

One-on-one interview transcriptions

With 'A'(F,65)

So, hello, good morning! I'm going to start asking you the questions you've received before. The first one is, how old are you now and how old were you when you started acquiring a second language? Then please go into detail about under what circumstance or circumstances did you acquire your first and second languages.

OK so now I'm 65 going on 66, and I started learning English at the age of 6 or 6 and a half. My father got a job at the UN, and we're talking about 1964, so it was ages ago. So, we arrived at New York, I had no knowledge of English at all, none whatsoever. I started attending an international school, it was called United Nations International School and it was very sweet because they took me to the teacher, who because she couldn't talk to me, asked me to draw something. I made a drawing and then they decided that I could join the 1st grade, so I don't have to be put back just because of my lack of English. English was the first language and then once you knew English, French was the second language at the school. We're talking about October of 1964, and by the spring of 1965 I was speaking English, so it took me 6 months. About that part I don't remember much but my mother told me that I had special English classes after school once or twice a week. I don't remember exactly that and then of course I made friends so then basically English became my first language by the end of that school year. It was very interesting because my parents were talking to me in Hungarian and I responded in English.

Oh, so they were fluent speakers of English as well?

They were not. You know my dad spoke English and it's how he got the job, but my mom learned, I mean she had some knowledge of English, but she attended... The UN had special courses for wives...

Wow! That is very impressive! OK, then we go on to the second question. Do you think you had started acquiring another language at an ideal age? If there is a 'best time' to start acquiring a new language, when do you think that is?

That's a very difficult question because I think it depends very much on the circumstances, I think if, you know, if I'd been five then you know that's when I started learning English... But what I have to tell you is, it's very interesting, because all of my grandchildren are bilingual. My daughter's daughter, she is now 5. Her mother's Hungarian her father is Brazilian, and so she speaks Portuguese. They live in Amsterdam, she goes to a Dutch preschool, so she speaks Hungarian, Portuguese, and Dutch. And what's the best time? I mean... you know, from birth!

Understandable!

It's very interesting to see my son's kids. They live in Geneva. He and his wife are both Hungarian, but the kids go to an international school, so they speak English. My granddaughter, she's fluent. She's 10, she's totally fluent in English. My grandson, who's five, who just started his understanding, he's very good already. He doesn't speak much but he understands almost everything. And they speak Hungarian at home.

That sounds like a very lovely family! Looking back at your bilingual childhood what is the first thing that pops into your head?

Sorry?

Looking back at your bilingual childhood what is the first thing that pops into your head? What is your most important memory? A core memory.

It's very interesting because in the US school it never bothered me that I don't speak English. So, I don't have any bad memories from there. Coming back in '68, I was very odd here, in Hungary. In 1968, speaking fluent English, and being a lot more open minded to the world than my classmates were at the time.

I see...

I don't have any bad memories of New York, or the States, actually. I had wonderful teachers, I had a very interesting class, it was international, so I had friends from Africa, India, the US, you know, from all over the world. So, I think it was much later that I became conscious that of the fact that I did never, sort of, saw somebody through their color or skin, or whatever. You

know, it never bothered me. I either liked the person or didn't like the person. And it had nothing to do with their looks or their colour or their race or whatever. I think that must have been very unique back in the '60s. Especially in Hungary. Not in New York! I came back to a homogeneous class where I was very odd. I also remember that... That's right, I came into fifth grade here in Hungary, and that's when we started learning Russian. To me it was just another language, so I was very excited about learning Russian, because I had the French, I had English, and so Russian would have been, you know, another language for me. Within a year, I got back to hating Russian like the rest of my class...

I guess it must have had a lot to do with the ideology what was most likely common in the country that time...

Yes, obviously. But that's what I remember, to me it was just another exciting language with a different writing... And so on, so...

Wow, I can imagine... Well, moving on! Were your parents ever concerned about your language development regarding either of your spoken languages? In this case, it's not just Hungarian and English, but I guess French and maybe Russian as well.

No, they were very positive about languages. I started French already in second grade because my English was already up to speed, so that was very cool, and I was very good at French. I think it also had a lot to do with the fact that I had to learn another language already. I think their concern was that I should not forget Hungarian at the time. Because to me, speaking Hungarian was sort of... I mean I wanted to melt in, so I didn't want to, you know, stick out because of speaking Hungarian. They made me learn Hungarian in the States, so I had Hungarian lessons, which I actually wasn't very keen about. I didn't like it too much, but I learned to read and write in Hungarian. With the French... I had a French teacher until... I think I was 18... Yes, up until graduation, and my dad, he speaks tons of languages, so he spoke Russian at the time already, so you know... They were, I think, they were very keen on me learning languages.

That's a very good approach! Do you feel like you possess the same fluency in all your languages?

It's an interesting question... When we came back, I also had an English teacher because my parents thought that, the vocabulary and the knowledge of a 10 year old is obviously not the same as an adult's... So, I had a very good English teacher who made me read a lot, write a lot. I started learning English grammar which I had never learned. You know, I spoke the language, so in the US school we didn't, I don't remember, ever learning grammar as such. So I really... I don't know...

For instance, if you think about the knowledge of your languages now, do you feel like you would be able to say the same things in French, and English, and Hungarian? I guess the Russian is not that much in the picture anymore...

Russian is sort of non-existent. Basically... Hungarian is my mother tongue so in that sense I'm not totally bilingual. I read a lot in English still and I have I have friends in New York, who, you know, I visit, or I correspond with. But talking is a lot less. I tried to speak English with my grandkids, just to have fun... Obviously, my first language is Hungarian and I had my English... What is the name? You know, the language whatever test... Or you know, "nyelvvizsga".

Yes, the language exam.

At 18. Then I stopped learning English, I continued to read and stuff, but then my friends became a lot more fluent... When I graduated from university where I had French, my French was a lot better, or no... Not better, but almost as good as my English! Up to I lost a lot of it because I didn't practice. I didn't have anyone to speak it with and... The English is still here...

I see...

And of course, my work language was English, so during my working years I had English-speaking colleagues and bosses. That made it easy. I was skiing in France, just a couple of weeks ago, and I had to... I had to speak French. And speaking was easier than understanding what they said...

Oh, I can understand! I mean like, I started learning French a few years ago, but they can speak in such a speed that... It's just unbelievable to me! So... Did bilingualism cause you

discomfort as a child? Like your proficiency not being as good as your peers', or lacking confidence to communicate in a certain language... Code switching issues... Code switching means using different languages in one sentence or just mid-sentence, switching from one language to another. Or discomfort as not being able to recall desired words or phrases in a certain language. Or what else you can think of.

This actually is a very good question. When we came back in '68, I was 10 and my Hungarian wasn't up to speed. I know you have a question about accents, I did feel that I had an English or... I don't know if I felt it, but I was told I had an English accent in Hungarian. Just for a short time. My Hungarian writing skills were never really as good as my peers'. I think, and I don't know if that had to do with the fact that writing for me is in general not easy, or that had to do with knowing English. When we had to write compositions in Hungarian, I know I always had an issue. I mean, I couldn't write, you know, long sentences, with a lot of adjectives and stuff. My writing was very, sort of plain and down to earth.

But I guess that got better in time. My understanding is that you didn't really experience issues regarding bilingualism in the States but more likely in Hungary.

Yes, yes.

OK.

Probably it may have been due to the fact that, that's when everyone learned to read and write. It wasn't like I joined at a certain point in time where they had some knowledge, that, you know... So basically, at the age of 6 you learn to read and write and that's when you're sort of together. But when I came back, I was 10. They had four years of Hungarian which I had but not those four years. The other part of your question is very interesting. I see that also with my grandchildren and I saw it with myself for sure. When I speak English, I think in English. When I speak Hungarian, I think in Hungarian. The translation, and... I don't know... Quoting? Or what you called it...

Code switching, it's not my term, it's the scientific...

I know what you mean because that's not easy. For example, even today when somebody... When my husband is reading something in English and he asks me about a word... It doesn't necessarily come into my mind in Hungarian. I sort of read the sentence and even if I don't understand or don't know that that's specific word, I understand the sentence. But I don't always find the Hungarian word for it. So, that is that. I see that also with my grandkids, is when they speak a specific language it's hard for them to translate or switch. Like my granddaughter speaks Portuguese with his father and Hungarian with his mother. but it's either, or. If she feels like it, sometimes she will tell you what she spoke with her father. Now she's sort of smart enough to try and use it against you.

It is a great power!

But thankfully... My son-in-law doesn't speak any Hungarian, but my daughter, she speaks Spanish, so she understands a lot of Portuguese. So, my granddaughter, she... You know, really... Can't really...

Escape with it... OK! Were there any challenges you were facing as a child being in different language environment at home in social circumstances and educational circumstances? Obviously, I'm not altogether sure what was the division for you exactly.

I think I started talking about this. Especially in the States... Not in Hungary, because in Hungary everybody spoke Hungarian. But in the States, when I had a party, or when I had friends over, I actually... I don't remember if I asked my parents, but I never spoke Hungarian. I mean, I had always felt I had to speak English. So that time if my parents spoke Hungarian, that really bothered me. But only at home, so you know, in school that wasn't an issue. Because there everybody was English-speaking. I had a couple of friends who were Hungarian, I don't remember speaking Hungarian with them. Although! My American friend tells me that that, I, just to annoy her, I spoke Hungarian with some Hungarian friends. But I that is is her memory, not mine. I don't... I don't remember, but it's... I mean, I don't think she made it up, so I'm sure it's true. But that only is, you know, her memory... You know, you can be nasty as a kid.

Obviously. But am I like, getting this correctly, that Hungarian only bothered you when your parents spoke to you in that language in front of your friends, who were obviously only

understanding English? OK... OK, we go on! So, what do you reckon to be the main difference between a bilingual and a monolingual child?

