

SIETAR JOURNAL



Bilingualism in Early Childhood

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Impressum

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SIETAR Journal

Editorial

Bilingualism in early childhood

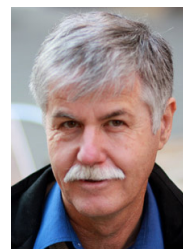
Over the last 20 years or so, much research has been done in the field of bilingual acquisition in early childhood. The more we learn, the more we realize the many misconceptions we have about young bilinguals.

For instance, when people use the term bilingual, it is thought that children become perfectly balanced, that they can do everything similarly in two languages. This, however, is essentially a projection--"I'm fully fluent in one language and, therefore, bilinguals must be fully fluent in two languages."

Upon closer examination, researchers have found that bilinguals tend to use their languages in different places, at different times and with different people. In other words, the two languages serve as different tools for different jobs.

Our interviewee for this issue, Dr. Franck Scola, discusses this and other subjects in an absorbing overview of bilingual childhood. Educated as a medical doctor, his take on the interplay of identity and language acquisition in early life presents us with a refreshing look at our subjective worlds.

On the same theme, we examine how Canada has been attempting to create a unified, bilingual nation since the 1970s. The efforts to enlarge children's language skills provide food for thought.



Dan MacLeod, a product of the bilingual Canadian dream, has written a French-English parable combining a fairy tale about a donkey with her human equivalent.

Lastly, we have a contribution from a young Neapolitan who writes how disinformation (i.e., fake news) in social media has cast a negative light on her city and about attempts to correct this through a more objective presentation of the facts.

Wishing you an enjoyable read,

Patrick Schmidt, Editor-in-chief

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Interview with

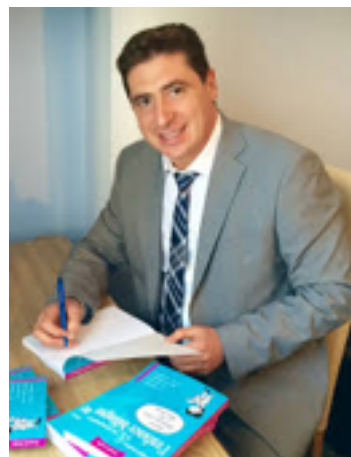
Franck Scola*A rare and unique medical interculturalist*

Until the 1960s, bilingualism was considered harmful to intellectual development. It was thought that a child's brain had space for only one language and overloading it with another would have severe consequences. One journal study in 1926 claimed, "The use of a foreign language in the home is one of the chief factors in producing mental retardation as measured by intelligence tests."

Today hundreds of studies suggest the exact opposite, that speaking more than one language can offer a distinct advantage. Aptitude tests reveal that bilinguals are marginally more competent at problem solving, meta-linguistic awareness and symbol manipulation.

Yet there can be drawbacks when a child is learning two or more languages. This is especially true among migrant children, who are forced to deal with developmental complications that they don't understand, such as emotional and identity changes, cultural attachment and socio-intellectual issues. One person who has devoted many years investigating and treating the problems of bilingual children is Dr. Franck Scola.

A physician, intercultural mediator and graduate in cross-cultural psychiatry, he has vast clinical experience in child bilingualism and wrote the book "Understanding and Nurturing a Bilingual Childhood". In it, he sheds light on how parents can provide a fruitful bilingual education for their child, offer-



ing realistic and practical advice based on concrete research.

He is also an active member of SIETAR, having served many years on the board of SIETAR France. Despite his research, training and patient care, he found time to share his experiences in the following interview.

Tell us what led you to the field of bilingualism?

As a child, I often lived abroad with my family. I noticed that migrant families had problems or medical needs that appeared absolutely unique. When back in France, I was raised in the south, *la Provence*, a culturally- and linguistically-diverse region due to the many immigrants living there.

When I began my medical studies, I wanted to specialize in expatriate problems. This specialization didn't exist at that time. I was fortunate that my school in Marseille allowed me to do my residencies outside of France.

One internship was in Liverpool, England, where I took care of handicapped people for a year. It was a transcultural environment — a French medical student working with British personnel and patients who were Indian, Sri Lankan and Nigerian. And two different medical philosophies, French and British.

When dealing with such patients, you need to go beyond "classic" medicine. It's necessary to know not only the patients' vo-

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Franck Scola

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Part of Franck Scola's childhood was spent in La Provence and Corsica.



cabulary and syntax, but also their cultural context. You need to provide confidence, support and relief and, most importantly, to be understood. These skills can't be improvised. I said to myself, "You need to do cultural studies". So, in addition to medicine, I studied anthropology, sociology and ethnology.

I was interested in the medical care of French expatriates in Rio de Janeiro, which became the subject of my doctoral thesis. Compared to immigrants, expatriates are assumed to be better off because they're well paid and privileged. Yet they also have physical or psychological problems and their anxieties are transferred to the spouse and children.

Over a period of four years, I documented their medico-social problems. But getting them to talk was difficult, it's almost a taboo subject. They had difficulties finding specialists who understood them and there was fear of judgement within the expatriate community and the company. And 38% of the expatriates didn't have medical coverage, surprising because the French are champions of health insurance.

After finishing my studies, I decided to work with expatriate groups in France. There were problems due to a lack of proper medical advice, word-of-mouth among expatriates on possible remedies, doctors, who weren't properly trained, leading to improvise diagnoses and treatments. I was able to demonstrate the need for the medical specificity of international mobility.

In my town, there were 70 expatriate children who were misdiagnosed by speech therapists. They assumed the child spoke the language of the host country without considering the identity strategies come with bilingual language development. Therapists often improvised a diagnosis based on their experiences with monolingual children. I became keenly interested in the development of bilingualism. "Understanding and Nurturing a Bilingual Childhood" was the result of many years of research, practice and reflection.

