applied. They were lucky and were accepted with generous funding at Phillips Exeter in New Hampshire, so at the beginning of the tenth grade, off they went. As a family, we were also lucky in that I was able to get a year's sabbatical that year and arranged for a visiting scholar's slot at Harvard, just an hour or so south of Exeter.

Exeter was, by far, the biggest challenge of my sons' educational path. This was not only because the school was a high-powered, pressure-filled place that thought of itself as a feeder school for Harvard and Yale: it was also because the kids felt as if they had been dropped into an environment they had never realized existed. The daily pressure on them to prepare for the next day's classes, the lack of freedom that characterized living in a residential high school, and the demand there to speak, speak, speak in class and compete with others for this "air" time were things they had never experienced before. If anything, the experience confirmed in their own minds that they were Japanese, not American.

Eventually this changed, but their transition to Western education this time around was much rougher than it had been in Canada. It was a transition that for the first time brought about a split between the twins as well.

To make a long and painful story short, one of my boys decided in the middle of his second (junior) year at Exeter that he hated it and wanted only to return to his international school and the close friends that he had left behind. The other son was not particularly happy at the prep school, but he wanted to continue to play hockey there. For the family, it was a traumatic time. There were serious financial repercussions—tuition was paid up for that year and we had not purchased any tuition insurance, so transferring back to Japan meant a third separate and very expensive tuition to be paid. Therefore, we pleaded with our son to wait till the end of the academic year to make the move. The longer he stayed, however, the more serious his psychological situation became. In the end, he came back to Japan, and we shelled out the money for his re-entry into OIS—out of savings that we had thought were going to be a down-payment on a place of our own.

I go into this detail because I want to emphasize how important the element of mutual trust is in these sorts of decisions, as well as how much it is a negotiation between you and your child. We were distraught both about the financial implications of what our son was doing and the fact that he was dropping out of prep school in the middle of his junior year of high school. This latter fact would as good as doom his college applications the following fall, we knew, and this, too, led to anguished tears on all sides. Our son, though, proved to be right: he needed to be out of that prep school environment. He simply could not succeed there and would not stay. As a student at Exeter, he was proving to be a C student, uninspired, and feeling always as if he were drowning. He promised that if allowed to return to Osaka International, he would do much better because he would be happy and among people that he knew and liked.

The change for our son who returned was great indeed and just as he promised it would be. He became a motivated student who did all his work seriously and turned it in on time. He bubbled with ideas, made excellent grades, and became a class leader—everything that he had not been at Exeter—and the classes that he had most hated in America became his favorites in Japan, especially English.

Not to put too rosy a light on it, though: our prediction that his college applications would be adversely affected indeed came true. He was rejected at every school to which he applied that following fall. We had been somewhat prepared for this eventuality in our own minds, though, and we had actively encouraged both boys to consider taking a year off between high school and university both to raise SAT scores to a higher level and to gain more confidence in themselves and their English ability before heading back into the pressures of university classrooms. The experience of learning two languages simultaneously simply puts too much pressure on a child, we thought and counseled the kids, and though their long-term prospects always seemed good, we thought that getting up to university level in either or both of their languages would simply take longer than it would a monolingual child. Hence, the idea for the year off.

Both boys ended up taking the year off, which proved good all around. Though the one who had stayed at Exeter through to graduation had been accepted at a number of good universities, he had failed to get into any of his first-choice schools, and the year off enabled him to give it all a second try. The one who had failed to get in anywhere knew

the reason for it and did not let it get him down that much. In the second round of applications, his senior year back in Osaka stood him in very good stead, and he eventually had his pick of schools. That was also the case with my other son as well; the second time around, he had a tough choice among a number of “first choices.” They decided on the basis of having split up in high school that they did not want to go to different universities, so they both chose the same place, Williams College, a fine liberal arts college in the American northeast. What was really amazing about that choice is that given the one boy’s experience at Exeter, one would think that a place like Williams would be the last place that he would choose to go to, but this time he was ready.

Both boys have graduated from Williams now and are working in New York City. They want to be filmmakers—we’ve raised them to be very practical, as you can see—and they have taken jobs as production assistants in the Big Apple as a way of getting their feet in the door. Neither is yet married, so we have not had to deal with the problem of language for the third generation, our grandchildren.

Both of our boys miss Japan a lot and in fact, even in high school, argued strongly against my taking an American academic job and our moving back to the States. In their words, they wanted a home in Japan that they could always come back to, and they seem still to feel that way. Will their future wives agree with that sentiment? If they turn out to be American, I suspect not, but who knows? I know that an openness to life in Japan is an important issue for the kids as they seek out mates, and were those mates native Japanese, the issue would be the same in reverse. They have a large number of friends in the American northeast especially, but both kids have said that they don’t think that they can stick it out much longer there. English is now the stronger language for both boys; there is no denying that. Yet Japanese remains an important part of their lives and something that they never want to give up.

In conclusion, I would say that the most important thing that we did, in addition to deciding early that it was essential for the kids to always know and be able to communicate with their relatives on both sides of the Pacific, was to be flexible enough not to put too much pressure on them to learn either of the languages they have inherited. Also, that we slogged through it all together cannot be emphasized enough. Every single step was one we all felt that we were taking together. Now we are an ocean and most of another continent apart almost all of the time, but the wonders of modern technology (Skype and the Internet mostly) enable us to talk almost daily, and that, too, has been a blessing for our family communication and for their maintaining an intimate relation to Japan and their Japanese-speaking selves.

A Bilingual Parent's Mixed Success in Bringing Up Bilingual Children

Margaret Maeda

My Own Bilingual Upbringing

I was brought up bilingually in French and English by a British father and a French mother. Although I was born and raised in England, both my parents spoke only French to me until I started nursery school at the age of three. Thus, the first language I spoke was French, and I learnt to speak English at nursery school.

I came home from nursery school speaking English, and as a result, my younger brother's first language was English. My French pronunciation was always a little better than his, and I never made mistakes with the gender of articles, whereas my brother constantly made mistakes with them. My mother believed the difference was due to French being my first language chronologically, and his second. Even so, from the time I was twelve or thirteen, French people started to notice that I had a slight English accent.

My family spent six weeks every summer with my grandparents in France, as my father was a schoolteacher who had long summer vacations. In addition, my grandparents spent two weeks a year in England with us. During our summers in France and my French grandparents' visits to England—a total of two months of every year throughout my childhood—my parents insisted that I speak only French. My only escape from French during these periods came when I could get outside the house and speak English with my brother.

In addition to these experiences speaking French, I also read novels in French throughout my childhood, but I wrote very little in French until I learnt French at school in England. There, I studied French language and literature to Advanced Level G.C.E. (General Certificate of Education).

My parents, particularly my father, strongly believed that children from a bicultural family should be brought up bilingually, and I considered myself to have been brought up as a successful bilingual. Therefore, when I married a Japanese, I believed that not bringing up my children bilingually was unthinkable, and I was shocked when I heard English-speaking mothers speaking to their children in Japanese.

My Son's Story

My son was born in England and started to speak English around the age of one. Soon after that, we noticed that he understood a little of the conversation between my husband and Japanese friends. My husband went to work in Brazil, and I went with my son to live with my mother and French stepfather (in England) while we waited to join him in Brazil.

Three months later, we noticed that my son understood a little French: My mother remarked in French that it was raining and he looked out of the window.

When my son was 16 months old, we joined my husband in Brazil. By that time, my son was speaking complete sentences of three or four words in English. With the move, he lost an extended family, a house and garden; moreover, my husband was often away on business trips. My son therefore had only me for company in an apartment. He seemed to suffer from depression and stopped speaking completely for two months. When he started speaking again, his sentences consisted of one syllable composed of a single consonant and vowel, and often he substituted one consonant for another. For example, for “rabbit”, he said, “ma”. After a year in Brazil, he had only learnt one word from Brazilians—“ciao”—and he had made little progress in English.

Then when my son was two and a half, we moved to Japan. At that point, most of his conversation consisted of two sentences: “Look this same” and “*Kore nani?*” The first sentence was a result of my trying to teach him, “Look—this is the same” in an attempt to get him to classify things. He repeated these two expressions about thirty times each per minute. (I counted). In addition, he had a few other short English expressions.

Just before my son turned three, my daughter was born. Although we were settled in Japan, my son’s linguistic ability continued to show little progress. Before starting Japanese kindergarten at the age of nearly five, he had little English and little Japanese. In the playground, he was aware that he was behind the other children in language and spoke gibberish in imitation of their fluent speech. One child asked me what he was talking about, and I answered, “He’s speaking English,” to cover for him. Since he had very little of any language by the time he started kindergarten, I was starting to worry that he might have a developmental problem, but various incidents had made me believe that he probably did not.

Once he began attending kindergarten, his Japanese improved. Until that time, I had only spoken English to my two children. Yet every day when we went to the kindergarten, as soon as we got near it, he told me to speak Japanese because he did not want to seem different from the other children. By that time, I was happy that he was speaking any language at all, so I did switch to Japanese when he made such requests. At home, however, I tried to continue speaking to him in English, but he stopped speaking English at home, too.

Around that time, my daughter had her eighteen-month health and development check-up, and to prepare for it, I needed to count the number of words she spoke. According to the local Health Center, a child of that age is supposed to have a vocabulary of at least fifty words. I found that my daughter had well over a hundred words each in English and Japanese and that the level of her English and Japanese was about the same. Yet this was when her brother began to come home from kindergarten speaking Japanese. Soon, my daughter’s English also almost completely disappeared. I found myself speaking more Japanese at home even though I tried to stop myself.

By the end of kindergarten, my son had mostly caught up in Japanese with his classmates, although he was still a little behind. In elementary school, because of his slowness with language, he was considered to be intellectually slow and had a “helper” assigned to him, although I was not aware of this at the time—he only told me about this

when he was in his twenties. In elementary and junior high school, one teacher noticed that he had ability in mathematics. Apart from that, all his grades in elementary and junior high school were poor.

When he was about to graduate from junior high school, we were advised to put him into a low-ranking public high school. My husband and I felt that his grades were based more on his eccentric and rebellious character than on his intellectual abilities. We put him into a private high school which had a policy of disregarding junior high school character reports and which concentrated mainly on test scores, especially mathematics. The high school recommended a good university, but he was put off by the English part of the entrance examination, which looked difficult for an applicant who had never lived in an English-speaking country. It tested natural, spoken-style English. He took a more typical entrance examination for another good university because he felt he could pass by memorizing a lot of grammar and vocabulary. He passed that and went to a university in Kansai to study mathematics.

He now has a good vocabulary and speaks grammatically accurate English, but he speaks slowly. He reads extensively in English. Like my daughter, his listening comprehension is good. In university he became motivated to improve his spoken English and used rock music for practice. As a result, he now has a mixed British, American and Japanese accent.

My Daughter's Story

Much as in my brother's case, our home in Japan was far more local-language dominated for the second child than it had been for the first. My daughter's listening comprehension in English remained good, and her pronunciation was a mixture of British and Japanese. Apart from this, her English did not seem to be much better than that of her classmates when she was in junior high school. In high school, her best subject was mathematics, but she was discouraged from pursuing studies in this area because she was not as good in the sciences and college entrance examinations in Japan normally focus on either the humanities or math and science.

Thus, she ended up studying English at university—not because she wanted to, but because she had an advantage in listening comprehension and because she had been strongly discouraged from majoring in mathematics. Although she was not enthusiastic about studying English, by the time she graduated, she was happy to find that her English reading, writing and vocabulary had improved.

She now works at Haneda Airport. When she started, her shyness made her panic when she was asked questions in English by passengers. To help her overcome her lack of confidence, I started spending more time speaking in English with her. Recently, my brother spoke to her in English for twenty minutes on the phone and was surprised at her fluency. She was surprised at it herself. In fact, it was the first time her uncle had ever had a conversation with her because when she had visited England at the age of sixteen, she had too little English to hold a conversation.