I think the main difference is basically an openness. It gives you a different perspective of the world. I mean, I think this is maybe going too far, but... It's difficult to explain, but that's what I felt when I came home, that I had a totally different perspective. There are other things out there than what you get in in Hungary or in Hungarian. I don't know if that had to do with the bilingualism or the fact that I had spent four years in New York, which was obviously a very open, liberal environment. And a very open liberal school. It's hard to it's hard to distinguish but what I also see in my grandchildren is... The fact that someone is different and speaks a different language doesn't close them, but instead, it opens them to something new. I don't know if this this makes any sense, and it does I am not sure if it has to do with the opportunity or the language itself...

As I'm listening to you, I get that you literally had the access because of the language. So obviously language plays a big part in it.

I see it especially with my granddaughter.... When she's at a playground or... It's sort of a matter of fact for her. If she wants to play with someone who doesn't necessarily speak the same language, it doesn't bother her.

That's nice. I guess it has a lot to do with the upbringing as well...

It's really hard to point out that it's just a the language, talking in a different language in itself... But I think, your view of the world or the world around you is different.

What advantages or disadvantages did you think you had as a bilingual child and what advantages or disadvantages did you have as an adult, later on, due to your bilingual upbringing?

I don't remember any disadvantage. Except the fact that I felt odd, but that had to do more with the social or background, coming back in 1960, to Hungary, less than the fact that I spoke English. As an adult it definitely was an advantage, especially because at the time I was quite unique in in my knowledge of English. Now obviously everybody speaks English, or you know,

not everybody unfortunately... But a lot of people in Hungary speak English. At the time when I was in my twenties, thirties, when I started working, that was quite unique. So that was that was very much an advantage. I don't remember really any disadvantage.

What were your personal feelings towards bilingualism, as a whole, or like, as part of your personality as a child? Have these feelings changed as the time passed?

I read all the English language books in English, so not the translations. Always the original. To this day. What bothered me at the time, I remember, is when all films were dubbed. That really bothered me that I couldn't watch English language movies...I was happy knowing English.

Have you experienced cognitive benefits because of bilingualism?

It's a good question. I have no clue. I started thinking about it with my grandchildren also, does it help them? Does that make them... Not smarter, but, whatever... I don't have an answer. I've read some articles about this. Some say yes, some say no...

Do you have an accent in any of your languages? Do you think it is possible to not have an accent if it's not someone's native language?

I did have an English accent when I came back. Now that's totally gone. My American friends tell me that I still have my New York accent, I don't know. Sometimes I feel like I don't sometimes I feel like I do. Maybe it has become less American and there's a little Hungarian tint in it. For a long time as a child I came across as a totally native American. After I came back... I don't think so anymore. Sometimes if I'm very tired, when I visit my friends in the States, at the end of the day I start looking for the words. Which means that I've stopped thinking in English.

And with French?

My French accent is quite good. I had really good French teachers. But I think it's a lot less evident than with English. I mean more evident that I'm not a French speaker.

Have you ever felt like that knowledge of one of your languages means harm to another one? So, for instance, accent wise or just how you said that you're Hungarian didn't develop in a way, in comparison to your Hungarian peers'.

I think that's the only thing I can say... But then again, I don't know because I didn't have to, you know... The compositions that I had to write as a 10-year-old in English and in Hungarian were not quite the same, so I don't know. I'm sure that if we had stayed in the States, I would have lost... I would have totally lost my Hungarian or it would have become almost non-existent. But in terms of harm, I think this is the only... I don't even know if it's harm, it's more of a difficulty that I had. But again, I don't know if it was because, for me just writing was more difficult than the Math... Or you know, whatever other topics or other subjects.

I see... OK, and do you see yourself as multicultural as well?

To some extent yes. New York has always been in some way my second home. So, we came back in '68 and I didn't go back until '72... I was back in the States in '72 but I don't remember going to New York at the time. I went and I don't think I went back to New York until... 1981. So, there was a long gap between '68 and '81.

Yes...

After that, I was I was back relatively often. I mean relatively, you know, I tried to go every year, second year, whatever. Since I have friends from New York, and friends to New York, it's a little bit like my second home. But culturally, I think because I got, you know, most of my culture I got as a teenager in in Hungary, I think I'm more culturally... I don't know what the word I'm looking for... Embedded in Hungarian culture. But I do listen to a lot of a lot of American music, I love American country music. A lot of my American music comes from my friend's taste, because she'd send me CDs, and that's what I listen to... Or now she tells me what she likes and I listen to it, and if I like it then it becomes mine.

Yes...

So, I think I'm a lot more Hungarian and I'm a little multicultural, yes. But let's say, you know, 70-30.

OK, and you've told me already that you still practice bilingualism on a daily basis... or more or less...

Yes.

Do you miss experiencing it in a more... fluent way? I guess.

Well, you know, do I miss experiencing it in in an English environment? Is that what you're asking?

Or just basically when you were learning Hungarian, English and French every day, I guess you got multiple input and exposure coming from several different places. Now I feel like, yes, you still keep in touch with your American friends and because of your family you have to practice bilingualism, but not as frequently ss for instance earlier in your life.

Sort of... When I'm in Amsterdam visiting my daughter, as her husband, you know, our common language is English. So, there it's a fluent environment basically. It's hard to say if I miss it or not. I think I'm I'm exposed to enough English.

I see.

For the English. I mean it would be nice to get the French back. My granddaughter, the 10-year-old in Geneva, she started French, whatever, two years ago. I was in Geneva, and she said something where she didn't use the right adjective, so I corrected her. She started arguing with me and then, you know, I said don't argue with me because my French is good enough for this. And then she looked at me and said, 'do you speak French?'.

Oh, she did not know!

Yes. So, that would be nice to, sort of, get the French back more. We were watching a video together, it was a French cartoon, or whatever, and they were talking very quickly, and they were talking in kids' slang, and I basically missed almost all of it.

That's it for French, I guess. OK, and there is one more question. In what languages do you dream?

I think it depends on who I dream with. If I have a dream that relates to my friends in the US, then, if I remember right... But it's hard to say because I never write my dreams down... Then I think I dream in English. And if it's... My dreams that I remember are mostly in Hungarian, so I'm mostly related to Hungary.

So, it's based on mostly who you're surrounded with at the time?

Yes, yes.

OK, well, then we are finished. Thank you so much, it was so amazing to hear your viewpoint!

Thank you.

With 'C' (M,57)

Good evening to you! I shall start the interview now. My first question would be is that, how old are you now and how old were you when you started acquiring a second language, and under what circumstance, circumstances did you acquire your first and second languages?

First, second and third. I'm 57, I will be 58 in May. I started acquiring my first second language when I was one year old. Until I was 18 months old, I had the English, then came the Hungarian and the couple of years later the Spanish. So, it was basically from the very beginning. When I was learning to speak. I was learning two, then a little bit later, three languages.

And how come, what were your circumstances?

The circumstance was that I'm a mixed-up kid. My father's Hungarian, my mother is Spanish, and I was born in the UK.

Wow!

English was the language which we, the whole family, spoke. The reason we used English was because at the time my mom couldn't really speak Hungarian, or very little. Although she learned Hungarian later on, mostly by listening. And my father's Spanish is not very good, he understands quite a bit, but he has problems with speaking. So, when we were all together, we spoke English. With my father I spoke a mixture of English and Hungarian, and with my mother a mixture of English and Spanish.

That sounds fascinating!

So, we spoke the languages whichever came first to our mind.

OK, thank you. Looking back at your, not bilingual, but multilingual childhood, what is the first thing that pops into your mind?

Umm I don't know. I've never considered the fact that I'm actually learning a language. You have a grandmother that to you speak this way, you have another grandmother to who you

speak that way. So, it wasn't really conscious what language I was speaking. Never had any problem with changing from one to another. I agree with my brother, who said when they asked him 'what language do you dream on?' – 'it depends on which country I'm in.'

I have a question like this actually, we can talk about it now. So, like... Which language do you use to think, and which language do you dream on?

At the moment I use the English and Hungarian to think because these are the languages, I use most. If I'm speaking Spanish, then I'll think in Spanish. I never think in one language, or very rarely do I think in one language and translate to another. So, it varies. And dreaming as well. It depends on which language impulse is hitting me more. If it's Spanish I'm more likely to dream in Spanish. So, it varies. It most likely has to do with the fact that I learned languages at such young age. At the same time the only problem I have is translating. I also find it difficult... I can translate but it takes more time. Many times, translating is something people learn at school. Sometimes, translating takes more time than asking my wife, who speaks Hungarian and she learned English at school. For her, translating is sometimes easier than it is for me. Although I do translate better from Hungarian to English, than from English to Hungarian.

Oh, wow, interesting... Do you think you had started acquiring languages in an ideal age? If there is a 'best time' to start acquiring a new language, when do you think that is?

As soon as possible. I've never found it difficult to speak with anybody. It was just the fact that if I speak to this adult, I speak this way, if I speak to that person, I speak the other way. So, I think that for the child. The sooner they start the better it is. And the more natural a language is. With the Spanish it was a bit more different as I was already speaking English and Hungarian. So, 3- or 4-year-old child can already speak and that's when I started to learn Spanish. It was a bit more difficult. But I think the sooner the better.

Alright. Were your parents ever concerned about your language development, regarding any of your spoken languages? And have you ever felt like that knowledge of one language might harm the others?

My parents... I don't think they had ever thought about the fact that how we learn languages. Like when a child is learning languages at the beginning parents might be concerned that the

child doesn't pronounce something properly or they have a stutter. But I don't think our parents ever thought about the way that we were learning. And me? It has never bothered me. It happened at such a young age that I was never conscious about learning languages. As, a child is not aware that, for instance, they are speaking Hungarian. When you are older, and you only speak one language then you understand that 'Oh, I'm learning a new language'. But with me and my brother it was never a problem. We never thought that we are studying or learning a language. It was just a given fact.

