

Bilingual Japan

バイリンガル通信

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JALTバイリンガリズム分科会ニューズレター
The Newsletter of the JALT
Special Interest Group on Bilingualism



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Call for volunteers! Vacancies are always open for editor positions - duties involved liaising with case study contributors, and conducting open peer review/feedback for articles. Volunteers should be JALT members, and ideally B-SIG members. Interested parties, please contact either the Newsletter Editor, Daniel R. Pearce, at pearce@shitennoji.ac.jp, or the B-SIG President, Alexandra Shaitan, at alexshaitan@yahoo.com.

ボランティア募集中！編集委員を常に募集しています。特に和文投稿のフィードバック・投稿募集ができる方は大歓迎です。B-SIG 会員であることは望ましいが、バイリンガル通信に貢献できると思ったらニュースレター編集者のピアース・ダニエル (pearce@shitennoji.ac.jp) あるいは、分科会コーディネーターAlex Shaitan (alexshaitan@yahoo.com) まで連絡をください。

Contribute to *Bilingual Japan* ・バイリンガル通信への投稿募集

Bilingual Japan is the official newsletter of the Bilingualism Special Interest Group (B-SIG) of the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT). The purpose of this publication is to provide B-SIG members with articles and reports about bilingualism research and bilingual life and/or child-raising in Japan. *Bilingual Japan* also provides information about recent B-SIG activities. While submissions are only currently accepted in either English or Japanese, the content of submissions is *not* limited to Japanese-English bilingualism – **all topics related to bilingualism in Japan, regardless of the specified language, are more than welcome.**

「バイリンガル通信」は、全国語学教育学科 (JALT) バイリンガリズム分科会 (B-SIG) の公式ニュースレターです。本誌は、日本におけるバイリンガル研究およびバイリンガルの生活または育児に関する記事やレポートを、B-SIG 会員に提供することを目的としています。また、B-SIG の最近の活動についても紹介しています。投稿言語については、現時点では日本語と英語による投稿しか受け付けていませんが、**内容に関しては日英以外のバイリンガリズムに関する投稿は歓迎です。**

The content of this newsletter depends on contributions from its readers. All SIG members and other interested parties are invited to submit articles or reports for inclusion in these pages. Start by writing about your family's experience or something about bilingual parenting that concerns you. Even if you feel that what you have to say is trivial, there is always someone who will be interested. Everyone has a story to tell, and we look forward to hearing yours.

「バイリンガル通信」は、読者の皆様からの投稿に支えられています。どんな立場であろうと、読者から寄稿を常に募集しております。学術雑誌ではないので、ご自身やご家族の体験、バイリンガル育児や教育について、関心のあることや疑問を持つことがあれば、とりあえず書いてみて、気軽に投稿してください！些細なことでも、興味を持ってくれる人は必ずいます。寄稿をお待ちしています。

Manuscript Guidelines ・原稿要領

Please consult the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7th edition, as a style guide. Refer to recent issues of the JALT Bilingualism SIG Newsletter for instances of layout and referencing. (Editors and co-editors are here to help with this process – we welcome all voices, so please do not feel intimidated by academic conventions of if you are not used to them).

和文投稿に関して、決まった様式がありません。投稿の問い合わせは、編集者のピアース・ダニエル (pearce@shitennoji.ac.jp) まで。

Bilingual Japan ・バイリンガル通信 invites a wide variety of submissions to columns that are not necessarily included in every newsletter. Columns are listed below, and contributors with ideas for submissions should feel free to consult with the editor(s) about proposals – we welcome any and all voices that contribute to the bilingual community.

投稿コラムについては、毎回出版するものではなく、投稿がある際に、筆者と編集者の相談の上に乗せています。コラム内容については以下をご参照ください。

Regular Columns ・ レギュラーコラム

(1,000~3,000 words または 1500 字~5000 字程度)

• Case Studies ・ 事例 (ケーススタディ)

See a detailed description on page 5. (和文詳細が準備中ですが、和文寄稿は歓迎します)。

• Children's Resources (& Young Adult Book Reviews) ・ 児童 (またはヤングアダルト) 向けリソース紹介/書評等

A column about books, magazines, and other resources for bilingual children in Japan, including: reviews and recommendations, information about where to get the resources, offers of resources to exchange, or give free to a good home (no sales, please) and calls for help from B-SIG members interested in producing their own children's resources. Please send submissions to the column editor, Daniel Pearce at pearce@shitennoji.ac.jp.

