

The Bilingual Family Newsletter



News and Views for Intercultural People

Editor: Marjukka Grover Assistant Editor: Sami Grover 2002, Vol 19 No.4

In this issue

- *Trilingualism and the Parents' Role*
- *Talking Toys*
- *Non-mother tongue Parenting*
- *François Grosjean: An Interview*
- *Query: Reluctance to Speak French*

EDITORIAL

Season's greetings and welcome to a truly multilingual winter edition of the *BFN*. This issue branches out a little from our traditional focus on bilingualism with a look at tri/multilingualism. Helen Le Merle's fascinating article explores the different ways in which her two children reacted to being brought up with three family languages. We would, as always, be fascinated to hear from readers with similar, or indeed differing, experiences of multilingual families.

Tri/multilingualism has, until now, often been treated by academics purely as an extension of bilingualism, yet it is becoming increasingly clear that there are differences as well as similarities. This point is picked up in our interview with François Grosjean, a key figure in the development of research on bilingualism. François also makes a plea for bi/multilinguals to be understood on 'their own terms' and not to be judged by monolingual linguistic standards – an important reminder to us all to remember the specific needs of each individual speaker when addressing language issues.

Manuela González-Bueno explores the role toys can play in children's language acquisition and in doing so shows how bilingualism can often lead to tri/multilingualism as a natural progression. Finally, Veronique Miccolis shows us that for some their 'mother tongue' may not actually be the most 'natural' choice for parenting.

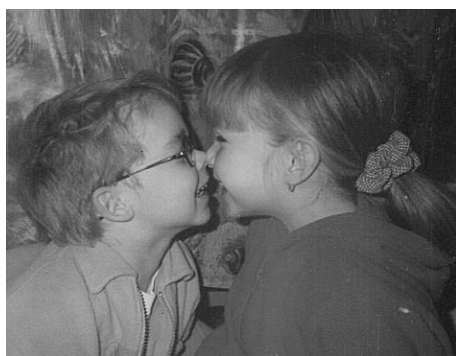
Just as there is a need for a diversity of languages in our cultures, there is also a need for a diversity of approaches to these languages. The one-size-fits-all approach which is still advocated from some quarters (see James Crawford's column) is both outdated and inappropriate. *Vive la difference!*

Sami Grover

TRILINGUAL PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN AND THE PARENTS' ROLE: A CASE STUDY

Helen Le Merle

There seems to be a growing interest in the development of three or more languages within one person. The different approaches to third language acquisition available at certain ages makes it necessary to make a distinction between childhood trilingualism and third language acquisition in older children and adults. Carrying out research on children is more complicated the larger the number of languages involved, and very young children's level of language competence cannot be measured in the same way as for adults or older children who already possess reading and writing skills.



Kevin and Tania

In this case study I will try to analyse my own children's approach to learning English as a third, or consecutive, language, after being brought up with French and Norwegian simultaneously from infancy. Our family situation of having two home languages and moving to a third country before the children reached school age may be of interest to other parents in a similar situation, although each family may not adopt the same approach as us.

One Person - One Language

My two children, Tania and Kevin, were born in the German-speaking part of Switzerland in 1995 and 1997. We used the *one person – one language* (OPOL) approach as much as possible with French from their father and Norwegian from their mother at home and French used as the family language. By the time we left Switzerland for France, Tania was three and her Norwegian was stronger than her French. She would express herself with more colourful language in Norwegian; for example, when she was very tired she said she was *full av stein* (full of rocks) whereas her French version was simply *tres fatiguée* (very tired). Kevin only had one year of pure Norwegian mother tongue input before we left to live in France, and his language production was limited to *Mamma* and *det* (that) in Norwegian and *Papa* and *au revoir* in French.

One Person – Two Languages

During our two years in France, Tania's balance between the two languages remained more or less stable. She attended a French nursery school and was able to translate or explain the events of her day in Norwegian. At this point I slipped more and more away from the OPOL approach, because of the increased influence from the French-speaking environment. While Tania's level of Norwegian remained stable, the effect on Kevin was disastrous.

At 15 months Kevin could understand Norwegian and carry out simple tasks, but increasingly his new vocabulary was French. Because he spent all day in a French-speaking crèche his motivation to

Continued on page 2

Trilingual Pre-school...from page 1

speak Norwegian was weak. As I spoke more French to him, he also understood that Norwegian was superfluous to communication. The children's need to communicate and my wish to hear about their day resulted in a linguistic dilemma. I would repeat their utterances in Norwegian, but usually the whole story came out in French, particularly with Kevin. Whereas Tania would address me in Norwegian and called me *Mamma* Kevin insisted on *Maman* and mostly replied in French.

However, his motivation for improving his rather passive Norwegian was aided by his wish to imitate Tania and to understand the conversations between mother and daughter. Tania was adept at explaining things using colours, size or shape to explain the object. One day, copying his sister's approach, Kevin, age two, forgot the Norwegian word for fish

“When a third language remains an ‘external’ language children often experience a great divide between their home environment of two parental languages and the outside world”.

and requested *Langt kjøtt bo i vannet* (long meat live in water) for dinner!