Conclusions

My special interest in TESOL is pronunciation, especially intonation, so I have tried at times to use my children as Japanese learner subjects. Interestingly, I have found that there were too many native-like features in their English rhythm and intonation for me to treat them as Japanese learners. This suggests that their English is much closer to a native speaker than the average Japanese. Nevertheless, they have never thought of themselves as bilinguals.

Thus, I found bringing up children bilingually to be more problematic than I expected. In my son's case, his reaction to changes of country made his language learning difficult, although some children take just as many changes in their stride. Because of the distance and expense, they have spent very little time in England compared with the time I spent in France as a child. However, if they are motivated to do so, I believe they can be good second language speakers of English.

Listening to the “Experts” When Considering Adding a Second Language

Dennis K. McLean

Our family consists of myself, an English-speaking Canadian, my wife Kumiko, a Japanese born and raised who also speaks English, and Maya, our Canadian-born daughter, who lived the first 23 months of her life in Canada before coming to Japan with her parents. Maya then spent the next 13 years in Japan with 12 of those years being in the Japanese school system, from kindergarten to the end junior high school. Her high school years were spent in Canada at Maxwell International Baha'i School. From Maxwell she went to a Canadian college to improve her English language skills enough to attend university. At this point, she is completing an MA-level degree at a university in Canada.

Returning to the beginning of our family's story: I was finishing my university degree in Canada while Kumiko was attending ESL classes at the same university when Maya was born. Because Kumiko and I had started our relationship in English, and all of our friends—both Canadians and immigrants to Canada—communicated in English, the language in our home was English. Kumiko usually spoke to Maya in Japanese at home when there were no guests present. We thought it would be nice if our daughter could be bilingual, and we believed it would come naturally to her with the language outside being one language and one parent speaking the other language at home.

However, in conversation with Kumiko's ESL teachers, we were advised to make sure our daughter was fluent in one language first and let her learn the second language as a subject of study. Their reasoning was the result of experience teaching ESL and preparing international students for university. They said they had met too many students in their ESL classes who were supposedly bilingual but were well grounded in neither language.

By the time of my graduation I thought that I would like to become a Baha'i pioneer to Japan, and Kumiko agreed to return to her home country. After moving to Japan, for the first 2½ years we lived in the same house with Kumiko's parents, who spoke absolutely no English. Therefore, it turned out the daily language of communication was principally Japanese. While we lived on separate floors of the house, we generally ate together with the grandparents. The grandparents were happy to have their granddaughter living in the same house, so she was always coming and going between floors. At that time my Japanese skills were severely limited, so I used English when talking to Kumiko and Maya. Maya therefore did hear English regularly but Japanese was predominant.

At the time of our arrival in Japan, Maya was beginning to use some English. After we'd been here for about three months, she stopped speaking altogether for about one month. When she started speaking again, it was only in Japanese. However, I continued to speak to her in English all the time. While Maya always responded in Japanese, her responses were such that we realized her listening comprehension of English continued to be very good.

Although Kumiko and I believed Maya could be bilingual, the idea of making sure Maya had one language first, suggested by the ESL teachers, was more or less forced upon us, because her early education was focused exclusively in Japanese. Thus, when she moved to Canada to attend Maxwell for high school, she had to begin in the ESL class.

Maya is now living in Canada, attending university, while Kumiko and I are still living in Japan. We speak with Maya regularly by phone, and she usually visits at least once a year. Kumiko always uses Japanese when speaking with Maya, and I always use English with her.

Maya's recreational reading is in both Japanese and English, but her academic reading level is basically English. For her academic work she does occasionally translate Japanese material into English. When she does translate Japanese into English for her academic work she occasionally experiences some difficulty with the specialized vocabulary used at this level because her Japanese learning effectively came to an end at the time she left Japan to go to high school in Canada.

As we look back now, our expectations of her becoming bilingual naturally – with one language at home and the other outside – were unfulfilled. However, we realize there were things we could have put more effort into to help Maya become more bilingual as she was growing up. Because we were living in Japan, we could have read to her more in English, sung to her more in English, played more videos in English, made her respond in English, had her spend more time with English only.

We also now understand more fully the value of the advice from the ESL teachers. Maya became fluent in Japanese first and has since become fluent in English as a result of her university study. She has a good grounding in both languages now.

Comment added by Maya

“It also involves social pressure as well. When I was growing up, I stopped speaking English because I hated to be different from Japanese. I wanted to become Japanese, and in order to be recognized as one, I had to speak Japanese, and not English. Japan was a hard place to raise a bilingual kid 20 years ago or so, I think.”

A Long and Winding Road — With a Happy Ending

Mary Goebel Noguchi

Introduction

At JALT '94, I attended a presentation by Eileen Christianson in which she reported the results of her study of 17 adults who had been brought up bilingually (reported in Ryan, 2000). Having conducted extensive structured interviews with each of her participants, Christianson was able to describe their varied backgrounds and circumstances, the factors that promoted their acquisition of two languages, the problems they encountered along the way, and their feelings about being bilingual.

Two things struck me about her presentation. First, each of Christianson's participants had a different story: Every family is unique and has to make choices based on its own circumstances and the personality of each child. Second, although 14 of the 17 participants had described how difficult it was to grow up with two languages, all “said that they would recommend parents who have a chance to bring up their children bilingually to do so” (Ryan, 2000, p. 6). I suspect that both of these findings will be confirmed by the stories in this year's monograph.

I offer my own family's story, then, not as a “roadmap”, but rather as one more tale of a unique set of circumstances in which readers may be able to discern some universal truths. Among them, I hope, will be the following: Becoming bilingual is not “automatic” or even easy, but it *is* worth it.

Background

I am an American who first came to Japan as an American Field Service exchange student during the summer vacation between my junior and senior years in high school. In the three months I attended high school in Fukuoka, I learned hiragana, katakana and a dozen or so kanji and decided that I would like to learn to read Japanese when I went to college.

Following up on that impulse, I ended up getting a double major in Japanese studies and English literature at the University of Wisconsin, then went on to earn a Master's Degree in Japanese studies before returning to Japan in 1974. At that time, I could already read and write Japanese reasonably well, but my conversation skills were extremely limited. I therefore enrolled in the intensive Japanese program of what was then known as the "Stanford Center" in Tokyo.

While there, I became a Baha'i and decided to use my language skills to help out the small Baha'i community in Japan. I have therefore lived in this country ever since, except for a 2-year stint in London while my husband got a Master's Degree there.

After finishing up the 9-month language program in Tokyo, I moved to the Kansai area, where I studied at Kansai University as an auditing student for a year and a half. Later, I got a job as a copywriter/translator at an advertising company in Osaka. Thus, I had already been living in Japan for quite some time and had developed my Japanese abilities to a fairly high level before I met and married a Japanese scholar of Shakespeare.

Decisions on Family Language Use

My husband Tada'aki and I did a lot of talking about education and language policies for our children before they were even born. Tada'aki was keen on giving our children a head start on learning English, since it had been a real struggle for him to master the language. I, on the other hand, had concerns about asking them to deal with two languages. I had met a number of graduates of international schools who could not read Japanese well—if at all—but whose written English indicated a lack of command in their school language as well. I felt that to be able to think at an advanced level, a person needed to have a strong command of at least one language. Moreover, I was uncomfortable with the perspective many of these international school graduates had on Japan: it was highly critical and definitely viewed Japan from the outside. Having spent my entire childhood and youth in the same small community in the American Midwest, I was grateful for the sense of belonging I had developed and wanted my children to have the same feeling of being rooted in a community. Thus, at first, my husband and I were not able to agree on whether or not to raise our children bilingually.

Tada'aki had always promised his parents that he would live with them after he got married, and when we got engaged, I agreed to help him fulfill this promise. Shortly after we got married we moved to England for two years so that Tada'aki could pursue his

studies there, but after we returned, the family built a large house in a rural community situated between Kyoto and Nara. We all moved in together just before our first child, our daughter Amy, was born. Our son Dan was born three years later.

Given the fact that international schools were extremely expensive and there wasn't one near our new home anyway, Tada'aki readily gave up his dream of sending our children to an international school. However, he still felt that we should teach them English as well as Japanese.

Shortly after Amy was born, I attended the annual JALT Conference with a friend who had a baby girl the same age as Amy. My friend suggested that we go to hear the Bilingualism Colloquium. That was the start of my association with the group that eventually developed into the Bilingualism SIG, and it totally changed my attitude toward raising children bilingually. I began reading more about bilingualism and trying to figure out how I could effectively teach my children English without undermining their Japanese ability. Soon, I was writing book reviews and articles about bilingualism and sharing what I knew with Tada'aki so that he could support this newfound goal.

Since we were living with Tada'aki's parents and ate dinner with them every night, it seemed impossible to follow the guidelines presented in the books I was reading. All of the research stressed "consistency" and recommended the one parent – one language approach for families like ours. Yet when Amy was first born, I found myself talking to her in Japanese when other people were around. Even after she began speaking English, I also taught her Japanese equivalents in an attempt to make sure that she would be able to communicate easily with her grandparents and the people in our neighborhood.

After a number of years spent worrying about the fact that I was not following "the rules" for raising children bilingually, I finally let practicality win out over theory. I devised a number of techniques that allowed me to use Japanese with my children when I felt it was necessary, but also ensured that they were getting as much English input as possible. I have written about these techniques in an article called "The Bilingual Parent as Model for the Bilingual Child" (Noguchi, 1996a).

English Literacy

Meanwhile, my research convinced me that I needed to start teaching my children to read English as soon as possible. To get ideas on how to go about this, I read extensively about teaching English literacy skills and conducted a survey of English-speaking parents in Japan who had taught their children to read English. The results were published in a series in *Bilingual Japan* between 1994 and 1996 and then compiled as the SIG's fourth monograph (Noguchi, 1996b). Based on what I learned through this research, I enthusiastically began to teach Amy the basics of English literacy while she was still in kindergarten. Fortunately, she was very happy to learn. Once she got into grade school, however, she had homework to do and also wanted to play with her friends more, so our English lessons became more of a chore.

The good friend who had originally introduced me to the Bilingualism group in JALT was having the same problem with her daughter, who is the same age as Amy, so we decided to start up a small Saturday School at her home when the girls were still in first grade. Although my friend's home was a 45-minute drive away, we managed to meet three Saturdays a month and have the girls do another couple of hours of homework each week, following the English language curriculum of a major American textbook publisher. (More information about this Saturday School is included in Noguchi, 1996b.)

Based on my experience with Amy, I decided to start teaching Dan to read English at an even earlier age using the Doman method, which I had learned about in the course of doing research for the *Bilingual Japan* series. At first, Dan was very excited about these lessons and the special attention they brought, but later, he got confused and frustrated, so we eventually gave up on that.

Since the friend who hosted the Saturday School had a son Dan's age, I took Dan along to play while Amy had her lessons. When the boys entered kindergarten, we started a class for the boys, bringing in another American friend in the area who had a son born in the same year as ours. Thus, the school grew to serve the families of four American mothers married to Japanese men, and we had six students—three girls and three boys. The mothers became very close friends, and we were able to continue the lessons until the kids' second year of junior high school.

Maximizing English Input

In addition to the Saturday School lessons, I tried to give my children as much English input as possible. Although the family spoke Japanese when we were at the dinner table with my in-laws, we usually spoke English in the nuclear family. I also bought a large number of American videos, which greatly improved the kids' listening comprehension skills and accustomed them to hearing a wide variety of accents. We also made visits to the States every year or two. There, the kids made friends with my parents' neighbors and their American relatives.

