



Bilingual Options

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Back in action and available

I am back from this year's winter escape. The volunteer part of our trip took place in Bangladesh this year, in a Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (<http://www.crp-bangladesh.org/>). It was an amazing place, a calm refuge in busy Savar (close to Dhaka) and a prime example of barriers for people with disabilities can be broken down. We still have to submit our profiles to the website, ie. you won't find my husband and myself there yet.

Speech Pathology is a very new field in Bangladesh and none of the senior staff has been working for more than 5 years. They are immensely grateful for the support from more experienced overseas colleagues, which they have been receiving over the years. I also supported the teachers in the on-campus inclusion school. Most of the children I worked with were born with cerebral palsy.

My husband worked as a general volunteer, helping with proof reading documents written in English. He too had a lovely time meeting Bangladeshis and fellow volunteers. Volunteering adds a magical component to one's travel experience.

Language was a problem, both for work and for moving around in the community. But help was readily available from Bangladeshis with various abilities with English. If we stood around looking puzzled, someone would always come up to us.

I also learned a bit of Bangla, mostly while observing adults interacting with children. Learning language like a child was a most amazing experience. It was so much fun to learn while playing, and I remembered best what I learned that way. It had its limitation when I was out and about in the

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community though. Thus I had to be super creative with my few words, changing "give me the ball" to "give me information" etc. Very limited language skills are such a fun adventure in themselves.

Once again we were overwhelmed by the kindness of people. Traveling was complicated a bit by political unrest, but with local advice we were able to adjust our usual backpacking a bit and had a lovely time visiting the beautiful countryside as well.

Now that I am back, I am available to see families for speech and language therapy again or support you with your family's particular language situation. Feel free to send me an email or give me a ring if you would like to make an appointment.



Free parent seminar in Melbourne

RAISING CHILDREN IN MORE THAN ONE LANGUAGE.

A FREE seminar for parents, early childhood and pre-school workers, grandparents, teachers and others interested in bilingual education.

When: Sunday December 7, 12:30pm – 5pm

Where: Carrillo Gantner Theatre, Sidney Myer Asia Centre, Cnr Swanston St and Monash Rd, University of Melbourne

Speakers: Dr. Susanne Döpke, Prof. John Hajek, Dr Averil Grieve

Raising children in more than one language is a very important process. There are many positive strategies that can be employed. The sessions in this seminar discuss issues in raising children bilingually, show you how to recognise your child's needs in the language and provide you with important tools to foster your child's language learning and maximise the advantages available to you.

THE SEMINAR IS FREE BUT PRE-REGISTRATION IS ESSENTIAL.

TO REGISTER PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.rumaccc.unimelb.edu.au

What you can do:

- Tell any friends or family you feel would benefit from our seminar about it. You can forward this flyer or direct them to our website to download it: www.rumaccc.unimelb.edu.au
- Promote the seminar in your sphere of influence, inc. at your school, day care centre, community, local government area, and local library.
- Encourage parents and those interested in early language and/or bilingualism to attend.

For more information on the seminar schedule and the content of the sessions you can also go to the following Bilingual Options link: <http://www.bilingualoptions.com.au/constkpa07-12-14program.htm>



Christmas markets

This time of the year, many ethnic communities run Christmas markets. This may be your opportunity to find used books and videos for your children, as well as meet other families who speak your language with their children. It may be well worth your while to google that.

I have received an invitation for the Christmas market of the Deutsche Schule Melbourne on Friday November 28th from 5pm to 9pm . Address: 96 Barkly Street (corner Dean Street)

North Fitzroy, VIC 3068. All are welcome!

For more information about the Christmas market at the German school go to:

<http://www.dsm.org.au/en/news/news/281-dsm-christmas-market-2014>



Multilingual Parenting Group in LinkedIn

Naomi Bulliard (EU Research & Enterprise Coordinator at University of the Arts in London,) manages a group on LinkedIn called 'Multilingual Parenting'. It is an open group for parents and linguists to share expertise, discuss questions, concerns and tips on raising bilingual children. There are 500 or so members and all benefit from at least passively engaging with each other's discussions.