When we left France their dominant language, French, was equivalent to similar aged French monolinguals. Kevin's French seemed well above the average, preferring elegant phrases like *J'ai failli trébucher* to the simpler *Je suis presque tombé* (I almost fell). We were happy with their level of competence in each language. They could communicate well with adults, as well as with age equivalent Norwegian children.

Living in England and schooling in Norwegian

On arriving in England in 2000, the children were bilingual, my husband had a good command of English in addition to his French mother tongue, and I was finally able to use all three of my languages. We decided to send both children to kindergarten, at the Norwegian School in London. Tania, then five, would act as interpreter for her three-year old brother if necessary. After six months, we were able to have meaningful conversations, with the odd word of French slipping in.

The advantage of this Norwegian mother tongue immersion was that they were

introduced to English with songs and games in English. They were able to assimilate the sound system, raise their awareness of this new language and accumulate a certain vocabulary before being moving to an English-only school. Tania started full-time school in the Reception class and after one month she found it easier to tell me about her day in English rather than translating the new vocabulary into Norwegian. Kevin had just turned four when he entered the same school level and followed broadly the same pattern.

Effects on a child's cultural identity

What happens to the child's cultural identity when it is confronted with a third language and culture? For my two children I have had two starkly contrasting reactions. During Kevin's phase of passive Norwegian and refusal to speak this language at age two, I explained to him that it was important to me to be able to speak my language at home. His reply was *Mais, Maman, ma langue à moi est le français* (But Mummy, French is my language).

Even when his Norwegian had improved, he still remained a monocultural person. Recently I asked him whether he was French, Norwegian or English. His answer was clear – he felt French. His sister, on the other hand, says that she is both Norwegian and French because of Mummy and Daddy, and also English because she speaks English. For us the question remains unanswered. I suspect that a secure sense of cultural belonging within the family would contribute to a child's ability in acquiring further languages. In my experience, childhood multilingualism does not necessarily mean multiculturalism.

A One Person - Three Languages strategy

When a third language remains an 'external' language children often experience a great divide between their home environment of two parental languages and the outside world. Parents need to communicate with their children about their experiences outside the home. Pre-school children equally need to know that their parents are aware of and care about their experiences during the time they are apart. To be able to share this the child will either have to translate or explain their day in a parental language. From my own experience, young children are not always capable of translating or they are too tired at the end of the day to do this.

One option which we have chosen is a parent being trilingual, so that all three

Continued on page 4

TALKING TOYS

Manuela González-Bueno



My family situation is one that many readers of the BFN are familiar with: a mixed couple living in the US, with an almost four-year-old child, Alicia. My mother tongue is Spanish. Since my husband does not speak Spanish, we communicate in English between the two of us, but I'm very consistent in always addressing Alicia in Spanish. We follow the *One Parent-One Language* approach, and it seems to be working well so far. But I did not always feel this way.

“Reading books is probably the activity that requires the most time and attention from parents until the child learns to read by themselves. But children of any age can play by themselves with toys.”

I once answered the questionnaire at the end of Arnberg's book *Raising Children Bilingually: The Pre-School Years* (1987) to determine where we were in regard to the 'Family bilingualism rating scale.' I got 147 points, and the guidelines said: *With regard to scores below 150, experience has shown that it is fairly difficult to raise the child bilingually. Parents having scores in this category may wish to aim for passive bilingualism.* I did not want passive bilingualism for my daughter. I had to increase Alicia's exposure to Spanish and enhance her interactive experiences with the Spanish language. My efforts to talk to her only in Spanish were not going to be enough so I designed a plan that included the acquisition of as many props and tools as I could get, locating as many Spanish-speaking friends in Alicia's age range, and bringing my monolingual Spanish relatives into the picture. I also purchased a large number of bilingual or Spanish monolingual books, videotapes, and computer games. Pretty typical for a bilingual family. Unfortunately for the

f

Please send us material which you think might be of interest to our readers. Remember the Newsletter is for you, but above all, by you!

full-time employed parent, the time that we lovingly dedicate to interact with our children might not be a lot. Reading books is probably the activity that requires the most time and attention from parents until the child learns to read by themselves. But children of any age can play by themselves with toys.

How could I turn the time Alicia spends playing by herself into additional opportunities to expose her to Spanish? The solution seemed to be in 'talking' toys. In the beginning, all I could find in the US were in English: talking telephones, talking dolls... One day, I entered a toy store and saw it: An electronic toy that claimed to teach languages to children as young as two – *The Little Linguist*¹ Languages can be selected by changing a cartridge. The device names the fifteen characters (a dog, a cow, a tree etc.) when the child places them in the hole on the top of the toy. Two big buttons invite the player to either hear the name of the character or to hear the noise the character makes. What noise does a house make, you ask: a doorbell ringing, dishes and voices. The tree? The wind blowing in the leaves. The most interesting feature of the toy is that it detects when the child can recognise the characters, and increases the level of complexity: From *car* to *this is a car* to *this is a green car*. In the 'testing' mode, it goes from *car* to *give me the car, please* to *give me the green car, please*. Another cartridge has the same characters singing short songs that introduce action verbs and more adjectives. All this in English, Spanish, French, or Japanese. This situation reminds me of the Vygotskian Zone of Proximal Development theory, according to which learners learn by interacting with a more advanced learner. The toy is interactive, the language is accurate, and the whole thing is attractive and user friendly. It had to work. And it has, and it still is. Although Alicia's Spanish abilities are well beyond the level that the toy delivers, she has started to play with the French cartridge (I myself am learning some Japanese expressions).

