
DLO DAILY MEDIA UPDATE

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No Korean diplomat can speak Farsi, Italian

Despite the government's efforts to upgrade its diplomatic corps, foreign language skills of Korea's diplomats are steadily declining. And in some Korean missions abroad, such as Tehran and the Vatican, not one envoy can speak the local language. But according to Foreign Ministry records obtained by Grand National Party Representative Kim Hyo-jae yesterday, scores for the Test of English Proficiency developed by Seoul National University have been falling every year for ministry employees who are required to take the test yearly. In 26 countries, such as Iran, Thailand, Kuwait and the Vatican, no Foreign Ministry workers can speak the local language. An English oral proficiency test taken by civil servants above the fifth-grade rank has shown the average falling from 68.64 percent in 2008 to 65.11 percent last year. This year the average bottomed out at 64.37 percent.

13 Tongues, Three Years

Elizabeth Gilbert ate, prayed and loved her way to best-sellerdom. Julie Powell cooked her way through Julia Child's oeuvre. And now Ellen Jovin, her book deal still in the aspirational phase, hopes to study her way to fame and fortune. Learning languages, that is. Italian, Chinese, German, Russian, French, Korean, Arabic; 13 languages in all over the course of three years, and lingering no more than three months on any particular one. She's 15 months into it.

Arabic sparks new passions

Ever since the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, there has been a nationwide surge in college-student enrollment in Arabic and study abroad in the Middle East. According to a study by the Institute of International Education, the number of American students spending their junior year in Arabic-speaking countries has increased six-fold, from 562 in 2002 to 3,399 in 2007. Khalil Barhoum, the coordinator of Middle Eastern and African Languages and Literatures at Stanford, notes that according to a recent survey conducted by the Modern Language Association, "Arabic enrollment at the university level has more than doubled nationally between 2004 and 2008, and so has the number of institutions offering programs over the same period, with 23,974 students currently enrolled in 466 programs around the country."

A state university retreats from language study

The State University of New York at Albany has generated a stir in the higher education industry with its announcement this month that nearly all of its foreign language offerings will be discontinued, along with the theater department, because of budget cuts.

Language classes decrease for spring

As students plan their schedules with the newly released spring 2011 semester course offerings, they may notice changes to class sizes and availability. The most noticeable changes are in foreign language sections, where many departments are offering fewer courses or none at all. No courses in Portuguese, Japanese or Swahili will be offered this spring. Emily Batinski, chair of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, said there is hope for the languages to be restored to campus, but no one is sure when.

U.S., China online education firms to merge

Online education companies Eleutian Technology and Idapted Ltd said on Wednesday that they will merge, bringing together the U.S. and Chinese companies in the fast-growing \$100 billion market for online English instruction.

Hundreds of foreign doctors 'not checked'

Despite widespread outrage over the case of a German doctor with poor English whose mistake led to the death of a pensioner, less than one in four foreign doctors is currently being properly verified, according to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request. The investigation by [Pulse](#), a newspaper for GPs, also found many NHS trusts in England have no accurate record of whether or not a doctor has been checked. Dr Daniel Ubani killed David Gray, 70, by giving him 10 times the normal dose of diamorphine on his first-out-of-hours shift in Britain in 2008. He later admitted never having heard of the drug.

Language and Literacy Development in Children Who Are Deaf

The second edition of *Language and Literacy Development in Children Who are Deaf* provides the most current information about teaching language, reading, and writing to deaf children. Models and strategies are clearly described and supported by theory, current research, and numerous examples of how these models and strategies can be used in classrooms with deaf students. The book has been reorganized so teachers can easily follow how to assess a deaf child's current abilities in language and literacy, develop appropriate instructional goals, and choose from among a variety of effective teaching models and strategies.

N.Korean agency apparently opens foreign-language website

North Korea's official news agency has apparently opened a website in English and Spanish, in the country's latest bid to boost online propaganda. A site under the name of the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), with articles in both languages, was seen Thursday at <http://175.45.179.68>. The English version shows leader Kim Jong-Il and other officials at a huge military parade staged last Sunday in Pyongyang. In a highly unusual move, the North invited selected foreign journalists and television crews to witness the event and broadcast it live.

More foreign language students needed

With the success of the Ministry of Tourism Foreign Language Cadet Program over the last two years, students are being encouraged to enroll in more foreign language classes to become ambassadors for The Baha-mas. Since the program's launch in Grand Bahama in January 2009, Coordinator of the Grand Bahama Island Foreign Language Cadet Program Karenda S. Williams-Swain said the 10 cadets have produced remarkable exam results. Five cadets completed the program in 2009. "All of them successfully completed the Bahamas General Certificate of Secondary Education Exam with favourable results," she said.

PREVIOUS NEWS

In Their Own Words: Lessons Learned in Today's Military (Af-Pak Hand)

Lt. Col. Diana Staneszewski is a Western woman who communicates with Afghans in their native tongue, bridging the language barrier and gaining the trust of the locals she encounters on patrol. As an AFPAK hand I have language familiarization in Pashto and Cultural Awareness training. My job is to engage the people of Afghanistan in line with the Commander of the International Security Assistance Force's Counter Insurgency (COIN) Strategy.

Japan wants U.S. to train English teachers

A program to improve the language skills of Japan's English teachers is being considered by the United States and Japan, sources told The Yomiuri Shimbun. The sources have told the Japanese newspaper that the program involves sending young Japanese teachers to the United States in order to improve their English. The English-language teachers would be trained at primary, middle and high schools in the United States for a period of one to two years. The program is part of an expansion of cultural, intellectual and human exchanges that Prime Minister Naoto Kan is seeking in order to deepen the U.S.-Japanese alliance.

