

The Bilingual Family Newsletter



News and Views for Intercultural People

Editors: George Saunders & Marjukka Grover 1994 Volume 11 No. 2

In this issue

- A Name for a multicultural child
- Book Review
- Raising children trilingually
- Language disorder
- Speaking a non-native language

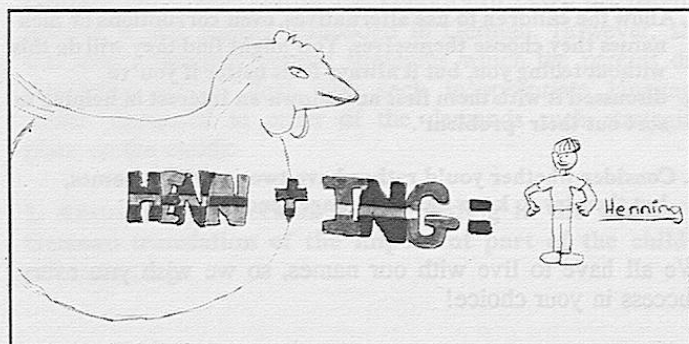
EDITORIAL

I have just realized that I know nothing about TRULY international life. I was invited to give a talk to the Parents Teachers Association Evening at The International School of Brussels. The theme of the evening was 'Living with Bilingualism and Biculturalism' and the parents attending the meeting came from all over the world (Japan, Thailand, India, Israel, Germany, France, Norway, Finland, Spain, Albania, USA just to mention some of the nationalities I spoke to). Not only did these parents come from different countries, they have also lived in several countries before moving to Brussels and, in time, will be moving on to who knows where.

Their children are real 'international nomads', as some of them have hardly lived in their parents' homeland. How do they see themselves? Where do they belong to? What language is their 'mother tongue'? Is a cosmopolitan identity as acceptable as an identity attached to a country, nation or language? These seemed to be the questions which worried the parents. If anyone knows of any research on this area please let us know. We will have more on international schools and cosmopolitan lives in the autumn issues of the BFN.

It is true that in the BFN we promote a positive attitude to bilingualism and biculturalism. Parents should, however, be aware of the fact that some children have difficulties in learning to speak and understanding language. By coincidence we received two letters almost simultaneously on children's language delay, both published in this issue. But please remember that monolingual children have language delays too, and as Alison Hüneke, a mother who's daughter has language disorders, writes '*language disorders certainly cannot be caused by a bilingual upbringing, but parents raising children bilingually should be aware that they may encounter this problem*'.

Marjukka Grover



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

by Keith Thompson

Choosing a name for a multicultural child is often difficult. Parents want their child to identify with both cultures but many names are clearly from only one culture. Even in such similar languages as English and German, the number of names which are pronounced exactly the same in both is very small and many pleasant names in one language are unacceptable in the other. Try Jörg in English, or Gail in German (it sounds promiscuous!)

At home, many children have pet names, but elsewhere then these are not normally used. We all tend to be categorized by our names, not least because it is often the first thing others hear from us. This is particularly the case for children, since play group leaders and teachers know that the best way to catch a child's attention is through their name. It is therefore

"We all tend to be categorized by our names, not least because it is often the first thing others hear from us."

somewhat of a trial for a small child when they have to say their name four or five times before the adults understand it, and even then it is frequently mispronounced or forgotten. This happens all too regularly in monocultural societies.

Names have different values in different cultures. The British and American tendency to shorten names results in schools full of children called Chris or Jenny, but rarely Christopher or Jennifer. In Germany, names are rarely shortened although pet forms are not uncommon. In Bangladesh, almost everyone has an official name which they only use on formal occasions, and a 'daknam' which is used by all friends, relations and at school. For instance, our colleague Sayyedul Haque is known to everyone as Toufiq and Lewis Rozario is always called Shontos. In Papua New Guinea, official names are often English and chosen at random, and the names individuals then use are corruptions or completely different. One man named Golden Delicious Apple chose to be called Gordon Dapple and a girl christened Lilian was known as

Continued on page two

Continued from page one

Ririari, which was the nearest her family could get to saying her name!

