

**Claire Darmstadter**

Hey everybody. I'm joined today by Taiyo Kakegawa-Fernandez, who is trilingual in English, Spanish and Japanese and is the son of Tomomi and Manuel, and brother of Maya, so we are completing out the whole family. And I'm so excited to hear your perspective. So thanks for taking a couple minutes to chat with me.

**Taiyo Kakegawa-Fernandez**

Yeah.

**Claire Darmstadter**

Yeah. So it'd be great if we could kind of get an overview of what it was like growing up in this trilingual household, how that kind of interacted with your education. I know that there's been a lot of programs and different things that you participated in, so the very general overview would be awesome.

**Taiyo Kakegawa-Fernandez**

Okay, so yeah, ever since I was born, I've been trilingual, which is really nice. I've been able to speak three languages. To keep that up, we've been going to Japanese school every weekend, until COVID. But yeah, up till then, we've been going every Saturday to the Twin Cities to keep my Japanese in check. As for the Spanish, we haven't really done much, but I can still speak it decently fluently. We've been to Japan, every single year. That really helps with my Japanese, like when I go over there, I usually just forget some English in return for some Japanese, we've also gone to Costa Rica a few times, which also helps Spanish part, which is really nice, because I always get to learn a lot of that culture. Let's see what else for the educational side, for like school, I guess it's helped with being able to be in language classes or not being language classes, because I'm already fluent. And yeah, because I took Spanish, like I took a Spanish three, which is a few years ahead of a normal course. I was able to do that and finish all my Spanish courses, like two years early. For Japanese. I just took the AP Japanese test and got a good point there. So I didn't have to take any Japanese courses. Other than that, I guess it's just flaunt that you can speak three languages.

**Claire Darmstadter**

Yeah. And do you feel like kind of when you're growing up and in those language classes, like in you know, the school day and a Spanish three, or in a Japanese class, or the AP exam, did you feel like your teachers would ever draw upon you to kind of be like the example or help the other kids in the class?

**Taiyo Kakegawa-Fernandez**

Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. My Spanish teacher would always try to use me for I think, maybe pronunciation, I feel. Yeah. And then whenever I spoke for, like, reading a line of text from a book in Spanish class. Yeah, some kids were like, whoa, cuz like, the accent is perfectly Spanish.

**Claire Darmstadter**

And do you feel like when you're kind of little, you know, even younger, growing up, were there ever moments? Or is like, Oh, my gosh, I'm overwhelmed. I can't organize three languages. Or do they just like nicely compartmentalized in your brain?

**Taiyo Kakegawa-Fernandez**

They do nicely, compartmentalize in my brain. Yes, that's good. Let's see, well having to talk different languages for different people in the household is a bit of a stress because I want to just be able to speak one, but it's fine. It trains you to, you know, jump from one to another.

**Claire Darmstadter**

Yeah. And so I was kind of chatting with Maya a little bit about this, just like what it's like to have two parents who are not only professors, but they are language professors. So do you feel like in your household, it is like, Oh, my gosh, they're always analyzing what I'm saying. And like, they're correcting me --

**Taiyo Kakegawa-Fernandez**

My dad does this so much. Yeah, my mom doesn't, but my dad does. So every time I'm trying to talk to him, if I slip up and use an English word, he'll correct me on that, and then like, I get a bit angry because he's like, not listening. You know, he's not listening to what I'm saying. He's just listening to correct me is what I feel like. Yeah.

**Claire Darmstadter**

And kind of looking down the road in the future, do you think you're gonna want to go into a career that would maybe leverage these linguistic abilities or is like, I want to do it for my own personal self, but I don't want to have any job that's related to languages.

**Taiyo Kakegawa-Fernandez**

For now, I don't really see myself and my job using my languages, but I know it definitely will come in handy. On an application resume, it would definitely come in handy and I could use it. I just don't see myself going for a job that would require it.

**Claire Darmstadter**

And I think you mentioned kinda you know, you travel to Japan in the summer to visit family. Obviously, with COVID, you haven't been able to travel or do as many like community events. So do you feel like there's been other ways that you've been able to practice or use language? Or is it kind of like on hold right now and it's just within your family?

**Taiyo Kakegawa-Fernandez**

It's on hold right now. Yeah, it's on hold, and only my family.

**Claire Darmstadter**

Finally, in celebration, multilingualism, we tell little kids that it's a superpower to speak more than one language. So give me one reason in Spanish, in Japanese, in English, in all three, whatever you like, why we should see speaking more than one language as a superpower?

**Taiyo Kakegawa-Fernandez**

Because it's a flex and because you get to make more friends around the world. Broaden your horizons, if you could speak three languages. Plus, I'm sure there's a lot of other multilingual kids in school nowadays. So you can use that to make more friends with other multilingual speakers.

**Claire Darmstadter**

Well, thank you so much. I appreciate your perspective, your whole family's perspective. I think it's so fascinating. So thank you again, thank you. Have a great day.

**Taiyo Kakegawa-Fernandez**

Thank you. Goodbye.