One of the biggest impacts on their knowledge of English, however, came from our reading together. We did this almost every night before the kids went to bed. After Amy outgrew picture books, we moved on to longer stories, and Dan always listened along with her. When he would ask questions about the meaning of words, I stopped to explain them in easier English. I would also stop occasionally to make sure the kids understood what was happening in the story—always explaining in easy English.

I really enjoyed reading out loud and created different voices for each character. We read through *The Tales of Narnia* twice, all of the Anne of Green Gables books, *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* and more, but what really kept us going was the Harry Potter series. All three of us liked them so much that we read books 1 to 3 twice before book 4 came out. By then, Amy was already in junior high school and quite capable of reading the books on her own, but we continued to read them as a family, with me doing most of the work, but the kids taking turns reading when I was tired and wanted them to

go to bed. Just before each new book came out, the kids would sit down and re-read the previous book, and then we would read the new one together when it arrived. By the time the last book in the series came out, both kids were in college, but on the release day, Amy was home and the two of us opened it up and took turns reading it out loud to each other. Amy later finished it herself and then passed it on to Dan, who came home just to pick it up.

For both kids, this love of Harry Potter gradually transformed into a love of reading in general, and today, they both read for pleasure in both of their languages. When the movie *The Da Vinci Code* was released, Dan went out and bought a copy of the book in English and quickly read it through, discussing the plot with me as he went along. Amy also often borrows English books from the library near her apartment and frequently recommends those she likes to me.

Bumps Along the Way

Despite these little triumphs, however, the road to bilingualism was never smooth. In between trips to the States, the amount of English the kids used usually declined, and there were periods when they would talk to me in Japanese even though they understood my English. I described one such period in Dan's life in an article I wrote for *Bilingual Japan* (Noguchi, 2000).

In addition, the kids—especially Dan—did not like being seen as different from the other kids at school and did not want to speak English for that reason. This eventually became a non-issue when they entered junior high school and realized how far ahead of the other kids they were in terms of English studies. However, while they were in elementary school, it was a source of some tension.

Both kids also resented the “extra” homework involved in Saturday School lessons. Fortunately, the mothers figured out a way to solve this problem: peer pressure. All I needed to do was say something like, “I’m sure Joe will have his homework done. Do you want to face him without yours done, too?” The thought of being behind their friends was usually enough of a push to get both kids through their week’s homework, although sometimes they did it all on Friday night.

Given all these hurdles, motivation to keep up their acquisition of English was a key issue. I therefore tried to get the kids to see the benefits of being able to speak English: the fun they had in the States, the pleasure of watching Disney movies in the original language, the joys of reading together. I also made sure that they were able to regularly meet other kids like themselves at the Saturday School and in the Baha’i community of Japan. Moreover, I stressed the Baha’i principle of the beauty of diversity when they were worried about being different from their peers. Nonetheless, there were a lot of tough times.

Higher Education

By the time the kids had applied to high school, however, the rewards of all this hard work were starting to show. Both children were accepted to a top-level magnet school for our prefecture, at least partly because they had passed advanced English proficiency tests (Eiken Jun-ikkyu for Amy and Nikyu for Dan) before they applied.

When it came time to choose a college, Amy debated a lot about whether to go to the States or stay in Japan. We finally discovered what seemed like the perfect compromise: the Dual Undergraduate Degree Program at Ritsumeikan University (where I was teaching at the time). This program was particularly attractive because it would allow Amy to go to college in both Japan and the States and get an undergraduate degree from a university in both countries. This, in turn, would give her a choice of which country she wanted to live in afterward. In addition, both Ritsumeikan and American University, the partner school in this program, offered substantial scholarships, so it would cost only a little more to go through this program than it would to attend Ritsumeikan (a private university) for four years. Considering how expensive American colleges are for international students, this seemed like an incredible bargain.

However, Amy's decision to apply for this program was made rather late—at the end of the spring term of her third year in high school—and she had not really been studying all that hard for college entrance exams. Thanks to her knowledge of English, however, she was able to apply for advanced admission under the “self recommendation” (*jiko suisen*) system. She had to submit a TOEFL score along with her application, and she only had enough time to practice for a couple of hours to get herself used to the test format and to typing in answers on a computer. Yet despite this lack of preparation, she got a score indicating near native-speaker competency—enough to be accepted to Ritsumeikan and the DUDP Program.

After one semester at Ritsumeikan, Amy went with the rest of her cohort of twenty-some students to American University in Washington, D.C., where she took ordinary course work along with American students. The program was tough, especially writing the term papers for her classes. Still, Amy loved the academic rigor of the courses in her major—psychology—and was pleased to find that most people assumed she was American. In fact, in one class, she was asked to write up the report for a group presentation because, she was told, her English spelling and grammar were the best in her group (the rest of whom were Americans). Amy laughed when she told me that, knowing that I was fully aware of how little confidence she had in her English writing skills, especially her spelling.

Two years and ninety credits later, Amy returned to Ritsumeikan, where she finished up her course work, earning B.A. degrees from both Ritsumeikan and American University. She graduated this spring (2008), and has gone on to graduate school at Ritsumeikan. Although almost all of her coursework is in Japanese now, a lot of the research she is studying was originally written in English, and she always reads the original. This spring, she took an intensive course on drama therapy taught by a visiting American professor and was pleased to be able to communicate directly with the

instructor rather than having to listen to the interpreter. She is hoping to qualify as a counselor when she graduates.

My son Dan has taken an entirely different path, although his English skills have helped him, too. He has always loved music and singing and is hoping to become a popular singer. Like Amy, he applied and was accepted for early admission to the college of his choice. He is currently studying popular music and not only sings in both of his languages but also writes lyrics in both. He also continues to do at least some pleasure reading in English.

The Family Picture Today

Both Amy and Dan have their own apartments now, but we are in regular contact. Both speak to me in English as a matter of course. We also do a lot of text-messaging, and that is also in English, although both kids do a lot of very creative spelling. When they come home, we enjoy watching movies together—mostly Hollywood fare, but occasionally Japanese films.

Neither has anyone they are serious about yet, so marriage is probably a ways in the future. However, not long ago, Amy said to me that if she does have children, she wants me to teach them English, too.

I asked Amy and Dan to look over this article, and then asked what they thought about having been raised bilingually. Both of them stressed that it had not been easy. But both said they were really happy to know both languages now.

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Growing Up in an International Family in Japan:

Assumptions, Expectations, and Everyday Realities

Craig Smith

“Many of my Japanese friends from my school days and colleagues at work in Tokyo ask about and make comments on my Mom and Dad’s Japanese-Canadian marriage. It’s so annoying!” complains Tami, our 24 year-old salary-earning daughter. She explains, “Lots of my friends are at an age when questions about marrying are on their minds. They all assume that an international marriage must be hard—harder than *normal* partnerships, and perhaps, even destined to fail.”

The annoying bit for Tami is not the spotlight of attention—unwelcome as it was in her childhood—that her life situation receives from the people around her, but the perceived disconnect between human relationships in an inter-national marriage and those in an intra-national marriage. “How weird it is that in one breath friends are going on about their parents’ miseries based on communication problems and in the next breath feeling curious about how impossible it must be to live happily with someone from another culture. I had a ring-side seat to lots of fights but I never felt we needed to ask the UN to send us the guys in Blue Helmets. They fought as a couple, not as an international couple. Growing up my house didn’t prepare me for a career as a mediator in international disputes. Darn!”

Tami feels that we are just a regular family. Phew! To my wife and I, obsessed as we were throughout Tami’s childhood about the potential difficulties that would spring from our international marriage, Tami’s adult view of us is a relief.

Tami’s education outside of home was the same as the other kids in the neighborhood. Except for one year of high school in Boston, Tami attended Japanese

public schools from pre-school to the end of junior high and then she went to a Japanese private senior high school and university.

Tami wonders why people aren't more empathetic about the challenges and tribulations faced by the offspring of *romances without borders* liaisons. The children's bilingual language skills are always of great interest. There is a "half"—apparently monolingual—who often appears on TV these days. Poor fellow is publicly mocked by some fellow stars as a failure for not being able to speak English! It's more than a wee bit strange that he gets precious little praise for the Japanese communication skills that landed him a paying job on TV. Guess he's just a pretty face, eh?

“Do our parents realize how relentless the pressure is on all of us to be bilingual? The constant whispered comparisons when international parents gather are way too stressful. Anyway, it's like comparing apples and oranges. We are all different but are we allowed to be different? Placing the same high language expectations on everyone is not fair. As kids, we are not in training for the Language Olympics! Most kids don't care who gets the medals for languages. Many of us internationals are just trying to fit in with the daily reality of the kids around us. In order to be on an equal playing field with monolingual kids, it seems we have to be good at both our languages. In fact, just good is not good enough—perfect is the expected standard.”

It makes my wife and I break into a nervous sweat when we hear Tami talking like this. We are waiting for the lessons to be brought home to us. Did we push her too hard to be bilingual? We talked about it endlessly. Before Tami was born we starting setting family language policies:

1. Yoko and I each spoke our native language to Tami. When the three of us were chatting we usually used English or we went back and forth between the two languages.
2. We focused our attention on raising a biliterate daughter by making reading in her two languages a natural and central part of our family communication.
3. We separated the two language/cultural components of our outside lives.

At home in Japan, we tried our best to fit in with local community. On frequent trips to Canada, Tami was a Canadian girl. Is this what we sometimes describe as the life of a *double* child? Yoko and I rejected the term *double* as vehemently as we did the pejorative *half*. We used the separation policy to respect the normalcy of Tami's life as one individual human being. This was accomplished in much the same way I separate my working life from my family life while at the same time, I struggle to integrate the two parts of my life to the extent necessary to have a single self-identity and not to survive by wearing a false moustache and disguise to work.

Writing articles for *Bilingual Japan* was a great help in clarifying our thinking about our parenting. If we wrote about something useful or wise we were doing, it helped us muster the strength to actually do it and then, keep on doing it.

A fourth part of our family policy was spending most summers while Tami was growing up in a community with lots of international marriages. This helped relieve some of the stress that comes from being different from most of the people around internationals in their daily lives. Tami remembers, “It was so nice to be with other kids like me. No one stared at me there. I wasn’t really noticed. I didn’t draw attention just because of the way I look. And, honestly I didn’t have the feeling that we were being compared that much by the parents in that community as I was growing up, but their expectations started to become obvious to me when my friends reached university age and then later, when we got our first jobs. Maybe, the parents were comparing each other’s marriages—who made it, who didn’t.”

Indeed, this sort of parental rivalry occurs outside of the world of international marriages, but Tami’s perspective on us as a group of parents is the everyday reality of children of international marriages in Japan. We are the only world they know. The hothouse environment of international families in Japan can become more intense, ironically, when we gather in support groups to fight the isolation of being different if we fall into reactive consolation chat instead of building good community energy to be proactive parents.

The diversity of international families has grown as the numbers of us explode. For example, there may be many differences between the experiences of Portuguese-Japanese, Chinese-Japanese, Tagalog-Japanese and English-Japanese families. We have to be careful not to over-generalize or stereotype our kids’ situations.

It’s a sobering thought that as the diversity grows, after all our talk about raising children to be bilingual, we remain with more questions than answers. This may be a blessing if a common characteristic of the two-language family is not to take the education of their children for granted. Constantly monitoring and reflecting upon our children’s lives leads us to accept a partnership responsibility in the various growing up events of our kids’ lives. In contrast, my parents were part of the “go-out-and-play generation.”

In retrospect, the most difficult bit for Tami to deal with was the unwanted attention her appearance and her international-ness attracted throughout her years as the only child like her at the Japanese schools she attended. “I envied my friends at international schools. They fit in physically, and they seemed to be having a lot more fun!”

The saying, “When the going gets tough, the tough get going” is true in Tami’s case because when we were trying our best to persuade her to go to a university in Canada, she sat Yoko and I down for a serious talk and started off by telling us, “I like Canada. I like Canada very much, but I love Japan.” She had made up her own mind to go to university in Japan. In spite of the rough patches, her experiences of being different in Japanese schools did not turn her off the culture.