Another product by the same company claims to expose infants to foreign language sounds in the form of babbling *The Babbler*. Based on theories that suggest that early exposure to foreign sounds will prevent loss of the ability to perceive them, this toy kind of makes sense. My daughter was already too old

for this, but I have been mentioning it to friends. At this time, I do not have any information on its commercial success or its effectiveness. I guess it will take a long-term longitudinal study to observe the results of these language-learning devices.

These were only the beginning. Soon after them I found *Lizzy*, the soft doll that talks in Spanish and English by pressing on her hands and knee². By pressing the knee, the doll will say *I love you* in both languages. By pressing each of the hands the child will hear a different set of phrases, which changes from language to language.

And then came the little interactive

"Already a whole cohort of multilingual toys live in our house constantly reminding Alicia that there is more than one accepted and validated way of communicating..."

gremlin, *Furby*³, which 'learns' how to talk in your own language (Spanish, French, or German)! It takes some 'training', explained in the instruction booklet, and soon you will have Furby reacting to your child's manipulation. If it hears a big noise, it will say *big noise*; if you cover its eyes you will hear *dark*; and if something is prodded into its mouth, it will say *hungry, yam, yam*. More recently, a toy by Fisher Price named *Kids Around the World* has entered my home. With it, children can count to five, learn some basic expressions in many different languages, and hear about music and facts from different countries. It's a great toy to promote diversity awareness and world citizenship.

Already a whole cohort of multilingual toys live in our house constantly reminding Alicia that there is more than one accepted and validated way of communicating; and she manages two of them (so far).

This brief account of 'talking toys' is by no means exhaustive but it might serve as inspiration for other parents to share with the rest of us toys they might find in their respective corners of the world. Every time I come across a new toy, I feel as if I have accomplished something valuable to enhance my daughter's bilingualism.

1. <http://www.neurosmith.com>

2. French, Italian, and Chinese versions of this doll are available from <http://www.languageittles.com>

3. <http://www.furby.com>



A Non-mothertongue Mother

I am French but studied English and lived and worked in the UK for over ten years. I went back to France two years ago and had a daughter to whom I decided to speak English. My husband is French (from a bilingual French/Italian family) and we've agreed to apply the *one parent - one language* principle.

Speaking English to my daughter (Eva) comes naturally to me. However, because it is not my mother tongue, I try to use other language support such as books, songs, videos and soon an English playgroup. A lot of people around me find it strange that as a non-native speaker I chose to use English as the main language to communicate with my daughter. My husband and I feel strongly that as long as it comes naturally to me, it can only be a positive thing for our daughter too.

Eva is now 18 months and saying her first words and she is a sociable girl. We now live in Brussels, where most children grow up in a bilingual environment. The attitude towards speaking English to Eva is very different here. People understand and adhere to our choice. The children at Eva's nursery are either from a French, Dutch, English or Arabic background. All of them seem to adapt perfectly to the French-speaking environment of the nursery where the staff are also used to dealing with bilingual children.

I'd be interested in hearing from other families or from professionals with regard to introducing a non-mothertongue language from an early age.

Veronique Miccolis, Brussels

Help, Help!!!

Please Help Promote the BFN!

We have produced a new A4 size poster to promote the *BFN*. If you can help in any way by displaying the poster in your school, library etc. then please get in touch with us, giving your name, address, and the number of copies you would like:

info@multilingual-matters.com

Tel:+44 (0)1275 876519

Trilingual Preschool...from page 2

languages can be contained within the family unit. When I pick up the children after school we speak mainly English about school, their friends or other local matters. I orientate them towards Norwegian while they are doing homework or just relaxing. I then switch to French at bedtime and the children choose the bedtime story from whichever language they want. At weekends and on holidays, we use French while my husband is there.

When the children are alone together their dominant play language is English, with French for support in difficult situations (and for insults!). Norwegian is relegated to third place. They will chop and change play languages according to their needs and the origin of their game. The success of this strategy remains to be seen, but for the time being, the children seem confident in their three languages and never mix languages when they are addressing a monolingual.

Language mixing and code-switching

Three languages in the home naturally lead to language mixing and code-switching. This is not all bad. Even bilingual children get lazy and use the vocabulary and phrases that are most readily available to them. Tania, age two, watching a fly drowning in my ice-cream: *Flue spise glace Mamma* (Mummy, the fly is eating ice-cream – *glace* is French for ice-cream). The word order was correct for Norwegian, but the French word for ice-cream was closer at hand. The important thing to recognise is that it is an asset to be able to draw on two or more sets of expressions when you are in the company of someone who shares the same languages. From a very early age, the children would only mix and switch when they were certain that everyone shared the same language combination.

