
DLO DAILY MEDIA UPDATE

CURRENT NEWS 29 SEPTEMBER 2010

Bridge the gap between genes and language

On October 1, 2010, the MPI for Psycholinguistics will be extended with a new and promising department on Language and Genetics, headed by Dr. Simon E. Fisher of Oxford University. Human children have an unparalleled capacity to acquire sophisticated speech and language skills. Despite the huge complexity of the task, most children learn their native languages almost effortlessly, and do not need formal teaching to achieve a rich linguistic repertoire. It has long been suspected that the answers to this enigma lie buried in our genetic makeup. This idea has gained considerable support from recent studies of children who suffer from inherited difficulties with language. The new MPI department on Language & Genetics will extend and move beyond this research, using dramatic advances in molecular technologies to discover how the human genome helps to build a language-ready brain.

Eurostat: Every third EU citizen says he fluently speaks foreign language

All pupils in elementary schools in Spain, Italy, Luxemburg and Sweden study at least one foreign language at school, EU statistical service Eurostat announced on the occasion of the European Day of Languages, cited by **Interfax**. "About 79% of pupils in elementary schools and 83% of pupils at secondary schools in the EU had studied foreign language in 2008. Besides this 30% of adult EU citizens said they fluently speak at least one foreign language", press release of the service announced.

California ranks high in languages, housing costs, commutes

Data released yesterday by the U.S. Census Bureau show California leading the nation in at least two areas: linguistic diversity and housing costs. The state also ranks highly in longest commute times. In California, 43.1 percent of residents age 5 and older spoke a [language other than English](#) at home in 2009 – the highest percentage of any state. Of those people, two out of three [spoke Spanish](#). Nationwide, 20 percent spoke a foreign language at home, with 12.4 percent being Spanish.

Learn English Rapido: New Spanish Edition of Language is Music (El Idioma es Musica), Makes Languages Fun, Easy and Affordable

Help is here for immigrants and students in need of easy, fun and affordable language learning. The new Spanish edition of the book, [Language is Music](#) ([El Idioma es Música](#) in Spanish) by [Susanna Zaraysky](#), shares how to easily learn foreign languages with over 70 simple tips and 90 free or low-cost Internet resources to use for things you already do, such as listening to music, watching TV, and surfing the Web.

Replacing Teachers With Technology

At Ironia Elementary School in Randolph, New Jersey Spanish class means a visit to the computer lab. Students complete their lessons individually, murmuring into microphones to work on their pronunciation. A classroom teacher is on hand to supervise and help with technical support, but the language learning comes from Rosetta Stone, an interactive computer program. Randolph is one of several districts in the state cutting elementary foreign language teachers due to budget cuts. Owen Snyder, Randolph Superintendent of Schools says that before the cut the township only had money in the budget for two foreign language teachers to work in all the elementary schools. Each class got half an hour a week of Spanish language instruction. Now, with Rosetta Stone the students get regular lessons and the district saves nearly \$100,000.

Learning French and German 'a good idea' for contractors

Learning a foreign language is an excellent idea for contractors hoping to secure a position on the continent, one source has noted. P Mannar Jawahar, vice-chancellor of Anna University, told the Times

of India that people in the engineering sector should take part in a German or French course in order to boost their chances of being contracted by an organisation in one of the countries. He noted that a recent trip to universities in the two countries revealed that there is a great need for manpower as long as people have the necessary communication skills.

PREVIOUS NEWS

Sing-A-Lingo Supports the Excellence and Innovation in Language Learning Act (H.R 6036)

A bill, called The Excellence and Innovation in Language Learning Act (H.R. 6036), recently introduced into congress draws on what language experts have known for a long time: children are efficient language learners-- the earlier the better. This bill links our nation's underperforming k-12 language programs with risks to our national security and economic future. Sing-A-Lingo, whose award-winning products help children, parents and teachers bring language to young children, is proud to support this bill.

Afghanistan adds female officers to swelling army

Afghanistan's army got its first female officers in decades on Thursday when 29 women graduated in a class of new recruits who hope to help take the lead role in national security from foreign forces by 2014. President Hamid Karzai, NATO and the United States have been pushing to expand and train Afghanistan's army, police and other security forces to allow them to take over during a planned drawdown of foreign troops. "I am fully committed to serving my country, the same way as my Afghan brothers currently serving in the army. That is why I decided to join," said female officer Mari Sharifi after the graduation ceremony at the Kabul Army Training Centre.

Latvians on top of EU by knowledge of foreign language

A new survey by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, on perceived language skills of adults based on 2007 results showed significant differences in knowledge of a foreign language. By the percentage of people considering themselves as being proficient, Latvia was on top with 55%, followed by Slovenia (45%), Slovakia (44%) and Lithuania (41.6%). 28% of Estonians deemed themselves as proficient. The proportion of those declaring themselves as being good was highest in Sweden (40%), Estonia and Slovenia (both 33%), Finland and Cyprus (both 32%). While the rest of EU nations including Estonians chose English as their best known foreign language, for Latvians, Lithuanians and Poles it was Russian. For the British it was French and for Slovaks it was Czech.

Holness Says Gov't Reviving Foreign Languages in Schools Policy

Education Minister, Hon. Andrew Holness, says the government will revive its policy supporting the teaching of foreign languages in schools, to secure Jamaica's place as a viable trading partner with non-English speaking countries. Mr. Holness was addressing educators at the Foreign Language Workshop for Teachers at the Caenwood Centre, Kingston Friday (September 24).