At university she wasn’t unusual anymore. There was lots of diversity in her fellow students’ backgrounds, skills, and experiences. She felt that she was naturally accepted for who she was.

At work it’s much the same: “I really feel that I was hired for who I am—the whole me. I don’t feel any discrimination whatsoever. It’s a great company. I haven’t even used

English much yet on the job. I work for a trading company and so it's assumed everyone can get by in English or in some other second language. It's truly international. And, hey, in my accounting job, I can go for hours not speaking to anyone in any language. It's just me and my numbers and my computer. But I hope this is one of these skill-building experiences that people move on from. I thought I was growing up by developing people skills and the ability to get along with and understand different sorts of people. Here I am doing accounting. Go figure!"

What about those annoying questions about international marriages Tami constantly fields? "Maybe it's not so bad," Tami says. "You know, people think I know something they don't. Sometimes I think that might actually be true. When I made my own decisions about university and work, some people from both sides of my life gave me their views that I was heading in the wrong direction. But I realized that some of them were trapped in their thinking by untested stereotypes. I was looking at the world in different ways and I knew what was right for me."

Tami seems to have survived her parents. She's bilingual and biliterate. Most importantly, she's off our pay roll. Phew!

Tami is so independent that Yoko and I have had to reinvent our lifestyle and our relationship. Sometimes we don't eat dinner, we go on dates—with each other—and we talk about things other than Tami—you know, like politics.

Hey, have you ever thought about how Barrack Obama shares some aspects of his childhood experiences with Tami and with all our internationals? And, do you think some day the United States will be ready for a Canadian woman president? Hmm... maybe not just yet, eh!

Once Upon a Time

Amanda & Kye Taura

Amanda: Well, my son's done it—reached that magical age of 20 when he has become an adult in Japan, and is way past the age of majority (18) designated by his "other" country, Australia, as well. He can do it all on his own. No more grammar drills, handwriting practice exercises, or bribes for him to study English. Sadly, no more bedtime stories, either, but we are into newspaper articles now, where we can banter back and forth about what is going on in the world or share fictional tales that we have read.

Yes—we are entering adult territory now. I can only "recommend" books for him to read now that he is making his own choices from among the world's literary treasures, from *Norwegian Wood* by Murakami Haruki to *Against the Day* by Thomas Pynchon; but I also enjoy being regaled with stories about the ten stimulating classics that he is reading simultaneously at the moment, while studying Japanese literature at university. I can give

opinions and get intelligent commentary back, including quotes and authors' names—all remembered with a lot more depth and focus now than I can recall from books read in the long distant past. And what's more, he can do it – or rather speak, read and write it extensively – in two languages. What a thrill to see that he can live on his own, and maintain and challenge himself in two languages now.

So, how does he feel looking back on the trials, tribulations and victories over the years, and what does he perceive in the future for himself? Looking back over the years and our family dynamics, Kye describes first, our family background, the language patterns and his schooling, which included a combination of Japanese school, international school, school abroad and home schooling, meaning he had the best of all worlds. “*Carpe diem*” or “seizing the day”, in a variety of different ways was our policy. Japanese school was from age 6 months in local Kyoto daycare to the end of the neighborhood elementary school 6th grade, apart from one year and 3 months when he was in Grade 3-4 back in Sydney, Australia. There, he attended Australian public school, and this was a major boost for his English language at the time. After coming back to Japan, he continued for another year with distance schooling from Australia while attending Japanese elementary school again, so in this way, we combined home schooling with local schooling (a challenge and a half!). Then, for grades 7-12, Kye was lucky to go to the private school SIS (Senri International School) in Osaka, with its unique program of Japanese education with the arts subjects (art, music, P.E. and English) taught in English only. In year 9, he again spent 10 months back in Australia in a high school, then returned to Senri for years 10-12. Now he is in the 3rd year at a Tokyo university and is majoring in Japanese literature.

Kye: I've lived in Japan for the most part, except for going to Australia, where my grandparents live, almost every year for about a month, and then for two longer periods of a year—first, when I was in the third grade, and again in my last year of junior high. But even though I have spent most of my life in Japan, I talk in English with my mother (Japanese with my father), and she used to read me books every night, which had a large influence on my bilingual ability. The longer terms I spent in Australia, especially in the third grade, also boosted my English reading and speaking skills a lot. Also, during that year back in Australia when I was nine and my sister was five, I used to speak English with her, whereas now, we speak mainly Japanese. In addition, the curriculum for English at junior and senior high school in Japan at Senri International School in Osaka had a level which equaled that of any other in the U.S. or Australia, so my experiences here, I think, succeeded in nurturing in me a deeper cultural understanding of people with different English backgrounds. At the same time, I could maintain and excel in English, improving my skills throughout my six years of high school.

On the other hand, reading, writing, listening and speaking in Japanese have never seemed to be much of a problem for me, since I have been living in Japan for most of my life, and I hope that my study of Japanese literature at university will leave me with yet a higher level of sophistication not just concerning the usage of the language but with an understanding of Japanese culture.

Amanda: Well—I really like the fact that Kye remembers me reading to him every night, as children often forget their parents reading them stories. From what I hear when talking to my monolingual friends back in Australia, parents usually read to their children in the early years of primary or elementary school, but as soon as the children can read on their own, their parents supply them with books and opportunities to visit the library but don't read aloud to them anymore. This is a pity, since when reading together, the level of books chosen can be a lot higher, as the parent is always there to read out new words, expressions and concepts and explain them. Not only was it enjoyable for Kye to read with me, but for me, it was one of the most wonderful ways to bond with my children as well, and we read together until he was about 13 or so and had entered junior high school at Senri International School.

Now, let's move on to some of Kye's memories about growing up bilingually and with two cultures, and how this helped him come to terms with his identity.

Kye: I fondly look back at all the books my mother read me, which is one of the oldest bilingual memories that I have. Being able to read, write, listen and speak in two languages has always been an advantage, because so many more horizons seem to arise. There are a variety of different possibilities which lie in the usage of each language and the countries it can be used in, and knowing two languages also allows me to think about the same thing in two different narratives or from two slightly different viewpoints. Saying the same thing in each language embodies a different impression. Therefore, for me to think or say the same thing in either language seems to make me feel like a slightly different person.

I think it is hard for me to concurrently maintain two identities or let them coexist while living in Japan. This can be explained, I think, by the strong emotional discrimination towards "others" in this country, or should I say, the strong emotional tie that Japanese people feel towards one another that doesn't let other people easily come "inside" their circle. In elementary school, I would get the occasional "you're a *ha-fu*" kind of comment, or a remark or look that would cast me aside as though I was not normal. This eventually evolved into "*ha-fu* people are *kakko-ii* or *kawa-ii*", which still represents the same type of discrimination against those who are different. Even now, at university, it seems hard for people to understand why, how or what right I have to be majoring in Japanese literature because I am not Japanese according to their standards. No one thinks of me as being Japanese when we first meet, because of my exotic (?) looks.

Referring back to what I previously said, this makes it hard for me to let my two identities coexist, since I think that an identity is constructed from how other people see you and not what you construct on your own, so this means that to some extent, if I want to be Japanese, I cannot be a "foreigner" in Japanese eyes. However, I don't look purely Japanese in the first place, so I seem to just end up going around in circles all of the time with the idea of having a Japanese identity. Concerning my Australian side, I have never really thought about it, so basically my "Australian identity" is untouched; it is there because of my blood, and from what my parents keep telling me, so naturally, it is not as engraved into my character or as ambivalently profound as my Japanese side.

Amanda: Identity is always a difficult issue with our children. We just wanted our children to be happy and confident and accepted for who they were. We thought that growing up in the one place in Kyoto during their formative years would give them roots, local friends, local customs and festivals so that they would feel a part of this area. Senri International School allowed them to be accepted and admired for their bicultural and bilingual heritage and gave them self-confidence because there was such a mixture of nationalities, as well as many Japanese students who had studied outside Japan. Students there could be different and be comfortable with that. However, since Kye left Kyoto to go to Tokyo for tertiary studies, he has been continually questioned about who he is and what his cultural background is. The world has become a bigger place, and there are more people who want to know about him.

Kye is now studying for his undergraduate degree and does not yet have a career, except translating part time, and marriage is still ahead of him.

Kye: I have yet to make a choice or think about marriage, career, possibly living in another country, or choosing a nationality, so I am not sure about answers to those questions, but what I can gather from my experiences at this point (I say “gather” because those experiences or choices weren't made in a very conscious way at the time) is that, with relationships, I tend to like people who can understand how I feel about having this sort of background, and career-wise, I definitely have to say that I am propelled towards a job that would put me in a good position to effectively use both my languages and cultures.

Amanda: Kye is now away from home, living on his own for university, and while we maintain telephone and e-mail contact, it is no longer on a daily basis. He reads books in English and tries to keep his vocabulary up to par by using vocabulary exercise books of a high level to stop attrition, but certainly isn't receiving the same input of spoken English which he would if he were still living at home in Kyoto. He isn't worried, though, as he knows that literacy and reading is a major key to keeping up his English level. I am only grateful that in our family, my choice to speak in English to our children and my husband's use of mainly Japanese (these were random choices at the beginning and not supported by us reading up on the research) turned out to be the best way for our children. I can now talk with Kye about difficult topics in English and relay my feelings and opinions easily to him, and visa versa. I didn't need to become another person by speaking Japanese to my son. I could retain my own identity and converse in the most natural way to my own child in my own language.

Kye: Actually, I'm not really afraid of losing either of my languages, as I try to maintain them both, which means I won't ever lose my connection with my parents anyway—be it over the phone, through e-mail, i-chat, Skype or visiting home.

Amanda: Grandchildren? Not for a while yet, I hope!! But when it happens, I really hope that Kye will remember that reading is an enjoyable way to make a connection on a daily basis, in any language, with his own children.

Kye: Again, I'm not anywhere near to making such choices in reality, so my answer will not be able to avoid the realm of fiction, but yes, I would definitely like to raise my children bilingually, in the same languages that I know.

Amanda: And that is the end of the story—or perhaps just the beginning—for Kye.

Section 4: Studies of multilingual young people

Identities of Young Multicultural Adults

Erina Ogawa

Introduction

Individuals who identify (wholly or partly) with more than one culture are called multicultural. Yet cultural identity is changeable and complex, and is dependent on the circumstances of the individual. It is an oversimplification to say that if children have parents from two different cultural backgrounds, they will incorporate both cultures equally into their own identity. In an earlier study (Ogawa, 2008), I found that the way cultural identities of multicultural children developed was dependent on the individual circumstances of each family, as well as on each child. Whilst this previous research investigated parental influence over the cultural identity development of multicultural children, the present study examines the cultural identities largely already developed in young multicultural adults.

