

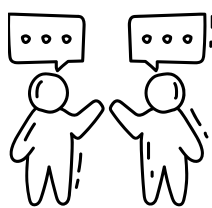


Hossa

HOSSA SKANDARY-MACPHERSON

Hossa was born in Afghanistan and speaks Dari and Pashto. However, the forced emigration of the 1990s resulted in time spent in India as a child where she picked up some Hindi and Urdu, a period of living in Russia, and then a move to Belgium where she became fluent in French. She now lives and works in Aberdeen having completed a degree at the university in Politics & International Relations and French.

I wouldn't say [the languages I speak] have shaped my identity, but rather my mindset. For example... when we moved to Russia, everything changed: my brain switched into Russian. At home with my siblings, we were using Russian words because Russian words were coming quicker to us. So your brain and your way of thinking or your mindset will shape in whichever country you live in. And then, when we moved to Belgium, most of the time we were speaking in French with each other and still sometimes when I'm speaking with my siblings, especially my youngest brother (because when we arrived in Belgium, he was very young), he feels more comfortable to speak with us in French rather than our mother tongues.



Here, I speak with my own children and my husband in English. At the beginning I tried to teach them Dari, but my kids, they said, "oh, I don't understand you" and to be honest, I said, "okay, I'll just use one language". But I think that was my mistake. I should have persevered because my my little brother, he lives in Denmark, and his daughter speaks four languages.

My husband is Scottish and at home we speak English, so I learned English in that context. And before meeting my husband, I learned English at school as a foreign language... But before coming to the University of Aberdeen, I hadn't been to school in English or had a regular education in English... so it was quite tough for me. But you learn a language out of necessity and you do your best.

I always say in Dari to my children, "I love you." When my children go to bed, I say *shab bakhair* (شب بخیر), which means 'good night'; *doostat daram* (دوستت دارم), which means 'I love you'; and *āfarīn* (آفرین), which means 'well done.'



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