What I found interesting is how the public has many misconceptions. For example, you write that balanced bilingualism is extremely rare. Could you clarify?

Broadly speaking, it's extremely rare that a bilingual person speaks each language perfectly; there's always a dominance of one over the other. It can depend on context — is the dominant language spoken in the family or in the professional world? It also depends on register, the level of formality with which you speak — are you talking to an expert, such as a doctor, or is it conversational, among friends? Lastly, there is the age at which you were exposed to the languages.

You need to also consider different types of bilingualism, classified according to certain criteria. There is the chronology of learning each language: Was it before age six or later on? Was it simultaneous or consecutive? Another criterion is the ability to understand without speaking, called passive bilingualism. The

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Franck Scola

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In 2008, he theorized the medical specificity in international mobility, which is now recognized within the medical community as a speciality in itself.

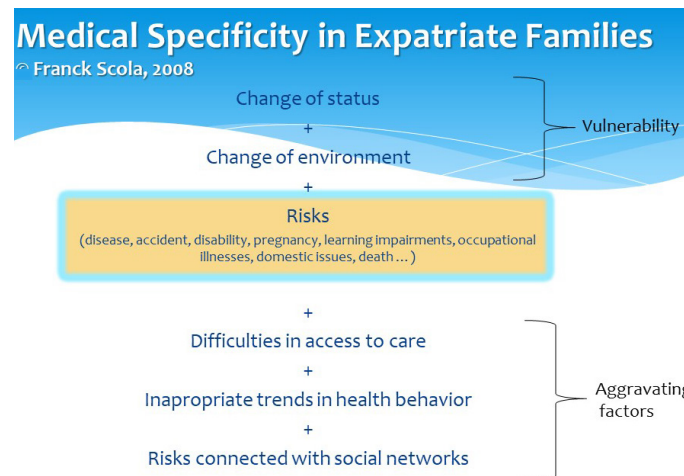
ability to speak both languages is known as active bilingualism.

There's also the link between speech and thought — is it coordinated bilingualism, meaning the individual learns the languages in separate environments? For example, one language at home, via the parents, and a second language at school? Compound bilingualism is when the languages are learned in the same environment, such as a child raised by bilingual parents using both languages.

Most importantly, how does the child live the languages? We need to take into account emotional- and identity-development, cultural attachment, family history, possible migratory experiences, and socio-intellectual environment. There are as many types of bilingualism as there are bilingual individuals.

In your book, you touched on the experiences mixed couples have and how children learn the language of each parent. As you said earlier, one language usually dominates the other. In the case of a child who lives in the country of one of the parents and is more exposed to that language, is there a way parents can make it more equal for the second language?

You need to remember that a bilingual or bicultural education is a matter of choice. There will always be unequal transmission of languages. Each spouse needs to adapt and make concessions when it comes to the goals they wish for their children.



An important point to remember is that language is a cultural good, a community link, a means of expression, an emotion. If a parent and a child share the same spoken language, the implicit, the unspoken and the taboo are more easily expressed, generating emotional proximity.

There are other variations, such as couples living in a third country, where both are foreigners. The choice can vary between trilingualism, bilingualism and monolingualism. Parents need to analyse what is best for the child and the family.

What you've just said reminds me of my own experience. I was raised in Los Angeles. When I was 10, my parents sent me to live with grandparents in a small village in France where nobody spoke English. I didn't speak French but I slowly picked it up. When I came back 16 months later, I was more French than American and was barely able to get out a sentence in English. It took me a long time to get back my American English. What happened here?

The fact that you didn't speak English for a long time meant your communicative competence decreased considerably — it affected your vocabulary, organization of syntax, grammar rules, pronunciation, accent and intonation.

That you felt more French than American is normal; the language you speak most fluently symbolizes the national group

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Franck Scola

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His book "Understanding and Nurturing a Bilingual Childhood" is the fruit of the many illuminating experiences of a practicing doctor



to which you feel affiliated, your identity. Obviously, you attached yourself to France emotionally, which explains the fluency. That it took a prolonged period to re-establish your English meant you had to reconstruct your American identity.

Does speaking two languages fluently as a child mean a person has acquired intercultural competence?

Not necessarily. As I said earlier, language is a cultural good, a community link. Each word or utterance associates an idea or emotion of its own. Admittedly, the benefit of multilingualism is a sense of relativity — each thought is addressed in two languages, two different cultural points of view. But the link between language and culture isn't constant. A child can function competently in the languages and environments he grew up with but, when placed in another country, there's no intercultural flexibility.

Take a French-speaking child who goes to German school in Paris. He speaks both languages and behaves in a culturally-correct manner in both environments. But if he finds himself in Québec, although he can make himself understood, he may not know how to react culturally because North American values are very different from those in France or Germany.

Going on to another aspect of bilingualism, how would you explain research that shows the time elapsed between early Alzheimer's diagnosis and the actual appearance of

the disease is up to five years longer for bilingual people ?

Indeed, there seems to be a correlation between bilingualism and its effect on elderly brains. It suggests that perhaps a chemical reaction happens in the most intimate part of a child's neural structures when the brain has to juggle two or more language systems. But recent studies have shown that cerebral structure changes were not limited to those who were bilingual in childhood but also include those who learned another language in early adulthood.

However it's not only the bilingualism that helps fight Alzheimer's. Singing, playing an instrument, learning poems by heart in childhood also seem to have positive effects. We experience this when an elderly person suddenly recites a poem they learned in childhood perfectly.

You write that language disorders are often misdiagnosed, especially among bilingual children. Could you expound on this?