Strictly speaking, there's no such thing as a wholly international name. Subtle differences in inflection and the pronunciation of certain sounds (for instance, the English vowels or 'i' or 'r') are used in names just as much as in the language itself. Astrid and Chris sound quite different in English, French and German. Ultimately all we can hope for is to minimise the differences and ensure that the name is clearly seen as the same one despite the variations.

"Hanne-Ruth comes out as Arrowroot, or even Anorak in English."

The name we are called depends on local perceptions too. My name, **Keith Thompson**, is common in Britain (I was one of seventeen K. Thompsons in the north Manchester telephone directory a few years back), but is not too common to cause confusion. Outside the UK it is more difficult. It is usual to use the second name in Papua New Guinea as a sign of friendship, so I was often called Thompson. But since everyone was used to the British abbreviating their names, I became Tom to my friends! Keith tends to sound like Kiss in France and Kies (gravel) in Germany, with Kite as a common variant. Fortunately Thompson seems (in my experience) to be easily said and understood throughout the world. Not only that, but it immediately identifies me as being British!

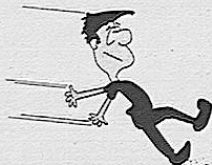
My wife, **Hanne-Ruth**, has similar experiences. Hanne-Ruth comes out as Arrowroot, or even Anorak in English. Alternatively, it is split into two and becomes Hannah Ruth. Often she finds it easier to be called Hannah, a name which is known throughout the Christian, Muslim and Jewish world. She also is called Mutti (Mummy) by the children, and has had friends from other cultures ask to call her that, too!

We have three children and at present live in Bangladesh. All have the Thompson last name, so we tried to find German first names which fitted Thompson and which sounded pleasant in English. **Henning Christopher** is now 11 and was born in Germany. He has found that it's easier to call himself Chris when meeting people who he'll seldom meet again. Henning seems to be easy to hear, but many English speakers try to make it into Henry. The spelling, however, is quite clear, and he's never had any problems when people have seen the written form. Henning, himself, says that he likes his name and will keep it as his main name. However, he's also sure that he'll continue to use Chris as an alternative at times.

HUMOUR, HUMOUR, HUMOUR

Yakov (2½ years) was pretending to play hockey indoors. Papa put on his slippers and told him they were his skates - *Schlittschuhe*.

Whether from English interference or from the fact that Yakov was slipping and sliding on his skates, he created his own term: *Slip-schuhe!*



Shoshanah Dietz, Austin, Tx. USA

Maren Jennifer, who was born in Papua New Guinea, is now nine. She finds problems with the pronunciation of her name (Ma Ren) since it isn't obvious from the spelling, and she often has to repeat her name a number of times. Occasionally she finds that Americans try Maureen or Noreen instead. On the other hand, in England, many girls have non-traditional names now, and Maren is often seen as belonging to this group. The German connection is then lost, of course, Maren herself is aware of it. Maren says she likes her name and has no intention of using alternatives.

Astrid Melanie (4 years, born in Manchester) has the least problems, in part because we'd learnt from experience. Astrid is well enough known in Britain that there's rarely confusion. This is not the case in Bangladesh, however, and she's adopted a Bangla name, Chumki, which she chooses to use with Bangladeshis.



Keith, Hanne-Ruth, Henning, Maren and Astrid

We're now taking stock of our experience and wondering if we'd chose the same names for our children again. The answer is that we would (not least because the children are happy with their names!), but that we'd also allow for greater diversity. Children don't appear to suffer by having different names for different occasions, just as, according to circumstances, they use our various languages (English, German and Bangla: we used to speak Pidgin too, but that has proved difficult to maintain outside Papua New Guinea). So, if we can be any help to others who are choosing names for their multicultural offspring, this is what we would say:

1. Make sure that all names sound acceptable in all languages.
2. Try for names which are pronounced as they are written: many hearers will be unfamiliar with the names.
3. Consider using common names which are also known in other cultures, provided minor variations in pronunciation don't bother you.
4. Allow the children to use alternatives, even corruptions or nick names they choose themselves. You might find they will do this without telling you, but it always feels better if you've discussed it with them first and shown an interest in helping to sort out their 'problem'.
5. Consider whether you'd rather have two (or more) names, but then try to keep these language specific.

