
DLO DAILY MEDIA WATCH

CURRENT NEWS 28 JULY 2010

Afghan army struggles with ethnic divisions

Officers in the U.S. Army routinely praise their Afghan partners: They know the culture, can relate to the villagers and understand regional politics. But in southern Afghanistan, the focus of the U.S. war effort, nearly all the Afghan soldiers are foreigners too. Most don't even speak the local language. They have to communicate through interpreters hired for the Americans. Despite ethnic quotas and recruiting drives, the Afghan army is still dominated by northern minorities who were oppressed by the Taliban. Nearly all Taliban are ethnic Pashtuns.

Protesters: 'Say no to Mandarin!'

Sunday's protest was unique – Guangzhou citizens were walking in the street to protect their native language: Cantonese. It was sparked by an announcement earlier this month by the local China People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), a political advisory body, encouraging the local government to promote Mandarin language content on Guangzhou's prime time TV news programs. Mandarin, China's official language, is based mainly on northern dialects, primarily, the Beijing dialect. It was not adopted as the country's national language until the 1950s, when the fledgling Communist government took power and began to enforce it as the standard language to be used in education, media and by the government. But in a country as large and geographically diverse as China, promoting one standard dialect has been no easy task. It's not uncommon for villagers living just 30 miles away from each other to speak different dialects – particularly in the south where the mountainous terrain helped lead to linguistic differences.

New Haven schools get \$1.3M for language studies; Chinese, Arabic to be expanded

The public schools have received a \$1.3 million federal Foreign Language Assistance Program grant for Chinese and Arabic culture and language programs, the district said in a statement. The five-year grant, provided through the U.S. Department of Education, "is intended to strengthen, expand, and enrich the teaching of critical languages essential for our nation's international competitiveness," the statement said.

Google Docs Adds Integrated Translation

Google is making the most of its translation technology by introducing it to more and more of its products. The latest to take advantage of it is Google Docs. Users can now translate documents from inside the editor. There are 53 languages to choose from, but other than the convenience, the feature doesn't add anything to the quality of the translations above the standard Google Translate.

Katie Grossweiner '12 wins US Department of State 2010 Critical Language Scholarship

Grossweiner spends more than 20 hours a week studying at the Nanjing University, where she takes two Chinese courses to learn how to read "shumian," the written and formal version of Chinese, and colloquial Chinese. She also attends night lectures about Chinese culture and history as well as tai chi classes. "But the most exciting aspect of the program happens outside of the classroom," Grossweiner said. "I am living with a Chinese roommate, which means I am constantly immersed in the language."

Lino Lakes city council passes English-only ordinance

With the passing of an English-only ordinance Monday night, Lino Lakes became the first city in Minnesota to require all government-related public meetings to be held in English. Also in accordance with the ordinance, the city will only produce city documents in English — which is what the city has been doing all along. Many local cities, such as Minneapolis, for example, translate information regarding many of the city ordinances into other languages — including Hmong, Orono, Laotian, Russian, Spanish, Somali and Vietnamese — for those who do not yet speak English.

Hebrew Optional: Santa Clarita Charter High School Set to Open

A new public charter high school in Santa Clarita that was to have required Hebrew language instruction as a “key component” of its curriculum will open this fall with 200 students — who will not be required to study Hebrew. The seventh-, eighth- and ninth-graders entering the Albert Einstein Academy Charter High School (AEA) in the fall will be required to study one language for four years — they'll have the choice of Spanish, Latin, Greek, Arabic and Hebrew — and will have the option of studying a second foreign language as well.

Top 10 translation blunders of international marketing, PR and branding

Somewhat humorous list of 10 translation errors within the realms of marketing, public relations, and branding.

PREVIOUS NEWS

Afghan Intelligence Contracts Apply Some Limits

(Washington Post)...Walter Pincus

After more than eight years of fighting in Afghanistan, the United States and its NATO coalition partners continue to hire private contractors to support their intelligence and counterintelligence analyses and operations in that country.

Secret mission: A child

A three year old boy has become part of a unique program begun by self-improvement organization NXIVM founder [Keith Raniere](#) called the "[Rainbow Cultural Garden](#)" aimed at helping youngsters master several languages. As a result, the child has been under the care of a number of different nannies, some from foreign nations, each using one of five different languages.

For York teacher, foreign languages key to education

Should foreign language be an elementary and middle school requirement like it is in high school? Yes. The language learning part of the brain begins slowly to atrophy right after puberty. This is not to say that adults and teenagers can't learn a foreign language; they can, but it's harder to do. It makes no sense to lose those ripe years when language learning is so easy.

More school students taking up German

As many as five new schools are expected to introduce the study of German language this year, in addition to the existing 13 schools which already offer the subject. "Students take up German because they can pursue cutting-edge technology courses like automobile engineering, nanotechnology and microelectronics in Germany that the country is reputed for. If they learn the language, they can take up these subjects easily. Also, companies which have a base of operations in Germany or work with German partners pay candidates a salary that is 20% higher than the average if they know the language," said Prabhakar Narayanan, head of language department, Goethe Institut.

The YMCA of Greater New York Launches Cabins of Hope, a Program to Send Children from Haiti to Summer Camp in the U.S.