They would exclude the third 'unusable' language when speaking to bilinguals. With monolinguals, they would avoid any mixing at all. As long as the children are competent and recognise which language(s) to use with which person, I see no real threat in children drawing on what they have available to express themselves. It adds to my day to hear exchanges like this:

Tania: Kevin, *kommer du?* (Kevin, are you coming?)

Kevin: *Ja, but wait a minute et je vais venir après* Nå kommer jeg! (Yes, but wait a minute and I'll come afterwards. I'm coming!)

Continued on page 7

An interview with François Grosjean:

Part One

Judit Navracsis

A full version of this interview can be obtained from François Grosjean: francois.grosjean@unine.ch



François Grosjean is perhaps best known for his book *Life with Two Languages: An Introduction to Bilingualism* first published in 1982. The book became a 'classic', because of its comprehensive and perceptive study of bilingualism. Here, he talks about his experiences as a bilingual, a father of bilingual children and how this has influenced his work. The second part of this interview will appear in a forthcoming issue.

How did you become bilingual?

I was born in 1946 in Paris. My mother was British and my father French. I did not become bilingual immediately as my parents first spoke French to me. It was only when I went to an English boarding school in Switzerland at the age of seven that I acquired English in a 'sink or swim' manner. I don't recall it being difficult as the staff and my peers were all very friendly. I stayed in that school for seven years and then, at the age of 14, was sent to a boarding school in England where I remained until my A-levels. This change was culturally very difficult and I never quite managed to become totally monocultural (i.e. British only) in the way others wanted me to be. But after 11 years of English schooling, I wasn't really French any longer and my return to France to enter the University of Paris at the age of 18 was quite a change. It took me a number of years to adapt linguistically, but especially culturally, to France. That explains many of my reflections in the book.

Is your own family bilingual?

Yes, despite what I wrote at the beginning of my book: *To my wife, Lysiane, for her encouragement and her informative bilingualism, and to my sons, Marc and Eric, for their monolingualism, so categorical and yet so natural*, the whole family is now bilingual in English and French. In 1982, after some eight years in

the US, we came back to Europe for a year and our two boys acquired French. We kept it alive when we went back for three years and since 1987, when we returned to Europe for good, both French and English have been family languages that we use interchangeably. We change base language a lot and code-switch from one language to the other.

What approach did you use with your family when your children were small?

Although we wanted our children to be bilingual, living in an English environment in a country like the US made this very difficult. It is a well known fact that children do not acquire (or only partly acquire) the minority language if there isn't community or educational support, or other motivating factors that make using the language a natural thing. So it was only when our boys were in a French-speaking environment for a year in 1982 that they finally became natural users of French. We then worked hard to keep their French alive when we returned to the States.¹

To what extent did your being bilingual determine your research area?

My interest in bilingualism found a first outlet in my Master's thesis in which I surveyed English-French bilinguals in Paris. This was a way for me to start understanding who I was and to begin thinking of the bilingual as a different type of speaker-hearer. Whilst preparing that piece of work I discovered researchers like Weinreich and Haugen. I never dreamed that I would actually become good friends with Einar Haugen himself.

What led you to write your book?

The idea arose when I was asked to teach a course on bilingualism. I realised that there just weren't any books that covered all aspects of bilingualism. I therefore very naively approached Harvard University Press. They asked for a chapter, reviewed it and gave me the go-ahead. I had met Einar Haugen in the meantime and had become friends with him and his wife, Eva. Einar Haugen was just the kind of person a young author needed: he took me under his wing, was very supportive and read every chapter of my book. Of all the authors on bilingualism, he was, I felt, the most 'human' (in the sense that he wrote about the bilingual PERSON). I tried to follow his example in my book. I wanted my book to be comprehensive but especially to give the bilingual's point of view as much of what had been written about bilinguals had been written from a monolingual view. Even now, my biggest source of satisfaction is when bilinguals tell me they enjoy my book.

What positions did you want to defend in your book (and in later writings)?

I have tried to defend a number of positions which I find important. These are:

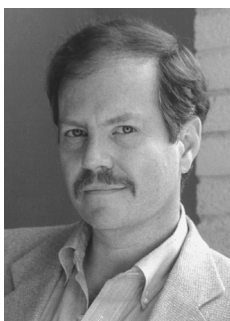
- Bilingualism is the use of two (or more) languages in one's everyday life and *not* knowing two or more languages equally well (as most laypersons think).
- Bilingualism is extremely widespread and is the norm (*not* the exception).
- The older, monolingual, view of bilingualism has had many negative consequences, one of the worst being that many bilinguals are very critical of their own language competence and do not consider themselves to be bilingual.
- The bilingual is a unique speaker-hearer who should be studied as such and not always in comparison with the monolingual. The bilingual uses two languages – separately or together – for different purposes, in different domains of life, with different people. Because the needs and uses of the two languages are usually quite different, the bilingual is rarely equally or completely fluent in his/her languages.
- In their everyday lives, bilinguals find themselves at various points along a situational continuum which induce particular language modes. The concept of language mode is critical and helps to differentiate such things as interference, code-switching, borrowing, etc. which researchers like Weinreich never actually differentiated.
- People testing (or examining) bilinguals need to take into account whether the person is in a stage of language restructuring (i.e. acquiring a new language and/or losing the first one) or whether the person has attained a stable level of bilingualism. In addition, such factors as the domains of use of the languages, the language mode the person is in when being studied, etc. has to be taken into account.