日本のバイリンガル児童 (またはヤングアダルト) 向けの本や雑誌、その他のリソースについて、レビュー (書評) やおすすりめ情報を紹介するためのコラムです (ただし、販売はご遠慮ください)。また、リソース制作企画等の協力募集も受け付けます。投稿当は、コラム編集者の Daniel Pearce (pearce@shitennoji.ac.jp) までお送りください。

• Resources Column ・ 一般リソース/書評等

Readers are encouraged to submit book reviews and introductions to materials that have relevance to bilingualism. Word count is not prioritized – submissions should include introductions of resources that could be beneficial to the bilingual (and emergent bilingual) community.

バイリンガリズムに関連する書評や資料の紹介の寄稿をも歓迎します。特に投稿基準は設けていませんが、バイリンガルコミュニティにとって有益な資料の紹介の投稿を期待しています。

• Voices ・ バイリンガルの聲

Readers are encouraged to submit both interviews and first-hand accounts of bilingualism in Japan. *Voices* includes (but is not limited to) experiences of individual bilinguals in Japan, novice researchers, graduate students, educational practitioners, and bilingual professionals. Submissions should have a clear message that should contribute to the community and should be relatively short (around 1,000 words). Frustrations are also voices – articles that reasonably point out the struggles of bilinguals are also welcome! Voices surrounding **Japanese+language-other-than-English are welcome**. Submissions to Daniel R. Pearce: pearce@shitennoji.ac.jp.

日本におけるバイリンガリズムについて、インタビューや生の声 (経験談など) をお寄せください。「バイリンガルの聲」には、一般人のバイリンガル体験、大学院生、教育実践者、バイリンガル専門家のつぶやきなどの、幅広い投稿を募集しています。投稿は、バイリンガルコミュニティに貢献する目標の、比較的短いもの (1500~2000 字程度) を想定しています。バイリンガル (あるいはバイリンガル関係者) の葛藤・苦勞等のおつぶやきも受け付けます。日英だけでなく、日+英語以外の言語の投稿は大歓迎です。投稿は、ピアース・ダニエル (pearce@shitennoji.ac.jp) まで。

• Current Research & Interests

A venue to keep readers up-to-date with links, news, and/or new research in bilingualism. Submissions should generally be summaries of relatively new trends in bilingualism, preferably kept

to under 1,000 words, and accessible to general members. Any relevant topics to bilingualism (with particular consideration to the Japanese context) will be considered. Please send submissions to the column editor, Shaitan Alexandra at alexshaitan@yahoo.com

バイリンガルに関するリンク、ニュース、研究などの最新情報を読者に提供するためのコラムです。投稿は、バイリンガリズムに関する比較的新しい動向の要約や紹介を、2,000字以内とし、一般会員がアクセスできるものとします。投稿は、コラム編集者のシャイタン・アレキサンドラ (alexshaitan@yahoo.com) までお送りください。

Feature Articles ・ 論文/短報/記事

These articles are longer and/or deal with topics not covered by the Regular Columns. No specific word limit, but submissions should adhere to a semi-academic standard. Questions regarding submissions should be directed to the newsletter editor.

レギュラーコラムに該当しない準学術論文的な記事の投稿です。字数制限は設けませんが、寄稿に関してはニュースレター編集者まで問い合わせください。

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE: February 15th

次号の投稿期限：2月15日

Guidelines for Case Study Articles・事例（ケーススタディ）の投稿要領

（以下が英文論文の要領。和文投稿に関しては、編集者のピアース・ダニエルが問い合わせを常時受けつけております。和文要領は、今後のニュースレターに詳述を記載する予定）。

The goal of a case study is to show how the process of teaching* and acquiring a minority language and culture is carried out in individual cases. Writers should clearly explain to the reader the relevant information regarding the main characters of the story, the situation that these characters came from and/or are presently in, and the strategies and methods used to advance toward the stated goal. While a case study is usually written by a parent about that parent's child or children, any contributor who is suitably informed about a particular situation is eligible to submit an article for publication.