My approach has always been that of pragmatism, realism, based on recorded facts. I've found all too often it's the directors of international schools, psychologists, doctors, speech therapists who are not trained properly. They have no understanding of the developmental specificities of a child who grows up with several languages

The bilingual child is, more often than not, treated as a

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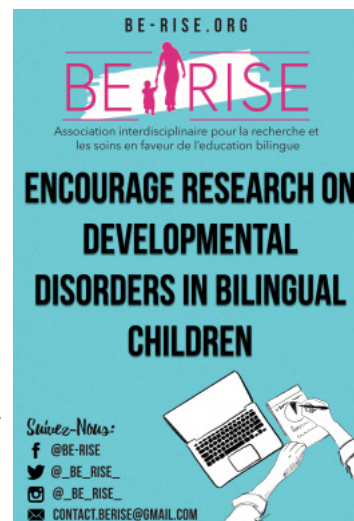
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Franck Scola

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Franck Scola coordinates the scientific committee for bilingual education at the Be-Rise association.



monolingual. And, because there is an absence of consensus, these people base their methods on “general knowledge”, personal experience, reading of publications.

Worse than that is their lack of academic expertise. A speech therapist who has been abroad, a doctor who’s married to a foreigner, a school director who worked in foreign countries think their international experience and good intentions make for an expert diagnostic, which often is pure improvisation.

On top of that, there’s often the idea that speaking two languages makes you more intelligent, which is false. Or that you have to be intelligent to be bilingual, again false. Or that bilingualism opens one’s mind, also not often right. Take the example of raising children in a regional-majority language, as in Catalonia or Quebec, and separatist movements.

Language is something more than a tool of understanding based on grammar, syntax and pronunciation. It’s also a vehicle of socialization, of belonging to a group, a family, a national clan, especially in time of war. This alternative vision has not been taken seriously among the experts.

My goal is to transpose what appears to be subjective into objective facts. There are physiological, psychoanalytical, developmental and emotional aspects that allow us to objectively deconstruct the phenomenon of bilingualism. We’re able to build up

modules that, in turn, can be taught using universal agreed-upon terms. We can then work competently with bilinguals.

I’ve spent 20 years theorizing, creating and designing course curriculums for doctors, speech therapists, nurses and psychologists and I hope to continue this work for the next 20 years.

How do you see SIETAR at present and in the future?

From my interactions with Sietarians, there often seems to be a lack of rigor. Major terms — bicultural, multicultural, bilingualism, culture shock, intercultural — are used erroneously. It’s as if there’s a will to not be academic.

And some academics have voiced the opinion there is a risk of evolving toward charlatanism among certain members, notably in coaching. They are not part of the medical profession, don’t possess methodology and theory, but read psychoanalytical articles and think they’re professional coaches.

I’m planning to become more active in SIETAR France again and have already convinced some of those who left the organization—because of what I’ve just pointed out—to come back.

There’s need for a better theoretical concept of culture, to utilise terms and theories, to improve work and training in the intercultural field. I hope we all can bring about a positive change.

Interviewed by Patrick Schmidt

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Acquiring a foreign language

French Immersion for Canadian children

by *Patrick Schmidt*

Canada has enjoyed the reputation of being a leader in the area of second-language teaching, especially after the implementation of French immersion programs, starting in the late 1960s. Canadian Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau (father of the current PM Justin Trudeau), had a vision of a unified, bilingual country when his government passed the first Official Languages Act in 1969.

Fifty years later, Trudeau's vision appears to have lost vigour. In three of the English-speaking provinces, French is no longer mandatory in school; in the six others, it is optional at the secondary level. Only in the province of Quebec is French mandatory for non-francophones.

More interesting is to examine which programs effectively teach French. Canada's nine anglophone provinces have, for the most part, adopted the Core FSL (French as a Second Language) program, that typically offers French for 30-40 minutes each day. Starting differs from province to province but, generally speaking, FSL starts in Grade 4 and continues to Grade 9, where the vast majority of students stop learning the language. And for the few who continue for the next three years, the results of Core FSL programs have been poor.

"Only 3% of Ontario Grade 9 Core FSL students con-



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tinue to Grade 12, most graduating with little ability to converse in, or understand, French." (Canadian Parents for French, 2008) The rare students that attain fluency are those who have a French-speaker at home, where the language is actively used.

Teachers and outside observers find this dismaying success rate easy to understand. Outside the classroom, students are awash in English--tv, radio, films, friends and family. Moreover, knowledge of French does not have a high economic value. In the federal and provincial public service, and in companies with national operations, positions requiring bilingualism are generally limited, except in Quebec.

Far better outcomes have been attained by French Immersion programs. Developed in the 1960s, an experimental kindergarten project was established by the English community in Saint-Lambert, Quebec. The children received the same type of schooling as in regular kindergarten except all taught in French. The teachers were native French-speakers and treated the children as if they were too.

The results were exceptionally good and the program was progressively expanded to all grades and all English communities. Today, the "total immersion" programs

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French immersion...

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French immersion is an extremely popular program all over Canada.



bc-uk.cpf.ca

are a runaway success. Anglophones living in Quebec actively enrol their children, making them by far the most bilingual Canadians.

So, how does it work? The programs last up to 11 years and are divided into three phases: a monolingual phase (kindergarten to Grade 2 or 3) when all school materials are presented in French but children are allowed to speak English among themselves or to the teacher.

A bilingual phase (Grade 2 or 3 to Grade 6) begins when English and French are equally used for instruction: one year, English is used days a week, French three days a week. The next year, it's reversed.