We all have to live with our names, so we wish you every success in your choice!

BOOK REVIEW

ONE PARENT ONE LANGUAGE

An Interactional Approach by Susanne Döpke

1992. 234 pages, ISBN 90-272-4107-4: Pbk US\$24.95, Hfl \$50.00.
Published by J. Benjamins. Amsteldijk 44, P.O.Box 75577,
1070 AN Amsterdam, Holland. Tel: 020-6738156.

Reviewer: George Saunders

This book (based on the author's doctoral research), looks at the relationship between young children's degrees of bilingualism and the way they are spoken to by their parents. In particular she was interested in finding out why some families following the 'one parent - one language' method succeeded in producing active bilinguals whilst the children in other families employing this method never developed an active command of the minority language. She wanted to discover whether parents can further their child's active development in the minority language irrespective of the availability of other minority language speakers, trips to the homeland etc. Further aims of the study were:

- ✱ To determine whether the force with which parents insist on responses in the minority language makes a difference in the children becoming productive.
- ✱ To examine the influence of overt and covert teaching techniques.
- ✱ To test the notion that mothers at home will automatically achieve higher degrees of bilingualism than working fathers.

To explore these questions, the author made case studies of six first-born children growing up in Australia with German and English. These studies were carried out during the children's third year of life. In five of the six families it was the mother who spoke the minority language, German. The father who spoke German to the child in the sixth family was a non-native, but fluent, speaker of German.

The children in the study were tested twice, with six months between the two tests. Tape recordings were made, and the information obtained in this way was supplemented by parents' observations. At both times of testing the dominant language of all the children was English, with two of them speaking German much more often and more freely than the others.

The language of the children and their parents was analysed and classified into utterances which were German, English, a mixture of the two, or belonging to either language (e.g. proper nouns). In addition, the children's utterances were labelled as original, repetition, translation, polar response.

The author examined how the German speaking parents reacted if their children addressed them in English instead of German. She found that in the majority of cases the parents ignored it and simply responded in German. However, she was able to identify certain strategies which the parents did sometimes use to deal with such inappropriate language choice (arranged in order of the demands such strategies place on the child):

1. Answering in German and including in the answer a German translation of the important part of the child's utterance, e.g.:

Child: Did you have dinner?

Mother: Ja, wir haben gegessen. (Yes, we've eaten.)

2. Providing a translation plus question (which requires more linguistic effort from the child, because he or she has to verify the translation), e.g.:

Child: This hurts me a bit.

Mother: Tut ein bißchen weh? (Hurts a bit?)

Child: Yeah, hurts.

3. Using a challenging question (a well-established teasing game used by the one father in the study and which usually overcame his son's reluctance to speak German), e.g.:

Father: Bist du häßlich? (Are you ugly?)

Child: Neinhe. (Nooo.)

4. Pretending not to understand, e.g.:

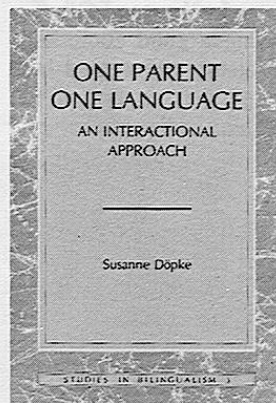
Child: Go away!

Father: Versteh ich nicht. (I don't understand.)

Child: Geh weg! (Go away)

5. Requesting that the child translate his/her English utterance into German. This strategy often brought the conversation to a halt, because it clearly stated that the parent did understand, but was not prepared to continue unless the child switched to German.