Your holistic approach to bilingualism is well-known all over the world, yet many people still hold a monolingual view of bilingualism. Many bilinguals claim that they are not bilingual since they are not equally competent in both languages. Is this a widespread phenomenon?

I'm afraid it is. Although most researchers throughout the world have the same defining view of the bilingual, based on the regular use of two (or more) languages (or dialects) in everyday life, the layperson still holds a monolingual view of the bilingual who should be balanced and equally fluent in his/her languages. If one were to follow this 'two monolinguals in one person' view, we would be left without a label for half the world's population. More seriously, we would be describing a person who is extremely rare. That person would be similar to international conference interpreters, but even they specialise in particular subjects. I believe that it is our

Continued on Page 7

NEWS FROM THE USA The End of an Era? James Crawford



As English-only laws proliferate in the US, it is easy to forget that bilingual education remains relatively widespread – at least, for now. Native-language instruction, though hardly guaranteed, is more common here than in most immigrant-receiving nations. There is a simple explanation for this. Back in the 1970s, the US government threw its weight behind bilingual education as a matter of civil rights.

First, the Supreme Court ruled that schools could no longer neglect the needs of children with limited English proficiency. 'Affirmative steps' must be taken to remove language barriers that barred equal access to the curriculum. Not doing so, according to the *Lau v. Nichols* decision, would make 'a mockery of public education.'¹

Second, Ford and Carter administrations launched an aggressive effort to enforce the *Lau* ruling. Under threat of losing federal subsidies, about 500 districts were forced to adopt programs using native-language instruction. Many others complied voluntarily or in response to mandates at the state level.

The Reagan administration later backed away from this policy. It championed 'local flexibility' to choose alternative, all-English pedagogies to overcome language barriers. Legally and politically, however, bilingual education continued to be seen as a primary, if not the only, means to foster equal opportunity for language-minority children. Under a recent court ruling, that principle is now in doubt.

The case involved a challenge to Proposition 227, the English-only school law adopted by California voters in 1998. A group of Spanish-speaking parents argued that the measure violates the US Constitution by discriminating on the basis of race and national origin.

In particular, they cited the special obstacles that Proposition 227 has created for minorities in the political process. Before the initiative passed, parents seeking to establish a bilingual education program merely needed to win approval from the local school board. Today, English-only programs are mandated for most English language learners by a state

law that cannot be amended or repealed except by a two-thirds majority in the California legislature or by passage of another statewide ballot initiative.

US courts have struck down similar laws limiting the political power of minorities as a violation of the 14th Amendment guarantee of 'equal protection' for racial and ethnic groups. Civil rights advocates had seen this as their strongest constitutional argument against Proposition 227.

But a federal appeals court disagreed. It could find no explicit 'racial animus' behind the English-only law. Furthermore, the court ruled, California's purpose in creating bilingual education was 'to improve education, and not to remedy racial discrimination.'² Therefore, the state's adoption of a new educational policy was 'race-neutral,' and the new political burden for minority parents was constitutionally permissible.

In effect, the recognition of bilingual education as a civil rights issue, the cornerstone of *Lau v. Nichols*, has been repudiated. Arbitrarily restricting English learners' access to native-language instruction – regardless of their individual needs, the desires of their parents, or the judgments of professionals – is no longer considered discriminatory. The Supreme Court could reverse this decision. But, given its conservative complexion, that seems unlikely.

The implications are enormous. Not that bilingual education is likely to die out entirely in the US. Two-way models, which seek to cultivate bilingual fluency for English speakers as well as minorities, are growing in popularity. These programs are surviving even in states with English-only laws. Unfortunately, they serve less than one percent of US students whose English is limited.

Meanwhile, bilingual education as a widely available option for language-minority children – as a program designed to redress inequality – may soon be an endangered species.

Visit James Crawford's Language Policy Web Site at:
<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/jwcrawford>

Footnotes:

1. 414 U.S. 563, 565 (1974).
2. *Angel v. Davis*, No. 01-15219, D.C. No. CV 98-2252 CAL (2002).

Stop Press!!!

Colorado Hands English Immersion Backer His First Loss!

Colorado voters have rejected a proposition to introduce English-only immersion classes for children with limited English skills. More info:

www.rockymountainnews.com



Daughter Reluctant to Speak French

I am French and my husband is English. We live in England and we have 2 children: Emily (4) and William (2). I speak French to the children and my husband English and we speak English together.

