I fell in love with *Growing with Three Languages: Birth to Eleven* at first sight. I loved the book due to my dual roles, as a researcher who has been interested in and devoted to research in multiculturalism and multilingualism, and as a mother of a seven year old girl who is developing trilingual competence and constructing her identities in Australian English, Mandarin Chinese, and a Chinese dialect spoken by Bai ethnic minorities in Yunnan, Southwest China.

The book, part of the *Parents’ and Teachers’ Guides* series published by Multilingual Matters, is written in a highly reader-friendly, non-technical and comprehensive style making it accessible to readers from all walks of life. It draws on the unfolding, entertaining story of an actual family, yet it is academically rigorous with details of evidence and data typical of research work. The placement of notes and references at the end of each chapter supports this rigor but facilitates the lay-reader to feel at ease with the content. As Corey Heller, the editor-in-chief of *Multilingual Living Magazine* comments on the back cover of the book, ‘the real-world experiences’ and the ‘researched facts and wisdom’ make it ‘a treasure trove’ for every multilingual family.

This book is directed at parents who live in a foreign country and intend to raise their children in their own heritage languages. It aims at ‘helping parents see the possibilities for raising children with three languages when parents are the major source of the heritage-language input, and make efforts to preserve their heritage languages starting at the family level’ (p. 5). It offers helpful suggestions for this challenging situation and provides useful strategies for the daily interactions between parents and children. As the author claims, the book differs from others relevant to bilingual or trilingual education due to some unique features. These include encouraging reflective parenting, focusing on the process of acquiring three languages simultaneously, describing trilingual developmental characteristics in the everyday context, treating language acquisition and development from a holistic perspective, valuing parental observation, appreciating the value of small sample studies in heritage language acquisition, and including children’s own voices about their multilingual development (pp. 5–8).

The book reports on an 11-year longitudinal observational study of two children who were exposed to French, Chinese and English from birth. Their father and mother, originally from Switzerland and the Chinese mainland respectively, raised two boys in
the U.S. Although the children’s trilingual first language acquisition environment was mainly a result of ‘second-hand’ input from only the father and mother, each boy proudly developed a unique trilingual identity in negotiating three different cultures, languages and ethnic-racial backgrounds.

The book illustrates how a determined couple supported the trilingual development of their children with unfailing persistence. It describes in great detail (1) how the parents made plans to rear their children in the trilingual setting; (2) the measures they took to carry out their trilingual childrearing plan; (3) what happened and how they adjusted their strategies; (4) the successes, difficulties, joys and frustrations they experienced; (5) what they found, and (6) what they suggest for other bilingual, trilingual or multilingual parents.

There are seven chapters in the book. Chapter 1 provides the conceptual framework for understanding the trilingual phenomenon by presenting different trilingual cases. The author criticises the definition of trilingualism given in the American Heritage Dictionary as too narrow and simplistic because it regards trilingual competence and performance as static in spite of its obvious complexities and dynamic nature.

Chapter 2 focuses on the importance of planning in raising trilingual children. The author’s experiences are given in detail, including the number of heritage languages to pass on and the time to begin, the family communication system, motives, the capacity of parents to achieve the goal, potential support, childcare plans, goals and expectations for children’s trilingual proficiency, potential sacrifices and challenges. This detail allows other trilingual families to get an idea of issues needing consideration in order to plan what is feasible and practical for themselves.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 are organised chronologically according to the children’s specific development stages from the home years through the preschool and kindergarten years to the elementary school years. Each chapter is divided into five parts: (1) Effective strategies used to scaffold the children in their trilingual and identity development; (2) Major challenges and issues and ways to deal with them; (3) Highlights of the children’s trilingual development characteristics from five areas including speech sounds (phonology), words (lexicon), grammar (sentences and language rules), language use (pragmatics) and language awareness (metalinguistic abilities); (4) Noticeable aspects of the children’s biracial (Swiss and American citizenship) and trilingual (French, Chinese and English) identity development as a consequence of their trilingual experiences; (5) Thoughts and suggestions on how to facilitate children’s trilingual and identity development and practical suggestions for parents or prospective parents to support trilingual children. In
each stage, the children’s developing linguistic competence and changing identity are made clear.

Chapter 6 presents the children’s own voices on how they negotiated and constructed their identities as trilingual, tricultural, biracial and binational. The personal accounts of the two boys, Léandre and Dominique, not only give readers the chance to hear the perspectives of those becoming trilingualised but also enhance the validity of the research by providing data from another angle. The chapter also presents some suggestions for trilingual-childrearing parents on how to help children develop a healthy identity and personality.

Chapter 7 briefly assesses the current state of research on trilingual first language acquisition. In order to help parents understand the complexity of the findings, the author highlights some perplexing issues such as nature vs. nurture, input vs. output, and language similarities vs. language differences. The chapter provides ten take-home messages for parents to consider in raising multilingual children. To just name a few: language learning is a life-long process; language and cultural heritage go hand-in-hand; it’s never too late to start; children are active learners; and, be a public advocate for multilingual children.

This book is highly worthwhile reading for parents, educators and researchers. It is useful not only for families with three or more languages but also for any bilingual or monolingual diasporas who can also benefit from understanding the role of multilingualism in children’s language learning and identity development. In addition to the examples from the author’s family, there are many illustrations of language learning and identity development in children from the literature. It gives parents possible strategies to teach heritage languages to their children while making it a fun process for the children. The family’s real and vivid examples deliver a message that multilingualism is not only viable but can develop superb cognitive and communicative skills. The book dispels any doubts about the possibility of raising trilingual children successfully when parents are the main source of the heritage-language input. The book also shows what a constant and unrelenting effort parents need to make to rear trilingual children. It is a timely stimulus and guide to other trilingual childrearing parents. I am looking forward to the author’s next book about the trilingual development of the two children during their adolescence.

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