The author gives a very detailed 60 page analysis of the discourse structures which occur in communication between the children and their parents and tries to pinpoint those discourse strategies which are most effective in getting the children to use the minority language, German. The results suggest that there is a definite relationship between children's degree of bilingualism and whether parents interact with them in a child-centred way or not. The author defines this child-centred way of interaction as



"one which is responsive to the child's contributions to the conversation, which works to maintain a topic once introduced, and which is more orientated towards conversing with the child than controlling the child".

The children in the study who did not acquire an active command of German had English-speaking fathers who interacted with them in more child-centred ways than did their German-speaking mothers. The children who did actively use German had German-speaking parents who were equally as child centred or slightly more child centred than their English-speaking spouses.

The book also has an interesting section on the teaching techniques employed by the parents. Teaching techniques were defined as features of adults' language to young children which differentiate it from that used to other adults. It was found that the parents of the two children in the study who could be considered actively bilingual used a greater variety of teaching techniques than the other parents. Teaching techniques included: vocabulary teaching (providing a word, translating an English word, describing or

Continued on page seven

Letters



RAISING CHILDREN TRILINGUALLY

I am a German, bilingual myself as a result of living in England from the age of 12. I am married to a Greek Cypriot whose first language is Greek, whose command of English is excellent, but who speaks very little German. We have lived in Cyprus since before our first child was born.

We have three children: Andreas (7), Mathias (4 1/2) and Marc (2). As soon as our first son was born we decided that my husband would speak Greek to him and I would speak German, although we speak to each other only in English.

At the time I had spoken very little German for years, so at first it felt strange to be speaking German to my child. However, we all fell into a routine fairly quickly and Andreas acquired both Greek and German following the 'one person one language' method frequently outlined in BFN and books such as Lenore Arnberg's: *Raising Children Bilingually: The Pre-School Years*.

We found, of course, that whilst Andreas (and more recently his brothers) had no problems in acquiring a good command of both German and Greek, English is mostly understood but not spoken. This is to be expected, given that neither of us speak to the children in English on a regular basis



Petra with her trilingual sons

The rationale behind our chosen strategy is fairly simple, namely:

- We are settled in Cyprus and have no plans to leave, therefore, the children must learn to speak, read and write Greek.
- In Cyprus (a former British colony), English is widely spoken and is the first foreign language taught at schools. The children will acquire English not only from school but from TV programmes, which are very often English or American productions screened undubbed.

• Our families speak Greek (respectively German) only, and it would be unthinkable for us to create a situation where the children are unable to communicate with one or other set of grandparents, uncles, aunts or cousins.

Today, the situation is this: the two older boys speak Greek best (majority language), German (minority language) very well, though their vocabulary is somewhat narrower than that in Greek, and they both understand a fair amount of English. Our youngest son has not yet begun to utter any intelligible words except for 'mama' and 'papa', but I have no doubt that his language development will mirror that of his older brothers.

On balance, we are both satisfied so far with our children's linguistic development, although I sometimes feel uneasy at the thought that, even if we manage it, so that they will have a reasonably good command of all three languages, some might argue that they will be 'Jacks of all trades but Masters of none'. But then these are probably just my perfectionist tendencies temporarily getting the better of me.

I wonder if any of the BFN readers have any tips for us on how we might improve the chances of our children growing up to be truly trilingual?

Meanwhile, I want to congratulate you on the quality of content of your newsletters as well as the excellent publications promoted through BFN. Keep up the good work!

Petra Apostolou, Larnaca, Cyprus

LANGUAGE DISORDER AND BILINGUALISM

The article by Leena Huss' in Vol. 10, No. 4, sought to reassure parents that raising their children bilingually would not adversely affect their general language development. While not disputing the article as a whole, I must take issue at the assertion that a child growing up in a rich language environment will have no difficulty in acquiring language. Sadly this is not always the case.

We have two children, Ruth (aged 6:4) and Nathan (4:9). Before they were born we resolved to raise them bilingually. Our chances of doing so successfully seemed good as both, my husband and I, speak German and English with a high level of competence.