In the last phase, called maintenance (Grade 7 to 12), three to five subjects are in French. And, because the anglophone children are surrounded by French-speaking people and institutions, they come out fluent in both.

In 1977, 10 years after Quebec introduced the program, it began to spread to English-speaking provinces and, by 2011, its popularity had steadily increased to include over 342,000 students. Today, the demand is enormous; in some districts, 25% of primary school students take French immersion and the number would be far higher if the schools could find more teachers.

But the program has its downside. For many parents, it's a way to "game" the system. "What a program like French immersion does is, it siphons off the kids who have engaged families who make sure the kids do all their homework," say Andrew Campbell, a Grade 5 teacher in Ontario. "Because of that, the opportunities in the rest of the system are affected because the modelling and interaction those kids would provide for the other kids in the system aren't there anymore."

And the richer the family, the more likely their children will be enrolled. According to figures from the Toronto District School Board, in 2010, 23% of French immersion students came from families in the top 10% according to income. Only 4% came from the bottom 10% according to income. Finally, 99% of Grade 12 students who took an oral French proficiency test achieved an "intermediate" score but only 42 per cent were "advanced or higher."

Experts point out that using a foreign language only five hours a day, five days a week for nine months of the year will not produce fluently-bilingual people with perfect accents. But it's certainly far better than the traditional Core FSL program.

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Il était une fois...

Rien n'est grave...

by Dan MacLeod

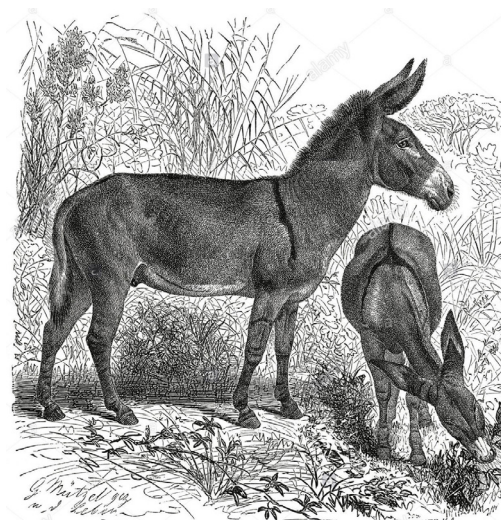
L'ânesse broutait l'herbe à côté de sa jeune sœur, et sa sœur était plus belle qu'elle et se bougeait en parure, s'y définissait, tout en affilant son accent de sorte qu'elle dit AAH au lieu du AAAAA sans élégance de l'aînée.

L'ânesse dit effectivement AAAAA et elle le dit souvent, comme souvent frustrée elle était de sa vie, de celle de sa famille, ses amies et amis et même ses ennemies, ici dans cette prairie.

Car elle voyait comment la vie était éphémère et combien on perdait de temps à la recherche d'un avantage sur les autres, davantage de territoire, davantage d'herbe, davantage de temps pour s'abreuver au ruisseau commun...

Alors que tous avaient besoin de tout ça, eurent besoin de tout ça et ce, de tout temps et pour tout le temps encore à aller jusqu'à toujours.

Elle disait à qui voulait l'entendre (qui n'étaient pas nombreux), « Nous sommes tout le monde dans un même bateau ! » Mais les ânes ne voyagent que peu par bateau, alors elle fut ignorée, évitée, rejetée.



The donkey said AAAAA and she said it often, as she was often frustrated with her life, and that of her family and her friends and even her enemies in the meadow.

She saw how life was ephemeral and how much time was wasted in looking for advantage over others, more territory, more grass, more time to drink from the common stream... Yet everyone needed all of that and always had and always will.

She said to all who cared to hear (not many), "We're all in the same boat! " But goats seldom travel by boat, so she was ignored, avoided, rejected.

...

He found her absolutely charming, the physical manifestation of Claire Brétecher's thirty-something Parisian girl-against-the-world, her twin sister, same gestures, same argot expressions, same awkward skinny frame, colorless stringy hair, same energy, heart, idiotically endearing reaction to the basic unfairness of life.

In real life she was 40 and divorced with an autistic kid and a temporary job. Financial support from her ex- but, like the marriage, it wouldn't be forever.

The donkey grazed grass next to her young sister, and the sister was more beautiful than she and moved as if an adornment, defined herself thus, refined her accent to say AAH rather than the inelegant AAAAA of her sister.

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Rien n'est grave...

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And wasn't. A few years later, when I returned, she was living at the edge of Paris, in Orly, one of those cement-block housing towers in a Soviet-style complex with no trees and a waterless cement fountain in an empty cement square. She was the only one there who wasn't Arab or Black, the only Gaul in her eight-storey building.

Apart from her son, who was now, at 13, big enough to be destructive, bigger and heavier than her. And a succession of seven years of contracts had eventually, inevitably dried into dust, her life gone grass to cement.

A succession of *tuiles* falling upon her head, never-ending to the point you shake your own head, find yourself trying to blame her. It's that or think about the world differently; always difficult.

But the stupidities of an administrative nature, the enactment of that contradiction in terms. And all she has to deal with with her son. But her nature too, the same characteristics as before but in a negative light, and now more alcohol oiling the sharp tongue, frustration fueling outcome, even if legitimate, especially if legitimate.

Never ends well and never will end, and worlds recede, each in their turn.



Louder the protest, more deafening the silence. *Dépaysant* day-to-day retreat, to solitude. Quiet persistent stress, occasional explosions, events *hors-controlle*, growing fatigue, gathering loss.

...

"Rien n'est grave..." qu'elle m'a dit, même si c'était grave, tout ce qui lui arrivait.

Les choses, toute chose, se dégradent, n'est que chimie. Quand tout est grave puis se dégrade, s'affaissent tout en même temps, ouragon-ouragons, rien n'est grave.