Did you feel like you always got the same input in all your languages? What I mean is, you said that you lived in the UK, so I guess you attended an English school...

I attended a Hungarian school and an English school. For university, I studied in England. For the Spanish... I studied a couple of years of Spanish. But I never went to a Spanish school. I lived in Spain for a year. And I spent most of my teenage summers in Spain with my brother and my grandmother. So, if anything was in the background that was the Spanish.

I see. Do you feel like you possess the same fluency in all your languages?

I would say that my Spanish is a little bit rusty. Because I've been living in Hungary for quite some time, almost 30 years. I do not practice much Spanish. And after living in the UK and in Spain, coming back to Hungary was a bit strange. As a child you can forget languages. So, it was a bit strange to start living in a Hungarian environment. It wasn't so easy to switch between the languages. Although I do not think I really had a problem, or a difference in fluency.

And do you think you have an accent in any of your languages?

I have an accent, I think, in all three. Although in Spanish I actually have Galician accent, which is where my mother originates from. I also speak Hungarian with an accent, and since living in Hungary my English accent is a bit worse. The dominant language that I speak now is Hungarian which has an influence on my English accent. My brother for example, doesn't have an accent in any of his languages. You cannot tell that he's not a Londoner, or when he speaks Hungarian, there is no trace of any accent in the way he speaks. Maybe his vocabulary is not as good as mine, but accent-wise, there is none, zero.

OK, so this actually leads to the following question: do you think it is possible to not have an accent in one's second language?

Yes, of course, it depends on the person. My brother doesn't have an accent, I do.

OK, do you think the time of when someone starts to acquire another language has an influence on this?

Yes. I was learning three separate languages, I was always in the appropriate environments and hearing the appropriate sounds, so I was developing all three at the same time better. So when people start learning a language at an older age when they speak only one language... I see it happening with most people that they already have the way they speak ingrained in them. I think in this case it's much more difficult to learn a language without an accent. Although my brother loved Italian, and he's learned Italian with no accent, so it also depends on the person, I think.

This might be true. Did multilingualism cause you discomfort as a child? Maybe feeling like your proficiency is not as good as your native peers', or in confidence to communicate in a certain language, code switching issues...

Absolutely not. Switching, yes. I was used to switching languages, when the whole family was together somebody spoke Spanish, somebody spoke English and Hungarian. So, I was used to switching. Sitting at the same table and maybe speaking 3 languages. So, I didn't have a problem, I believed my language is just as good as anyone need it to be.

OK and what advantages and disadvantages do you think you had as a as a bilingual or multilingual child?

Advantages... I think the main advantage is that as I learned 3 languages, I was living in various countries... You accept the differences in people far more easily because you have an influence from the English culture, the Hungarian culture, the Spanish culture. And then you put the three together, or the two together, I think it makes you more aware of society and then you easily accept differences in people. So, you become, I guess, maybe less judgmental due to the fact that you have three different cultures or two different cultures. You are aware that both cultures

have their own differences. They behave differently, they believe in different things or priorities. When you put it together, I think it makes you a person who is far more aware of what's going on in the world or with people. Disadvantages? I cannot think about any disadvantages.

How did this affect you as a child, that your educational, social circumstances used a different language other than what you used at the home setting?

don't think it affected me at all. With my brother we had a policy that we would use a language of a country we were currently in. So for instance when we went to holiday from the UK as soon as we arrived to Spain we switched languages, from then on we used Spanish.

That's very nice!

To me being multilingual was always an advantage. I have never felt that I was different or worse because I speak three languages.

And what do you think about advantages and disadvantages as an adult? Due to your multilingual upbringing.

At the job market this is always a huge advantage to speak more languages. If you ask me what my mother tongue is it is difficult to say... work wise it was always an advantage, especially if you want to work in a multinational environment. I cannot see any disadvantage throughout my adult life that it would have caused me.

I see, OK. Do you think this multilingual environment caused security for your child self?

My child is also bilingual, in English and in Hungarian. He's actually doing his degree in English. Funnily enough, he learned Hungarian in school at home he learned English. What I see is that he is far more comfortable in reading or doing something in English. Many times, he gave up books when they were in Hungarian, if he found an English version then he read the English version.

Do you think it has something to do with Hungarian being a more complex language than English?

No, I absolutely do not think. He just prefers English. He talks to people, plays game with people from all around the world in English. He prefers to watch films in the language they were originally made, even with subtitles. He says if a film is synchronized it's not the real film. He's just more comfortable in English.

What were your personal feelings towards mortal multilingualism as a child? Have they changed as the time passed?

As a child you do not think that you are multilingual. I do not think that it occurred to me that I speak three languages. At least not consciously. As an adult... I do not think it changed. It depends on who I'm speaking to, who I'm with, even with my parents. My father as he ages, he changes languages very often. He starts speaking in English then he changes to Hungarian. And I change it with him. If he speaks to me in Hungarian I speak in Hungarian, if he speaks to me in English and answer in English. Maybe he changes it mid-conversation or mid-sentence and I change it with him. Languages make you a better person... They make your life easier. Especially if you go around the world if you know more languages it is more likely you'll find something and understand more people. It has always helped me that I knew to move other languages than English. Many English people have a problem understanding accents for instance an Indian accent or Scottish accent... I've never had problems understanding accents.

What do you reckon to be the main difference between monolingual and bilingual or multilingual child?

I don't know really... May be the way how they perceive the world. The way they speak, their logic. As when you are multilingual you think slightly differently. The way you put things together, it makes your life easier.

When you were a child did your peers make you feel odd in comparison to them who might have been monolingual?

No.

All right. Do you believe that bilingualism or multilingualism provides cognitive benefits?

Yes. The way you think... As I was saying when you process your thoughts in Hungarian it's different than when you do it in English. Because of the cultures you are a bit more perceptive of what is going around.

So, you've personally experienced these benefits yourself?

Yes, yes. The logic, the way you think improves.

My guess is that the answer is yes, but do you feel like you're multicultural as well?

Yes, definitely. For instance, my son is different because he learned English at home. We go to England, we go to Spain, but he's never lived in those countries. So, in his case, I wouldn't say that he is multicultural. I lived in all three countries. A year here, a year there, I moved quite a lot as a child. I would separate being multicultural from being bilingual.

Of course, it is not the same. These cultures you have, do you think you have the same connection with all of them? In terms of maybe spending less time in a country or another, or the input not being the same...

I would say I spend more time in the UK and in Hungary. As I was moving from one another, it became so mixed commerce so engraved that sometimes I had to think about what cultural trait was Spanish or English or Hungarian. Sometimes I found it hard to tell that the things I'm thinking, saying, doing... which culture do they originate from. So little bit from here, little bit from there. If I consciously think that I can say 'Yes, this is how a Hungarian would react' or 'This is how the Spanish would react or would do' and 'This is how the English would think or say' because this is how their culture would accept it... But generally living the everyday life I don't think of it... maybe I know what is acceptable in Hungary or in England; it is so engraved that I don't really have to think. Is this how the Hungarian culture would accept it? Or the Spanish? So, it is difficult for me to separate the three.

And do you practice or experience the same kind of language use you did as a child? If not, do you miss experiencing that?

The last couple of years I've been back to Spain for business trips, and I find it quite frustrating that I couldn't speak Spanish straight away like I could 30 years ago. I had English so no one cared that I have to think of words. If I do not practice the language for... I had the same problem with Hungarian when I was out of Hungary for 12 years, and when I came back, I understood everything but there were words which simply did not come into my mind. I could say glass, it's the thing you can drink from, the thing windows are made from, you can see through it... sometimes words simply would not come. But also, as I've been back to Spain a couple of times, I had business discussions then I sometimes feel that my Spanish is not that bad... But it can be frustrating when you do not practice the language you do not have the same fluency, the same use. English, I use it work every day so it's OK, Hungarian, I naturally use it every day so... they are alright. But I think you never forget a language it just becomes rusty. It's like riding a bicycle. If you do not ride it, you can have a hard time sitting back on it, maybe you will wobble a little, but it comes back. It happened to me sometimes as a child as well, it's just, as a child it comes back easily than as an adult.

This is the end of the interview, thank you so much!

With 'S' (M,49)

Good afternoon! My first question to you would be... How old are you now, and how old were you when you started acquiring a second language? Under what circumstance/circumstances did you acquire your first and second language?

I am 49 years old now, and my circumstance was being born into a Hungarian family and learning Hungarian from them, but they were diplomats, and diplomats have to spend some months in a foreign country and then some months back in Hungary. So, when I was 1, we moved to Venezuela. That is where I had my first interactions with the Spanish language, because we had a Spanish cleaning lady, and I don't remember this, but I know it from my parents that I must have understood some of what she said to me because after a while was able to bring here the cleaning products she asked for.

I see! Looking back at your bilingual childhood what is the first thing that pops into your mind?

I consider myself very lucky for having a childhood like mine, being surrounded by all those cultures, all those languages, especially at such a young age. So, being able to comprehend and to speak, and basically at the very early stage of my development. The fact that I could have an insight of different cultures is... I think it is very helpful, so luck is the first word which comes to my mind.

Lovely! Do you think you had started acquiring another language in an ideal age? And if there is a 'best time' for someone to start acquiring a new language, when do you think that is?