We decided to use the 'one parent - one language' approach, (father speaking German/ mother English) and began doing this religiously as soon as Ruth was born. Her first words did not appear until she was about 18 months old but there seemed no reason to worry at that time. However, although she slowly acquired a fairly large vocabulary (in both languages) she did not progress to talking in phrases and sentences, other than a few that she memorised and repeated parrot-fashion. Her understanding of language was also very poor. She was referred to a speech therapist and was diagnosed as having a severe language disorder which she would require intensive help to overcome. So, when she reached five, she was admitted to a special unit, specifically for children with language and communication disorders, instead of going to an ordinary school.

There is a considerable lack of awareness of language and communication disorders. Yet a language delay is the commonest developmental abnormality, affecting 9% of pre-school children. In most cases, children have caught up by the time they start school, or are found to have other problems, such as deafness, or mental handicap. But a minority, about 0.5% of have a severe specific language

disorder which persists well into school age and, in some cases, into adulthood. Indeed, the problem may never be wholly overcome.

The causes of language disorders are not fully understood. They are, however, the result of a neurological dysfunction that generally occurs before or during birth. There is often a genetic factor, and families which have a history of language problems should be particularly alert. Language disorders certainly cannot be caused by a bilingual upbringing (several well-meaning friends leaped to this conclusion in our case!). However, parents raising their children bilingually should be aware that if they encounter this problem, they are likely to face a number of additional difficulties.

First there is the problem of establishing that there is actually something wrong. When a delay in Ruth's language

with Dad and did not mix the two languages at all. We felt it might confuse her more if we suddenly discontinued the German, and there seemed no real evidence that acquiring two languages was hindering her progress. Besides we did not want our younger child, Nathan, to be denied the opportunity of growing up bilingually.

Over the last year and half her, Ruth's English has improved dramatically. Her German has also improved, though at a slower rate, and she does now sometimes have to resort to English to express herself. Ironically, this is a sign of progress in her case, as it shows that she is beginning to internalise language structures. Nathan has long been doing the same thing. We no longer worry about the children becoming absolutely bilingual, feeling it more important that they achieve competence in at least one language. Any German they acquire in addition will be a very worthwhile bonus. In Ruth's case, especially, it is highly unlikely she would have been able to learn as much German otherwise.

I should be very interested to hear from anyone who has got similar experiences and I am willing to give any advice and information I can (though I don't know all the answers).

"Yet a language delay is the commonest developmental abnormality, affecting 9% of pre-school children."

Contact details removed

development was first identified, it was simply attributed to her bilingual background, which is widely believed to produce late talkers, and not taken very seriously. We were, however, fortunate in that Ruth's main language was also the language that was assessed in her regular developmental checks. Families whose children do not speak the national language at home face particular difficulties, as professionals may assume that their deficient language skills are due to lack of exposure to the majority language. To convince professionals that there is a problem, parents may find themselves having to translate their children's speech, or produce detailed analyses of their child's proficiency in their other language. Parents might also have difficulty of recognising that their child has a problem, if they are isolated from other speakers of their language. It would seem a wise precaution for all parents to learn something about the normal development of language in children, so that they are better able to identify any deviation, and seek help.

Once the problem has been recognised, parents will face a number of questions:

- Is it too much of a burden to expect a child that has problems acquiring language to learn two at once?
- Would it be better to drop one?
- Will the child's other language improve without the intensive therapy now being given in the majority language?
- How can we help the other language to improve?

I must confess that I do not know the answers to these questions. I compare notes various professionals had given us with another mother who has a language-impaired son. They covered the whole spectrum between 'You should carry on with both languages or you'll only confuse the child', to 'You can't possibly expect a child with these problems to manage two languages!' Most of the answers were, I suspect, more a result of instinctive reaction than considered expert opinion.

We have decided to continue using both languages for a number of reasons. Ruth had become used to talking German



CAN ANY CHILD BECOME BILINGUAL?

I have a son, aged three, who has so far shown very little interest in speaking either in English which is the major language, or in Japanese which is the language I speak to him. I am beginning to wonder seriously whether raising him bilingually was a wise decision. I would probably have given up a long time ago if it wasn't for his older sister, Natasha, aged five, who positively loves anything Japanese. It would be impractical to teach her Japanese and not her brother.