My daughter was quite slow to speak and we put it down to the two languages. Her speech (English) is fine now. She always answers me back in English and has asked me several times to speak to her in English which I have refused to do. When she asks a question, she always wants my husband to answer because she says that she can not understand me. I do not know if this is true or not. She also asks me to repeat things in English after I said it in French. Of course, I do not want to speak English to her. My parents can not understand the children and communication is very difficult, which I find hard to cope with. We see my parents four to five times a year for five days at a time in France or England. Emily goes to Saturday 'French class' with English children. She is of course the best there and I thought that would have given her the confidence to speak, but no. Apparently, she does speak French during these sessions.

I do not know what line to adopt? Of course, I want her to understand me. Maybe she is just pretending not to understand, I do not know. My son is very different, he started speaking early and he will say words in French with almost perfect pronunciation.

Any ideas to improve the situation would be welcome.

Nathalie Holmes, England

Often, during my (Finnish/English) childhood, I would refuse to speak Finnish. This did not mean, however, that I was unable to understand it. Our mum continued to speak Finnish with us and to ensure that we kept in contact with Finnish culture. This meant that when I was ready and willing to speak Finnish again these skills were still intact. It sounds to me as if your daughter is in a very similar situation.

She has regular contact with her grandparents and can certainly speak French. Contact with other French speaking children is also important. Emily needs to see that this isn't just mum's 'funny' language and that speaking French can have distinct advantages. For me, the big change in my attitude came when I spent 4 months in Finland at the age of eight attending primary school. I was able to meet kids my own age, get messy and have fun. It didn't even occur to me that I was doing it in that 'other' language.

Pushing your daughter may be unwise. I believe that the only way a child will speak a particular language is if it can be made enjoyable. It is important to relax and to have fun with your children, they will pick up on any anxieties. I would like to be able to tell you that our mum was the perfect model of the confident parent, smiling serenely when we refused to speak Finnish. This, of course, was not always the case. I remember a number of times when she was in tears because we were rejecting her language (and, by extension, her), yet we had never felt we were doing anything of the sort. We were speaking in whatever language came naturally at the time.

One final trick which you could use, and I remember being particularly effective, is encouraging Emily's (English) friends to take an interest in French culture. My mum, Marjukka, used to come into school and give a talk to the class on Finnish culture and tradition. This was often aided by bare-faced bribery. She would bring in a gingerbread house which all my friend would, of course, devour in ten-seconds flat. I'm sure some delicious French pastries or similar would do the trick. The whole class were converts to Finnish nationalism in no time, and I had gained a lot of confidence about, and pride in, my 'special' culture.

Marjukka adds: *I fully agree with the above and now wish that I would have relaxed more. It really does not matter that she doesn't speak French as long as she gets constant input. Be consistent and proud of your language and talk about the importance of bilingualism but the most important thing is to relax and enjoy the kids.*

I'm sure that with a relaxed, yet determined and consistent approach to bilingualism, both of your children can grow up to be proud of their two cultures.

Sami Grover

Interview... from page 5

role as researchers to change the public misconceptions of bilinguals. When defending my holistic approach, I am constantly thinking of bilinguals who belittle their bilingualism because they do not master their languages to the same level. This leaves them insecure about their status as human communicators. This saddens me. All bilinguals should have positive feelings about their bilingualism. I often tell them that monolinguals have to cover all domains of life with just one language and that they, as bilinguals, have to do so with two or more languages. They are human communicators, like monolinguals, but they simply communicate differently.

"...when we know as much about multilingualism as we do about bilingualism, we will probably realize that there are many similarities but also quite a few differences."

You state that you investigate stable bilinguals. Can a person ever be a stable bilingual considering the fact that the mental lexicon keeps changing all the time?

It is true that lexical knowledge, and other linguistic knowledge, do change over time but probably much more slowly for the stable bilingual. In my studies, I look at bilinguals who are not restructuring their languages at that moment (they have not just moved from one country to another, they are not acquiring a language or forgetting another language, etc.). All bilinguals should be studied. However, I concentrate on those who have achieved some level of stability simply because it is easier to study them experimentally.



Bilingual Supplies for Children,
P.O. box 4081, Bournemouth, BH8
9YX. UK

(Recall that I am an experimental psychologist and that I run experiments on bilinguals).

In your definition of bilingualism, you mention two (or more) languages (or dialects). Do you consider bilingualism and multilingualism to be the same? Aren't there both quantitative and qualitative differences?

This is a very difficult question for which I don't have a clear answer. I wouldn't be surprised that when we know as much about multilingualism as we do about bilingualism, we will probably realise that there are many similarities but also quite a few differences. I'm happy to see the work on multilingualism increase in importance in the literature. I'm also happy to see that many concepts and approaches developed to study the acquisition, the knowledge and the use of two languages carry over quite easily to three or more languages, sometimes after having been adapted.

