
DLO DAILY MEDIA WATCH

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Closing the Language Gap: Improving the Federal Government's Foreign Language Capabilities

On Thursday [7/29/10], U.S. Senator Daniel K. Akaka (D-HI) will hold a hearing titled Closing the Language Gap: Improving the Federal Government's Foreign Language Capabilities to examine the federal government's needs for personnel proficient in foreign languages. Changing threats to U.S. national security, the increasing globalization of the U.S. economy, and immigration to the U.S. have greatly increased federal agencies' needs for personnel proficient in foreign languages.

NIST replaces translators with smart phones

The persistent shortage of qualified translators is a serious problem facing American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. But the National Institute of Science and Technology is working on a [solution](#) that makes a surprising use of smart phone technology. [NIST](#) is currently testing a smart phone-based device that translates English to Afghani Pashto and back again. When an English speaker talks into the phone, speech recognition software records and translates the information. The device then reads the information back orally in the target language. NIST scientists have spent the last four years researching and evaluating speech translation systems for the [Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency](#) (DARPA). Previously, they used microphones and portable computers. But the new technology works on more wieldy devices and operates in real time.

Tribe hopes to fund Cherokee as foreign language class in public schools

The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians is urging the state to formally license Cherokee language teachers, enabling Cherokee courses taught in public schools off the reservation to count toward a student's foreign language requirement. Earlier this month, tribal and school officials met with representatives from the N.C. Department of Public Instruction to finalize the steps in the process.

TalkAbroad founder discusses Silicon Valley, Omaha Startup scene

TalkAbroad is a company that uses online video conferencing to connect American college students learning a foreign language with native speakers abroad.

Virtual schools 'clicking' for many students this school year

A record number of students are heading back to school this year – without ever stepping foot inside a classroom. A growing number of virtual schools (also known as cyber schools or e-schools), combined with booming parent (and student) demand for high-quality virtual education, have more students than ever logging on, instead of boarding a school bus, this back-to-school season. Many parents are drawn to the quality curriculum a virtual school can offer their student – and programs they might not have access to at the local brick-and-mortar school. The current economic climate has forced many neighborhood schools to eliminate programs like foreign language instruction, Advanced Placement (AP) courses and more. At the same time some virtual schools are adding courses like Mandarin Chinese and AP Chemistry.

TEFL TEACHERS LOSE JOBS AS JAPANESE LANGUAGE-SCHOOL

The TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) industry is often regarded as recession-proof but with another major language-school operator going bust in Japan, this does not appear to be the case. GEOS Japan filed for bankruptcy in April citing fewer students as a result of the recession as the reason for its debts of ¥7.5 billion (£51.5 million). G Communication is to take over 230 schools while 99 are set to close but the company has pledged to help GEOS employees who have lost jobs to find new employment.

CASL's Brecht To Discuss Improvements to Fed's Foreign Language Capabilities

Richard Brecht, the executive director of the University of Maryland's Center for the Advanced Study of Language (CASL), will testify before the Senate Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management during its hearing titled *Closing the Language Gap: Improving the Federal Government's Foreign Language Capabilities*.

OPINION

The CIA Solution For Afghanistan

(Wall Street Journal)...Jack Devine

The U.S. military will not achieve anything resembling victory in Afghanistan, no matter how noble the objective and heroic the effort.

PREVIOUS NEWS

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.

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.