Le disant, son visage, sa peau, son corps se décontractent, genre de soupir physique faisant miroir à ses yeux qui s'éclairent. "Rien n'est grave..."

...

"Rien n'est grave..." she told me, even if things were bad, everything was bad.

Things, everything, degrades, is only chemistry. When everything is serious, degrading, collapsing all at once, hurricane-hurricanes, no one thing can be serious.

Saying it, her face, her skin, her body relaxes, a physical sigh that mirrors brightening eyes. "Rien n'est grave..."

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Rien n'est grave... — continued

And no, no quote-mark at the end because that thought, that concept, rippled ahead in time.

Past the obvious fact that things were bad for her. The girl who could have been a champion and was, could have gone far and did, and then didn't. Watched everyone and everything slowly then quickly and definitively fall away.

Until she fell down a flight of stairs living alone in her dead uncle's falling-apart old farmhouse out in the country, about halfway down the map of France, and half a kilometre to the nearest neighbor so her body wasn't found for days.

Her nephew called me at 6 a.m. We'd met, years before. He knew what time it was in America, he mentioned it. "*Il est très tôt chez vous...*" The sister married rich, he was a rich kid going down a list. His aunt had been some kind of hippie and mostly an embarrassment. He was losing a weekend helping his mother throw her stuff away.

She'd fallen down a flight stairs. I asked, "*Chez elle?*" trying to picture it.

"*La maison qu'elle habitait, oui.*" Taking even that away from her in death, her home, telling me it hadn't ever been hers. And she was gone, disappeared out of nowhere, the way she came in.



In my thoughts, out of nowhere, all these years since, presence undiminished by time. Unresolved quote-marks, never-ending life, an echo a decade later with my own life crashing like the echo of an already-receded wave. "*Rien n'est grave...*"

allows you to keep swimming against tide just a bit longer. Belief in yourself, that you're good, don't deserve what's happened and happening. The present tense of past and future. Stress and small hope of success. Hope. What keeps you going 'til it kills you.

...

L'annesse broutait l'herbe à côté de sa jeune soeur, sa mère juste devant. Le soleil faisait plaisir à sentir et l'herbe était encore fraîche de larmes de fées, qui pleurent toujours la mort de la nuit. Elle pensa aux amours qu'elle connut dans sa vie. Son bébé se frotta à elle en disant aaaaa...

— pour Annie

The donkey grazed grass next to her young sister, her mother just ahead. The sun was pleasant to smell and the grass still fresh with the tears of the fairies that mourn the death of the night each day. She thought of the loves she'd known in her life. Her baby rubbed against her saying aaaaa...

— for Annie

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Napoli, Italy

A Case of of Disinformation in the Social Media

by *Francesca Zanfagna*

My name is Francesca and currently attending the NHL Stenden University in Leeuwarden as an Erasmus student. When people learn that I'm from Napoli, I always receive a bad comment or a sarcastic joke, with the same usual question, "Is Napoli a safe city?"

As someone who has lived in Napoli all my life, I know that it's just as safe as most European cities. The question I ask myself is where does this bad reputation come from? Is it a case of sloppy journalism? Or the TV series "Gomorra" about the Neapolitan Mafia, which in these last years has become very popular worldwide.

Let me begin by saying that Napoli has been always targeted by media all around world. The reason is Napoli's association with the Camorra criminal organization and the waste management crises. Although organized crime is present in other parts of Italy, newspapers throughout the world seem to always want to point out the Napolitano *Camorra* first, which then claims the city is dangerous and not at all recommended to visit.

It was in this context that in 2017, the British newspaper, *The Sun*, classified Napoli as one of the eleven most dangerous corners of the Earth. It was written by someone who obviously had never spent a day of his/her life in Napoli - a place full of problems, but certainly not as bad as



The Sun had ranked it. After massive protests, the article by *The Sun* was immediately corrected

So, what's the truth? How dangerous is Napoli compared to other cities? According to "The Criminality Index" from *Numbeo*, Napoli is ranked at the 58th position, exactly at the same level as Washington D.C., not an amazing result, but definitely far better than Houston, Mexico City or Kuala Lumpur, which have far higher crime rates.

Then, you have online journalism and online communication, which can be very dangerous in spreading fake news, untruths and disinformation.

What I found interesting are quotes in *TripAdvisor* and on the *Rick Steves's Forum*, where travelers share their experiences in Napoli. The most absurd ones are: "Naples is a very unpleasant and unsafe city, with very rude people", "There are pickpockets everywhere on the city center", "You can get easily run over by scooters", "The Mafia can assault you anytime" and the craziest one is "Neighbours throw homemade bombs at each other".

Are these statements reliable? As mentioned before, a common stereotype about Napoli is that because of the Camorra, it's dangerous. But what do tourists have to do with organize crime? Probably nothing. It's extremely

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Napoli...

— *continued*

The inner city of Napoli is colorful, vibrant and full of life.



unlikely that a tourist will be targeted by a Mafia thug because they tend to focus on local businesses. The truth is that Napoli isn't all that dissimilar to many other metropolises of the world, such as London, New York or Paris.

Gomorra is a famous TV series based on Roberto Saviano's book (with the same name) about the crime organization of the region Campania. The story of *Gomorra* paints a portrait of the brutal Neapolitan issues linked with the Mafia. *Gomorra* "mania" has been well reviewed by so many important newspapers worldwide like *The Guardian*, *Der Spiegel*, *The Telegraph* and so on. But how much of this TV series represents the reality?

