

The Bilingual Family

A handbook for parents

Second Edition

Edith Harding-Esch and Philip Riley



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Contents

<i>The authors</i>	<i>page xi</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>xiii</i>
<i>Part I A survey of the issues</i>	<i>1</i>
1 Children and language	3
<i>What do children use language for?</i>	<i>3</i>
1.1 Building up relationships	3
1.2 Exchanging information	5
1.3 Thinking	6
1.4 Playing with words	7
1.5 Communicating while learning	8
<i>Some general ideas about language</i>	<i>10</i>
1.6 'Languages' and 'dialects'	10
1.7 The written language and the spoken language	11
1.8 Change	12
1.9 Levels of language	13
1.10 Varieties of language	16
1.11 Acquiring a language	18
2 What is bilingualism?	22
2.1 Some definitions of bilingualism	22
2.2 'Elitist' bilingualism and 'folk' bilingualism	23
2.3 Different kinds of bilingual societies	26
2.4 Bilingualism is not rare	28
2.5 National identity and the monolingual state: the example of France, French and the French	28
2.6 'Official' and individual bilingualism	30

3	Some things you should know about being bilingual	33
3.1	Bilingualism is a matter of degree	33
3.2	Compound and co-ordinate bilinguals	39
3.3	Age of acquisition	42
3.4	Sharing two cultures	45
4	The development of the bilingual child	50
	<i>Simultaneous acquisition</i>	50
4.1	Types of bilingual families	51
4.2	Similarities in development between bilinguals and monolinguals	54
4.3	Separating the two languages	55
4.4	Awareness of being a bilingual	61
4.5	Code-switching and translation	63
4.6	A 'born translator'?	67
	<i>Successive bilingualism</i>	69
4.7	Is a second language learnt in the same way as the first?	70
	<i>Bilingualism and intelligence</i>	73
5	What will influence your decision whether to bring up your children as bilinguals?	77
	<i>Questions you should ask yourself</i>	77
5.1	What is your own language background and history?	77
5.2	What language(s) do you speak to one another?	78
5.3	How do you use your respective languages?	79
5.4	Who is going to look after your child?	79
5.5	What are your attitudes towards your own language?	81
5.6	What contacts do you have with the rest of the family?	82
5.7	What are the languages concerned?	83
5.8	What means of support are available for maintaining the language?	86
5.9	Would you have to change the way you communicate with one another?	86
	<i>Reaching a decision</i>	87
5.10	Some 'golden rules'	87
5.11	Assess your own situation	88
	Questionnaire	89

<i>Part II Case studies: a number of bilingual families, and how they did it</i>	93
Case Study 1: English as a 'father tongue'	96
Case Study 2: Playing it by ear	97
Case Study 3: Bilingualism begins at the front door	99
Case Study 4: Conversational switching strategy	102
Case Study 5: Travelling light – bilingualism as basic baggage	104
Case Study 6: Biculturalism, yes; bilingualism, no	106
Case Study 7: Family roots first – one parent, one language	108
Case Study 8: My home is my (linguistic) castle	109
Case Study 9: 'Kids' lib' – accepting one's children's linguistic independence	111
Case Study 10: Traces from childhood	113
Case Study 11: A cultural heritage – one parent, one language	116
Case Study 12: Two homes, two languages, two cultures	118
Case Study 13: Easy come, easy go	120
Case Study 14: Determination – and a sense of humour	124
Case Study 15: Language as religious and social identity	127
Case Study 16: Bilingualism – and a better life	128
Case Study 17: Single parent, two languages	130
Case Study 18: Bilingualism in a 'reconfigured' family	131
 <i>Part III An alphabetical reference guide</i>	 135
Accent	137
Age	137
Aptitude	139
Baby talk	140
Biliteracy	141
Code-switching	142
Colours	144
Correcting	144
Counting	145
Dictionaries	146
Doctors – and other 'authorities'	147
Dreams	148
Gesture – and non-verbal communication in general	150
Internet	151

Interpreting and translating	152
Mixing	153
Names	155
Nationality	156
Other languages	156
Reactivation of dormant languages	158
Reading	158
Refusing to speak the language	159
School	161
Script / Writing system	164
Spelling	165
Stuttering	167
Swearing	169
Television	171
Very young children	173
Visitors	175
Writing	176
<i>Quotations</i>	177
<i>Recommended resources</i>	178
<i>Bibliography</i>	180
<i>References</i>	181
<i>Index</i>	188