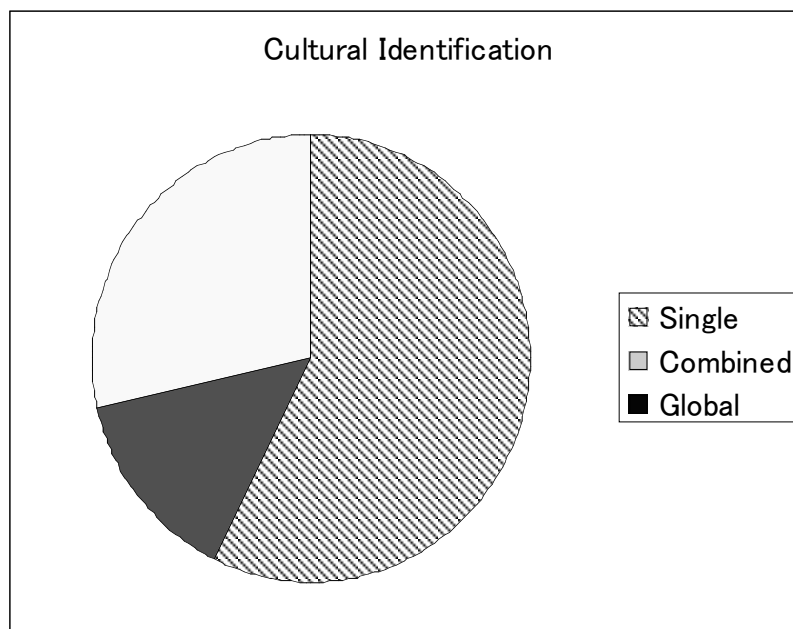
Methodology

This study explores the cultural identities of seven students from a university in Saitama, Japan, who have multicultural backgrounds. The respondents' names have been changed to protect their identities. Since my Masters of Management is in the area of cultural communication, and I am not an expert in linguistics, this study focuses on the

cultural aspects of the participants' identities rather than on their language use. Therefore, in choosing respondents for this study, I selected young adults who expressed identification with more than one culture, rather than those who were able to speak more than one language.

Three of the respondents are students I have taught personally and had previously revealed their multicultural identities to me, so I approached them personally for the interview session. I found the other four students by asking staff and students to refer likely participants to me. All seven students were interested in the topic, willingly participated in the study, and signed a consent form.

Information was gathered during interviews which were based on the questions posed in the Call for Contributions for this monograph. (See Appendix on p. 78.) In addition, the respondents were asked to classify their cultural identity using the pie chart shown below, which was developed in my previous study. They were asked to classify their identity as 1) based on a single culture, 2) a combination of their cultural backgrounds, or 3) a global identity.



Adapted from Ogawa (2008)

Each of the participants shared openly, although there were some signs of shyness regarding the life partner question. Especially considering their ages, I considered it very brave of them to share such intimate thoughts. In general, those who seemed to have confidence in their cultural identities appeared to speak more freely than those who seemed to be still in the process of coming to an understanding of these issues.

I made it clear that this research was unrelated to class work, was entirely voluntary, and that normal class rules of only English speaking did not apply. Some of the

participants expressed concern about not being able to express themselves properly in English. Some needed assurance that their teacher—who in the classroom is strict about only speaking in English to them and expects only English in reply—would actually allow the interview to take place in Japanese! The fact that most of the interview session was conducted in Japanese allowed the respondents to relax, and their relationship with me changed from that of teacher-student to that of interviewer-interviewee. Five of the interviews were conducted in Japanese, while two participants (Antonio and Tom) chose to use English.

I personally translated the Japanese interviews into English. Although this does not rule out misunderstandings or mistranslations on my part, a third party armed with only the taped conversations would not have had the benefits of non-verbal communication, which accounts for a large part of face-to-face communication. Since this report deals with the participants' feelings, at times the original Japanese words have been included to provide a closer understanding of the feelings being conveyed.

The interview session took place in the university's Writing Center room in July 2008. Most respondents stayed to listen to what the other respondents had to say, but they were generally not present for the entire session, as it was a day of normal classes and the students needed to get something for lunch or attend class for part of the session. When I thanked them for their participation at a later date, all expressed enjoyment of the experience.

After the interviews, I compiled the information I had gleaned from each participant into a short description of the person's background and identity. These "stories" are presented below.

The Participants' Stories

Dinnah

Dinnah, a fourth-year student, is a 21 year-old Japanese national with a Pakistani father and a Japanese mother. Although her father can speak five languages (Urdu, Arabic, Persian, English, Japanese and Punjabi), Dinnah says that she herself is only fluent in Japanese, with the same level of English as most Japanese students her age, and a beginning level of Arabic (she can do greetings but not everyday conversation). When asked if she is Japanese, Dinnah replied that she did not know. She does not think that nationality is important and often tells people that she does not have a national identity: "*nanijin demo nai yo!*"

Dinnah attended normal Japanese schools and until her second year at high school, she had a complex about her appearance. Although I personally feel that she is beautiful, she wanted to look like everyone else and not be called a foreigner (*gaikokujin*). Adults would tell her that she was cute ("*Kawaii ne!*") or that they were jealous of her looks ("*Urayamashii!*"), but her peers treated her quite differently. They told her that she was different and that made her sad ("*Kanashii*") and she suffered because of it ("*Tsurai omoi wo shita*").

Dinnah also did not like to belong to just one class group of friends as most Japanese girls do: she wanted to be friends with everyone. She is glad that she insisted on her right to be able to make friends with everyone because now she can understand a lot of different people's ways of thinking.

From her second year in high school, Dinnah began to feel glad to have been born of mixed race and cultures—a so-called “*haafu*”. She now feels that to be different from everyone else is to be her own unique individual. She used to hate being asked if she was a “*haafu*” but now she just smiles and says “I am a human. I am me!”

In the future, Dinnah wants to be an international volunteer in Africa or some needy place and, although she would lean toward marrying a foreigner, all she requires of a future partner is that he be able to accept her dream and that his personality matches hers. She wants her future children to learn many things, as she intends to do herself, and to be able to speak Japanese, English and Arabic.

Antonio

Antonio, a third-year student, is a 20 year-old Nikkei Brazilian national with permanent residency status in Japan. He lived in Brazil and spoke only Portuguese until he was twelve years old. Antonio's language use is domain-based: he speaks Japanese at school and Portuguese at home.

Until Antonio's family moved to Japan when he was twelve, the only exposure Antonio had had to Japanese language and culture was through his Japanese grandparents, but this was limited to eating some sushi and other Japanese foods and learning some hiragana. Due to his Japanese heritage, he was called a “Jap” and other derogatory terms in Brazil.

Then when he came to Japan, he was told that he did not look Japanese, so he became confused as to who he was. He said that it was very hard at the beginning because he could not speak Japanese and found it hard to make friends.

The turning point for Antonio was his first year in high school, when he could finally understand what the teacher was saying and this made him feel that he fit in. The development of Antonio's linguistic ability was crucial for him to fit into Japanese society and to adopt a Japanese identity. The reason Antonio gives for choosing his Japanese identity over his Brazilian one is that he has been in Japan for a long time. He now feels more comfortable in Japanese culture than in Brazilian culture.

Antonio believes that being bilingual and bicultural will affect his career and life partner choices but he is not sure how. He would like to have a Japanese partner, as he identifies with Japanese, but would prefer to work in a Brazilian or other international company, as that is where his linguistic and cultural strengths will be of the most benefit.

Satomi

Satomi, a first-year student, is an 18 year-old Chinese national with permanent residency status in Japan. Her father is half Chinese and half Japanese and was raised in Japan, while her mother is Chinese and was raised in China. Satomi was also raised in China until she was four years old. Although she cannot remember anything of this period in her life now, she has been told that she did everything in Chinese at that time.

After the family came to Japan, Satomi's parents continued to speak to each other in Chinese but Satomi began speaking to them in Japanese and continued to do so for the rest of her childhood. As she didn't use her Chinese while she was growing up, she cannot speak the language now. Sometimes her parents speak to her in Chinese and sometimes in Japanese. She can understand a limited amount of Chinese (that which has been spoken in her household) but cannot hold a conversation in the language.

Until very recently, Satomi did not tell her friends that she was Chinese, but since coming to the university, she has found the confidence to do so, as she feels that the students in her department are open minded. Most of the friends she grew up with do not know of her Chinese identity, as she always looked and acted like a Japanese child. Now that she is comfortable telling people about her background, she feels relieved (*"Sore wa raku desu ne!"*), as it was very awkward (*"kimazui"*) for her to keep it a secret for so long.

Satomi appears to be still negotiating her cultural identity. When I asked what she is now, she replied that she is Chinese, then said maybe Japanese, then that it is hard to say (*"bimyou"*). After we discussed the fact that she feels Chinese in Japan and Japanese in China, she concluded that actually, she does feel like a normal Japanese young adult (*"futsu"*). It will be interesting to see if her identity is clearer after she visits China this summer for her brother's wedding.

When asked about what languages she would like her future children to learn, Satomi first said that she wants them to learn English because she thinks it is more useful than Chinese. However, she said she also wants them to learn Chinese, but says that she will have to learn it herself first!

Toshio

Toshio, a first-year student, is a 19 year-old with a South Korean mother and Japanese father. He was born and raised in Japan but spent three years, from the ages of nine to twelve, in South Korea due to his father's job. While in Korea, Toshio did not use Japanese at all and picked up the Korean language easily, even though he had not spoken the language before the move. He can now speak Korean well, except for technical language, although he is not very competent at writing it.

Although Japanese is the main language spoken in his home, Toshio's mother, who was raised in Korea and came to Japan in her twenties, does speak to him in Korean. Toshio believes that she has a strong Korean identity, since she often speaks Korean with her Korean friends and was, in fact, visiting Korea at the time of the interview.

Apart from his last three years of elementary school, which he spent in Korea, Toshio has had a normal Japanese education. However, his high school had an international focus, drawing many students from different cultures. There, when he told his classmates that he was half Korean, he would get comments such as “Great! Really?” (“*Sugoi! Maji de?*”). Likewise, he feels accepted at the university. Thus, Toshio feels that he has been sheltered from racial prejudice so far and worries about how he will deal with it once he goes out into society after graduation.

Toshio wishes that he had lived in the United States and learned English while he was young, so he wants to provide that opportunity for his future children. He wants them to speak English and Japanese but does not feel that Korean is very useful, as it is not spoken in many places.

Enrique

Enrique, a first-year student, is a twenty-one year-old Nikkei Peruvian with Japanese permanent residency status. Until he came to Japan with his family at age five, he lived in Peru.

He went to a Japanese kindergarten and elementary school, but could not understand the language and got behind in both his studies and his relationships. He says that his life was a mess. He hated school and so did not go to class until his third year there. Instead, Enrique and another Latin American boy would hide computer games in their school bags and play them at school until a teacher caught them. After he entered junior high school, Enrique attended classes but did not study. He says that some days he just went to eat lunch. As he did not earn enough credits in junior high to enter high school, he ended up going to night school before entering university.

One problem seems to have been his language development. Enrique claims that he had not become competent in either Spanish or Japanese. His parents both worked long hours, so Enrique did not see them much, and his Spanish language development suffered as a result. At one point, he says he was no longer able to speak in Spanish. His Japanese at the time was also weak. Over the years, his Japanese has improved, but he still feels it needs a lot of work.

The turning point for Enrique came in his fourth year of elementary school, when his family went back to Peru for a year. There, he picked up Spanish as he played with other children. He listened to music and wanted to dance, remembering his cultural roots. He also learned pick-up lines to chat up girls. Enrique believes that through these interactions with his peers, his Spanish linguistic ability improved dramatically and so did his sense of identity as a Peruvian. He got used to living in Peru and found it hard to come back to Japan at the end of the year. Enrique says that he never doubted his Peruvian identity but struggled a lot to survive in Japan. Now, he sees himself as a bilingual Peruvian who is used to living in Japan.

Being bilingual has a huge influence on Enrique’s life decisions. He sees it as an advantage (“*toku*”) to be bilingual, because if you only have Japanese, you have to stay in Japan, but if you have Spanish, English, or another language, you can study and work in a

lot of different places. In the future, Enrique wants to travel and live in many different cultures—possibly starting with Europe—to find the one most suited to him. He wants to marry whoever he falls in love with and bring his children up to be bilingual. Since he struggled so hard to become bilingual himself, Enrique wants to pass that on to his children and make it easier for them.

I would like to conclude Enrique's story with a message he asked me to share with our readers. Enrique says that a lot of children get bullied. He asks people to please not bully others and especially stop bullying Nikkeijin (foreigners with Japanese ancestry).