The children were selected from teen members of the YMCA Youth Centre in Port-au-Prince, which was destroyed in the January 12 earthquake. Six months later, many continue to cope with emotional and physical trauma from the disaster and lack a clean, safe place to live. In addition to offering relief from the stress of their everyday lives, Cabins of Hope will help these kids recapture some of the simple joys of childhood. The program also will aim to strengthen their social, physical and linguist skills so they may return to Haiti more empowered to help rebuild the youth programs at their Y in Port-au-Prince.

Gen. Casey visits the Defense Language Institute

Short video capturing Army Chief of Staff, GEN Casey, on a recent visit to the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center.

Military testing Afghan language translation mobiles for US troops

One of the biggest challenges for troops in that region is the language barrier. To overcome this problem, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) [has been evaluating](#) a trio of new, portable handheld devices that record and then transmit voice translations of that country's two most popular languages. How do they work? Project manager Craig Schlenoff explains: "An English speaker talks into the phone. Automatic speech recognition distinguishes what is said and generates a text file that software translates to the target language. Text-to-speech technology converts the resulting text file into an oral response in the foreign language. This process is reversed for the foreign language speaker." The users can both speak into one device, or call each other on their own copies of the handheld.

U.S. Students Making Progress in Persian

Persian is a hot subject on U.S. college campuses, with students registering for courses in the language in unprecedented numbers. Surveys of colleges and universities by the Modern Language Association have shown large gains in registration for classes in Persian (also called Farsi): up 82 percent from fall 1998 to fall 2002, and up 82 percent again from fall 2002 to fall 2006. (Enrollment in all foreign language classes generally rose in those periods, but at a much slower pace: by 17 percent from 1998 to 2002 and by 12.9 percent from 2002 to 2006.) The next four-year survey is due out in 2011, and those in the profession say it's clear the number of students continues to rise substantially, spurred in part by a U.S. government effort, begun in 2006, to encourage the teaching of Persian as well as Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Swahili, Turkish and Urdu.

Pascrell announces \$1.3M grant to Montclair BOE for foreign language education

U.S. Rep. Bill Pascrell Jr. today announced a \$1.3 million U.S. Department of Education grant for the Montclair Board of Education's 5-year project to expand teaching of Chinese through the district's elementary and middle schools as well as the high school. This program, which will be developed with the help of Rutgers University, will connect the study of the language with the study of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, according to a release sent to The Montclair Times.

Around the Metro: Bondurant youngsters to study Mandarin Chinese

The district will receive \$214,102 annually for three years from the U.S. Department of Education through the Foreign Language Assistance Program.

Elementary Students Learn a Foreign Language

Elementary students in Monongalia County showed off their foreign language skills on Friday at North Elementary in Morgantown. About 60 students in first through fifth grades spent the last few weeks learning the Chinese language through the Startalk program. Friday, they put their knowledge together at the final awards ceremony by giving performances all spoken in Chinese. The Department of Education says they want to help students become proficient in foreign languages by the time they graduate. "It's the prime time for them to learn a language. They're able to compartmentalize. Brain research is very supportive of that. So, the students right now have the attitude, the disposition, to learn a language at an early age. That's really the main focus here, is to provide that exposure," says WVDE World Languages Coordinator Robert Crawford.

Best Travel Apps for the iPad

If you need a basic talking phrasebook, you can't go wrong with the [World Nomads iPad app](#) series, mainly due to the comprehensive introductory audio lesson. For vocabulary-building, the [Byki iPad app](#) series has you covered. This app uses a three-step learning process to help build your vocabulary in a foreign language, and it goes beyond the basics with extensive downloadable lists to customize and enhance the experience. SlowSound ensures that you can truly hear and understand the correct pronunciation of each word, and the series covers 20 languages, including several that are more exotic than the typical French and German apps. If you want to go beyond the basics and actually learn a foreign language before you go, you should start with [SurvivalPhrases for iPad](#). Available in 18 different languages, each one includes audio lessons, flash [cards](#), and handy phrases organized into logical categories. It won't make you completely fluent in a foreign language, but should offer enough instruction to get by in almost any context. The best dictionary app is the one offered by [Ultralingua](#). In addition to

highly detailed, fully hyperlinked definitions, it has extra features such as verb conjugation and a handy number translator that put it ahead of the other dictionary apps covered in this series.

Virtual classrooms give schools online options

Eau Gallie High is taking advantage of that by offering a unique pilot program this fall. It will offer one core class -- a foreign language class -- through Florida Virtual School. That means the 35 students sitting in Eau Gallie's [computer](#) lab practicing their language skills will technically be enrolled at the virtual school so Eau Gallie won't have to comply with class size rules for that period. If they did, the school would have to limit the class to 25 students.

Government Foreign Languages Hearing Scheduled

Did you know that the US Government will have a hearing on July 29, 2010, in the Dirksen Senate Office Building about the language gap and how to improve the federal government's foreign language capabilities? For those of you who live in the greater Washington, D.C., area, the hearing will be in room SD-342 and should be interesting. There may be a live video of the proceedings as well for those who cannot attend.

http://hsgac.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.Hearing&Hearing_ID=6aafe312-754a-48a4-9cab-19b7051c1433

U.S. Reps. Push for Foreign-Language Teaching in ESEA

Two Democrats from the U.S. House of Representatives said at a policy briefing yesterday on Capitol Hill that they plan to introduce a bill that would authorize \$400 million in funding for fiscal 2011 for the teaching of foreign languages to K-12 students. They hope the bill will become part of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.