© François Grosjean. 2002

Endnotes

1. See François Grosjean's 'Making my children bilingual, and trying to keep them that way' in the Bilingual Family Newsletter 1985, 2(4). 1-2

Some recent writings on bilingualism by François Grosjean

Grosjean, F. (1996). Living with two languages and two cultures. In Parasnis, I. (Ed.). *Cultural and Language Diversity and the Deaf Experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Grosjean, F. (1997, 2000). Processing mixed language: Issues, findings and models. In de Groot, A. and Kroll, J. (Eds.). *Tutorials in Bilingualism: Psycholinguistic Perspectives*. Mahwah, NJ: LEA, 1997. Also in Li Wei (Ed.). *The Bilingual Reader*. London: Routledge, 2000.

Grosjean, F. (1997). The bilingual individual. *Interpreting*, 2(1/2), 163-187.

Grosjean, F. (1998). The on-line processing of speech: Lexical access in bilinguals. In Bhatt, P. and Davis, R. (Eds.). *The Linguistic Brain*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Grosjean, F. (1998). Studying bilinguals: Methodological and conceptual issues. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 1(2), 131-149.

Grosjean, F. (1998). Transfer and language mode. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 1(3), 175-176.

Grosjean, F. (1999, 2000). The right of the deaf child to grow up bilingual. *Deaf worlds*, 1999, 15 (2), 29-31; *WFD NEWS*, 2000, 13 (1), 14-15; *The Endeavor*, 2000, 1, 28-31. Translated into different languages including Hungarian: *Modern Nyelvoktatás*, 1999, 4, 5-8.

Grosjean, F. (2001). The bilingual's language modes. In Nicol, J. (Ed.). *One Mind, Two Languages: Bilingual Language Processing*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Guillemon, D. and Grosjean, F. (2001). The gender marking effect in spoken word recognition: The case of bilinguals. *Memory and Cognition*, 29(3), 503-511.

Trilingual Pre-school...from page 4.

Kevin replied initially in the language he was spoken to, but his English was more easily accessible to carry on with. When he got to the word 'minute' he was uncertain of the pronunciation in English, so he switched to French to help him out of the sentence. The sentence finished, he could then go back to Norwegian because this was, after all the language of the request – all completely natural, *n'est-ce-pas?*

One interesting aspect of introducing



English, was that interference up to this point normally occurred with French vocabulary into Norwegian grammatical structures, or French sentences using Norwegian word order. For example, *La bleue maison* and not *La maison bleue* (the blue house). When starting to learn English, the mixing occurred with nouns inserted into Norwegian or French sentences, e.g. *Il a crié dans mon face* (He screamed in my face). As their level of competence rose in English, so did the intricacy of their language mixing, such as Tania saying *Kevin har ikke usé den grønne farva* (Kevin has not used the green crayon). The language chosen for her sentence is Norwegian, the verb is

correctly used in the French past tense, but the choice and pronunciation of the word 'use' comes out of her English memory compartment ('user' in French would mean 'use up', which is not what she meant). Observing my children closely, I can reassure readers that such complicated instances of mixing all three languages in one and the same exchange or utterance is not common, and therefore more fascinating.

Some factors that affect trilingualism.

As a conclusion, I have found four factors that seem to have influenced my own children's trilingualism. Firstly, an **established cultural identity**, i.e. a clear sense of belonging within one (or more) cultures seems important as a basis for the young child's language acquisition. It seems reasonable to assume that if a person feels culturally secure they will have more confidence to venture into other worlds and cultures.

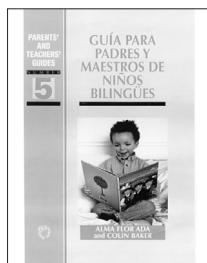
Secondly, **motivation** takes on even more importance for trilinguals than for bilinguals. As I observed with Kevin when we moved to France, a child is motivated to learn languages initially by her/his natural need to communicate and because of its affective value. Therefore, constant stimulation of the child's motivation to speak and learn each of the three languages is essential. Motivation is linked to the amount of **time** the child spends listening and actively using a language, as well as the **source of exposure** the child receives.

Thirdly, if you choose to use all three languages in the home I believe it is important to create **separation** between

Continued on Page 8

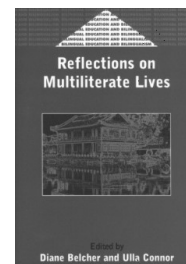
Books Available from Multilingual Matters

Order online at: www.multilingual-matters.com



***Guía para padres y maestros de niños bilingües* – Ada & Baker**

This is an adapted Spanish Language version of *A Parents's and Teachers' Guide to Bilingualism*
Pbk 1-85359-511-x, June 2001,
248pp
Price: £12.95/ US\$19.95



***Reflections on Multiliterate Lives* – Belcher & Connor**

A collection of personal accounts, in narrative and interview format, of the formative literacy experiences of highly successful second language users, all of whom are professional academics.