Tom

Tom, a first-year student, is a twenty-one year-old half Filipino-American/half black American. Growing up in America, he naturally experienced a lot of different cultures within his home and family and absorbed all of them without thinking about it. He can speak English, Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, a bit of Dutch, and a dialect of the Philippines.

Tom's father is a Filipino-American, and his mother is an African American. His racial and cultural roots are complicated, but he normally says that he is half black and half Filipino, as he assumes that most people include European and other elements into a black American identity. Actually, his great-grandmother looked very Caucasian but considered herself to be African. Tom described his own appearance by naming celebrities he is often likened to: People often say he looks like Tiger Woods, and this resemblance was also obvious to this researcher. Other celebrities he is said to look like are Denzel Washington, the brother from the Softbank commercial, and Jero, the Japanese-African American enka singer from Chicago.

Tom says that his father is racially 100% Filipino and culturally 100% American. Tom's mother is an African American, and he believes her cultural identity is that of an African American. He thinks that he also has that as part of his identity, but finds it difficult that an African American identity seems to be what he calls a "package deal". He elaborated by saying that if you say that you are an African American, people then assume that "you like this, this, and this, and you think this way", but these assumptions are not always true for him.

Tom's parents divorced when he was young, and they each remarried soon after that. He was raised by an El Salvadorian nanny and had a mother-child type bond with her, so he spoke Spanish from an early age. His stepmother is Cuban (raised in Cuba), and he often visits that side of his family, so he still has Spanish-speaking cultural influences in his life. In addition, his stepfather was from Holland, so he visited Holland a lot and explored the Dutch culture. Tom says that as a child he was accepted into all of the cultures he was exposed to.

When asked if he has an American cultural identity, Tom replied that he does not. Although he grew up in America, with normal American schooling, he traveled a lot and experienced many different cultures with family members. He also went to immersion

language and culture programs in China and Japan, so he does not have a strong American identity.

Despite these many cultural influences, Tom says he has no internal conflicts over his cultural identity—just external ones. He was not raised with a concept of race, and it was only when he went to college that he became aware of prejudice. At that time, he thought, “So, that’s what this is”. People could tell that he was black and something else, and as he answered their questions about his background, he was able to answer the question of who he was for himself. Tom says that he has never struggled with his cultural identity himself and claims, “I am completely comfortable with myself”. However, he has had problems with people telling him that he does not look Filipino or that he is only black. At one stage, he tried to play down his black side because he did not want to be stereotyped, but now he feels comfortable saying he is black.

English and Spanish are the languages that were spoken in his home when he was a child. He has learnt Japanese and Chinese from study in these countries, and he has learnt some Dutch and a dialect of the Philippines from extended family members. Tom views languages as tools for aiding cross-cultural communication and plans to become an international lawyer based in Japan in the future.

He believes that multilingualism will affect his life choices. He wants to find a marriage partner who speaks English, as he values directness and has found English to be the most direct language of the many languages he has studied. He feels capable of doing business in any language that he can speak.

As far as his future children are concerned, he would like them to be raised with just two cultures rather than with many cultures, as he was. This is because he thinks it will be easier for them. Although he hesitates to say it, he also states that he wants his children to be raised to speak English. He also wants them to be able to speak other languages and to be able to relate to people from different cultures, but he feels that English is a necessity.

When asked if there was anything he wished to add, Tom said that he feels for people with mixed cultural identities when people say that they do not look like who they are. When people tell him that he is not Filipino because he looks black, he thinks, “Wow! You just, like, killed off my Filipino side—like, I’m sorry you don’t think that, but that’s not going to change my biological make-up”.

Nobuyuki

Nobuyuki, a second-year student, is a half-Japanese/half-Taiwanese resident of Japan who has Taiwanese nationality. His father is from Taiwan and came to Japan when he was a university student. His mother is a Japanese who can speak Chinese. Although he often heard his parents speaking in Chinese while he was growing up, Nobuyuki was born and raised mainly in Japan and in Japanese culture.

At the end of his junior high school years, Nobuyuki’s family moved to Singapore when his father took up a job in mainland China, where he has remained ever since. Because his father was no longer living with the family, Nobuyuki’s exposure to Chinese

decreased. During the year that he lived in Singapore, Nobuyuki attended an international school where classes were taught in English. Yet even though he no longer heard Chinese at home and was being schooled in English, Nobuyuki found himself to be more interested in Chinese than English because he had found a Chinese girlfriend. After a year in Singapore, his family moved to Canada for five years, and Nobuyuki enrolled in an ordinary Canadian school despite his limited English proficiency at the time.

While he was in Canada, Nobuyuki could not make Canadian friends. This was partly due to the language barrier, but also due to a lack of interest on Nobuyuki's part because of the cultural barrier. For example, he was not interested in ice hockey—the sport most of the Canadians around him loved passionately. Thus, Nobuyuki had Japanese friends and attended night classes in order to pass the tests at school. Somehow, he managed to graduate from Canadian high school, but he said that studying Shakespeare was really difficult!

However, it was returning to Japan to enter university that posed the greatest difficulty for Nobuyuki. He had assumed that he would be able to enter a Japanese university easily as a foreign student, since he had a Taiwanese passport and had graduated from a Canadian high school. However, he learned that he was not eligible to sit the examination for foreigners because he had lived in Japan for more than three years. He therefore tried to sit the returnee examination, but was again told he was not qualified, this time because he did not have Japanese nationality or permanent residency status. Therefore, he was only eligible to take general entrance examinations. This was difficult because in Canada he had been studying Shakespeare, not the classical Japanese tested on general entrance exams. It appeared that he might not be able to get into any Japanese university, but he finally found one that allowed students to enter on the basis of a single English examination and was able to pass that.

At university, Nobuyuki is taking Chinese language classes. Although his early exposure to Chinese at home and in Singapore made it possible for him to speak the language without problems, it was not until he reached university that he at last learned to read and write it.

Interestingly, for both Nobuyuki and his younger brother, Japanese is their dominant language and their English proficiency is limited, while for their younger sister, English is her dominant language and her Japanese proficiency is limited. Nobuyuki says that this is because his sister, who is now ten years old, was mainly brought up in Canada.

In addition to this difference in their dominant languages, there is also a difference in the siblings' cultural identities. Nobuyuki believes that his sister has a Canadian identity because her friends are Canadian. Conversely, considering the fact that his friends (even the ones in Canada) are Japanese, Nobuyuki feels that he is culturally Japanese. He believes that friends have a lot to do with shaping a person's cultural identity. When he goes to China or Canada, he looks for Japanese friends. Nobuyuki speaks Japanese with his family and a mixture of Japanese and English with his sister. He does not feel it at all strange that his sister has a different dominant language and cultural identity from him.

Although Nobuyuki is clear about his Japanese identity, he has found that Japanese society does not accept this because his family name is not Japanese and he does not hold Japanese nationality. Thus, when asked by Japanese people about his cultural identity,

Nobuyuki replies that he is Taiwanese, even though he has only visited Taiwan a couple of times and does not feel like he belongs there. Although he is Japanese at heart, he answers that he is Taiwanese because that is what Japanese people expect him to say. He calmly explained that this is because of his family name and because nationality is important to Japanese people (“*Nihonjin wa kokuseki ni kodawaru*”). This researcher thinks that, despite his declaration “I am Taiwanese”, Nobuyuki’s reasons for answering in that way are very Japanese and just serve to prove his Japanese identity.

Nonetheless, Nobuyuki has no anxieties about this apparent contradiction and has accepted his position in Japanese society. He is determined, however, to obtain permanent residency once he has been in Japan for the required number of years, and eventually wants to become a Japanese national.

In the future, Nobuyuki wants to live in Japan, marry a Japanese woman and work for a Japanese company. He wants to lead a normal Japanese life and to be considered an ordinary Japanese person. As for his children, he does not mind what language they are brought up to speak and does not feel it necessary for them to have a Japanese identity. He is used to family members speaking different languages and having different cultural identities and has no problem with that.

Discussion

The complexity of the identities of these multicultural individuals is fascinating! You cannot say that if you live in a culture from a certain age, you will necessarily adopt that identity. Antonio came to Japan at age twelve and did adopt a Japanese identity. While he values his bilingualism and bicultural identity, he acknowledges the dominance of his Japanese side, which he adopted after coming to Japan. On the other hand, Enrique has acquired the Japanese language without adopting a Japanese cultural identity, even though he arrived in Japan at the much younger age of only five. Perhaps this difference is due to the fact that Enrique identified with Peruvian culture while he was in Peru, whereas Antonio, as a Nikkeijin, still has the issue of looking Japanese in Brazil.

You also cannot say that bilingualism, biculturalism, biracialism, and nationality issues are absolute and easily defined. Tom appears to be comfortable with his identity and does not mind answering questions about who he is, even though his linguistic and cultural heritage is complicated. Likewise, Dinnah has a strong sense of identity, even though that identity is somewhat ambiguous. In Nobuyuki's case, his nationality and his cultural identity do not match. Toshio and Enrique have separated language and culture, claiming that their bilingualism does not determine their cultural identity. I believe that Satomi is still coming to terms with her cultural identity and am interested to see how this will develop in the near future.

A common theme that emerged from this study is the importance of peer acceptance. Dinnah fought for acceptance by explaining and debating her situation regarding wanting to be more of an individual than a member of a single group. Antonio learnt the Japanese language and culture and now feels part of the Japanese culture himself. Satomi kept her Chinese identity a secret in order to be accepted by her peers. Toshio has been sheltered from prejudice and is nervous about having to confront this issue in the future. Enrique

was not accepted by his peers in Japan, partly due to a lack of linguistic ability, but felt accepted in Peru—hence his Peruvian identity. Tom avoided being labeled by his peers and chooses his own labels. Nobuyuki could not relate to the language and culture of his Canadian peers and instead made friends with other Japanese teenagers and retained his Japanese identity. It appears that if you do not feel accepted by your peers in the culture you are in, it is very difficult to adopt that culture's identity. This should be noted by those influential in the identity development of multicultural youth or youth exposed to a new culture.

My previous research (Ogawa, 2008) revealed three categories (or types) of cultural identity for multicultural people raised in Japan. I adapted these three categories to suit the current study and asked the participants to choose which category they felt they most belonged to. Antonio, Satomi, Toshio and Nobuyuki chose a single culture as their main cultural identity. Tom chose a combination of two cultures as his main cultural identity. Dinnah and Enrique chose a fluid or global identity for their cultural identity. These results confirm my previous findings that the cultural identities of multicultural people depend on their individual circumstances.

Each and every one of us human beings is a unique individual. This report presented seven individuals who share something in common – cultural identities which cannot be described simply. That does not make them better or worse than monocultural individuals, but it certainly makes them interesting. This researcher wishes to thank these seven wonderful individuals for sharing personal thoughts about themselves with us. I hope that their sharing will aid in the understanding of people with multicultural identities.

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Raising Children to Become Bilingual and Biliterate

(Condensed from a paper submitted by the author to Temple University Japan in April, 2008)

Jimena "Emily" Homma

Introduction

Many scientists believe that learning begins at infancy—or even earlier. Our learning foundations and the efforts we exert in building them determine the kind of life we will

lead in the future. This fact motivates many parents and educators to strive to provide richer experiences for the children they help raise.

As they do this, they are faced with many questions. How educated should an individual be to be fully successful in today's world? The demands keep growing as our society invents new products and activities at a pace unimaginable some decades ago. How many languages and dialects should one speak to be able to have a considerable grasp of the tasks and events happening in the world today? The answers are so startling that parents now design fascinating courses of study for their children. It is no surprise that numerous learning institutions and crash courses emerge in our communities today, all to meet the demands and hunger for learning of both children and adults. Regardless of what educational theories they were exposed to in their earlier lives, parents today are often determined to set their own goals for their children and have them follow a definite track they themselves sculpture.

