
DLO DAILY MEDIA UPDATE

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The Forgotten Half: Female Engagement Teams

Half way around the world and 5 months into the de-ployment has drastically changed my preconceived ideas of what my role would be as the provincial re-construction team's female medical officer. If you told me last June that I would be in Afghanistan meeting with provincial leaders from the Department of Public Health or Department of Women's Affairs to assist and mentor the development of the Afghan health system and improve the lives of families through women's empowerment; I would have looked around trying to figure out who you were talking to.

What Happens in Vagueness Stays in Vagueness: The decline and fall of American English, and stuff

I recently watched a television program in which a woman described a baby squirrel that she had found in her yard. "And he was like, you know, 'Hellooooo, what are you looking at?'" and stuff, and I'm like, you know, 'Can I, like, pick you up?,' and he goes, like, 'Brrrrp brrrrp brrrrp,' and I'm like, you know, 'Whoa, that is so wow!'" She rambled on, speaking in self-quotations, sound effects, and other vocabulary substitutes, punctuating her sentences with facial tics and lateral eye shifts. All the while, however, she never said anything specific about her encounter with the squirrel. Uh-oh. It was a classic case of Vagueness, the linguistic virus that infected spoken language in the late twentieth century.

Foreign Languages Avoid Budget Cuts

At least one subject has remained off the chopping block despite multimillion-dollar budget cuts at Long Beach Unified School District. Student demand for foreign language programs, especially at the middle school level, continues to increase, said curriculum director Pamela Seki. Additionally, a minimum two years of foreign language is a typical college admission requirement that high schools must meet. "We are in a difficult time, but when schools have enough students interested in learning a language, then we find a way to make that happen," Seki said.

High school students to learn about Chinese language, culture

About 50 students from Boulder Creek High School and Gavilan Peak School in Anthem will learn about the Chinese language and culture on Feb. 24 at the Memorial Union. The Arizona State University Confucius Institute will provide the students with lunch in the MU, room 220, and they will be introduced to STARTALK, a Chinese language and culture camp that will be held in June on the Tempe campus, and the ASU Chinese Language Flagship program, which is for ASU undergraduates who seek to achieve superior language proficiency in Mandarin Chinese while pursuing degrees in the academic major of their choice.

Foreign languages could close the gap

Students' reluctance to take a second year of a foreign language course before they finish high school may be what's keeping many students in the Wichita Falls Independent School District from graduating in the Recommended or Distinguished Achievement degree programs.

Linguist urges preservation of Taiwan's Austronesian languages

The Formosan languages are the most important cultural heritage of Taiwan and in dire need of preservation, according to Paul Jen-kuei Li, a Taiwanese linguist who has spent four decades studying Austronesian, the vast family of languages to which the Formosan languages belong. "Most people don't understand the importance of aboriginal languages in Taiwan, not even the aborigines themselves," Li said in a Jan. 25 interview with Taiwan Today.

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[ROTC Bonuses Beef Up Services' Language Capacity](#)

A Defense Department pilot program to add foreign language proficiency to its officer corps is growing dramatically, the department's head of foreign languages said. The department began the ROTC Skill Proficiency Bonus in 2008 at the request of Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates to encourage the study of languages critical to the armed services. Congress authorized DOD's request as part of the 2009 National Defense Authorization Act, and the pilot program is funded through the Services until the end of 2013, when the authorization expires. Although it began with just 29 students, the program has grown to more than 1,800, Nancy Weaver, director of the Defense Language Office, said during a Feb. 18 interview with American Forces Press Service and the Pentagon Channel.

[Wednesday Warfighter: Reaching out to Women in Afghanistan](#)

Special Operations Task Force-East united with Female Engagement Team members from the 734th Agribusiness Development Team and Kunar Provincial Reconstruction Team to provide medical assistance to women of a remote village in Kunar Province on Feb. 16.

[DepEd to offer Mandarin, Arabic language courses to HS students](#)

To produce more internationally-competitive graduates, the Department of Education (DepEd) will introduce two more foreign languages in pilot schools: Mandarin and Arabic. DepEd Bureau of Secondary Education chief Director Lolita Andrada said the Special Program in Foreign Language is for schools whose students master English early. Courses in Mandarin, widely used in world economic power China, and Arabic, spoken vastly in the Middle East market, will be offered in the coming school year.

[Air traffic advisers aim high for Iraq's future](#)

For trainees, the journey to become an air traffic control officer starts at the Defense Language Institutes at Taji or Tikrit, Iraq, where they study basic English for up to a year, depending on personal learning curves. The trainees advance to aviation English, which is the international aviation language, after scoring higher than a 60 on their basic English aptitude test.