Pbk ISBN 1-85359-521-7, price £19.95/
US\$29.95, February 2001 viii+211 pp

The editor, with the help of the International Editorial Board, is happy to answer any queries you may have on bilingualism /biculturalism. We reserve the right to edit any letters published. All contributions to the BFN should be sent to:

Editor: Marjukka Grover
Assistant Editor: Sami Grover
Editorial Board:
 Alatheia Anderssohn, *El Jadida, Morocco.*
 Colin Baker, *Bangor, Wales, Great Britain.*
 Suzanne Barron-Hauwaert, *Bassersdorf, Switzerland.*
 Jayson Campeau, *Chatham, Ontario, Canada.*
 James Crawford, *Silver Spring, USA.*
 Terry Haywood, *Milano, Italy.*
 Christine Helot, *Strasbourg, France.*
 Nobuyuki Honna, *Tokyo, Japan.*
 Li Wei, *Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Great Britain.*
 Anne-Maria de Mejiá, *Cali, Colombia.*
 Michael Rosanova, *Oak Park, Illinois, USA.*
 Stephen Ryan, *Osaka, Japan.*
 Tracey Tokuhama-Espinosa, *Geneve, Switzerland.*

If you want to get in touch with any member of the board please send your letter to c/o Multilingual Matters and we will forward it to him/her.

If you do not already subscribe to *The Bilingual Family Newsletter*, use the form below to enter a subscription for the next four issues. If you know of any other families who may be interested in BFN enter their address on the form and we will send them a free sample of a recent issue.

Multilingual Matters
 Frankfurt Lodge, Clevedon Hall, Victoria Road
 Clevedon, England. BS21 7HH
 Tel: +44-(0)1275-876519; Fax:+44-(0)1275-871673
 E-mail: marjukka@multilingual-matters.com
 http://www.multilingual-matters.com

Vol. 19, No.4, 2002

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

TOWN.....

COUNTRY.....PostCode.....

Please enter a subscription to BFN £12.00 (US\$20.00)

Please send me the book.....

Payment or authority to charge your credit card (Visa/ Master/ Amex/ Switch Card) must accompany each order.

Remittance enclosed for £/ \$.....

Please make your cheques payable to Multilingual Matters

Charge my Visa/ Master/Amex/ Switch Card

Card No.....

Expiry Date.....

Signature.....

PLEASE NOTE you can order all Multilingual Matters books advertised in this Newsletter either by sending the order and payment by post to us, or through our fully searchable, secure online ordering web-site. It offers the benefit of FREE postage to any address in the world. The ordering system is fully compliant with the latest security software, so you can order with confidence!

Please send a sample copy of BFN to:

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....

.....

CONTACTS

If you wish your name and address to be included in the contact section, please send us the following information:

Name, address, languages spoken in the family, children's birth dates and specification of the types of families with whom you would like to get in touch.

Great Britain

Martha Jesty 020-8286 1817
 email: jesty@lals.co.uk

Spanish Saturday club for children 4-11 in Surbiton, Surrey from 10.30-11.30am is great fun for monolinguals and bilinguals and good to meet with other Latin American and Spanish mums.

Cristina Carrera 01489 564615
Anglo-Spanish family living in Southampton. 3 children (3yr old son and 1 yr old twin sons). Would like to meet other Anglo-Spanish families.

Italy

Janine Raedts & Angelo Vettorello +39 0438 85953
 email: tovena.bb@libero.it

English and Italian speaking family in north-east Italy; one daughter Maddy -(two and a half) would like to get in touch with other English/Italian speaking families.

France

John and Laurence McKenzie
 4 Le Queric, 56470 La Trinite Sur Mer, France
French/Scottish family with a 4 year old son would like to meet other French/English speaking families in Morbihan or near Southern Brittany.

Glossary:

Code Switching: Moving from one language to another inside sentences or across sentences.

Trilingual Pre-school...from page 7

each language, according to activity, place or time, while maintaining a smooth transition when changing from one language to another. Moreover, provided that the child clearly separates the languages according to the interlocutor, some language-mixing and borrowing can only be beneficial to young children's need to express themselves.

Finally, it is essential that parents have **realistic objectives** as to the child's long-term level of competence in each language. Setting the goals too high may lead to disappointment and will require a great deal of time and effort on the part of the parents as well as the child. As further research into trilingualism gives us a wider understanding of how three languages function side by side within one person, we may find a realistic, flexible and practical way to handle our linguistically challenging children.

Note:

Helen has just completed a survey of twenty trilingual families from around the world and her results will be published in the BFN next year.

RECOMMENDED READING:

- Arnberg, L (1987) *Raising Children Bilingually: The Pre-school Years.* Clevedon, Multilingual Matters.
 Baker, C (2000) *A Parents' and Teachers' Guide to Bilingualism.* Clevedon, Multilingual Matters.
 Barron-Hauwaert, S (1999) *Issues surrounding trilingual families: Children with simultaneous exposure to three languages* Paper presented at the 1st International Conference on Trilingualism and Third Language Acquisition in Innsbruck, Austria:
 Ronjat, J (1913) *Le développement du langage observe chez un enfant bilingue.* Paris, Champion
 Tokuhama-Espinosa, T (2001) *Raising Multilingual Children.* Greenwood Publishing Group.