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## **DLO DAILY MEDIA UPDATE**

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### **CURRENT NEWS 16 SEPTEMBER 2010**

#### **Congress Will Explore Charges Of Unqualified Translators In Afghanistan**

The chairman of the House Armed Services subcommittee that investigates the military told ABC News he is deeply concerned by recent allegations that Army units have been saddled with unskilled foreign language translators in Afghanistan. "This issue of language skills is a very, very significant one," said Rep. Victor F. Snyder, an Arkansas Democrat who chairs the subcommittee on oversight and investigations. "The Army is taking it seriously. Our committee is taking it seriously. We're going to follow up on this."

#### **Afghanistan Pakistan Hands: The first year**

One year ago this month, Adm. Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, established the Afghanistan Pakistan Hands Program for long-term regional engagement of the Afghan and Pakistani people. Now, nearly 300 military and civilian personnel are deployed to Afghanistan and neighboring Pakistan to build partnerships with the local populace as part of the greater counterinsurgency strategy employed by the International Security Assistance Force. They are part of a program that allows them to work shoulder-to-shoulder with Afghan partners.

#### **The NCLRC Celebrates Refunding**

The National Capital Language Resource Center is pleased to announce that it has been refunded by the U.S. Department of Education as a Title VI Language Resource Center for an additional four years, from 2010 to 2014. There are currently 15 LRC's around the country whose mission is to improve language teaching and learning in the U.S. We are all delighted to be able to continue serving foreign language educators around the country.

#### **FAMU Offers New Language Courses**

The FAMU Office of International Education is encouraging students to invest in an opportunity that will yield positive results and high rewards. The Mandarin Chinese, Arabic and Hausa courses are \$195, while the Portuguese course is equivalent to a regular four credit hour course taken at the university. FAMU acquired the courses from the State Department through their Fulbright Language Teaching Grant and the instructors are trained professionals with appropriate certifications. This marks the first time in history that FAMU has offered all of these courses simultaneously during a semester.

#### **Rosetta Stone launches latest language-learning version**

Arlington-based Rosetta Stone has released the latest version of its language-learning technology. Version 4 TOTALe (pronounced tow-tally) adds an online immersion experience to Rosetta Stone's current language-learning software, featuring interactive coaching sessions with native speakers. Once users have participated in a series of lessons, they can practice online. Online opportunities include sessions led by native speakers that allow users to practice with other learners at their same level. The Rosetta World allows users to converse with native speakers and practice language skills in online games. The version also includes mobile applications for iPhone and iPod Touch devices that allow users to reinforce learning on the go. These can also be downloaded onto an audio CD.

#### **Foreign languages lead to better wages?**

A new report shows that employees who know a number of languages other than Polish can expect higher wages and better career options. Knowledge of a foreign language can be boon for both employers and employees, who can expect to earn as much as 10,000 zloty (around 2,500 euro) more at a managerial level than colleagues who speak only Polish. A report drafted by Sedlak&Sedlak personnel

consultancy, which is based on the firm's own salary report from 2009, shows that knowledge of Chinese, Swedish, Arabic and Dutch are of particular benefit.

## **PREVIOUS NEWS**

### **ABC J'accuse MEP: There is no there there**

Last week ABC News Investigative Team, including its chief investigative correspondent Brian Ross, ran a story that seemingly confirmed much of the negative coverage one sees in the media about private military contractor issues. On Sep, 8 it [reported](#) that Paul Funk, a former employee of Mission Essential Personnel (MEP), a major provider of translation service, interpreters and cultural advisors to the U.S. government, charged that more than one quarter, 28 percent to be precise, of the translators hired by the firm between November 2007 and June 2008 to work alongside American soldiers in Afghanistan failed language proficiency exams but were sent onto the battlefield anyway.

### **McNeil wins \$500M Special Ops contract**

A unit of Aecom Technology Corp. has received a \$500 million contract from the U.S. Special Operations Command to provide linguistic support services, the Defense Department said Tuesday. The five-year contract calls for McNeil Technologies Inc., of Springfield, Va., to supply all personnel, equipment, tools, materials and management needed to provide foreign language interpretation, transcription, reporting and translation services in support of overseas contingency operations.

### **Decode Your Future as a Cryptologic Linguist**

The United States Army operates in many different environments throughout the world. In order to make sure that the troops in the area are always safe, it is necessary to keep constant surveillance on all communication from the opposition. The information being captured will likely be in a foreign language seeing as they are communication with each other. Additionally, the language will be coded as to escape detection by the US Army Cryptologic Linguist.

### **Spicing Up Foreign Language Courses**

Language courses typically assign nightly pages of grammar exercises and class time often gets devoted to textbook activities. Surely, this teaches language fundamentals and is a means to a clearly necessary end. The repetition also eventually lessens the awkwardness of having to contemplate each conjugation. In the end, a basic justification of this repetition comes down to the fact that you can only really learn a language by using it, and textbook exercises do a pretty good job of getting us to use a language.

### **UAFS German Teacher Learns About America**

Joannis Kaliamos is sharing his passion for teaching while learning many things about Arkansas. The 23-year-old native of Giessen, Germany, is teaching German to more than 30 students at the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith via the university's Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Program. Kaliamos will teach in the program for one year before returning to Germany to continue his studies, and he's greeting each school day as an exciting challenge.