I think it was too early, too early for me. I think it's better if you already have the basics of your own language and later on, you know, still at a young age, it's good to start a second language. But it's good if you don't start it more or less parallelly. Just as I was speaking with my parents, to bring back some memories from their side as well, they said that for example... You know when you are working as a diplomat you spend 10 months, more or less, abroad, and then you come for two months, to Hungary. Some come for vacation, some of them work at the the local ministry. They get in touch and get the things going. My mother told me that basically when we were on our vacation, when I was one year old, I already started to say some words in Hungarian, like my sister's name. But after that... I had an influence from the Spanish side,

which I've already mentioned, that probably caused some confusion in my mind, because next year, when I was 2, we came home the same and I didn't say anything. Neither in Hungarian, neither in Spanish. So basically I didn't use any language. I only started to talk when we came back to Hungary for a longer period from Venezuela and I was already going to kindergarten. I was like 3,5-4 years old or 2,5-3 years old when I started to speak again in Hungarian. They said that I could show them everything, like a pantomime master, so they could understand everything I wanted. I most probably didn't feel the need to use the language. That's what I'm saying, that for me, is this story shows that maybe I had some confusion in my mind. That, OK there are some Hungarian versus Spanish words. So, my understanding would be that if you already have like four or five years of knowledge from your mother tongue established, just a very basic level, it is then a good time to start learning a second language... Probably. But I'm not a professional.

OK, then in this case I think it would be reasonable if your parents had any concerns regarding your language development in either of the languages. Did this ever happen, and have you ever felt like knowledge of one of your languages is harming the other one?

So, they had concern in the very early stage. "OK why is this guy not speaking?" but when I started to speak Hungarian when later we were in Colombia. There I only contacted Hungarian people because they were afraid to take me to the street and meet anybody, so I was only based in the embassy for 10 months. After that we went to Nicaragua and over there it had already started, I started to go to Spanish school, and it came quite quickly. They were not afraid that I wouldn't be speaking because it came quite quickly, the Spanish. But it's interesting, for my sister it was different, we are different kind of people. She was like, she learned a new word then she was saying it. In Venezuela I didn't speak anything, just one day to another I started to speak. It was not easy my mother had the task to teach me Hungarian, basically she was in charge of my education. Sometimes it was tough, I don't think I was bilingual at the time because I'm more like... As she would say I need time for things to settle in. It was the same with other languages, like I had to learn some French in Uruguay. We were going on a field trip and my father as a French teacher was asking me. I made all the mistakes, I couldn't do anything and then we came back from the same trip, the same day, and I was perfect. My sister and I, we are different.

Interesting... Do you feel like you possess the same fluency in all your languages?

Not anymore.

OK.

At least not on an active level. When we came back from Nicaragua, after learning for six years and speaking a lot of Spanish, and being in the swimming team in school, and being with the people who were around me, locals in the house... Then after three years in Hungary with Hungarians, I went back to Uruguay, it came back but I needed a few weeks. I hope now after being 30 years here in Hungary I can still get to that level again but that's a question mark. Because I don't try. If I go to Spain, I have no problem with communications maybe I have some issues with the content. Because of my work I use a little bit more English, so in the past 20 years of my working life I used more English. Therefore, sometimes I squeeze in English words naturally if I don't know a Spanish word by heart. I only realize that after I finished speaking so that makes me mad. But I think if I would go somewhere with Spanish surroundings for a longer time I could get back to the same level.

OK, so what you've just mentioned is called code switching. Like, you are using 2 languages in one sentence or switching midway or just for a word or phrase. Did this happen to you as a child as well?

Not really, no. Because when I was in Nicaragua, I was speaking Spanish to everybody except the Hungarian people, with them we were speaking Hungarian, with my parents with other people around the embassy. I think probably this would be the same in my sister's case, her son was born and raised in Switzerland but at home they speak Hungarian, and he has a vocabulary, I think even better than 99% of Hungarian people of his age. Because he spoke a lot with them, he read a lot of things Hungarian... So, that's also interesting.

Did bilingualism cause you discomfort as a child? We talked about codeswitching, but I also mean feeling like your proficiency is not as good as your native peers, which might cause losing confidence, or just not being able to recall desired words or phrases in a certain language.

I think I was fine. I was six years old when we started, so basically, they were not so far ahead, and I could catch up with them very fast. Over there I was maybe old enough to realize that I need some time to get back on track. There is no serious frustration which I still recall today.

OK, and do you have an accent in any of your languages? Do you think that it is possible to not have an accent in someone's second language?

I have. It's interesting because I used to have a Central American accent because I learned there, but later on I spent one year in Uruguay and since then, they have a very different accent, whenever I meet a Spanish guy they all ask me if I'm from Argentina. There are a lot of small differences in pronunciation. My accent has definitely changed. You can definitely have an accent and it can change over time.

I tend to agree. What advantages or disadvantages did you have as a bilingual child? And how did it affect you that you had to use different languages at the home setting in comparison to your educational and social circumstances?

Disadvantages... I would say it is altogether an advantage. Maybe it would have caused some problems if they had started to speak with me, my parents, when I'm very young not in Hungarian but in Spanish. But it was very clear that there are certain people who I speak Hungarian with and with certain people I speak Spanish. So, I don't recall any disadvantage, altogether I think it is a very advantageous situation.

And what advantages and disadvantages do you think you have as an adult now, because of your bilingual upbringing?

Being open minded... Being multicultural... If I may say. The language also drives the development of the brain so if you have one language that gives you certain development, if you have two languages it helps you to possibly have different kind of thinking. It helps you spend time with the locals, you have the possibility to understand, to see a whole different way of living. It was two totally different world when we were in Nicaragua and totally different from when we were at home. It gives you a perspective.

Thank you. What you've mentioned is that you think it also provides cognitive benefits. So, have you ever experienced that yourself?

It's hard to separate what are the benefits created by the way I was raised, the situation of where I was raised, or the place where I was raised. So, it is hard to say is it whether because I'm

bilingual. It's altogether because of both. My sister and myself are open to other cultures, open to other people, or open to different situations, to different cultural backgrounds. The school system was very different from Hungary. In Hungary it was like just you start in first grade, and you finish in 8th grade, and you have the same classes all over every year. In Uruguay every year they mixed up the classes. There I spent half a year in one grade, then half a year in the grade that would follow. There was only one guy who would be with me in the same class, one of my friends. All the other guys were from other classes. That also helped to see all kinds of people. From different backgrounds, different colours. Uruguay is really melting pot a lot of Italian, Hungarian, German, Spanish came there in different ways from Europe, so it's really mixed.

Could this bilingual or multilingual and multicultural environment provide security for your child self?

I don't think that it provides extra security. More security than being in one place speaking one language.

So, do you feel like that you would have felt more comfortable if you had been able to speak your home language at those settings?

I was quite young and rapidly went in the level of language. I wanted to mention the that when I spoke to my mother, it was interesting, she told me that the teachers in Nicaragua had told her that, first they should concentrate that on me being fluent and being able to write everything in Spanish, in the language which I'm learning in school at the moment. When that is set then they should switch and try to push a little bit the development of the Hungarian language.

Hmm this was the teachers' recommendation...

Yes, the teachers recommended that, OK, don't mix up the kid, don't try to go head-to-head with the two languages, now it is important that he's stable, he's safe, he's competent in the language which we are using in the school, and which we are basically spending the majority of his time. When the basic for that is stable then you can start to develop the Hungarian writing, Hungarian grammar, and Hungarian vocabulary. Which is interesting because later on there were still some gaps in my vocabulary. Like when I came back in '86 to Hungary, I went home

and asked them “OK I don't understand there is this thing ‘egyház’... There is one house, two houses, three houses but this is one house, and it is written together, what does it mean, what is this?”. And then it was like “OK what is this word ‘kályha’, I had lived in a very warm country, so I didn't see anything used for heating. I don't know what is this ‘kályha’ so we had to go and fill up the gaps. Sometimes the usage was not right like, I would not say ‘kislány’, I said ‘kiskislány’... For a very long time there was ‘lány’, ‘kislány’ and ‘kiskislány’.

Understandable...

There were some gaps needed to be filled up. But I don't think that would have been... I think I always felt safe in school, I always felt safe at home... Despite having some snakes and everything but actually I was alright.

OK, these personal feelings of yours when you were a child towards bilingualism, have they changed as time passed?

Come again, please.

Your personal feelings towards multiculturalism, multilingualism, have they changed as time passed from you being a child to nowadays even?

To my sons I was like “OK, you need to learn some languages.”. I know some parents who speak for example Russian and Hungarian, and the mother only speaks with them in Hungarian and the father only speaks with them in Russian... Or they want the guys to be very good in English and they start to speak to them in English instead of their own language. I think that might lead to a little confusion. So, we didn't start that here with the guys. I still I think it's very good, it gives you a lot of positive things, learning extra languages is also very good and you always have good feedback. Like when I was in Spain and I wanted to find a certain place and I asked someone in Spanish and he was like “OK, sure, I will walk with you.”, we spoke and it's completely different... If you go there and you speak English, which is a foreign language, to him, foreign language to me, that can be a totally different connection. If you speak the local language you can feel at home. And then they treat you like... They ask me “Are you from Argentina?” and I say “No, from Hungary.” and they say, “How come?”, that they don't

understand, and I explain, then they realize how that makes sense after all... I still feel the same, that I'm lucky.

And do you consider yourself multicultural as well?

I try to be...

So, not anymore? As a child you felt that both of those cultural settings have a strong connection with you but not anymore? Now you only relate to the Hungarian culture?

There are some elements which I am still very much into but over the years everything fades away... I was very happy when my son had a birthday and I could find a pinata because I remember that being blindfolded, trying to hit it and break it and get all the candy out... There are still certain things which I would love to do. I would love to go back and have some culinary experiences from Nicaragua like, gallopinto, which is the easiest food to do, but I couldn't replicate it in Hungary. It is just fantastic. When it is my birthday my old swimming trainer calls me and then we speak and this is really good.

I see... What do you reckon to be the main difference between a monolingual and the bilingual child?

The big difference?

The main difference.