□ This is the link: www.linkedin.com/groups/MULTILINGUAL-PARENTING-2020514 or contact Naomi directly: multilingualparenting@googlemail.com



Reader feedback

I am still a big fan - I saw you speak in May 2010. I was so inspired, I began speaking my second language (French) with my children (at that time I had two). I now have four children, all four of whom speak French with me all the time and English with their father. I have recently relocated to Jakarta. Having seen my son at nearly four years old move from only speaking English to now reading Roald Dahl novels in French, I believe it is never too late. I have asked everyone involved with our children to only ever speak Indonesian with them - the kids love it and have had no issue taking on a third language! I recently met a lady at my children's school, she is Bulgarian but has only spoken English with her daughters for the last two years, which she was really sad about. I told her all about your presentation and your ideas, starting with a half hour of play or reading time each day - she has begun doing 'Bulgarian time' with them every day and she is SO excited. Back at home in Melbourne, one of my close friends has begun speaking only French with her two children (it is her second language), they are absolutely loving it as a family. Your word about raising children to be bilingual spreads!

Response: Thank you so much for sharing your story. I am very excited about your success as well. I bet what your children and the children of your friends love is the play time that comes with their parents' aspirations.



"Sum of bilingual baby's ability equal to others"

<http://www.abc.net.au/science/articles/2012/02/20/3435085.htm>

Babies who are raised in homes where more than one language is spoken may appear to talk later than those learning just one language, leaving parents puzzled and concerned as to the reasons why. But they need not worry says one US researcher.

Conventional wisdom often suggests that bilingual children are confused and so they take longer to talk. Or, parents may hear that any apparent delay is just an illusion because kids are little geniuses who can learn many languages quickly and easily.

"Both of these views are wrong," says University of Florida Atlantic psychologist Erika Hoff who is presenting at the American Association for the Advancement of Science meeting in Vancouver.

"It is not the case that hearing two languages confuses the child and impairs their ability to acquire anything. But it is also not the case that children can magically acquire two languages as quickly as one."

Instead, psychologists should take a different approach to testing young children, one that measures their proficiency in both languages instead of just one.

When that is done, researchers typically find that the two tests add up to about the same level of proficiency as would be seen in a baby who is learning a single language.

"Children who are exposed to two languages ... must hear less of each language than a child who hears only one and so it takes them longer to get the same amount of experience with each language," says Hoff, whose research has focused on highly educated bilingual Spanish-English families in south Florida.

Merits of self-reporting

Two kinds of tests have existed for decades - the Language Development Survey and the MacArthur Bates Communicative Development Inventory - in which parents answer questions about which words their child knows and how many word combinations the child has at around age two.

Since their inception decades ago, both paper-and-pencil surveys have been adapted into different languages, with as many as 20 variations of the LDS and more than 60 of the MacArthur Bates now out there, say researchers.

This low-tech approach has proven superior to modern methods, says Philip Dale, professor of speech and hearing sciences at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

"Despite an understandable scepticism you might have about the ability of parents with limited training and a natural pride in their child, parent-report can be quite an accurate measure," said Dale.

Leslie Rescorla, professor of psychology at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania, who devised the LDS in the 1980s, agrees that surveys can be very effective in identifying late-talkers by 24-30 months of age.

In the LDS, parents are given a 310-word checklist, and are asked to mark which words their child says. Average children have about 150 words at that age, and late talkers have 25-50.

Rescorla presented research on new versions of the LDS distributed in Greece, South Korea and the Netherlands, which showed similar results as have been seen in the United States.

For instance, eight per cent of Greek children surveyed were found to be late-talkers, compared to nine per cent of US children.

Highlights other disorders

Knowing whether a child is a late-talker is important because it may point to disorders that could be helped with early intervention, such as autism, hearing loss, or mental impairment, says Nan Bernstein Ratner, professor of hearing and speech sciences at the University of Maryland.

"Late-talkers are at high risk for other developmental problems," says Ratner.

"If you have children who have problems with language and with reading, we have children who will not succeed in society."

Previous research has shown that as many as 20 per cent of all children are late-talkers, but many of them are simply "late-bloomers" who catch up by age five years, adds Ratner.

"About four-fifths of children will recover. The problem is we don't know which ones, so if you don't have a crystal ball it is much better to catch them at age two and to start tracking them, rather than to wait and see what happens."

When it comes to bilingual babies, Hoff urges parents to take advantage of the second-language tests out there, rather than worry about the child's poor scores in a single survey which is missing the full extent of the child's knowledge.

"Because these inventories are available in multiple languages, you can often assess what they know in both languages," she says.

"When you do that, the bilingually developing children look exactly like the monolingually developing child. They are acquiring total language knowledge at the same rate."



I hope you enjoyed this newsletter and will have lots of fun playing, talking reading and going places with your children,

Susanne