I conducted a survey about the *Gomorra* series during my Erasmus semester in the Netherlands. I found that almost 90% of international students (from Japan, China and Spain) knew the TV series very well, compared to only 12% of Dutch students. Those who watched it all imagine the Neapolitan scenario exactly like the TV series shows.

Although *Gomorra* was inspired by some real facts that happened years ago in Napoli and in the outskirts, it's necessary to keep in mind that this TV series is fiction; many of the criminal acts are over exaggerated, romanticized and don't happen in everyday Napoli.

Another point contributing to Napoli's bad reputation has been the city's waste management crisis. From 1994 to 2012 Napoli was dirty and surrounded by uncollected garbage. In 2011 a new mayor was elected and from the early days of his mandate, the quantity of uncollected garbage in the streets declined from 2500 tons to zero. In spite of this huge improvement, today in 2019, we still hear nasty comments and prejudices about the dirt in the city of Napoli.

Napoli for many years had been a problematic city for reasons, such as the trash disposal, corruption and the Mafia. However, the situation in the city has objectively improved in the last few years.

Despite its difficulties, it has been the honest Napolians, who have had the courage to go ahead day by day in building the identity of the city. All the same, Napoli's beauty is still unnoticed and unrecognized because people seem to be stuck in the past, especially for the ones who don't know the city at all.

Napoli has very strong cultural values, historical sites as well as being rich in landscape and panorama. All these places are really worthwhile to experience and to share on social media. Hopefully, this article will change Napoli's image for the better.

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Book Review

Israeli Business Culture:

Building Effective Business Relationships with Israelis

by Osnat Lautman

O. Lautman Publishing, 232 pages

£ 22.10

Several years ago, I was hired by an Israeli company to do a cross-cultural workshop for managers of a US Philadelphia organization that it had acquired. Basically, as it was explained to me, the US personnel were terrified at the prospect of continuing to deal with the Israelis whom they labeled as “tank commanders”, demanding, argumentative. Given that, I did my best to acquaint my participants with Israeli values and behaviors such as the specific form of directness known as *dugri* that were a part of everyday life. The soft-spoken participants were utterly amazed that the Israelis could mix it up, shout at each other, and then linger over a pleasant coffee together at meeting’s end. The workshop would’ve benefited greatly had this handbook been available.

While the author is careful to warn us that the so called “cultural characteristics” of any group are lived out in various ways by its members, they still remain good starting points. Lautman makes this clear and easy and does an excellent job of showing how these various characteristics are intertwined with each other.

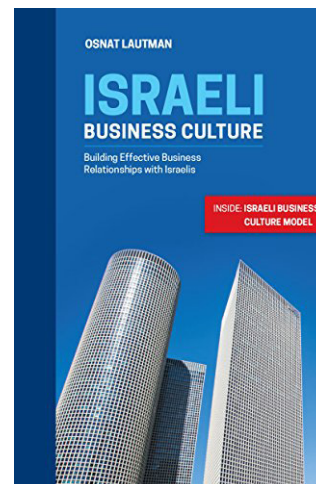
The characteristics are not only explained, but particularly valuable are the author’s enjoined tips for managing situations in which these characteristics seem baffling or disruptive. One feature that I particularly liked, not usually found in books of this nature, was that the author provided perceptual and behavioral tips for Israelis as well as outsiders. After

all, intercultural encounters are a two-way street. The author does not hesitate (in Israeli fashion?) to tell it straight for potential homeland readers. No one on either side is blamed for their culture, but rather all are made aware of what is useful and what is not.

Some Israeli characteristics, for example, seem to harken centuries back to Talmudic debating style, while others are the product of more contemporary narratives. The author also notes the paucity of vocabulary in the modernized Hebrew tongue, a feature that makes nuance difficult. This, in turn, is reflected in the brief and direct use of English as a second language, English being so necessary for a country whose cultural familiars and trading partners are not its immediate geographical neighbors but in the global marketplace.

While most of us are familiar with the frightening dynamics of Middle East politics and conflicts, we are likely to be ignorant of the inner workings and products and accomplishments of the tiny state of Israel. Lautman offers us bits and pieces of this in brief biographies of successful Israelis as well as making us aware of the creativity found in the important inventions and technical contributions of Israeli genius.

The book is written simple, easy-to-read language and offers useful illustrations, making it both a pleasure to peruse and accessible to second-language speakers. *Reviewed by George Simons*



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Book Review

The Refugees

by Viet Thanh Nguyen
Corsair Press, 224 pages
Euro 16,78

What is currently described as the refugee crisis has taken up much of our political, media, and social attention, given the sheer numbers of people who are moving about the world today. However, the phenomenon of human migration and acculturation to new environments is a constant, going all the way back to our hominid ancestors.

This collection of very human stories is perhaps a strong reminder that we are all in some sense migrants, and even refugees, as we face the challenges of cohabiting with each other and living with ourselves., building and shedding our cultural markers.

The characters in this collection of narratives are not taken from the current waves of Middle Easterners, North Africans, and Latin Americans fleeing from homelands to cross strange borders for survival and security. Rather they are bits and pieces of ongoing stories related to those who fled Vietnam at the end of the war and the subsequent generations abroad and at home.

This context reminds us that we should not frame refugees and asylum-seekers only in their flight, the miseries of their passage, or their acceptance or rejection by a host society. Rather, their experience extends to the second and third generation in a new homeland, and this book explores the ongoing process of acculturation to life and

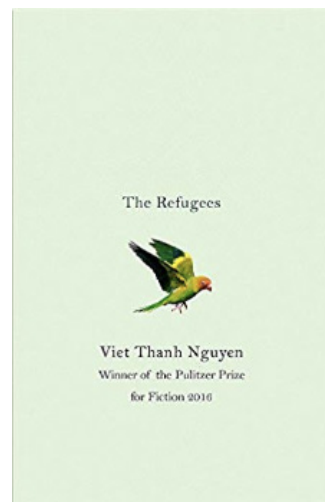
to the diverse others we share it with on an everyday basis. There is much pain and vulnerability in the characters walking through these pages and, willy-nilly, we often discover them as giving voice to parts of ourselves.