The main difference... I try to narrow it down because, you know, a lot of benefits of being bilingual can be given through education, through showing them, making them understand different cultures, the way you phrase in different languages. Also, your thinking is different, it's hard to put it together. What is the main difference? I feel that we were not taught Spanish and Hungarian and became a multi- or bilingual, but we were locally involved in the culture. That gives you an extra. In Hungary the kids play soccer in middle school, in Nicaragua we played baseball with a tennis ball we hit with our fists. In Hungary there is a canteen where you would go if the parents paid for your lunch, in my school there was a small buffet where you could buy Coca-Cola which they put in a plastic bag. They couldn't give us the bottles so

they put it in a plastic bag, sealed it and you had to cut the corner of the bag and squeeze it in your mouth. Certain things you cannot experience otherwise. These things give this inner experience. Not just soccer and not just how you don't need a glass for Coca-Cola, you only need a plastic bag... It's hard to quantify, to measure these experiences but they are there.

Alright! And do your circumstances push you to still practice bilingualism on a daily basis, and if not or not in the same extent, do you miss experiencing that?

I don't have too much of a chance to speak Spanish. That's a problem for me. I would love to but there is not enough need. I could go and read the newspapers in Spanish, sometimes I do, but in general I don't have the urge to do it. I'd love to speak, when I have the chance, one of my old swimming buddies was here in Hungary, few years back... My father has a very good friend from Venezuela who has a Hungarian wife and they come every year to Hungary, and we go, and we speak, and I love that. A great guy, pretty intelligent, basically a humorist. I would be able to speak with him in any language, but I love speaking with him in Spanish.

And last question: which language of yours do you use for thinking and in which language do you dream?

Now I use Hungarian. Thinking Hungarian, dreaming in Hungarian. Generally, this was the case. When we went back to Uruguay, and I told you that it took me a few weeks to get back on track, I realized after three or four weeks that I was dreaming of my friends from Hungary, and in my dream, we were speaking Spanish. That was the point where I woke up and I said "OK my Hungarian friends in my dreams are speaking Spanish with me so I'm probably on a good track.". We came back in '91 so 33 years ago. Since then, I didn't... I spent one month in Spain as a... How do you say it in English, 'idegenvezető'?

Well, a person who leads tourists to the attractions... A guide! Sorry, yes, a guide.

I was a guide for one month, that was the longest I stayed over there. I had the possibility over there to speak in Spanish with people, but also, I was handling Hungarian tourists who could only understand Hungarian. When I spent four months in New York in '93, over there I had more chance to speak Spanish because everybody spoke Spanish. You went to the Chinese

store, or you went to any other store, there were people from Puerto Rico or other South American countries. These people were serving, I spoke with them in Spanish of course.

So, they were not native speakers either...

No.

Well! Thank you so much for this interview.

With 'E' (F,57)

Hello! I would like to start with the first question which goes as how old are you now, and how old were you when you started acquiring a second language? Under what circumstance/circumstances did you acquire your first and second language?

OK, so I'm 57 years old... Which is old... And I was five years old when I learned or started learning my first non-mother tongue language, to put it this way. That was Spanish, and to be honest I don't recall too much of how I learned it, I heard from my parents that I learned it by spending six months in the kindergarten not really saying anything, and then suddenly speaking the language. But I cannot corroborate that because I just don't recall that. Then the second foreign language that I learned was English, I was 15, I was in a Spanish environment, in Latin America again, and I went to an American school. So, there I had to be bilingual in terms of having classes in Spanish and in English. I was still learning the language when I had to present in class and things like that, so it was a pretty fast-paced learning for being in an alternative environment. The school people spoke mostly English, but also Spanish so it was like a Spanish speaker learning English... So, these were the two, and just for the anecdote, we live in Switzerland, in the French area, and we've been living here over 25... For more than 25 years but I've always worked in an English environment. We speak Hungarian at home and the French, with on this basis, it is not so easy to pick up which is a constant problem for me... I mean I speak it, you know, I'm fine but I've never been able to take it to even a similar level of my English or Spanish. So, I think I can only talk about two languages rather than the three in terms of bilingual or trilingual.

OK. And looking back at this colourful, multilingual childhood of yours, what is the first thing that pops into your mind?

I am very grateful for it, and I've always thought that it's an incredible gift. Every language that you speak is a gift because you have the opportunity to know cultures, you understand people and you relate to them very differently. Having been brought up in Latin America, speaking Spanish gives you a completely different experience than, you know, being put into a foreign language school and not living in those countries. So, for me, I just feel very lucky that I've had that upbringing with the languages.

I see. Do you think you acquired these languages at an ideal age if there is a 'best time for' acquiring languages when do you think that is?

I'm a bit biased because I've also read about it, so in terms of... From the neurological side, I think I was spot on when I learned Spanish because I was five years old. That helped me to learn English much faster and I was still young enough to actually learn a language, more or less, in six months, and be able to function and get grades and not flunk out in 10th grade in the American school. So, you see, later you start working and you have a family, and everything you know, your ways are more set. It becomes much more difficult to learn another language even though, for instance it's at a good level, but you will never be satisfied with what you are able to learn at that age. In terms of the quality of the language that you speak.

I see. And we talked about neuroscientific side of this phenomenon, so do you believe that bilingualism provides cognitive benefits, and if you do, have you yourself experienced them?

Cognitive benefits... You know that you people say that because Hungarian has a certain way of linguistic... The way that you put together sentences and words and everything that it has a cognitive advantage. I don't know. Maybe it's already a given. From a cognitive perspective, I don't think so... Linguistically, in my work it has helped me a lot. In the sense that even though I always worked in English, I always worked internationally, working with either Europe... With teams of the European countries or of Middle East, Africa, Eastern Europe. And with the Latin languages, even though I don't speak Portuguese, certainly don't speak Portuguese, I don't speak Italian, yet I am able to, because of the closeness and the and the way you think about certain Latin languages. I'm able to work in those languages, to a certain point you do have some similarities that you you're trying to sort of figure out. But beyond that, I don't know whether that comes from a strictly cognitive perspective, that it helps me do anything better than others.

OK, it's understandable. Then, based on what you've just mentioned I was wondering if you believe you possess the same proficiency in all your languages.

Like I've mentioned, unfortunately I do not. However, with Spanish and English and Hungarian I feel those to be on an equal level of proficiency.

And your perspective regarding bilingualism, has it changed since time passed? Like in comparison to your child self or even just like, your early adult life in comparison to, for instance, nowadays?

My perception?

Your personal relationship with bilingualism or how you, yes, or how you perceive it, how you think about it.

I always thought that it's an asset. I have a lot of Spanish speaking friends, I have a lot of Anglo-Saxon friends and of course with English, you know, obviously you communicate these days with everyone in English. I think it's something that has always helped me in my career, it has helped me in my private life, in terms of friendships and understanding cultures, having a broader perspective potentially of things. Then when you know only one language you can't read or watch the original. If you want to read really beyond what you see in your native country in terms of politics or culture or any other area, I think it's quite important that you are able to read in that language. You understand that culture and you have a different perspective, so I like to read Spanish newspapers, I like to read British newspapers, I like to read French papers. Then you put together your opinion about these things. If it's too tiring, figuring out how to and where to look, and things like that, I think it that kind of lessens your possibilities than having those languages and being able to inform yourself in in various languages. A well as enjoying the cultures of those places.

So, these multicultural, multilingual circumstances never caused discomfort to your child self?

No. It was very comfortable. Maybe there was one time when we returned to Hungary, I was nine years old there were four years spent in Hungary and then at 13 we moved back to Latin America. The first month or so, or two months, were tough because somehow, I lost some of the Spanish and a nine-year-old's Spanish is not the same as a 13-year-old's Spanish and so that was difficult. I wasn't prepared to not speak the language. I think we all assumed that I would speak the language. It turned out that you lose a lot. When you think about it's obvious that your vocabulary changes. At that point you're old enough to know that you really need to catch up otherwise you will be a little bit on the on the sidelines.

Then, for instance during these times, did you have problems with not being able to recall a desired word, or code switching, code switching is changing language mid-sentence or just like saying a phrase or a word in another language because you cannot remember the first used language's phrase or word, or feeling like your proficiency is not as good as your native peers' therefore lacking confidence to speak?

At that point I was speaking Hungarian and Spanish and there was not much of a choice to do code switching, there wasn't anybody obviously who would have understood me speaking Hungarian. It is just that I had to realize that I really need to pick up the pace.

I see...

To fit in, to be able to study, to have friends... And that's not particularly a great feeling but that lasted for a couple months.

OK...

Which is not funny either, but you just need to focus on it and do it because otherwise what are you going to do? You cannot return to Hungary for because you're having trouble with the language.

Would you have felt of more comfort during these times if you could have spoken your home language in these educational or social circumstances?

It was more, you know, you spoke this language you're going to you have to speak it again, you need to get on with it. But there was this discomfort. It wasn't about how it would be more comfortable speaking Hungarian. I mean we could have thought about this that you should have practiced, blah blah blah... It's clear but thing happened so we had to deal with that but the way you prepare a child for this is first of all you don't let them ever slack off when they learn the language or try to keep that language because it's an asset. Maybe have a few weeks before you leave or before you go to school to start to pick up and then this whole feeling is no longer there. That's how I see it.

OK and what about accents? Do you have, have you ever had an accent in any of your languages and do you believe it is possible to not have an accent when someone is using their second language?

I have a Venezuelan accent in Spanish, and even after many years of not being back to Venezuela, just few months ago in a store in Spain they said ‘Oh, you're Venezuelan!’ and you don't hear it anymore, but people recognize it. So, in Latin America and in Spain it doesn't really matter, you will always have an accent but a Spanish accent. I don't have a Hungarian accent as far as I am told by all my friends and colleagues, I think it is very easy if you learn it early on, to not have an accent. The later you learn the more you are likely to have an accent. Interesting, in French I have a Spanish accent. I guess I retain the one accent where I went to school.

What advantages and/or disadvantages do you think you have now as an adult due to your multilingual upbringing or childhood?