Obviously, contributors should keep in mind their audience. Most Bilingualism SIG members (numbering over 200, all of whom receive three online issues annually) have various years of experience in this field. Many joined the SIG when their children were young, hoping to learn how to raise their children to be bilingual, bi-literate, and bicultural. A contributor should strive to contribute to our readers' desire to know and learn, keeping in mind that our members have a wide range of personal backgrounds, current family circumstances, and material and social resources.

* (Terms such as 'teaching', 'teachers', 'learning', etc. are used broadly in these guidelines and can/do include people, practices, and experiences beyond a traditional school environment.)

Submission guidelines:

It is advisable to check with the editors before writing your article. It is best to propose an idea or an abstract and then proceed upon the editors' feedback. Reading past case studies is advisable.

Deadlines are the middle of February, May, and October. Articles should be 1500-3000 words, though exceeding the upper cap, within reason, can usually be accommodated. In certain circumstances, much longer articles are accepted but may be split into two parts, appearing in successive issues. Check with the editors on this.

Editorial guidelines:

Case studies in this newsletter are generally not academic in nature. Rather, they are a focused narrative on the real experiences of people in specific situations. References to research and theory, if used at all, should be used sparingly. Many case studies are fine without such references. However, meandering narratives will be rejected or sent back for revision. Articles should convey a clear story that reveals the efforts and outcomes towards teaching and learning of the target language and/or culture, whether successful or not.

Article structure:

- Introduction

This first part of your article should provide the relevant information about the 'teachers' and 'learners' (often the parents and children) – demographics, past and current residencies, education history, language abilities, teaching strategies and methods, lifestyle and social circumstances, etc. Pseudonyms are acceptable but should be acknowledged. A thesis statement of sorts should be included to alert the reader to the direction and scope of the article.

- Body

This section should clearly deal with the main events of the article. Convey the steps taken to address the problems stated in the (so-called) 'thesis statement' and the results of those steps. This is sometimes the most personal part of an article, and conveying the thoughts, feelings, and behavior of the participants towards successes or failures can be powerful. Be fair, be accurate, and be honest.

Typically, there is a third party involved in a case study -- a teacher, principal, a school, family member, a 'Saturday School' board member' etc. It is beneficial to the reader to explain this party's position and behavior adequately and honestly.

Details matter. Explain the methods you use in enough detail to give the reader a sense of how that method worked in those circumstances. For example, methods might include reading English books at bedtime, Skype sessions with cousins back home, Saturday school projects, daily 'English-only' periods,

or home-school routines. Helpful detail would include any ‘spin-off’ activity *vis a vis* bedtime reading; particulars of Skype sessions, i.e., do the kids just ‘wing it’ or are talking points set up beforehand? What is the proficiency or ‘success’ of the exchanges? What excites kids in Saturday Schools to do mid-week English homework in preparation for the Saturday lesson? What are the social benefits of such an arrangement? For periods where ‘English-only’ is in effect, how does the child respond? Do all siblings, or spouse, participate? To what effect?

- Conclusion

Wrap up your article by briefly summarizing the wins and losses, what you have learned, and the path forward in the long and winding road ahead.

In the end, as a case study contributor, you are a storyteller. As always, good stories have drama, suspense, protagonists who struggle, antagonists who thwart, success, failure, humor, irony, courage, uncertainty, etc. Most importantly, good stories always connect with the reader. Your reader will be much like you -- having much on the line, such as a precious child who they dearly want to succeed in life. Your story will resonate with them. Tell it well.

Contacts:

Case study editor:

Ian Downer - downerian@gmail.com

Newsletter editor (ニュースレター編集者：和文投稿は以下のアドレスまで):

Daniel R. Pearce (ピアース・ダニエル) – pearce@shitennoji.ac.jp

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE: February 15th

次号の投稿期限：2月15日

President's Message • 会長挨拶

Dear Bilingualism SIG Members!

I hope this message finds you well despite being the busiest time of the academic year! Firstly, we would like to thank BSIG Officers (<https://www.bsig.org/officers>) along with **ALL** our Special Interest Group members who have been contributing to the Bilingualism SIG successful activities through long-term membership, presenting and sharing their research and lived experiences at the PanSIG and JALT Bilingualism SIG Forums, and SIG events related to bi-/multilingualism and bi-/multiculturalism, submitting articles and book reviews to the SIG's newsletter and the JJMM Journal, and other various contributions.