### **Rosetta Stone Survey Finds Americans Fear Lack of Multilingual Skills May Cost Them High-Paying U.S. Jobs**

In a May 2010 speech to the Council on Foreign Relations, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said, "An issue that affects our ability to compete and collaborate on the world stage (is) the need to increase the foreign-language fluency and cultural awareness of all our students." According to a national survey conducted by Wakefield Research and commissioned by Rosetta Stone Inc. ([RST 19.71](#), +0.77, +4.07%), a leading provider of technology-based language-learning solutions, Americans share Secretary Duncan's concern. More than half (58 percent) of Americans fear that high-paying U.S. jobs will be filled by workers from abroad in the next two decades because of the country's lack of foreign-language skills.

### **Raising the Bar**

Leah Gilman's "job" this summer was to learn Arabic. A multimedia journalism major at the University of Texas at Austin, she took Arabic from 9:30 to 3:30 every day, for 10 weeks. She took time out for an interview during her lunch break midway through week 10. "Aside from one day out of the week, my whole days are spent on Arabic," said Gilman, a junior who started Arabic the fall of her sophomore year. "From when I get up in the morning to when I go to bed on the weekdays I'm completely immersed in Arabic, and at least one day on the weekend is spent completely at the coffee shop doing my homework. They give you about 10 hours of homework during the weekend and then it's about four during the weekdays."

### **Immersion Program Teaches Students Everything in Spanish**

Research has shown the best time to teach a foreign language is within a child's first 10 years of life. That's because the brain is still flexible, making the ability to retain information easier. Covenant Christian School, located on Fir Road in Mishawaka, is giving [parents](#) the choice to send their child through school on a regular school plan or through their new immersion program. The immersion program teaches children all subjects in Spanish, and begins in pre-kindergarten. "I think it's a great program and it's good for them to know and respect diversity," says immersion teacher, Migdalia Tamlin.

### **The culture of speech**

Does a person who grows up speaking Tamil or Occitan or Quechua see the world differently than a native English speaker? Or, as linguist Guy Deutscher puts it: "Does our mother tongue influence the way we think?" Among those who study language, this question has generated centuries of debate. Aristotle, for one, believed we all share concepts — say, the color blue — whose names change according to culture. But, as Deutscher notes in "Through the Language Glass," linguists have observed that concepts and categories do vary by language; for example, ancient Japanese used one word, *ao*, to cover the blue-green spectrum, while English employs two. So do we all see the same colors? More broadly, do distinctive languages reflect distinctive cognition rather than overlying universal ways of thinking?

### **OU student uses scholarship to travel, learn 5th language**

For Ohio University junior Michael Lupsa, new languages and cultures are more than just classroom lessons. Lupsa's interest in languages brought him to spend this summer in Jordan studying Arabic as part of the Critical Language Scholarship Program, funded by the U.S. Department of State. The department awarded 575 scholarships in 13 languages this year, including Lupsa's choice of Arabic, according to the department's website. Lupsa learned modern standard Arabic in school before the program but arrived to find that most natives spoke different dialects. "Without knowing the dialect, I couldn't get around," he said. "It was like knowing two Arabic languages - the one I learned in class, and the one everyone else spoke." The program involved a 12-hour class schedule with a three-hour break - equal to about 20 credit hours - and about four to five hours of homework, all in Arabic. But his lessons were still taught in modern standard Arabic. Luckily, Lupsa made friends with non-English-speaking people.

### **Gathang dictionary hoped to lead a revival of the language**

In the 1960s, when a young Swedish linguist, Nils Holmer, was researching Australian Aboriginal languages he was lucky enough to meet Biripi elder Eddie Lobban, the last known fully fluent speaker of Taree's local native tongue. Quite a few other Biripi people were, and still are, conversant in single words and phrases but the language was largely unspoken by the time the academic and the elder sat down to record it. Today in Purfleet, a very special event is taking place with the launch of a dictionary of the Gathang language, which comprises the dialects of a large group of Aboriginal people from Port Stephens to Port Macquarie, including Biripi and Worimi.

### **Superintendent wants to grade Georgia high schools on overall performance**

Georgia soon could join other states that grade schools on their overall performance. An idea floated last week by state Superintendent Brad Bryant at a Georgia Board of Education meeting opened the door for discussion on the strategy, which would be piloted in high schools first. Bryant said a performance index

could be used to give schools a numerical grade that looks beyond traditional accountability measures of success to [SAT](#) scores and other factors such as whether students completed two or more years of a foreign language, took Advanced Placement courses and how they fared on AP exams.

#### **Exclusive: Whistleblower Claims Many U.S. Interpreters Can't Speak Afghan Languages**

More than one quarter of the translators working alongside American soldiers in Afghanistan failed language proficiency exams but were sent onto the battlefield anyway, according to a former employee of the company that holds contracts worth up to \$1.4 billion to supply interpreters to the U.S. Army. "I determined that someone -- and I didn't know [who] at that time -- was changing the grades from blanks or zeros to passing grades," said Paul Funk, who used to oversee the screening of Afghan linguists for the Columbus, Ohio-based contractor, Mission Essential Personnel. "Many who failed were marked as being passed."

#### **DOD, DHS earn failing grades in foreign language**

Do you speak Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Pashto or Urdu? No? Neither do an alarmingly high percentage of troops deployed to the Middle East and southwest Asia, home to languages that local residents but few U.S. warfighters speak. Far too few, according to the Government Accountability Office, which recently released a report that underscores the woeful foreign-language capabilities of the Defense and Homeland Security departments.