Looking back on it Natasha didn't really start speaking until she was about two. She could, however, communicate reasonably by the time she started nursery school at three. Now her English is no different from any monolingual child and she has no problem talking Japanese to my mother who comes over here once a year, and plays happily with her Japanese friends when she has a chance to do so.

I believe strongly that children have to WANT to learn if they are to carry on learning when they are older and beyond parental control. Because of that I impose very little on them as far as language is concerned, but try to create an environment where being able to understand Japanese is fun. I always provided both of my children with plenty of Japanese books, video tapes and songs. The only rule I have is that I speak to them in Japanese except when there are English speaking friends around. I am not too strict about Natasha speaking in Japanese at home. My English husband is

Continued on page six

Continued from page five

far from being fluent in Japanese, while I speak English with no problem, so our conversation is almost entirely in English. Natasha knows that I can understand both English and Japanese and it seems to me to be cruel to ignore WHAT she is trying to say in order to concentrate on HOW she says it. I consider my main task to be, at least for the moment, to keep her interest in Japanese alive. A dogmatic approach of any kind, unless absolutely necessary, is just not my style.

Nicholas, however, is another matter. He is as intelligent as any other three year old boy, but until he started nursery school recently he showed little sign of wanting to communicate verbally. I must say I am very pleased with his progress since. Although not very successful, he is at least trying to say things! His vocabulary has also expanded significantly in the last couple of weeks. He is, however, still far from making up any sentence. I am worried about what to do if he has problems with his speech in future, how am I going to find help for him in both English and Japanese? I recently came across an Anglo-Japanese couple who decided not to raise their children bilingually because they discovered that their younger son was mildly dyslexic. Faced with a situation like theirs is there anything we can do?

Kazumi Honda, Reading, England.

In the BFN we do often say that the research evidence indicates that there is little difference between the average time at which a child growing up in a monolingual situation and a child being raised in a bilingual situation acquires speech. However, there can be considerable variation among children generally, be they monolingual or bilingual, with regard to the time when they begin to utter words, begin to use two-word sentences, and so on. In this issue Alison Hüneke writes that a language delay affects 9% of pre-school children. And a small percentage of children suffer from some more severe language disorder.

But language delays and language disorders cannot really be blamed on bilingualism. Removing one of the languages is a drastic measure which will most likely not cure the problem and only create new problems (communication difficulties

HUMOUR, HUMOUR, HUMOUR

QUEL DOMMAGE!

My husband, Tom, is very proud of his high-school and university French, but he never had the chance to use it until our trip to Canada. Driving into Montreal, we were trying to find the Immaculate Conception Seminary, but very quickly became lost.

My husband spied a lone figure in the street and pulled over to ask directions. Clearing his throat, Tom said, 'Pardonnez-moi, monsieur. Où est le Séminaire de l'Immaculé, Conception?' The man looked confused for a moment, then said 'I'm sorry mister. I don't speak French'. Looking rather self-satisfied, Tom wound up his window, sat back and announced, 'He doesn't speak French, Shirley. We'll have to find someone else.'



Shirley Curran (Found in the Reader's Digest - August 1991)

with relatives etc.). If you are still worried about your son's language development after observing how he is managing at nursery school, do consult a speech therapist, but preferably one with some experience with bilingualism.

With regard to your not wishing to be dogmatic about insisting that your children speak Japanese to you, this is really a personal decision each family has to make. However, we normally point out the advantages of encouraging the children to use the minority language as much as possible to ensure that it is acquired and maintained at a good level of proficiency. It is true that when the children are older and beyond parental control it is up to them whether they continue to use or develop a language that they have acquired in the family, but while the children are young, parents have an ideal opportunity to lay the foundation for their later behaviour (linguistic and otherwise). In my own family, for instance, I found it easier to get my children to speak to me consistently in German when they were young than to say 'please' and 'thank you'. Perhaps it would have been easier for my children to have spoken only English and not to have bothered about manners, but would that have been better for the children individually or the family (and society) as a whole? I doubt it.