It was nice seeing some of you at the BSIG AGM and Forum at the The 50th Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT) International Conference in Shizuoka. The discussions were rather productive, and I learned a lot from participants' feedback.

I look forward to working with our newly elected Programme Chair Niko Catharine Watanabe Schultz, who has been incredibly supportive of the BSIG over the years. Thank you very much to all members for having voted for the BSG Decision-Making Team of 2024-2025.

We look forward to making next year's election and nomination process more transparent so that all members can nominate themselves or others for the positions of a SIG Officer or for any other role. At the same time, we thank **YOU all** for your support and look forward to hearing from you! Please e-mail Alexandra Shaitan at alexshaitan@yahoo.com if you would like to join the DMT and get involved in the SIG's activities more actively.

I am delighted to let you know that I have submitted our SIG annual report, and the results suggest that our SIG was able to retain its voting SIG status, thanks to your hard work and participation in all JALT activities.

We welcome all members' thoughts and proposals related to the SIG's activities and events. Please do send us an email and we would be happy to respond as soon as we can.

Meanwhile, I have already been attending PanSIG 2025 meetings and submitted a Bilingualism SIG participation proposal. We will be in touch with all members asking for your support in representing BSIG in different roles.

We thank Newsletter contributors Lisa Yamagata and Frankie Lafferty for their contributions to the current issue. Daniel Pearce Roy, our Newsletter Editor has shared wonderful news with readers and we look forward to supporting Daniel.

Happy winter holidays to you and your loved ones. Stay healthy and safe, and have loads of fun throughout the winter break!

Best wishes,

Shaitan Alexandra

Bilingualism SIG President

Case Studies • 論文/短報/記事

Submissions should be directed to Ian Downer: downerian@gmail.com

事例（ケーススタディ）の投稿は上記のメールアドレスまで。

Reading Across Cultures

Lisa Yanagida

So, you want to learn a language and delve into a new culture? Consider getting your feet wet first by reading a book from the country of your target language, and discover common attitudes, cultural themes, expressions, and thought processes from different communities.

Background

Born in Tokyo, Japan to an American mother and Japanese father, I have always lived a multicultural lifestyle. My origins led me to study anthropology with an emphasis on Linguistics and English as a Foreign Language at Indiana University and Australian National University. I continued my studies in cross-cultural relations and management by attaining a master's in applied leadership and management at Arizona State University. I have lived in the United States, Australia, Japan, and Rwanda, and I have experienced illiteracy in countries rich with literature which has made me determined to 'crack the code' – one that is not only limited to foreign languages, but even one's own mother tongue.

Overview

I embarked on a stationary journey to read 'across the world' by selecting a book from every country. While I didn't have strict guidelines since this is a personal project, I wanted to learn more about other countries and communities from an insider's perspective. If the specific country is impactful because of cultural knowledge in a fictional narrative, I count it. If the main character is a certain nationality and their cultural perspective is crucial to their choices and actions that drive the plot, I also count it. I am not particularly interested in travelers on vacation or the exoticism of a country as a backdrop for the main character, especially if the country nationals are not key players in the events.

I primarily read in English to relax, but I also read in Japanese, German, Spanish, and French. My fluency levels are variable in these languages, so I will primarily be discussing books written in, or translated into, English. I used a free library application called Libby to borrow books and read book recommendations from friends and then buy the books on Kindle.

Benefits

When a traveler goes to a new place, they absorb information by osmosis when they interact in their new setting. Readers can learn about the type of government, societal values, and religious influences, among other cultural items as they follow the main character in their journey. One author, Lea Ypi, describes her childhood in Albania and the struggles she faced as the country became a post-communist society. Fictional books can also give rich insight with ‘setting as a character’, as it often impacts the story’s development. Magical realism or science fiction can reveal deep cultural associations and values, especially with creation myths or the author’s religious upbringing and values.