Viet Thanh Nguyen, recipient of the 1916 Pulitzer Prize for fiction, is an extraordinary writer, not only in his ability to capture the inner feelings and the everyday behavior of the characters he describes, but also in how his choice of words, similes and metaphors give life to the environments and contexts in which they find themselves. His words, expressions and phrases frequently leave the reader open-mouthed in both amazement and recognition.

The Refugees was given to me on my birthday by a former Vietnamese intern, and I began to read it as a possible resource for the kind of work other intercultural colleagues and I have been engaged in, assisting and forwarding the acceptance and acculturation of today's immigrants.

Little did I expect it to stir up the spirits of my immigrant ancestors, present, but usually dormant in my sense of self, reminding me of their stories and how entwined they are with my own. It was a surprise gift of self-knowledge, imparting a different meaning to wishes for "many happy returns", a gift for which I must say again, "Thank you."

Reviewed by George Simons



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Book Review

Handbuch Methoden interkultureller Weiterbildung

by Wolf Leenen, Andreas Groß & Alexander Scheitza

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlag, 924 pages

65 Euros

This is the ultimate German intercultural-training reference book, second to none. With 924 pages of intensely-packed information, compressed into a massive, two-and-half kilo, Hegelian *magnum opus*, the handbook is a prime example of German “*Gründlichkeit*” (thoroughness) and will surprise not only non-Germans, but even native Germans.

With a cursory browse, one immediately notices the professionalism. Its exhaustive, meticulous research is a testament to the authors — Wolf Leenen, Andreas Groß and Alexander Scheitza — who have taught and trained international youth groups, prisoners, police officers, immigrants, social workers, university students, and professionals in private companies.

Divided into three sections, the book first deals with basic terms in culture and communication, cultural competence, identity, cultural description and didactic methods. Even for experienced facilitators, there are new perspectives here that will enhance one's knowledge. The second section explores well-explained case studies and critical incidents. An extensive module on self-evaluation methods presents an overview of the many different approaches toward knowing oneself. Additionally, there is a considerable discussion on why simulations should be part of any workshop, along with presentation techniques.

But it's the last section — the use of pictures and film clips in the training session — is perhaps the most original. The au-

thors offer 340 pages of illustrations, pictures and screenshots, plus in-depth questions and exercises. The emphasis, however, is on short videos, clips that “help create a unique environment for cross-cultural learning because they speak to our emotion as well as our intellect...When we experience intercultural contact with our eyes and ears, we begin to understand it.”

For instance, the book uses screenshots from the film “*Lost in Translation*”. An American actor, Bob, appears on a Japanese talk show that is extravagant and colorful, something Westerners don't expect from the “reserved” Japanese. The suggested teaching plan is to show the video clip from the screenshots. Afterward, one participant plays the role of film director and other participants act out a scene from the Japanese and American viewpoints. The acting exercise is highly relevant because the learner experiences a new cultural outlook with all the senses. In all, there are well over 500 other suggested clips (each with a screenshot and internet address).

Overall, this handbook is ideal for anyone interested in current, state-of-the-art practices in intercultural training, especially since patterns of global mobility have changed so much. We now have more ambiguity in the way cultural differences play out; how we leverage this diversity requires new perspectives and methods. *Handbuch Methoden interkultureller Weiterbildung* makes a major contribution in that direction.

Reviewed by Patrick Schmidt



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In Memory of André Cresson



It is with great sadness that we heard of the passing away of André Cresson on December 8th.

For many of us, André was the incarnation of SIETAR France and our first point of contact with the association. He was president from 1987 until 2007, founder and director of the “Cahiers de SIETAR France” and the journal “Intercultures”, he also organized the first of the “SIETAR France Saturdays”. His warmth and caring nature always shone through.

André helped to pose the foundations for the construction of SIETAR as we know it today, not only SIETAR France but also SIETAR Europa where he was the president of the Transitory Board of Directors which prepared the statutes and the first General Assembly in 1990-91. André was also vice-president of SIETAR International.

Since his retirement, convinced that it is always worthwhile to explore new horizons and delve into different universes, André Cresson had been keeping busy by translating some classical Latin texts from the Middle Ages. With his passing, a page in SIETAR’s history has been turned.

We extend our deepest condolences to his wife, his family and his friends.

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Knowledge Bites



SIETAR España Knowledge Bites

Since part of our efforts as SIETAR España lie in relating innovative ideas and concepts found in academic papers to the work of professionals, we established a publication series called “SIETAR España Knowledge Bites”. This series of articles aims to present ideas that have a direct impact on working in an intercultural, connected world.. If you are interested to publish your academic research, please feel free to contact us at research@sietar.es. We hope you enjoy the reads found at: <https://bit.ly/2DUPnty>

- Bennet, Milton J. (2019). *Culture is not a Thing, and other Antidotes to the Ravages of Reification* Knowledge Bite. SIETAR España Knowledge Bite (Nr 1).
- McSweeney, Brendan (2019). *Confirmation Bias: ‘Looking Before You Leap’ Is Not Enough* Knowledge Bite. SIETAR España Knowledge Bite (Nr 2).
- Fink, Gerhard (2019). *Managerial Intelligence* Knowledge Bite. SIETAR España Knowledge Bite (Nr 3).
- Wallis, Steven E. (2019). *Finding Patterns of Knowing to Improve Communication & Understanding* Knowledge Bite. SIETAR España Knowledge Bite (Nr 4).
- Cummings-Koether, Michelle (2019). *Psychological Contracts: Effect on International Assignments* Knowledge Bite. SIETAR España Knowledge Bite (Nr 5).