I guess advantages, as I mentioned to you, the studies and in work, provided that you want to be in an international environment as I wanted to be. It's obviously very helpful if you don't want to be in an international environment then maybe it's not that interesting. For me the real benefits are that to you have a broader perspective. I think just by knowing a culture and a language, then even if you don't want to you will learn something about those cultures. Especially if you want to learn then you can learn much more, so I think it's very much on the plus side. A disadvantage which is not necessarily because of the bilingual upbringing but it's related to the lifestyle, that you potentially have friends in different places. I've never had schoolmates with whom I've had more than three years together. People are in different places. But that's not a disadvantage of being bilingual it's just what the lifestyle can bring you when you are having bilingual upbringing.

I understand... And then do you consider yourself to be multicultural as well?

Yes. I still have friends from those countries, I have friends from where I worked. I often gravitate towards forming friendships with Latinos, I worked in New York in a law firm and I have a number of very close friends from Argentina, from Mexico... So, Latin Americans continue to be my friends. Here I have a lot of Spanish friends in addition to others but that's

just sort of a personal thing, gravitating towards Latinos because I somehow find a better connection with them from the start.

So, can you still practice bilingualism on a daily basis just like you did as a child?

Yes, yes, I can, yes...

So, you use Hungarian, English and Spanish just as much as you did during your childhood?

Yes, also the French!

Oh, the French as well!

As we live here.

And do you like this circumstance or is it sometimes overwhelming or something?

No, I think it's normal. I find it normal.

OK. What do you reckon to be the main difference between a monolingual and bilingual child?

The main difference I think is that you start realizing that the world is a bigger place sooner. There are different ways of thinking and different cultural traits and people think differently. Societies think differently. I think that you start to realize that very quickly and you are much more openminded and when you see other cultures, you're more able to place your own, in quotes, "culture" into that as to where it is situated. You don't necessarily become... I don't want to get into the politics, but you don't become a full-fledged nationalist...

OK so these cultural differences and ideologies, have they affected you as a child or in your adulthood? That these countries can have different approaches?

I think it does because you see very different cultures, you see very different ways of thinking and you get used to the fact that, you know, what you think with one hat on your head, like the Hungarian hat, is maybe incomprehensible to somebody else and vice versa. So, I think that

you try to have more empathy to understand why you think in a certain way. Others have different culture and historical background. I was saying from the beginning you are provided a broader perspective where you can actually try to understand both sides, or three or all the several sides, and see how you can connect with them. You have a more critical view generally of what's happening. You know there may be some good things here, some bad things at the same time... I think have it helps critical thinking.

Actually, there are some studies which suggest that this sort of cognitive benefit can also come from bilingualism in a sense that it is easier to switch in between logical and abstract thinking, like switching between languages. So, this very much supported what you've been saying! In which language of yours do you think and in which languages of yours do you dream?

I honestly don't know because I tend to forget my dreams... Most of them. They come and go rather abstractly for the first few minutes after waking up and then, like most people, I tend to forget them. It's odd but I can't even say with certainty that it's in one language or two or all three, so I really don't know...

OK and what about thinking?

Thinking it depends on the situation. English, very often in terms of rational business thinking also when I have some discussions with our son, who is a trilingual, quadrilingual actually. Because he was born here so he speaks Hungarian as if, subjectivity aside, I think he speaks like a Hungarian, although he has never lived in Hungary; French is his other mother tongue, I wish it was his mother tongue... And he speaks English and German. There are areas of things that we talk about in English but otherwise we will almost always speak Hungarian. I think it's the English and Hungarian mostly, and then and then I switch to Spanish more likely in social settings or when I'm reading a book or watching things. It's a language I love so it doesn't matter when. But in terms of the thinking, because I worked many years in English it just kind of stays with you, when you want to do something even a little administrative you start thinking in English about it. So, it's those two.

I see. OK, my questions end here, so I thank you for the interview!

With 'V' (F,52)

Good evening to you, I shall start the interview now. My first question is: How old are you now, and how old were you when you started acquiring a second language? Under what circumstance/circumstances did you acquire your first and second language?

I'm 52. My first language I acquired as a baby and I acquired it in Hungary, so my mother tongue is Hungarian. At the age of 11, I started acquiring my second language which was German, I started learning it in a very unique way because I started it completely alone, in Germany, with the family of my father's. They invited me for six weeks, and without any language knowledge I was put into a different culture, a different family and language environment. So, I had to start it from zero. I was there for six weeks, I acquired some basics. Then I started an adult language course during the school year back in Hungary. This school was a bilingual school and actually it was a secondary school, although I was still in primary school, so I learned the language among adults, as a child. Then in the next summer I was put into the German language environment for another six weeks, and during this second period I acquired a high level of the language, actually accent-free and correctly. I became bilingual by the end of the second term, or the second summer. Returning to Hungary, at the airport no one could tell that I'm not Hungarian. Everybody thought, as we were discussing stuff with other people, that I'm a German person and German is my mother tongue. Actually, it was really shocking for me as well that I could acquire a language at such a speed and with no accent at all.

I see... Looking back at this period of your life, this part of your bilingual childhood, what is the first thing that pops into your mind?

People sometimes say that 'You had a very easy way to acquire a second language' and 'How easy it is that you could learn a language like that' because they think that for a child it's not a challenge to be put into a very different culture, and to be put in a very different country, among completely new people and in a new environment. But I think it's really a big challenge, especially when you start from zero, and you are 11 or 12 years old and you also have your own thoughts at this age, and you have your needs, and you cannot express yourself at all. And then you have to cope with this situation step by step and find out how to survive such a shocking experience. The first time it was really shocking and the cultural difference... The

obstacle of not understanding what is going around. For example, I was put in a summer camp for children, in the summer, in the woods, among children younger than me. I felt like like being in a zoo, and I am the animal to be watched by the others. That here is a complete stranger, she doesn't speak the language at all, we have to involve her in all the activities, share every part of the life of this camp. It was really shocking; this was the first summer I was there. And I don't know, probably with my hands and feet, I asked the family on the third day or the 4th day, they were coming to visit us in this camp, that they should take me home! To the small family, because it was too much... At that time. But then during the second summer I really felt a big difference in how confident I was, how much self-confidence I got by being able to learn in a scholar environment. I was in a language school, and I could acquire the basics, I could acquire vocab and the grammar basics and so on. So, the next summer gave me such a big push regarding the language knowledge and being self-confident in that already known environment. It wasn't new altogether, I know the people, I already had friends there, we had shared experiences. It was a completely different word from the previous year, and then after that using German language became very natural for me. I can switch to the language anytime I want. My vocab has faded away a little bit, and I need some days to adjust myself when I'm in a German language environment, but I do not have any fear of speaking. Usually, I'm asked where I have studied the language because my I speak the German literature language and I don't have an accent.

As I was listening to you, I sort of understood this big change between your first and second years. I understand this personal obstacle you had to overcome in time. Have you ever experienced discomfort? In terms of not being able to recall desired words in your second language or losing confidence, because you feel like you do not have the same proficiency as your native peers', or, you know, maybe code-switching issues? Code-switching is like... Changing a language mid-sentence or even for just a word or something because you cannot follow the other language' pace and flow.

Yes, of course. When I spend a lot of time in a language environment I usually start thinking and dreaming in this language. So, there were periods of time when I was thinking in German mainly, not all the time, but mainly, and dreaming in it. I also had periods of time when I had this in English. Right now, I'm settled in the Hungarian environment, so I do not use my other languages in such frequency... Sometimes it's difficult to change to German from Hungarian or to Hungarian from German, whenever needed. But I'm an open person, I'm not disturbed by

making mistakes. I'd rather make fun of it and use it as a way of connecting to the other person. It's also very important to say that I never had to use German, for example, for working purposes, so I never had the stress of being measured in German. My experience or my achievements by German language. I used to study in Nottingham, so I had to do my exams and all my university studies in English. So, I experienced what stress that can be when you are measured by whatever knowledge you can express in another language... This was rather in English alone as I never had the level what I achieved in German. But for example I studied foreign trade in Budapest, and there we had... German was my third language, so I had Hungarian and English and German, and there was a German course, and the German exam for me was actually fun! And a relaxing time because it was so natural for me. No stress... Sometimes it can be really difficult to switch between languages because your mind, or my mind, cannot adjust to it so quickly. I spent a lot of... Actually, months in Germany and then back in Hungary, and then months, or a half a year in the US, and then half a year in England, and back in Hungary, then again in Germany... So, mixing up all the languages and switching from one another, I have always needed at least one to three days of adjustment from one language to the other.

Actually, you're not the first interviewee to say this... OK! And do you think you acquired your second language at an ideal age? If there is a best time to acquire a second language, a new language, when would you think that is?

My first degree is English teacher, and I cannot tell you if there is an ideal age for acquiring a language. I mean, acquiring the mother tongue is ideal because your whole life is set in that language and culture. You do not stress about it, you just learn about life. So probably... The ideal setting for acquiring another language is that you are settled in the cultural environment and you are exposed to the most...

Language input?

Yes, of course.

So, you think from birth it is ideal if...

It is not the age but the setting. OK, probably it's also a matter of age as well. Because, for example, I have just started learning Spanish and my memory is not the same. I don't have so much time and I'm not in Spain at the moment, so it makes it much more difficult to acquire Spanish. For example, compared to how well I acquired German so quickly.

So, you think that it is not a matter of time only, but also how someone is... Dropped into an area or is surrounded by culture and just a natural way of others speaking a language, which is their native language.

Based on my case, I think yes.

This is what helped you so much.

Yes, yes.

I see. OK and do you feel like you possessed the same fluency in all your languages?

No, of course not. At the moment, no. Back then I think my German was as fluent as my Hungarian, but right now it's not that good. I'm sure if I would, for example, move to Germany or Austria I could acquire the same level again, what I had before.