Inspiration

One theme can spark interest in another topic, leading to natural learning. Going down this rabbit hole has led me from reading about Middle Eastern relations to Islamic belief to the creation of Buddhism to Jorge Mario Bergoglio, better known as St. Francis, the current pope of the Catholic Church. In the book, *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*, William Kamkwamba’s natural curiosity is piqued after he reads a battered physics book from the library and is inspired to build a windmill to help his family gain reliable, cheap energy. Recently, there has been a publishing trend of attaching recipes at the end of narratives,

so readers can try the foods described in the story. Harini Nagendra includes an Indian date dessert often eaten by the police chief while he is solving crimes in *The Bangalore Detectives Club*. Rabia Chaudry includes multiple recipes in her memoir, *Fatty Fatty Boom Boom*, because it connects her to family and culture in Pakistan. My taste buds have been delighted after reading about new cuisine and combining country flavor profiles in my own cooking – my *pièce de résistance* being Yemeni Khubz, a flatbread similar to pizza dough with a Moroccan-inspired pizza sauce in the style of an Italian calzone.

Accessing Genres

Delving into the world of fiction is a pleasure, from German *Krimis* (crime stories) to Greek mythology and Native American folklore. Readers can also access broader topics like music, poetry, and parables. The Sufi poet, Jalal al-Din Rumi, writes shorter verses with clever, humorous twists that delight, and translators have been very skilled at keeping his light and playful tone. Additionally, by exploring nonfiction genres and themes, readers can break their routine. Juvenile nonfiction is also great for gaining a general understanding of a new topic, especially when reading in a foreign language, because it still includes facts in easy-to-understand terms.

Empathy

Building empathy and perspective has been my key goal of this project. Many people do not have the opportunity to become intimately aware of other cultures through personal connections, but reading can open doors to thinking about new situations, even themes like war, religion, and overcoming conflict.

Tales of immigrants searching for peace, work, economic opportunities, reunification, and education are universal. As a result, I have come across many tales of refugees, forced migration, and escape during this project. From North Korean women fleeing to South Korea to avoid starvation in an oppressive regime to an Afghani child bride escaping with her sister wife, these topics can be considered taboo. One story had regular bombings as a Syrian medical student tried to fund passage for her pregnant sister-in-law after losing her entire family. Another story reported on a Honduran boy risking a dangerous trek to the U.S. to reunite with his mother as she worked for financial prosperity. Purposely seeking out stories that humanize immigrants can potentially reduce fear in homogenous communities, especially in a time where media highlights differences to create fear.

Challenging Stereotypes

In her acclaimed TED talk, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie describes the ‘danger of a single story’, where one story is repeated ad

nauseum and eventually creates a stereotype. Gaining access to minority cultures from community members, rather than historically dominant or outsider perspectives, gives an authentic voice to people with real experiences. Preconceptions of enslaved people are often singular in the quest for freedom. In the book *Island Queen*, the main character Dorothy Kirwan Thomas rises from slavery, emancipates herself and her family, and becomes a wealthy woman. Based on a real person, her story spans the Caribbean islands and details the path she took to transcend her past. By reading more stories of immigration, love, and human nature from different cultures, readers can challenge refugee stereotypes, discuss conflict resolution, and become better informed.

Language benefits

English learners often use circumlocution to express their ideas in cases when they are missing a keyword in English. Alternatively, translated English generates unique phrases because of language nuance and idiomatic differences. Because I come from a Western education, I am always surprised when wealth is measured in cows (Africa) or camels (the Middle East) or a ‘sultan’ or ‘emperor’ appears instead of the term ‘king.’ I primarily read in English, and I have noticed a diversity of voices appears because of historical connections to English colonialism. With language referring to identity, some people might prefer one term

over the other (Black versus Black American versus African American or Hispanic vs Latinx). Regional variation, turn of phrase, loan words, and idioms can be an important way to challenge your own language usage and pronunciation while at the same time confronting your own habits and culture.

Foreign Language Reading

The function of my languages differs and contributes to how I interact with reading materials. I chose appropriate materials in my languages (Japanese, German, Spanish, and French) at my learning level. Just like with young readers, materials need to be graded for appropriate word, sentence, and compositional level. With a fleeting knowledge of Spanish, I read a formulaic and easy to understand overview on the people and culture of Venezuela that was purposely written for foreign language readers. Because it did not use slang or difficult phrasing, I was able to practice my target language. With Japanese books, I purposely look for modern slang or idiomatic expressions but avoid historical Japanese terminology. In German and Japanese, I read for gist and main ideas, much like interpreters, instead of translating word for word.