Editors: Dr. Barbara Covarrubias Venegas and Verena Hanna, MA



Building Dialogues on Diversity

SIETAR Europa Congress 2019

27 May - 2 June 2019
Leuven, Belgium



Once again we are happy to invite you to the bi-annual
SIETAR Europa Congress!

The SIETAR Europa Congress is one of the biggest events for intercultural trainers. Apart from being an incredible opportunity to learn from leading figures in the intercultural field, it is also a chance to have fun and socialise with interculturalists from all over the world.

Book you spot now, and enjoy the facilities prepared by The Congress Organising Team, like the

Buddy Connection Program, our organized **trips around Belgium**, and **Pre- and Post-Congress workshops**.

Register and find out more at:

<https://www.sietareu.org/seucongress2019/>

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IESEG and IACCM conjoint CONFERENCE in Paris

31 October – 2 November 2019

Intercultural competencies for a disruptive VUCA world. Exploring creativity, innovation, resilience and resistance in intercultural research, training and management

While globalisation with its quick flows of people, information and technology has been a fact for many years and many lessons have been learnt, the ever-increasing scale and pace nonetheless adds to the Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity (VUCA) the world finds itself in today, with the challenges posed seemingly increasing rather than decreasing.

The conference theme thus focusses on creativity and innovation as we want to explore new approaches and ideas to familiar problems that nonetheless present themselves anew every day.

Exploring these VUCA dynamics and how intercultural competence is and can be used to navigate these challenging waters therefore seems to be more important than ever. The conference aims to continue the dialogue between scholars, trainers and practitioners as all three groups will contribute valuable insights to this discussion and to explore together new and creative ways of promoting and embedding intercultural competence in organisations and to managing in a VUCA world.

We are looking forward to seeing you in Paris.

Conference Chairs: Grant Douglas (IESEG, France) and Barbara Covarrubias Venegas (IACCM and FHWien, Austria)

Web: iaccm-congress.ieseg.fr

Contact: iaccm2019@ieseg.fr

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Events, workshops, congresses

SIETAR Europa Webinars

March 19th, 2019, Tuesday 18:00-19:00(CET)

Speaker: Gabriela Wegłowska

Topic: "Intercultural Training and the Modern Learner."

May 7th, 2019, Tuesday 18:00-19:00(CET)

Speaker: Patricia Stokke, EdD, PHR

Topic: "Global leadership development lessons from global nomads."

CCC - Break

April 19, 2019, Friday 11:00 - 11:40 am (CET)

Moderator: Barbara Covarrubias Venegas & Charlotta Brynner

Topic: "What do cultural competence and change management have to do with each other?" What is the use of cultural agility in a fast changing world, where the environment keeps changing?

May 5, 2019, Wednesday 11:00 - 11:40 am (CET)

Moderator: Joanna Sell & Joe Kearns

Topic: "What factors or behaviours lead to the success or failure in cross-cultural relationships or marriage?"

Bath, United Kingdom

25-29 March, 10-14 June 2019

Developing intercultural training skills This 5-day course is for trainers wishing to learn more about theory and practice of intercultural training.

25-29 March,

Designing and delivering intercultural training The more advanced course for those who wish to deepen their knowledge. both to integrate intercultural topics into their

current training and also to deliver their own intercultural training courses. Exchange of experience with other participants Information at: www.its-training.com/ or contact adrian.pilbeam@its-training.com

Milan, Italy

May 10, 2019

Intercultural Consciousness: Applying the New Paradigm, facilitated by Milton Bennett. The course will establish the new paradigm of constructivism that is supplanting positivism and relativism in social science and show how it supports intercultural consciousness. Core practical theory course intended for educators, human resource professionals, coaches, international cooperation and partnership workers, and other intercultural practitioners.

May 13, 2019

Intercultural Citizenship: Making a Difference in Communities and Organizations, facilitated by Milton Bennett and Ida Castiglioni. Intercultural citizenship is an intentional act requiring specific competencies, a conscious mind, and an ability to see productive opportunities. Multiculturality in itself does not confer value to a society. This course is intended for aspiring or estab-

lished intercultural professionals who want to be more effective supporters of mutual adaptation in multicultural societies, including HR managers, social service administrators, community developers.

May 13, 2019

Embodied Culture: Discovering the Feeling of Self and Other in Cultural Context facilitated by Ida Castiglioni. As we become more conscious of constructing cultural identity, how aware are we that it is inscribed in our body? By increasing our awareness of cultural embodiment, this course will show how ethnocentrism can be counteracted more effectively and how multicultural identity can be achieved more deliberately. Application course intended for advanced trainers and educators, coaches, and practitioners in therapeutic and contemplative disciplines. Prerequisite: Facilitating Intercultural Consciousness: Applying the New Paradigm.

More info at <http://www.idrinstitute.org/>

Leuven, Belgium

27 May - 2 June, 2019

SIETAR Europa 2019 Congress The theme is "Building Dialogues on Diversity - towards a future of hope." More information can be found at <https://www.sietareu.org/> Contact: congress2019@sietareu.org

Online Everyday

The SIETAR Europa group, discussing

What features of men and women make them attractive in your culture?

on LinkedIn, has now over 8000 members. Plus it offers videos, articles, books, tools for the intercultural profession. To join, click here:

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/2740568>

For more information, contact George Simons at diversophy@gmail.com

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