Not fully aware of the many arguments and contrasting studies on educational theories, parents appear to indulge in their own dreams as they devise curriculums for their children. Yet despite their lack of background in the fields of linguistics and pedagogy, their techniques are innovative and inspiring. Since parents' goals for their children's education differ greatly according to their culture, economic status, location, profession and beliefs, the writer, as an educator and parent herself, thought it would be interesting to investigate how various families mold and prepare their children for their future and how they create pathways for their children to acquire the skills that might adequately equip the future builders of the world.

Specifically, I decided to explore strategies parents use to help their children become bilingual and biliterate. I felt that these findings would not only aid me in choosing strategies favorable to my own child-raising and language teaching, but also help others in molding children to be better equipped to face the challenges of today's world.

Survey

To learn more about the strategies used by different families who had raised children to be bilingual and biliterate, I conducted a survey of eight families who are currently living in such different environments as Japan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Kingdom, and were found to be employing effective strategies on their way towards their goal of raising their children to be literate in two or more languages.

The families were asked to complete a questionnaire comprised of ten questions pertaining to the languages being learned by their children, factors that affected their decisions, principles and learning styles, as well as the strategies and methods being observed in their children's language acquisition. Table 1 briefly describes each family's make-up, their children's ages, the main factors affecting their children's learning, and the strategies and methods the family used in trying to achieve their goals of bilingualism and biliteracy.

Table 1: Family Characteristics and Strategies

FAMILY	CHILDREN Sex / Age in Years	MAIN FACTORS Affecting Language Learning of All Children	STRATEGIES Used to Achieve Bilinguality
FAMILY A			
Japanese father: manager	Child 1: M, 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Regular conversation * Attitude, example set by parents * Contact with friends * Travel, study abroad * Reading books seen as parents' work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Father speaks Japanese at home * Mother speaks English at home * American friends speak English with children * Japanese friends speak Japanese with children
American mother: writer / nurse	Child 2: M, 22		
Location: Japan	Child 3: M, 18		
FAMILY B			
French father: French teacher	Child 1: F, 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Study abroad * Language schools * Parents' goals for children * Children's desire to learn * Books and TV shows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Father speaks English to children * Mother speaks Japanese to children * Children attended English medium school * Child 1 studied in France for 2 years * Child 2 planning to study in France, too
Japanese mother: housewife			
Location: Japan	Child 2: F, 16		

FAMILY C			
Japanese father: construction worker	Child 1: M, 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Family and friends * Living conditions * Opportunities abroad * Activities at home: TV, PC * Gathering: big family gatherings, parties, social gatherings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Japanese father spoke Japanese to children * Filipino mother speaks Tagalog to children
Filipino mother: factory worker	Child 2: M, 16		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Children studied and lived abroad for 2 years * Father 2 speaks Tagalog at home
Japanese father died, mother married a Filipino construction worker	Child 3: M, 10		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Children go to Japanese preschool and elementary school
Location: Japan	Child 4: F, 4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Children have Filipino friends and speak Tagalog with them
FAMILY D			
American father: accountant	Child 1: M, 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Inadequacy of international schools * Parents' goals for children * Opportunities abroad * Parents' employment overseas * Regular conversations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Father speaks English at home
American mother: registrar	Child 2: M, 16		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Mother speaks English at home * International school * Homestay abroad
Location: Saudi Arabia	Child 3: M, 13		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Study at boarding school in home country
FAMILY E			
Syrian-British father: businessman	Child 1: M, 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Environment, family, friends * Supportive schools * Separation of parents * Parents' profession, status, work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Father speaks English at home
Filipino-British mother: hotel manager			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Mother speaks English at home * Father taught children Arabic while they were in elementary school
Location: United Kingdom	Child 2, F, 18		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Father taught children the <i>Koran</i> * English-speaking friends

FAMILY F			
Norwegian father: engineer	Child 1: M, 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * International school * Norwegian language environment in the home * Father's employment overseas * Regular home country visits * Father's posting back and forth * Book, videos in both languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Constant home country visits * When needed, parents arranged to be reassigned in home country * Parents constantly monitoring children's language development * Effective use of materials and language environment * Maintenance of Norwegian-speaking environment in the home
Norwegian mother: housewife	Child 2: M, 17		
Location: Saudi Arabia	Child 3: M, 15		
FAMILY G			
Chinese father: petroleum engineer	Child 1: M, 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * International schools, Chinese school * Chinese-speaking environment in the home * Parents' talk, conversations * Relatives role, conversations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Both parents speak Chinese in the home * Regular contact with relatives who converse in Chinese * Attendance at Chinese schools
Chinese mother: petroleum engineer			
Location: Saudi Arabia	Child 2: M, 12		
FAMILY H			
Japanese father: construction worker	Child 1: M, 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Family and friends * Parents' regular conversations * Songs, books, movies, toys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Father speaks Japanese with their son * Mother speaks Russian with their son * Relatives visit occasionally * Mother's strong determination to provide minority language exposure
Russian mother: gymnastics teacher			
Location: Japan			

Strategies Employed

After gathering the above information on the basic family characteristics and the factors and strategies that had the most impact on their efforts to instill biliteracy in their children, I asked the participants what specific techniques they found to be effective in achieving their objectives for their target languages. The following are a selection of the answers I received.

Family A (Japanese Father and American Mother Living in Japan)

“I felt that if I spoke only English, the children would learn it, and they did. I considered deliberately teaching reading and writing, but decided they would eventually get that in school and I would not set lessons. (Obviously, this strategy only works for English.) I read a lot to them when they were small. They heard a lot of English from our foreign friends. We had English videos and bilingual TV. We took them to the U.S. for a few weeks every summer when they were young (through elementary school). I think one very significant factor for our three boys is that their father is completely bilingual Japanese. So, they have always seen a real Japanese man who is comfortable in both languages. We also have many multilingual friends. They came to view using more than one language as normal”.

Family D (American Couple Living in Saudi Arabia)

“Classroom learning is not adequate by itself. The student/child needs to practice the language with others who are fluent in the language they are trying to learn. At Saudi Aramco, all students used to take Arabic throughout their elementary school education—grades K ~ 9, which is approximately ages 5 ~ 14. However, even living in Saudi Arabia, many students did not really learn Arabic, as they did not practice it. Within the Aramco community, there were not many Arabic speakers, so they were not required to speak it. Outside of the Aramco community, in the local economy, many merchants were from India, Pakistan, and other countries, and they did not generally prefer to speak Arabic. If a customer spoke English, even if they tried to speak Arabic, the merchant would speak English. As with our oldest child, I think an immersion program is excellent once you have a foundation of the language you are trying to learn. By providing him with the homestay opportunity last summer, I think this helped to stimulate him to continue with Japanese through college. I’ve offered assistance for him in getting him an internship with Saudi Aramco in Tokyo in a couple of years, so I hope that this will encourage him to continue with his Japanese language studies.”

Family F (Norwegian Couple Living in Saudi Arabia)

“Children’s books and videos in both languages, and of course exposure to people with other backgrounds. However, our main strategy has been a Norwegian-speaking environment at home, combined with English-speaking schools. We are of the opinion that a child of less than 7 years will not retain many memories. Hence we have moved back and forth between a Norwegian and an English-speaking school environment after our children passed 7.”

Family G (Chinese Couple Living in Saudi Arabia)

“Take them to the language environment and live there for a while. Send them to Chinese schools whenever we can, plus, both of the parents’ native language is Chinese.

The techniques employed by these families were enlightening. The learning acquired by attending language schools and international schools was further enhanced by the parents’ constant use of their native language, thus providing balanced exposure to both majority and minority languages. Sometimes, even if the parents didn’t really set clear targets for their foreign parents’ tongues (as in the case of Family C), activities natural to one parent’s culture, such as regular visits by relatives, socio-cultural parties, and a few years of study in that parent’s home country assured a good balance between the children’s L1 and L2. This was true for both Family C and Family G, which displayed typical Asian practices, with extended family structures and strong family ties. Other parents (Families A, B, D and F), on the other hand, in the absence of the regular presence of relatives on both sides, strove to attain a similarly rich environment by arranging for their children to attend international schools and/or live and interact with international communities (Families D and F in Saudi Arabia).

One interesting practice was observed in London, England, where the primary school attended by the children in Family E supported the PTA’s suggestion to support small community language clubs where children from the different language groups were taught the minority language by a native speaker parent. This program was seen as a very effective means of encouraging children to learn their parents’ native language alongside their peers, while also engaging in cultural activities from their parents’ native culture and interacting with other children from a similar background. Unfortunately, this community had no follow-up to this program for the children in the higher grades to continue their L2 learning in high school or college. This eventually resulted in the children losing interest in achieving proficiency in their L2 (Arabic).

Realizing the difficulties involved in scheduling and finding expert teachers of the minority language in the upper grades, parents might consider reviving their children’s L2 foundation later on, after the children have passed through the busy high school period. This is what Family B did, making up for lost opportunities in educating their children in French during their elementary school days by later sending them to France for total immersion in the language and culture. Reactivation of the neglected language might not be too difficult if one parent supplies L2 support from time to time in accordance with the family’s long-term goals.

Evaluating the Strategies

To try to determine which of the family strategies was effective, I asked the participants to evaluate their children's language proficiencies and explain the basis for their evaluation. Their answers are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Evaluation of Children's Bilinguality

Do you think your child / children could be called bilingual at their current proficiency? Why/ Why not?

Family A (Japanese Father and American Mother Living in Japan)

	Proficient? (Yes / No)	Why do you consider them to be or not to be proficient in two or more languages?
Child 1	Yes	Writes and presents scientific research papers in English. Understands American humor. Travels abroad using English without difficulty.
Child 2	Yes	Took the GRE to apply to U.S. graduate schools and scored about 50 th percentile (compared with native speakers). Travels abroad using English without difficulty. Understands and enjoys films, etc. in English.
Child 3	Yes	Admitted to International Communications department of Japanese university with excellent marks in English, including full points for listening comprehension. Understands and enjoys music and films in English.... Has English girl friend....

Family B (French Father and Japanese Mother Living in Japan)

	Proficient? (Yes / No)	Why do you consider them to be or not to be proficient in two or more languages?
Child 1	Yes	Graduated from Japanese university; Garnered good marks in French.
Child 2	Not yet, but will be	Attends Japanese high school; Will study in France, too.

Family C (Japanese and Filipino Fathers and Filipino Mother Living in Japan)

	Proficient? (Yes / No)	Why do you consider them to be or not to be proficient in two or more languages?
Child 1	Not yet	Proficient in Japanese, and later Tagalog. Child's interest to learn is high. Child has been speaking Tagalog with parents and friends.
Child 2	Yes	Proficient in both Japanese /Tagalog. Wants to study in Philippines again.
Child 3, Child 4	No	Receptive Tagalog; future long vacations planned by parents will help.

Family D (American Couple Living in Saudi Arabia)

	Proficient? (Yes / No)	Why do you consider them to be or not to be proficient in two or more languages?
Child 1	No	Learning Japanese in school – I would not consider him bilingual yet.
Child 2	No	Learning Spanish in school – nowhere near proficient.
Child 3	No	Learning Arabic in school – nowhere near proficient.

Family E (Syrian-British Father and Filipino-British Mother Living in the UK)

	Proficient? (Yes / No)	Why do you consider them to be or not to be proficient in two or more languages?
Child 1	No	Very good foundation in Arabic, but now has discontinued study.
Child 2	No	Very good foundation in both English and Arabic, but discontinued study due to lack of time and support.
Both children		Father who used to provide opportunities for Arabic learning now has moved to another country; separated from spouse and children.

Family F (Norwegian Couple Living in Saudi Arabia)

	Proficient? (Yes / No)	Why do you consider them to be or not to be proficient in two or more languages?
Child 1	Yes	He is fully conversant in both English and Norwegian and speaks with a natural accent and dialect in both.
Child 2	Yes	Ditto.
Child 3	Yes	Ditto.