And do you have an accent in any of your languages? Do you think it is possible for someone to not have an accent in a second language?

Of course, I think it's possible to not have an accent in the second language, but I think you have to have good ears for. For example, you have to have good ears for music, it's something similar to that. You have to be able to hear the difference and you have to be able to pronounce the difference. But I am easy to influence, for example, after graduating from secondary school I moved to Portugal where I studied Portuguese. My teacher couldn't speak Hungarian only English, so our common language was English. I studied Portuguese there for half a year, I acquired Portuguese on a basic level, then I came back to Hungary and had to do the admission exam at the university for an English course. I went to the oral exam, and they asked me 'Where did you learn English? You have such a horrible Spanish accent.'. Because my teacher spoke English with a Spanish-Portuguese accent I adjusted my accent to her. Then I spent a semester

in Nottingham where I studied in British English, so I changed my accent to British English, it was completely British after graduating from the university. I went to the US where I spent the half year, I acquired a beautiful American accent. Now that I have been living for a long time in Hungary, I have a beautiful Hungarian accent. So, in my case I change a lot because I am influenced by my environment and I'm adjusting myself to my circumstances. I don't know how it works with other people, but for me it's like that.

No, to be fair this usually happens... Just maybe not this frequently or not at this extent, to everyone. Have your parents ever been concerned about your language development regarding either of your spoken languages? And have you ever felt like that knowledge of one of your languages means harm to the other one, or to the other ones?

No, no, no. They have always made it possible for me to have the chance to learn other languages. Both of them spoke German, no other language, only German, but they both spoke that. For example, my grandpa, he lived until the age of 97, and in his last two weeks of his life he was studying German because he was expecting friends from Germany. He was eager to be able to speak to them in German. So, studying languages is important in my family and I think this it is a value that I'm giving, and the possibility, to my children. Because I believe as many languages one speaks as many people live in oneself, same goes for cultures. I know I can be more understandable, I can be more colorful in my thinking, also in expressing my thoughts. As well as putting myself into other people's shoes.

No, this is a very lovely approach. Actually, this is the main thing that connects all the people who I've interviewed so far. That everyone keeps on highlighting how bilingualism brings some sort of openness, and how this is the biggest benefit from it. I love hearing that. Thank you for it. What do you reckon to be the main difference between a bilingual or multilingual child and a monolingual child?

Logic, maybe... Or flexibility and openness, as I said. I think mainly it is about having these experiences and these structures that build up in your mind. Hungarian language is so different from other languages that learning a new language should, I think, create a new type of connection in your brain, which enables you to learn a foreign language. I think it can be like playing chess or it just generally gives you a more flexible brain. A more flexible mind and soul.

I love that, thank you. Then, do you believe that bilingualism or multilingualism provides cognitive benefits? Have you yourself experienced them?

I'm sure. Because being able to speak a second language, at such a level gives you confidence, and gives you strength and courage, that you are capable of achieve high-level and high-quality knowledge. If you can acquire a language, then you will be able to acquire any other knowledge or information. For me it was always like an empowerment. That I can do something professional, and I can go into the "deep ways" ... I had my university degree in comparative linguistics, English and Hungarian, not German. It was very interesting to go into the deep structure of a language, of your own language and of another language. I think the ability of a second language opens you. For example, if you read books in another language... It is such a huge experience. The same story can be so different! If you are able to read a poem in Hungarian or German or English, the same poem, it is a different thing. I think it is so nice to be able to feel these little differences between the "same" text, just in different languages. It gives you a completely different feeling. So, I think it's really good to have another language.

Thank you so much because you're the first one who explored the topic from this direction, and it was very inspiring to hear it. I know now that you lived in Germany, in the Us, in the UK, in Portugal. Do you identify with other cultures, other than Hungarian one? So, do you see yourself as multicultural?

No... But I haven't lost my roots. To tell you the truth, coming back from these countries I always feel depressed... It's not the question of the language, it's the question of the country itself... I've just returned back from Austria, I spent this weekend there. One of my brothers lives there. I spoke with his colleagues and his friends, and I always enjoy being involved in the life of other cultures' people. I really enjoy being able to connect to them, I really enjoy that I can talk to them in their own language. It really thrills me.

And do your circumstances push you to still practice bilingualism on a daily basis? And if not, or not to the same extent, do you miss experiencing that?

I try to find the possibilities to use all my languages. For example, I watch a lot of films, movies in the original languages. When I watch a Scandinavian movie with the original audio,

sometimes for fun, I watch it with German subtitles, and not with English. I like to read in German, so I usually read novels, especially from German and Austrian authors, in their original form. It makes it more fun. Same with English-speaking authors. I try not to forget these languages and I try to find possibilities for using them. I really like connecting with people, and travelling, and using languages. I really believe that these experiences add to my personality.

Thank you so much, this is the end of my interview.

Focus group interview transcription

So, good evening, everyone! My first question is, please tell how old you are now and how old were you when you start to be part of more than one culture group, and under what circumstance or circumstances did you become part of such groups. Anyone can start, I will not tell people to be the first one...

‘T’ (M,48): Ladies first!

‘P’ (F,27): Alright then I will go ahead I’ll be the brave one. I am 27 now and I became, I guess, multicultural when I moved to Mexico when I was 8 years old so starting there, I have been a bit Latina a bit Hungarian and so far it’s been really fun and other than Mexico I’ve lived in other Latin American countries so I guess the whole Spanish thing is part of my culture now I think

Thank you! Well, Z., would you like to...

‘Z’ (F,31): Continue? Yes. I’m 31-years old, I’m half Moroccan and half Hungarian so let’s say I’m a mixture. I can say I participate in two cultures and that’s why I think I have this multicultural experience. I speak French, Arabic and English, so what I say always is that as many languages you speak, you can feel, you can have experiences in as many cultures. I always come and go between Hungary and Morocco, so this is the two cultures I’m participating in.

Thank you! X.?

‘X’ (M,26): So, my two cultures are in English. American and English. I’m 26, and I guess I became multicultural when I was born. But I guess probably became... Felt more multicultural as I started going to school and changed between the two countries.

Thank you! Then, I.!

‘T’ (M,48): Hi! I am 48 and I was one year old when I went to Tunisia with my parents, to live there for five years. Then I was 12 when I went to Belgium for another seven years, so I was

welcomed into Tunisian and Belgian culture for many years in my childhood, and that's the base of my multiculturalism.

Amazing! Thank you everyone. I shall go on to the second question then. If you would like to, we can take the same turns answering. Then! Has your personal connection to all your cultures changed over time? Do all your cultures have the same influence on you, and the same meaning to you now as they had on and to your child self?

‘P’: Excellent question. I guess I appreciate culture more now than when I was a child. Initially Mexican and Hungarian culture are quite similar regarding traditions... Art even. The main difference obviously is the language. They have nothing to do with each other. I suppose I appreciate it now so much more than before. Also, I think, in regard to the other cultures I've lived in, for example Argentina, has even less to do with Hungary... But I think that's about it.

Thank you, sounds quite nice!

‘Z’: So, for me, since I was born in Hungary and grew up in Budapest, I feel more comfortable in the Hungarian cultural setting. Also, since, what I mentioned that I always visit my father in Morocco, so I come and go between the two countries, I could have I gained an insight for this other culture, it is totally different, but in the end, I feel more comfortable when it comes to the Hungarian culture.

And have your personal connections changed over time?

‘Z’: Two times I went for six months to Morocco to live... Let's say, live in Morocco, if I can say that. What I experience is that when I'm in Morocco I feel totally different, I feel the culture and I feel that I belong there. When I come back to Hungary, I feel the same here, so since now I live more in Hungary, I feel the Hungarian culture closer to me. It might sound too simple, but for me what culture feels closer to me is where I am.

Thank you! X.?

‘X’: It has changed over time. I think probably when I was younger, I would probably attach myself more to my American identity as a way, or as a means of distinguishing myself from

other kids. And then as I grew older... Also, I haven't been to America since I was like 11. As I grew older it became much more distant and felt less relatable. A lot of the things that people from that part of my life were interested in and considered normal; I can't relate to them as much. So, I think I've probably become less binary. I don't know if that's less of both or more of one than the other.

I see...

‘I’: It took me a lot of time to accept the many cultures that exist, and to respect the other cultures, and myself, and my role in in this multicultural world. When you ask, ‘Do your cultures have the same influence on you and the same meaning to you now as they did on your child self?’ – no, of course not. They merged into one global, general view over time. Being a child, you do not understand cultures, you're just part of the culture. Being an adult, you start understanding, and I am the oldest here, and you will understand that when you will get to my age, that the time, it's just like for wine, it makes your understanding more mature and things just merge. So, with time you accept, you respect, and you're delighted by multiculturalism, the more you experience it.

Excellent approach, thank you so much. So on to the next question, please everyone, try to... I don't know, look back on your child selves when answering these ones. Have you experienced favouritism or discrimination due to your cultural difference? Either by your peers or adults during childhood, or later during adulthood.

‘P’: So, I guess when I was a child it affected me a lot more, because I remember starting school in Mexico, I didn't speak a single word of Spanish, and obviously my English wasn't as good as it is now. So, I had no, like, common language with anyone, neither my peers nor my teachers. It took me about two or three months until I became somewhat fluent and after that the language barrier was no longer there. But I remember my schoolmates making fun of me for my accent, and they made fun of some of my cultural things that were way too European for them. And when I moved back to Hungary, when I was 12 years old, I remember I was too Latino for people here, so it was just weird, kind of felt like I don't belong anywhere. As the years have passed and I've lived in other countries, and then I moved back to Hungary, and now as an adult, working, I don't think it's affecting me anymore. I just grew past that and obviously my accents have changed. So, I no longer feel like that would be something that

affects me. But I do remember how that was a very important part of... Not even my childhood, but I think probably my teenage years, the bullying, people making fun of my culture just because they didn't understand. I was a minority there but when I came back, I also felt like a minority. Even though I was Hungarian living amongst Hungarians.