Better French results than the French

Over the last four years, children at Wix primary have been taught in French by French teachers for half the week and in English for the other half. This year, the "guinea pig" children – who were the first to start French at the age of four – sat the French national tests for eight-year-olds under strict examination conditions and performed as well or better than the national average for children in France. The 250-pupil primary shares a site with the prep school for the Lycée Charles de Gaulle, a private school that follows the French national curriculum. Both [schools](#) provide 14 pupils in each year group who make up the bilingual stream based in the Wix classrooms. They follow a curriculum designed by the two schools, which is a combination of the English and French curriculums. The French and English teachers liaise with each other to avoid duplication. On the French language papers, 11 of the 14 English speakers and 10 of the 14 French speakers reached France's 50% benchmark. Of those, six of the English and five of the French scored in the highest category, denoting a "very good understanding". The English children were an average five months older than the French when they took the tests last May.

[For Young Brains, Teaching Technologies Are Hit-or-Miss](#)

Many parents plop down their babies in front of Mozart, TV and educational video games every day in hopes of raising a smart, well-adjusted human being (or just giving mom and dad a break). That mass exposure of young brains to technology, some researchers say, is one of the greatest natural experiments ever conducted outside of labs — and yet the end results remain complex or unknown. "It is not clear that babies are equipped to learn from audio-visual worlds; the research suggests they need social interactions and direct feedback," she said. "Touch is very important." Still, studies found that educational TV shows such as "Dora the Explorer," "Blue's Clues" and "Clifford the Big Red Dog" gave boosts to the vocabulary and language skills of children between the ages of 9 months and 30 months. TV also showed promise for children through the rest of their preschool years (up to age 5). But some shows produced mixed or negative results. The [TV show](#) "Teletubbies" actually had a negative effect on vocabulary and language.

[Ruling opens door for retesting of language skills](#)

A HIGH Court victory by Brazilian student Marcos Berenguel is increasing the already considerable pressure on Australia's skilled migration policy. It allows graduates to overturn the refusal of skilled migration visas on the basis that the Department of Immigration and Citizenship failed to take into account up-to-date English test results. "It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say there could be thousands [of former foreign students] to take advantage of it," Sydney immigration lawyer Peter Bollard said.

[Teaching of Spanish Intensified](#)

The Department of Education (DepEd), through its Bureau of Secondary Education (BSE), will conduct Professional Development Course on Teaching Spanish as a Foreign Language (SFL). In collaboration with Instituto Cervantes, Manila and Universidad D Salamanca, Spain, a total of 102 teachers from pilot and expansion schools will undergo simultaneous training in Manila and in Cebu from Oct. 25 to 29. Education Secretary Br. Armin Luistro said that the training aims to capacitate the Spanish teachers on linguistic command of Spanish in grammar and vocabulary aspects from a functional and communicative approach as well as in available resources to integrate on culture in SFL class.

[Babbel Learning System: Pronunciation Training Goes Mobile](#)

The online foreign language learning system Babbel brings its speech recognition feature to the iPhone, iPod Touch and iPad. With the Babbel Mobile vocabulary trainer app, users can test and practice their pronunciation. This new audio feature includes analysis of pronunciation in real time and evaluates all facets of speech. The seven Babbel language apps, as well as the entire Basic and Advanced Vocabulary of 3000 words with accompanying images and example sentences, are now available for free download in the App Store. Already surpassing the 200,000 download mark, the app's previous and current versions were created in collaboration with iPhone developers from the Berlin company Aspirement.

[Arts council speaks out to save Indigenous languages](#)

Gulf of Carpentaria community leaders' fears traditional Indigenous languages could be lost unless more is done to revive Indigenous history. The Queensland Arts Council (QAC) is in Normanton, in the state's

north-west, to develop a program which will rejuvenate ancient Indigenous languages of the area. A linguist is working with elders and local schools on how to bring tribal history alive through art, music or film.

McLoughlin of Arabia: memoirs of an interpreter

Natural discretion and the Official Secrets Act have prevented McLoughlin from spilling many beans about his 20 years as an interpreter for British ministers and Arab VIPs. (The titillating "confessions" in the title of his book is thus a tad misleading.) It would have been fascinating to hear a fly on the wall account of talks between Margaret Thatcher and the Saudi royals about the massive al-Yamamah arms deal; or a frank report on what happened when Saddam Hussein's deputy came to Downing Street to negotiate UK export credits during the war with Iran. Still, this engaging autobiography is fascinating and fun for anyone who has grappled with the mysteries and beauties of Arabic and wants to hear from an expert practitioner how teaching methods have evolved in recent years.

Ectaco SpeechGuard® Assists Military Linguists

The Defense Language Institute's Foreign Language Training Center, based in Fort Huachuca, Arizona is providing students of their arduous linguistic programs with SpeechGuard® units. The Ectaco SpeechGuard® continues to grow in response to the resounding language translation needs of local, state, and federal agencies. The handheld speech-to-speech device was initially requested by the Department of Defense to be developed for translation use by the military. It has subsequently become used by many, including law enforcement and Homeland Security divisions throughout the United States. SpeechGuard® not only has speech-to-speech, text-to-speech, and text-to-text capabilities, but also a plethora of educational applications such as Cultural Notes, Language Teacher, Audio Phrasebook, and CIA World Factbook.

Program Bolsters Department's Language Capabilities

"Language and culture are essential to the fight," she [Ms. Nancy Weaver] said during a recent interview. All servicemembers deploying to the Centcom area of operations should receive at least an introduction to language and culture in their training, she said, noting that language is key to understanding a culture.