George Saunders

SPEAKING A NON-NATIVE LANGUAGE TO ONE'S CHILDREN

Everything began when we moved from our homeland - Israel - to the USA. At that time our three year old spoke no English, but a very high level Hebrew, and her sister was too small to speak. We spoke Hebrew at home as this is our native language.

As the time passed both girls started to talk English, and I decided to pursue a career as a technical writer. I had been working mainly on improving my writing skills in English, when I discovered that conversing in English with my girls helped to improve my own skills. I realised that the only way to maintain their English - especially when we return to Israel - would be to speak to them in English, so they will be used to talking English with us and between themselves.

Today we speak English with our girls while I communicate in Hebrew with my husband. I am sure that when we return to Israel our daughters will acquire the Hebrew, and eventually, they will be bilingual.

But, I am concerned because English is not our native language. I am afraid I will not be able to give my girls a rich and correct language. Yes, sometimes I make mistakes while talking, I am not always sure if I use the right words and constantly wonder if there was not another option of a higher level of English. We are trying hard to enrich our English, mainly by using English most of the time, and lately I joined a children's books group. I am exposed to a new culture, and thus are my girls to whom we read on a regular basis mostly in English. But, I wonder if it is good to raise a child as bilingual when we, the parents, are not native speakers of that language.

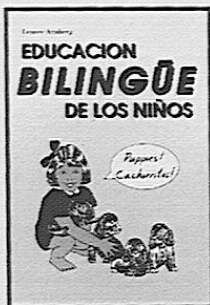
I want to emphasise that there is no miscommunication between us and our girls because both of them are fluent in English and our English is good enough to have a free conversation.

Tova Blay-Sneor, Austin, USA

RAISING CHILDREN BILINGUALLY by Lenore Arnberg is available in:

- Arabic
- English
- Farsi
- Finnish
- Spanish

Details from the BFN Office.



There are many people in the world who do not use their own native language to communicate with their children. This is particularly obvious in countries with high levels of immigration, as in a lot of immigrant families the language of school and the environment also becomes the language of parent-child communication. Children who were young at the time of immigration may arrive in their new country monolingual in the language of the country which they left behind and, after a period of bilingualism, end up monolingual in their new country's language. This would appear to be approximately what your present family situation is.

There are also parents, such as myself, who use a language which is neither their own native language nor the predominant language of environment to communicate with their children. This seems basically to be how you envisage your own family situation when you return to Israel.

No doubt many parents who use a non-native language with their children do at times worry about the quality of the language they are passing on, although probably less so if their children are also receiving plenty of native speaker input outside the home. However, in your case you do say that both your own and your husband's English is fluent. Of course, you will at times become a little frustrated that you cannot express certain things as well in English as in your native Hebrew, but this will be a small price to pay for giving your children a far greater knowledge of English than they would ever obtain from learning the language as a second language at school in Israel. My own children are now aged 20, 18 and 13, and they and I still speak only in German to each other here in Australia, although my native language is English. The standard of their German is high, although it is not in all respects equal to their stronger language, English. They know that I am not a native speaker of German, but this does not trouble them. As we live in a predominantly English speaking environment, we do occasionally have a problem finding appropriate German terminology when talking about certain topics, and it is always satisfying when a particular word is found. Just the other day one of my sons, Thomas, happily informed me that Rettungsdecke (literally 'rescue blanket') was the German for what in English is known as a 'space blanket' or a 'survival blanket' - he has seen the word stamped on such a blanket which had been imported from Germany. (Up until then he had used a literal translation of 'space blanket' in his German.)

My only concern with your 'plan' is that you do not mention exactly how long you have been in the USA or how long it will be before you return to Israel. If it is going to be some time before your return, it would perhaps be advisable to ensure that the children continue to receive some input in Hebrew and get some practice in speaking it, so that they can settle back into their homeland with a minimum of culture shock.