Family G (Chinese Couple Living in Saudi Arabia)

	Proficient? (Yes / No)	Why do you consider them to be or not to be proficient in two or more languages?
Child 1	Yes	He graduated from his high school's Chinese classes with an SAT-Chinese score of 760/800.
Child 2	Yes	She is taking Chinese classes weekly and can speak and understand Chinese well.

Family H (Japanese Father and Russian Mother Living in Japan)

	Proficient? (Yes / No)	Why do you consider them to be or not to be proficient in two or more languages?
Child 1	Not yet	In his first years of learning; will be biliterate eventually; Mom and Dad dream.

All of the parents who participated in this survey had very positive viewpoints about their childrearing duties. They were proud to have achieved a certain degree of success, and indicators of progress motivated the families to try more effective ways to speed up L1 and L2 learning. Although some of these families faced a lot of challenges

and difficulties, it was a pleasure to learn of their future prospects and plans to counter the current unfavorable circumstances.

The appreciation expressed by the writer for the role the parents play in helping their children achieve their goals seems to have generated more enthusiasm among the parents. It should be noted therefore, that for parents to continue providing a supportive environment for L1 and L2 acquisition, they need more support from society at large. It is imperative that governments recognize the successes of these multicultural children and understand the advantages of offering numerous experiences for these versatile children. It is hoped that governments and communities will come to accept that bilingualism and multilingualism could answer the many problems we face today.

Factors Having Positive and Negative Impact on Bilingual Childrearing

While families trying to raise their children bilingually have successes, they may also have failures. My next questions therefore tried to find out what parents think of as stumbling blocks to their objectives, as well as those factors which had a positive impact on the family's attempts to raise their children bilingually. The participants' answers to this question, presented below, again warn us of the many factors that could present difficulties.

What do you think are the important variables that are impacting positively or negatively on the family's attempts to raise their children bilingually?

Family A (Japanese Father and American Mother Living in Japan)

“I think parents need to treat bilingualism very matter of factly, and just expect it to happen. In our house it is assumed we speak more than one language. (My husband also speaks good German, and I speak survival German.) Interaction with lots of people outside the family from various cultures, all speaking English together, has been very helpful. I also agree with the literature that says it is easier if the mother speaks the “extra” language, the one not spoken in the community, since she generally spends a lot more time with the children. And I do believe that not sending our children to *yochien* until age 4 was good—I had them more to myself longer. And for the same reason (one-on-one interaction with me), it was probably helpful that our children are spaced so far apart. The youngest was always home with me after the older ones were in some kind of Japanese school.

“I suppose I should also say that our children had good experiences in Japanese schools and were never made fun of or otherwise harassed for speaking English. I only had one conflict, with a junior high English teacher who took off points on tests if the child did not answer exactly what was taught in class, even if his answer was also correct. “So, you punish excellence?” My

husband stood behind me and we got the child his two test points, just on principle. That teacher was gone the next year. ...”

Family D (American Couple Living in Saudi Arabia)

“The most important factor is that the student of a second language be in an environment where they have to use the language, even rely on it. If you are not challenged to use the language you learn in the classroom, it is difficult to become proficient in the language. Like anything you learn, if you don’t use it, you will lose it... Arabic speakers in Arab countries don’t encourage non-Arabs to speak Arabic. It is my impression that:

- * Some Arabs prefer to communicate in English because their English is better than the other person’s Arabic, so it is easier to communicate.
- * Some Arabs seem to prefer that they have a language that others don’t understand so that they can communicate without being understood. I know people who worked on learning Arabic for business purposes, and once those in the room/meeting knew the non-Arab spoke Arabic, they started speaking English.

In terms of speaking Arabic outside of Arab countries, there are negative connotations associated with Arabs, so I think Arabic-speaking Arabs are careful not to speak Arabic outside of the Middle East to avoid drawing attention to, and possible bias against, them.

Family E (Syrian-British Father and Filipino-British Mother Living in the UK)

“ Our children’s happiness is the first and foremost in our lives. If our children do not feel comfortable speaking and learning a language, and spending so much time at the expense of other more important school tasks, we let them decide for their own career”.

Family F (Norwegian Couple Living in Saudi Arabia)

“Each parent needs to stick to their own native language at home from the beginning, as young children quickly learn and distinguish between languages. It is important for the child to be able to communicate effectively with the extended families on both sides, so perseverance from both parents is necessary (easily said by us, as we are both Norwegian). This may mean that each parent also needs to learn the other's language. In our case we only needed to move to an English school environment to give the children enough exposure.

Family G (Chinese Couple Living in Saudi Arabia)

“Positively, we traveled frequently to China and negatively, people tend to communicate with the easiest language they feel they can use to get the message across, that includes all of us: both parents and kids.

Family H (Japanese Father and Russian Mother Living in Japan)

“ I am afraid *youchien* would have greater influence on my child. This is giving me a reason to work more in using materials straight from my home country. It’s just me now talking to him in Russian. I think I have to double my time and strategies.”

Impact of Parental Attitudes, Educational Background and Personal Circumstances

The next part of the questionnaire was designed to elicit the parents’ views on bilingualism and determine the principles that affected their decisions on the kind of education their children received.

As a parent/ parents, how do you view bilingualism? Is it your desire that your child / children become bilingual? Why / Why not?

Family A (Japanese Father and American Mother Living in Japan)

“It was my specific goal before the first child was born to raise bilingual children. My husband and I both view proficiency in extra languages as a tremendous asset. Communication is power! And it is so very much easier to learn a language as a young child.

“My husband and I discussed child development a lot even before we were married. We both believed (and still believe) that anyone can become American if he speaks English, but to be culturally Japanese he really needs to grow up here. I know this is a hot topic among foreign mothers—do you WANT your children to be culturally Japanese?—but I am fine with this, provided they remain open to many other points of view. If they are equipped with English, opportunities are limitless.”

Family B (French Father and Japanese Mother Living in Japan)

“Our goal for our children is multilingualism. Globally, English is a necessity. There’re not enough resources in Japan that could offer a very rich French experience, so sending them to my home country could be the best option. That will be done when they finish high school at their own choice. Japanese and

English are the two important languages for people in Japan. They have to be proficient in these two languages first, I think. The third language can wait, even if it is my native language. “

Family C (Japanese and Filipino Fathers and Filipino Mother Living in Japan)

“We rely much on what the Japanese education could provide our children, but having relatives that speak other languages, it is so natural and easy for us to give our children other cultural and language experiences. We are happy that our children find bilingualism an asset and are not ashamed they have other cultural backgrounds apart from Japanese.”

Family D (American Couple Living in Saudi Arabia)

“As we are both native English speakers, we generally don’t have a need to learn another language. Therefore, as parents we did not establish any targets for our children with regard to learning another language. If interested in learning another language, we would certainly encourage this interest—as we’ve done with our first child (learning Japanese as L2). We are preparing him for a possible position in our Japan office. I think that with learning another language, you often learn more about the culture of those who are native speakers of the language. Understanding different cultures and perspectives is important in today’s global society.”

Family E (Syrian-British Father and Filipino-British Mother Living in the UK)

“As we have been living here in England more than half of our lives, we don’t feel any need for our children to master another language. My husband used to insist that the children acquire Arabic too, but the children’s identity and perception of their own selves affect the way we choose their educational experiences now. My son has been keeping so many questions about his own cultural and religious background, and expresses confusion over his being Muslim. Their father has stopped giving them Arabic studies. The children feel that they are fully British, and think they’d live here in the future till the rest of their lives. They are open to hearing and understanding my native language Filipino though, but knowing English would be good enough to communicate with my relatives in the Philippines. They view their father’s native language, Arabic, as a cultural and religious thing, rather than educational.”

Family F (Norwegian Couple Living in Saudi Arabia)

“Yes, we have consciously chosen to expose our children to multilingual environments in order for them to have more options in life. The world is a big place, and command of several languages allows more freedom”.

Family G (Chinese Couple Living in Saudi Arabia)

“It is another way of brain development, in addition to having an added skill for competition in the future job market”.

Family H (Japanese Father and Russian Mother Living in Japan)

“It is my culture, so it should be my son’s culture. He has to learn and speak the languages I speak, especially my native language, Russian. I realized that knowing many languages is an advantage. I myself can communicate with many nationalities and may apply and win positions requiring knowledge of languages. My son should be able to speak my husband’s and my own language, primarily to communicate and understand us both, and then be able to live in a country he wishes to be live in the future. He should be able to find happiness with the languages he learns to speak”.

The reasons why the participants decided to educate their children to be bilingual and biliterate included cultural, personal, educational and economic reasons, but in all cases, the parents were striving to offer what they thought were the best opportunities to prepare their children for the future. As the parents themselves had experienced or realized the advantages of being multilingual, they were aware of the dangers, sacrifices and joys dual education could bring.

In some cases, there were personal reasons why the children’s language studies were discontinued. Trends and incidents influence the way people view certain languages and judge the speakers of particular languages. The parents’ choices and their reasons given above are eye openers: we see in them issues that require society’s impartial judgment and understanding.

Even when they are just teenagers, children seem to have their own direction and personal choices about the languages they learn and speak. But as parents, how strong are we in leading our children in their choices? Whatever the language, it is important that children are fully convinced and informed of the many advantages L1/L2 can have in their lives.

Acknowledgement

The writer wishes to express her gratitude to the cooperation and help the eight families extended for the completion of this narrative and investigative report. They shall be the strong force that would guide other homemakers of the best choices for their children’s future... My sincerest gratitude. J B Homma

Appendix

Call for Monograph Contributions: All grown up: The bilingual adult

The JALT Bilingualism SIG is calling for authors for this year's monograph. The focus will be on adults who have been raised bilingually in Japanese and one or more other languages. We hope to have a broad range of perspectives, including young adults in university or in the workforce, bilingually raised adults with children of their own, and the parents of bilingual adults. Below is a list of suggestions and questions that you may wish to address in your article, but they are just ideas gathered by people currently raising their children bilingually who want a peek into the future. The suggestions are not meant to be a prescriptive list by any means.

Questions for parents of children who have been raised bilingually

1. What is your background? Briefly describe your family, the languages you used while your children were growing up and the languages you use now.
2. Did you have a specific plan for bilingualism from the beginning, for example, minority language at home or one parent one language, or did you create your path as you went along?
3. How do you relate to your adult children now? How have the language dynamics changed? Are you and your children living in the same country now? If you are all in Japan, for example, and your adult daughter has married a monolingual Japanese man, how does your family's minority language fit into your daughter's life now? Conversely, if your child married someone from your language background or a person from a totally different culture altogether, how are you balancing all of the different languages and cultures? Are you afraid of your child losing his or her minority language and then losing part of your connection? If this is a concern, how are you dealing with the situation?
4. If your children have children, are they raising them in more than one language? What is your role, if any, in raising your grandchildren in your language?
5. Many parents of young children worry about their children not being able to communicate as an adult in either language. What advice would you give to them?

Questions for people who have been raised bilingually

1. What is your background? Briefly describe your family, the languages you use or used with different family members and your education (Japanese school, international school, schooling abroad, homeschooling or a combination of these).
2. What are some of your memories of growing up bilingually and biculturally? Did you ever struggle with your identity as a bilingual person? How have you eventually come to identify yourself?
3. How has bilingualism affected your choices in career, dating, marriage, nationality, and country of residence? How do you use your languages now as an adult?
4. How do you relate to your parents now? Are you afraid of losing the connection to one or both of your parents if you do not use their language daily as you might have when you were a child at home?
5. If you have children, are you raising them in more than one language? If you plan to have children in the future, do you hope to raise your children bilingually? Will you do it the same way you were raised or differently?