[Learn a foreign language to age-proof your brain](#)

Want to keep your brain sharp? Pick up another language, or even better, several more [languages](#). New research suggests that learning foreign languages can protect your brain from cognitive problems as you grow older - and the more languages you speak, the bigger the mental boost.

[First second foreign language proficiency test to be launched on May](#)

The Language Training and Testing Center (LTTC) yesterday announced its plans to launch a first-ever Second Foreign Language Proficiency Test (SFLPT) in May which will offered as an evaluation of the ability of an individual to use and understand four different foreign languages, including Japanese, French, German, and Spanish.

[Ole Miss Chinese Language Program in Demand](#)

The Chinese Language Flagship Program at the University of Mississippi is chipping away the barriers between two cultures on opposite ends of the earth, both literally and figuratively. Donald Hyer, an Ole Miss professor and co-coordinator for the program, said the idea for the Chinese Language program was born almost a decade ago. "We talked to a couple of government officials who came to campus and said they were looking at universities for a program that would encourage American students to learn another language," he said. "With (co-coordinator) Michael Metcalf's connections and a little luck, we thought we could build a program that is second to none."

[Should children learn a second language?](#)

Does being bilingual help children learn to prioritize information, provide a defense against some effects of Alzheimer's or just provide a great workout for the brain? All of the above, according to studies discussed Friday at the [2011 American Assn. for the Advancement of Science](#) meeting in Washington

D.C., where a number of researchers presented on the benefits of being bilingual. Among the findings: that infants raised in bilingual households can tell unfamiliar foreign languages apart and that bilingual speakers who rapidly switch between languages are better mental multitaskers than their monolingual counterparts.

Colombia's indigenous languages 'disappearing'

More than 20 of Colombia's indigenous languages are in danger of disappearing, according to a report from the **Ministry of Culture released Monday**. A study by the Ministry of Culture in conjunction with the **International Mother Language Day** states that five native languages are "nearly extinct because they have almost no speakers" and another nineteen are in "serious danger" of disappearing in Colombia. The five nearly extinct languages are Tinigua, Tonuya, Carijona, Totoro, and Pisamira. Each of these languages has fewer than 60 living speakers, and Tinigua has only one.

Forty one ethnic group languages under threat in China

Half of the world's languages are under the threat of extinction with China facing the loss of 41 ethnic group dialects, the China Radio International (CRI) reported on Monday. As Feb 21, 2011 marks the 11th International Mother Language Day, UNESCO, the cultural arm of the United Nations (UN) has created safeguarding and promoting languages as its theme, according to their website. Speaking of the 41 endangered ethnic group languages in China, Dr Bradley, a language professional, says we risk losing component of our history. "Every time a language disappears that indicates the entire cultural understanding of that folks disappears." He also says the factors that trigger the possible disappearance of ethnic languages around China include the wide use of Putonghua (Chinese mandarin).

Google, Yahoo! BabelFish use math principles to translate documents online

For decades, machine translation was mostly useful if you were trying to be funny. But in the last few years, as anyone using Google Translate, Babel Fish or many other translation Web sites can tell you, things have changed dramatically. And all because of an effort begun in the 1980s to remove humans from the equation. As the **late Frederick Jelinek**, who pioneered work on speech recognition at IBM in the 1970s, is widely quoted as saying: "Every time I fire a linguist, my translation improves." (He later denied putting it so harshly.) Up to that point, researchers working on machine translation used linguistic models. Jelinek and his group at IBM argued that by using statistics and probability theory, instead of language rules, a computer could do a better job of converting one language into another.

International Mother Language Day: February 21

International Mother Language Day was proclaimed by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**) in November 1999 (**30C/62**). On 16 May 2009 the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution **A/RES/61/266** called upon Member States "to promote the preservation and protection of all languages used by peoples of the world". By the same resolution, the General Assembly proclaimed 2008 as the International Year of Languages, to promote unity in diversity and international understanding, through multilingualism and multiculturalism.

UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger

The online edition of the Atlas is complementary to the **print edition**. It does not reproduce the regional and thematic chapters of the print version, but it offers additional information on the listed endangered languages. Via this interface, you can browse through them, using combinations of search criteria and/or zooming in the map below.

Pentagon Goes for a Universal Translator. Again.

Thus was born a scientific (and sci-fi) drive that's lasted 57 years, from *Star Trek* to **Babel Fish** to **Google Translate**: instantaneous speech translation. But even though no one's mastered that yet, the Pentagon's out-there research branch is asking for even more with its Boundless Operational Language Translation, or BOLT. As outlined in Darpa's fiscal 2012 budget request. For the low, low starting cost of \$15 million, Congress can "enable communication regardless of medium (voice or text), and genre (conversation, chat, or messaging)."