Challenges

Access

This project will look wildly different depending on the reader, which means a

unique experience with each new book. Linguistic background and access to materials could be significantly different from reader to reader. Finding stories with an insider perspective can be surprisingly difficult, especially considering access to materials, cost, and language barriers. There are travel guides aplenty, but I wanted to learn more about culture and literature rather than promotional events or destinations. More than 67 countries use English, not including non-sovereign territories, so there are English language narratives and books available. For someone with a French background, there would be more access to Francophone countries and books in French. But for minority languages and countries without English translations, language barriers arise. Additionally, some cultures have a strong oral tradition compared to written accounts, lack financial resources, or were historically taken advantage of and colonized, so it is harder to find historical accounts and literature in some contexts. I highly recommend local library resources, especially online library applications like Libby, but for those without access to a library, Project Gutenberg is a free source online for books that are in the public domain.

Lost in Translation

Whatever language you choose to read in, the type and availability of translation could limit book selection. Different translation styles affect the reader experience, in

particular, literal ‘word for word’ or free ‘thought for thought’ translation with the translator’s knowledge and skills tested regarding technical terminology, cultural significance, and literary style. To exemplify this, let’s look at the old debate on religious translations. For Muslims, the Qur’an is best read in Arabic because it is closer to Allah. In parallel, reading the Torah in Hebrew is a rite of passage for young Jewish men and women. Even the 17th-century English translation of the King James Bible through to the contemporary English New International Version (NIV) have been criticized for ‘missing verses’ (i.e., less verses than the originals), translation style, and modern influence in word choice. Readers may come across stories with politically incorrect terminology that may show the historical social conventions at that point in time. The skill of the translator is not to be dismissed, especially concerning lyricality and humor.

Story Structure and Darker Themes

Much like real life, not all stories end happily. The structure of a narrative may not look the same depending on the culture, so readers might have to let go of their preconceived notions of story structure. There may not be an inciting incident, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution as is common in western storytelling. East Asian writing styles have been described as circular and with elements of poetry. Native American oral traditions could relay only a fragment of

a story told to teach morals, and similarly, African oral stories could focus on a proverb and audience participation. Middle Eastern storytelling may frame smaller stories within a larger whole like the Qur’an. Readers can examine their own biases and forecasting while reading as they look at the stories of the world.

Because countries do not exist in a vacuum, readers may become aware of uncomfortable histories, especially with colonial connections. It may be shocking to come across darker themes because of past trauma, especially if it is remarked upon as a matter of fact. In one case, Jennifer Teegebäcke (in *My Grandfather Would Have Shot Me*; see bibliography) had to confront her own family tree after learning that she was a descendent of an infamous Nazi leader, despite being a member of a black minority persecuted during the Holocaust. The experiences of a child soldier’s drug addiction or the abuse of street children in Zambia (i.e., in *Walking the Bowl*) can be jarring and rightfully upsetting. Cultural medical interventions, like the topic of assisted dying in Canada (*This is Assisted Dying*), might be taboo. Reading reviews for content warnings may be advised if this is a concern, especially for minors. Ultimately, the reader has the power to select their book and/or continue reading.

In Defense of a Secondary Writer

Depending on the author's literary style, codeswitching or code mixing could be a benefit or barrier to understanding the events in the story, and interviews transcribed in English from can be tedious to read, with unconnected thoughts or broken language. With the help of a second writer, these stories can be shared with easily understood English while remaining authentic and giving credit to the original voice.

I chose to confine my project to insider knowledge with years of personal experience in the culture, environment, and language. Rather than just reading translations, I found journalists and secondary writers who have highlighted unknown stories with interesting interviews and research to create a cohesive story.

In many countries, especially in Europe and Africa, it is common to be multilingual, but at various degrees of fluency because the function of each language can be different. For example, a child in an immigrant family may use one language at school with emphasis on reading and writing, but a second language used with grandparents only functions as spoken language. With the help of a second writer, these voices can be transcribed more faithfully. Isha Sesay, a reporter for CNN, famously interviewed schoolgirls kidnapped and released by Boko Haram in Nigeria. Kidnapped because they chose an education, they were kept hidden for two years before the 21 girls were

released as an effort of 'goodwill' to the Nigerian government. After the disruption in their education, the 21 girls were given the opportunity to continue learning. The reporter, Isha, created a bond with the girls and told their story as they practiced their English to eventually be able to share their own narrative in their own words.