George Saunders

BOOK REVIEW continued from page three.

explaining the function of objects, paraphrasing, rehearsing (e.g. repeating one's own or a child's utterances), eliciting words from the child ('What is this?', 'How do you say that in German?'), modelling techniques (expanding a child's short utterance, supplying a correct form etc.)

In her conclusions, Susanne Döpke writes:

"The results from the present study give reason to believe that the quality of input is more important in the acquisition of a minority language than is the quantity of input when children are raised according to the principle of 'one parent - one language'."

In the final two pages of the book, the author has some recommendations for parents who wish to raise their children bilingually by this method. She points out that great parental effort is involved in raising children to become productive bilinguals. Parents need to create the necessity to speak the minority language by insisting that the children speak it with them. Minority language parents should try to engage in playful activities with their children as much as possible. The author stresses that these are things over which a parent can exert some control and that one's children's active acquisition of a minority language is not completely at the mercy of such uncontrollable factors as the child's temperament or being blessed with ethnic grandparents living nearby.

As one would expect from a doctoral thesis, this book gives a thorough academic discussion of the relevant literature as well as a detailed report of the author's own research methods and findings. For the lay reader, the extent of this detail and the complexity of some of it may appear a bit daunting, but the book certainly contains a wealth of interesting and useful information for those willing to persist.

COPING WITH TWO CULTURES

COPING WITH TWO CULTURES
British Asian and Indo-Canadian Adolescents
P. A. Singh Ghuman



British Asian and Indo-Canadian Adolescents

Paul A. Singh Ghuman

The first chapter is about the history, religion and culture of the people from the India sub-continent. The rest of the book contains analysis and discussion of the data obtained through interviews with young people, parents, teachers and

community leaders on a range of educational and social issues.

Pbk ISBN 1-85359-201-3

176 pages

Price £11.95 (US\$24.95)

FOUNDATIONS OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND BILINGUALISM

Colin Baker

"...Colin Baker's treatment of the subject is truly liberating, because he engages the reader in making informed decisions about bilingualism in individuals, schools and society".

Professor Ofelia Garcia, The City University of New York.

Pbk ISBN 1-85359-177-7

320 pages

Price £11.50 (US\$24.50)

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.

Please send your queries, answers and/or contributions to

Contact details removed

or Marjukka Grover at Multilingual Matters

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 please help to secure the future of this publication by entering their address on the form and we will send them a free sample of a recent issue.

Multilingual Matters
Frankfurt Lodge, Clevedon Hall, Victoria Rd,
Clevedon, Avon, England, BS21 7SJ.
Tel: 0275-876519 Fax: 0275-343096

Vol. 11, No. 2, 1994

From:NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

TOWN.....

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

Please enter a subscription to BFN

☐ £6.00. Overseas £7.00 (US\$14.00)

Payment or authority to charge your credit card must accompany each order.

Please send a copy of the following book(s):

☐ *Coping with Two Cultures* £11.95 (\$24.95)

☐ *Foundations of Bilingual Education* £11.50 (\$24.00)

Remittance enclosed for £/\$.....
(please make your cheques payable to Multilingual Matters)

☐ Charge my Visa/ Access/Master/Euro/American Exp. Card

CardNo.....

ExpiryDate.....

Signature.....

Please send a sample copy of BFN to:

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

Country:.....PostCode:.....

GLOSSARY

Ambilingual/ Equilingual: Person who has an exactly equal command of two languages and would pass as a native speaker in both. This form of bilingualism is rare as it is unusual to have an equally good vocabulary in both languages in all possible topics.

The following people would like to get in touch with either same combination language families or other bilingual families in their area.

Contact details removed

HELP, HELP, HELP !!!

Resource File

We would like to up-date our resource file, which gives information on bilingual schools, saturday schools, intercultural societies, publishers and book shops providing minority language material etc. If you have any information you think might be useful for other bilingual families, please let us know.

We are particularly interested in books on how to raise children bilingually, written in a language other than English (see page 7 for *Raising Children Bilingually*). If you know of any please send us the bibliographic information (title, author, publisher, publication date) for a resource list to be published in one of the future issues.