Thank you.

‘Z’: Honestly... I had some bad comments in Hungary because I went to school in Hungary, but it never affected me. I was always proud of being half Hungarian, half Moroccan so... They said something and I was laughing about it. About how sorry I was to see that they're stupid. I was like ‘It's OK, it doesn't affect me at all’.

That's lovely, but how about now, during your adulthood?

‘Z’: I don't experience this now because I have my group, my people who I'm surrounding myself with, and they don't make those comments. They are mature and multicultural, also international, so I don't experience this.

Love to hear that!

‘X’: So, it's not like language related, as much as P. was talking about how it's a different language, but I suppose my accent and the way I formulate words in English, probably as a child, was much more noticeable. I learned it from an American but with a British accent so often I would have sounded like I couldn't speak or form words correctly. And obviously kids would pick up on that. It often sounded like... A northern English accent but with the southern English accent mixed in, so some of the intonation was a bit off. Then, yes, the other way around I suppose, living in America as a kid with a British accent you are kind of like a circus animal. Because everyone kind of presumes that you are like Shakespeare and... Or super intelligent... I guess that's favoritism but also in the negative connotation. And then as an adult... I don't think there's been much.

And as like... A foreigner living in Hungary? Does it affect you?

‘X’: I mean... Probably, yes, in a positive way. A native speaker of English, I suppose that has visible and non-visible benefits to my existence here, versus if I didn't speak English to the level I do, whether that's related to one being British or American, but that's a different question...

OK but do you do you receive comments or judgment due to your difference, here?

‘X’: Not in any, like, meaningful way, no. I don't believe so.

Lovely, OK! I.?

‘T’: Well, I'm multilingual, tall, I was handsome as a kid, white, heterosexual male. So, I can say that I've been favored by all cultures all my life. Wherever, whenever I was host or in my home country I've always been favored by cultures. I was born lucky.

Sounds amazing... Was it hard for you to come back to Hungary and melt in with the Hungarians, after all those years spent on a foreign land?

‘T’: Belgium was a special case in that regard, because when I went to Belgium it was Western Europe. We still were Eastern Europe at that time, communist country. But during the time I was there, the country's politics changed and that was also something special. Being abroad, I was young, and as a child I did not really understand. I was just happy that freedom is coming, that we will be liberated. And since I was in Belgium, it was Western Europe, so I knew what was coming to Hungary, so I was very happy that finally colorful shops and many good music can enter the country. Being young that's all I was interested in. Since 2010 in Hungary... It's a different situation, but that's another story and it's really not part of this multicultural issue or it's really not directly related.

OK, then, what do you guys reckon to be the main difference between a monocultural and a multicultural child?

‘P’: I think that's the easiest question so far. In my point of view, mostly, well... Obviously not in everyone's case... But I think it's mostly the language, that was in my case at least. I think that people who speak more than one language, or have lived in multiple places, or come from

diverse cultural households, they are more open, they're more empathetic. Just so much more open to the world and to people, they tend to be... They have different views than someone who was just based... Or who was brought up in one cultural household. I feel like they have this openness to the world, they're not afraid to travel, they are interested in other cultures, they appreciate the art or the differences more than anything.

I am delighted to hear this. Onto Z.!

‘Z’: ‘P’'s answer is really good. I think it's mostly the open-mindedness what music, culture can give, and multiculturalism of course. What I see is also... Even though nowadays it's more common, since people learn other languages in school, that people are more interested, look for more chances to be open-minded. My other thoughts are the same as P's so I don't want to repeat it.

Thank you!

‘X’: Yes, I agree with these two. I guess as a child it's probably less conscious that you're having a multicultural... At least for me because there's no language difference, so it was a much more nuanced difference. I would find myself, perhaps, being interested in other things than my friends at school. For example, they would have absolutely no idea what I was talking about which can be kind of disconcerting as a 7-year-old or as an 8-year-old. That I'm interest in different sports or culture or whatnot... I guess... Wait, what were you going to say?

Is this the main difference you would highlight from your childhood? When it came to you being surrounded by other children who did not share multiple cultural roots, that you were interested in more things, other things just... I don't know, more...

‘X’: Maybe yes... I guess it was just the distinction between having a more varied upbringing, what I'd experience in my household, and in my familial relationships, and with my relationships with other children, and people I meet in everyday life. It is much more diverse range of relationships than if I had just been from a monocultural upbringing. And I guess that probably does contribute to a more open-minded level of... Again, without even realizing it in my case, because it gets far less intrusive in my day-to-day life when it's all in English... But

it's little things... When you think about it, perhaps it's not too dissimilar from being... I don't know... In China and speaking Chinese or whatever it is.

Understandable, thank you.

‘I’: Well, I think that it helps me to understand how much I'm favored and lucky just by birth. Also, how many other people in the world are not. I think that's... After 48 years of multiculturalism, that's the main message that that I would relay.

OK, so on to the following question! For you, what is the relationship between cultures and languages? Do you consider yourself bilingual as well? If yes, in which language of yours do you think and dream?

‘P’: Another easy question... I think, as I've said in my previous answer, I think I would consider myself bi- if not trilingual, because I speak Hungarian English and Spanish, and I speak them almost at the same level. I've been learning English since I was three, and Spanish since I was 8, so it's been a while. I use them every day. I've done most of my studies in Spanish, so that's one of the reasons why most of the times when I do remember what I dream... It is in Spanish.

And do you think in Spanish as well?

‘P’: That's a tough one... I think it depends on my surroundings, as if I'm surrounded by Spanish speakers then yes, definitely. If I'm surrounded by English speakers, mind just switches instantly because it's easier to think and talk in the same language than to think in a language and translate. For me it's always been the best mix everywhere... And I feel like whenever I'm speaking one language or another, I have a different personality... Basically I'm me but my sense of humor, for example, is very different in all three languages.

That's interesting... Z.?

‘Z’: OK. So, when I was the young my mother used to speak with me, talk to me in Hungarian and my father in Moroccan Arabic. These are the two cultures and languages I was raised in. I really like your question about the languages of thinking and dreams. I was... What I've

mentioned before, that before, not now, not anymore, but before, every three months I went to Morocco and when I was there, or when I spent time with my father, I'd always get back to that mindset, the Moroccan humor or way of thinking or... Seeing the world the world that way, perceiving the people around me. When I'm surrounded with Hungarian people thought process changes... Which is sometimes confusing because, in my opinion, you have to choose one... Sometimes I was so Moroccan when I was with Hungarians and so Hungarian when I was with Moroccans.... I don't know how why it happened but now, as I've mentioned, I think since I've spent more time in Hungary... But this is how I work, I don't know why, it depends on where I am exactly, like, physically. Now I think in Hungarian and I'm more Hungarian...

So, what you're saying is that you also had to shift in terms of ideology when changing in between the countries?

'Z': Yes absolutely.

I see. But you are more embedded in the Hungarian culture now?

'Z': Yes.

OK, thank you! X.!

'X': Well, unsurprisingly I think in English... This is a difficult question for me to answer because I don't really know how to distinguish it from how I would act in different social situations... But I suppose the way I would manipulate English if I'm talking to Americans, and talk to my family members who are American, and British people, would probably be very different. On the other part of the question, about the relationship between language and culture... I guess the only contribution I feel I could make on my shared experiences, that when I was living... As someone living in a country which I am not bilingual in, the language is kind of the shared experience. When I interact with someone who's also anglophone and a native English speaker, it's quite interesting... You're basically drawn together, though, I guess, a shared experience of living in a country, where the main language is not your mother tongue... It's either linguistic or cultural understanding. And so, that would probably be my brief contribution.

And when you... I know that you located in Spain for some time, and you speak Spanish... Did that happen to you, that you used Spanish to think, or you dreamt in Spanish?

‘X’: So basically, to echo what P said... When I was studying in Spanish I would obviously have to think in Spanish, because if I hadn’t then I would have just stood there in silence for about 5 seconds before saying anything... But yes, I would have switched either consciously or unconsciously.

OK thank you so much. P.!

‘T’: I think when I was young, I was completely bilingual... I don't know if I'm bilingual or multilingual... When I was 18, I spoke better French than Hungarian because I was embedded in Belgian culture... I was going to school there and all my friends were speaking and talking in French. It was a difficulty when I was 18-19 years old, to come back to Hungary, to the Hungarian school system, and to perform in Hungarian at the academic level. It was not easy during the first years or the first year, but of course it's my mother tongue so I got used to it. I'm back in Hungarian culture for 30 years now so I think I think in Hungarian, I count in Hungarian... Counting is something that helps you understand what language is the closest to you. Because when it comes to figures and numbers, you come back to your “good” language because you don't want to miss... Of course, there was time when I was thinking about figures in French too... What's funny about languages and dreams, sometimes my wife tells me that I speak in French in my dreams... What's special with languages and with words, is that when you're multilingual, you don't have one language, and you don't think in one language. Things become images in your mind, and you relate words to it in different languages. That's why translating, for instance, is not so easy for us. You have to learn translating. Being bilingual or multilingual translating between the languages is a difficulty because it's not the same bridge... You don't really think in words or in languages anymore, it's just things that you see... A shoe; you imagine it in your mind. It's not about the word shoe, or “cipő”, or “chaussure”, or “zapato” ... You see the shoe as an image, a drawing of a shoe, the shoe you wear... That's how I think I'm related to languages today.

Thank you, what an exciting experience and approach! Onto the last task, I ask you all to write 5 words or phrases that pop into your mind, based on the word ‘culture’. I am going to use

them to create a word-cloud. That is the end of my interview, I dearly thank you all for participating!