Short on time

Depending on your time availability, it may be difficult to devote your free time to 200 works. Instead, explore works of visual art, animation, music, poetry, theatre, or movies. Many parents, including myself, try to read cultural folktales to their children with colorful picture books. Upon discovering their pregnancies, excited colleagues have asked me to compile a list of English children's books to share with their future bilingual babies. Alternatively, I learned of an embassy worker newly posted to an assigned country asking country nationals to recommend a favored song to learn more local pop culture. A small act now could bridge the gap to a new relationship from someone of a different cultural upbringing.

Conclusion: Beyond My Own Shores

Since starting this project, I have sailed, flown, waded, walked, and ridden the rails to countries that I formerly could not find on a map. I have learned about serious economic hardships, medical interventions, inspirational nonprofits, and societies that

progress and regress repeatedly. Not only have I learned hard facts about history, politics, and culture, but I've gained different perspectives as characters combat their trials. Each book that I open with my own hands is a choice to delve into an unfamiliar world, the ultimate pleasure of reading. I encourage you, your students, and the people in your life to take up their own reading challenge.

Key Points

Benefits

- Inspiration can lead to natural learning.
- Explore genres, especially juvenile nonfiction to demystify lesser-known countries.
- Build empathy reading immigrant and refugee journeys.
- Challenge stereotypes and gain knowledge about minority cultures.

- Confront your own culture while learning cultural, religious, and language differences.
- Learn regional variations, phrases, and nuances in English.

Challenges

- General access to materials, which can involve cost, as many limited release books are expensive, in addition to everyday consideration of, time, availability, etc.
- Translation style ('word for word' or 'thought for thought')
- Story structure and taboo themes, in particular, real-world experiences with trauma
- Seeking insider knowledge versus traveling or expat experience

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Other Resources

Libby Application <https://libbyapp.com/>

Project Gutenberg <https://www.gutenberg.org/>

The Danger of a Single Story by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story

Made in Japan (Saitama)

Frankie Lafferty

Hello. How are you? I'm fine, thank you. O.K., formalities over. Let me get on to the main topic: Bilingual offspring.

Me (being from the Republic of Ireland) and the Mrs. (being from Saitama, Japan) have two children, a boy and a girl – well, not exactly children – both are teenagers now, 17 and 14 years old, respectively.

Their abilities at English are generally strong, although not balanced equally across all skill areas. Regarding listening, speaking, reading, and writing English, they both are stronger in listening descending down to writing. They can watch movies/TV in English and grasp everything. They can talk and chat and even joke in English but can sometimes be lost for words. Our son dislikes reading but our daughter devours books. Their writing is not strong, though. Regarding their Japanese language ability, they both have equivalent ability in Japanese as their peers. And now let me try to describe how they arrived at this situation.

A few days after my son was born, I decided to pop down to Shinjuku's *Kinokuniya* to find a book about how to raise a bilingual child. *Kinokuniya* has a wide range of books, even

academic ones. Lo and behold, I found a goodie. It was in an academic area of said store that I found Suzanne Barron-Hauwaert's *Language Strategies for Bilingual Families: The One-Parent-One-Language Approach* (2004). This laid the groundwork for my family's bilingual journey. Wow! Cool!! Great!!!

Barron-Hauwaert's book is based on surveys from families all over the world who worked hard on trying to raise bilingual and even trilingual children. A great thing about this book is that it does not authoritatively say 'you must do this,' or 'you must do that' to raise a bilingual child. I would say the simple gist of the text is that you should promote the minority language (in our family's case, English) as best as you can. I interpreted this to mean to spend as much time as I could with my young ones, talk to them as much as I could (even if it was nonsense and gibberish) and create an English language environment as best as I could.

I did find other texts through the years about bilingualism and got good information from them – another that stood out was *Growing Up with Two Languages* (Cunningham, 2011).

Next, drawing from my own brain's (admittedly feeble) memory bank, I shall list some points that helped my kiddies to become *bilingualish*:¹

- Visual media: We had no TV, still don't. The kids couldn't get to watch Japanese TV unless they visited their Japanese grandparents. We could watch DVDs on the PC, so they watched, in English, things like *Thomas the Tank Engine* and Disney movies. Rented and bought DVDs really broadened and helped their English. With YouTube we got an even wider selection of things to watch. A show both children enjoyed was *Henry Danger*. They both seem to be good at grasping accents and even imitating them.