Award-winning teacher shares passion for language

"My students constantly remind me of the value of language learning," Harkins said. "The ability to communicate with others is the single greatest skill which unites the human race. My students find joy in simple greetings to total strangers in another language."

Turkish intelligence agency looks for new personnel with language skills

The National Intelligence Organization, or MİT, is looking for new personnel with a command of various languages including Kurdish and Armenian. According to a job advertisement published in various newspapers including daily Hürriyet's human resources supplement over the weekend and on Monday, the other languages MİT is looking for in candidates are Arabic, Croatian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Chinese, Farsi, Georgian, Hebrew, Macedonian, Russian, Sorani and Greek. The advertisement is also on MİT's website.

Kindergarten Teacher Launches Free Site to Introduce Children to Five Different Languages

A new Web site called Chillola.com is giving parents a fun, safe learning environment where their kids can explore different languages. Chillola.com employs a playful, child-oriented theme to introduce children to five languages: English, Spanish, French, German and Italian. "Chillola.com is designed to give children all over the world the opportunity to explore foreign languages, and learn about different countries, cultures and people," said Tina Jack, a California-based kindergarten teacher who owns the Web site.

How a bright idea translates into success

Ulster Language Services is a one-stop-shop for all foreign language requirements — translation, interpreting and tuition for businesses, organisations or individuals who need documents translated, require the assistance of an interpreter to communicate with their foreign clients or staff, or wish to learn a language for business or leisure purposes. My role is to identify what clients' foreign language requirements are and to select suitably qualified linguists who can meet these requirements.

Center helps DOD build international bonds

A graduation ceremony at the Defense Language Institute English Language Center is not what one would consider typical. As the students' names are read, they approach the stage wearing the uniforms of their respective countries. From privates through generals, across all the services, these men and women have traveled from around the world to attend classes for English proficiency, specialized English training or instructor development. Every Thursday, an average of 60 students graduate and return to their countries of origin or continue to follow-on training at U.S. military training sites, equipped with the English language proficiency necessary to adapt to the American and U.S. military cultures.

Military Specialists Aim to Improve Cultural Understanding

The specialists will build on their existing language skills and cultural understanding by gathering local knowledge and fostering contacts at bazaars, shuras and other places where local people gather. At full strength, the unit will have forty two members and is open to all trades in the three Services and will also support cultural training in the wider military and other government departments.

Training the Troops 'Hyperrealistically'

After she retired in 2005, she and her husband, Leroy, who is also a retired Army veteran, decided to form a business that did just that — provide the most realistic cultural awareness and military training to troops being transferred to these two inhospitable parts of the world. The key element missing from the Army's training was a more realistic approach to what soldiers should expect along with a cultural awareness and rudimentary language skills that could give them an edge in their mission, she said. To accomplish that, the Latshaws enlisted native Iraqi people to play residents of an authentically simulated Iraqi village.

Opportunity knocks ... for SMEs with language skills

Preparing to address the conference and participate in a round-table discussion on languages, competitiveness and employability, Androulla Vassiliou, the European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, stressed the importance of overcoming linguistic barriers. 'Europeans are increasingly aware of the difference that foreign language skills can make in their lives,' she said. 'As well as being a practical asset for an individual's personal development, languages mean more business for companies, giving them a competitive edge and opening up export markets.' The European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme supports language activities and projects to the tune of EUR 50 million each year.

Cuts hurting language classes

Everyone is aware of the current budgetary crisis in Louisiana and its consequences for education in the state. What may have gone unnoticed is the damage that is being done to foreign language education in Louisiana. From the elementary to the university level, cuts have eliminated or reduced language programs. Parents, students and graduates recently had to rally in support of the highly successful immersion programs slated to be eliminated in Calcasieu Parish. Universities like LSU and Southeastern are dropping relatively inexpensive language programs in the name of budget cuts. Language skills are a

necessity for the future success of this global generation. The Louisiana Foreign Language Teachers Association asks Louisiana citizens to consider how these widespread trends are closing doors of opportunity for our children.

Schools at below-standard level for languages

This is European Day of Languages [Sunday, September 26], which is this year focusing on language skills for business. Up to 11% of small and medium businesses in Europe have said they have lost contracts because of a lack of language skills. Ruth Deasy of the European Commission Representation in Dublin has said: "There should be more focus on foreign languages in Ireland's schools, starting at primary level."

Army Corps completes \$28 million school building for Defense Language Institute

Rising above the hills of the Presidio of Monterey is the Defense Language Institute's new general instruction building (GIB), completed in September by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Sacramento District. The \$28 million building will house 60 classrooms for military students learning foreign languages, the first of three scheduled for Corps construction to accommodate the growing DLI. "The GIB will be a state-of-the-art instruction facility that will add 9.5 percent classroom capacity," said Col. Darcy Brewer, garrison commander at the Presidio of Monterey.

Contractor helps troops gain conversation skills for war zone

In a mock Afghan village on the Quantico Marine base, Sloan Mann, a military contractor, guided several Marines into a sweltering concrete room. They came to meet a fake mullah, played by an Afghan American actor. Mann, a former Army infantry officer, watched as the Marines practiced the seemingly straightforward tactic of chatting up Afghan village leaders. But the Marines, weeks from deploying to Helmand province, stumbled through their conversations. Their encounters with the "mullah" felt like bad first dates, with the Americans posing robotic questions about the village. Sgt. Walton Cabrera, 25, an aspiring police officer from Southern California, sat before the mullah but couldn't ease into a groove. "So . . . how's everything in the village so far?" he asked. "Has the population changed?"