- Music: We basically always have music on in our house. The radio is always on, or we have CDs playing. Our kids got exposed to lots of English from songs. I remember my son being shocked as a wee lad listening to 'Hey Joe' by Jimi Hendrix (it's a murder-love song – check it out!). Our daughter listens to and enjoys P!nk, Katy Perry, and currently is really into Olivia Rodrigo (have you heard her lyrics?).

- Books: I was able to stock up on books all the time. *Me da back in Dublin sent us a lot of kiddie books* (My dad, back in Dublin, Ireland,

sent us a lot of children's books). The local Japanese library has lots of good children's books in English. And I took the time to read to them. They pestered me to read bedtime stories, which I did. And I got into the books. When they were young it was simple stuff: *Mr. Men* books, fairy stories, and plenty of picture books. As they got older, I read Roald Dahl and *Harry Potter*. It was a long slog, but worth it.

- People: Another great thing has been people. Lots of people were able to engage with my kids in English, for instance, *Da and Ma* (my parents) and my brother and sister live in Ireland but pop over sometimes to visit, or when we visit home, they all went out of their way to spend time with my children. We became friends with some other similar families, with whom we shared strategies and ideas and anecdotes. My in-laws have also been positive about the kids using English. I recall a friend saying that their spouse and in-laws disapproved of their kids being raised bilingually, and so I'm grateful for my in-laws' support.

- *Kumon*: Our son was not great at reading or writing English until he went to *Kumon*. At home I just could not persuade him to read or write, but when he went to *Kumon* and did English, his reading and writing ability

¹ A personal neologism, which I define as, 'a person who can *kinda* speak two languages *kinda* equally well.

improved a lot – this shows that it’s important to explore multiple strategies in helping your child.

- My profession: I haven’t yet said what I do for a living, have I? I am an ALT (assistant language teacher). And this, too, has been very good for our family – at least I want to believe so. I work and live in the same city. I took my children to and from pre-school as my wife worked far away. I could get weekends and national holidays off as an ALT. I didn’t have to do overtime. We have basically always been able to eat dinner together. All this meant I could spend more time with my kids and expose them to more English.

- A supportive spouse: My wife handles English well. She is able to chat, sing, complain, argue, joke, persuade, and generally speak in English to the kids. She and I are amazed all the time at how effortlessly the two of them can switch from Japanese to English.

So, all this is our story on what we did. I

hope this article can help you on your journey. I can’t claim that our two children could be called ‘perfectly bilingual,’ but they are at the very least *bilingualish!*

There have been lows when I felt unhappy about my kiddies’ ‘mistakes.’ But just now, thinking about the nuance I took from Barron-Hauwaert’s (2024) book, being flexible and creating, to the best of your ability and situation, an environment that exposes your kiddies to as much of the minority language as you can helps a lot, and I think I did my best. I hope this article can give you, the reader, some ideas on how to help your wee ones, too. Good luck!

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Upcoming/Recent Publications

For any B-SIG members, or anyone else who would like to share upcoming or recent publications (be they relevant book publications, articles, or otherwise), please feel free to contact the editor (pearce@shitennoji.ac.jp).

Plurilingual Education in a Monolingualised Nation: Exploring New Frontiers in Language Teaching in Japan (Multilingual Matters) by Daniel Roy Pearce

This book explores alternative approaches to foreign language education in a context which is traditionally dominated by English-only approaches, and widely viewed as highly monolingual. It examines the grassroots classroom practices of teachers, and their assistants, involved in plurilingual education in the first longitudinal research of its type in the Japanese context. These practices are grounded in depictions of the practitioners' personal and professional trajectories through explorations of their visual linguistic autobiographies. The holistic ethnography thus deepens understanding of plurilingualism in a hitherto underexplored context and should be of interest to students and researchers of language teaching, teacher training, language policy, sociolinguistics, and plurilingualism.



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“Analyzing rich multimodal data, Pearce successfully helps readers see a more diverse reality of the country than is commonly believed and offers educational possibilities that can be explored outside the context as well.”
Chika Takahashi,
Ehime University, Japan

 www.multilingual-matters.com

Discount valid for December, 2024

Publication page: <https://www.multilingual-matters.com/page/detail/Plurilingual-Education-in-a-Monolingualised-Nation/?k=9781800417694>

