
DLO DAILY MEDIA UPDATE

CURRENT NEWS 27 SEPTEMBER 2011

New Mandarin test for native speakers stirs up debate in China

(Xinhua)...Deng Shasha

China's new Mandarin test has raised public debate, as some experts doubt its effectiveness in enhancing native speakers' language abilities. The National Education Examinations Authority (NEEA), a body affiliated with the Ministry of Education, said in August that the Chinese Proficiency Test, which will debut after three years' preparation, is designed to promote people's interest and ability in their native language. The test evaluates listening, speaking, and reading and writing abilities at six different levels, while also providing advice to examinees on how to improve their Mandarin. The test was conceived amid the perceived withering popularity of Chinese culture and language, as more and more Chinese people have rushed to English training classes instead of perfecting their native language, because better English can mean a higher salary.

Thousands protest language law

(*The Baltic Times*)...TBT Staff

Thousands of ethnic Poles have again taken to the streets in Vilnius to protest a new language law that would force all schools in the country to teach certain classes in Lithuanian. Lithuania has a huge Polish minority and a number of schools that teach in Polish. The new law would introduce standardized testing in Lithuanian at the highest grades, as well as making Lithuanian language and history courses mandatory for younger students.

Culture hangs on language, art

(*The Durango Herald*)...Heather Scofield

"Ich nuu'apag'apü uruskwa'èi." The sentence means, "The Ute language is disappearing." Experts and tribal leaders say culture is a critical component of American Indian life, affecting tribes' interactions with government, family, the environment and their neighbors. But some say the practices and teachings of their heritage are fading within the Ute Nation's tribal membership, and it could have painful effects for both the tribes and their neighboring communities. "The language identifies who we are," said Lynda Grove D'Wolf, who teaches workshops on language and culture for Southern Ute tribal members. "If we lose the language, we lose our identity."

English easily the most popular foreign language in Bulgarian schools

(*Sofia Echo*)...Sofia Echo Staff

In Bulgaria, in 2009, 77 per cent of primary and lower secondary school pupils were studying English as their first foreign language while the second most studied language was German with 15 per cent. In Bulgarian upper secondary schools 100 per cent of pupils were studying English as their first foreign language followed by 41 per cent who were studying German. The information on language learning of school pupils was released by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. In 2009, among the European Union's 27 member states as a whole, 82 per cent of pupils at primary and lower secondary school level and 95 per cent of those in upper secondary level general programmes were studying English as a foreign language.

PREVIOUS NEWS

Airman experiences Lajes culture through LEAP

(*Af.mil*)...Staff Sgt. Olufemi Owolabi

To increase the Air Force's bilateral relations capability, an Airman is benefiting from the cultural richness of the Azores at Lajes through the Language Enabled Airman Program. LEAP is used to develop Airmen who already speak a foreign language, but have a desire to increase their knowledge of the language and culture, said Gilley. "It's a career-long program designed to sustain and enhance language and cross-cultural skills, with the end goal of producing a language speaker who can perform their core job duties in their respective foreign language," said Gilley, who applied for the program in September of 2010 and was selected in November.

Language, Culture, and Doctrinal Convergence of Trends in Full Spectrum Operation's

(Small Wars Journal)...Terry Tucker

The purpose of this paper is to provide research information on doctrinal convergence and divergence, and elaborate upon the role of language and culture in counterinsurgency operations. Language and culture are not mission enablers to Full Spectrum Operations (FSO); rather they are now in direct support thereof. For those in the field, this has been very clear for some time.

Commandant of the Marine Corps visits 3/6 Marines and sailors in Marjah

(dvids)...Staff Sgt. Andrew Miller

Q. What is the estimated timeframe for employment of the Female Engagement Team and if permanent would it become an MOS (Military Occupational Specialty)?

A. Gen Amos: "I can't think of a good reason why we wouldn't want to [utilize FET] while we still have Marines here. It's something that's found its place in the Marine Corps. I believe in it, sergeant major believes in it, senior leadership believes in it. It may become a permanent part of the structure, every one of you has a different MOS, we just kind of plug and play."

American students abroad pushed out of 'bubbles'

(The Associated Press)...Justin Pope

Educators are thrilled to see more American college students venturing abroad — perhaps 300,000 this year alone. Now if they can just get them to venture out of the "American bubbles" that can make the streets of study-abroad hot-spots like London, Barcelona and Florence, Italy almost feel like exclaves of Tuscaloosa or Ann Arbor. They're trying. After decades of laissez-faire and faith that just breathing the air in foreign lands broadens horizons, American colleges and international programs are pressing students harder to get out of their comfort zones. It's happening in popular destinations as well as more exotic spots in Asia and Africa, where there are fewer Americans, but language and culture barriers make them even more tempted to stick together.

Linguistically speaking – English becomes India's 'Numero-Uno' language

(The Washington Times)...Sonal Jaitly

India has a rich linguistic history with more than 22 different national languages spoken throughout the length and breadth of the country. The 1991 census recognized 1576 mother tongues and grouped them into 114 different languages. Imagine the plight of a linguist trying to study all the languages of the country. So how does English survive in this linguistic caldron? Wonder what motivates the so called ordinary people to learn English? The answer lies in the simple fact that English has become the goddess of empowerment. It contributes to the social mobility of Indians; it is a language of Science and Technology, economic progress and globalization.

Oxford Chinese program among top in nation, earns grant

(The Oakland Press)

In recognition of its potential as a model Chinese language program for the U.S., strong local leadership, demonstrated commitment to international exchange and collaboration, and global vision for the future, Oxford Community Schools has been accepted as a member of the third cohort of schools in the Asia Society Confucius Classrooms Network. This national network of 100 exemplary Chinese language programs is being developed over a three-year period. With this third cohort, the network represents almost 25,000 Chinese language learners in more than 100 schools in 27 states and the District of Columbia; public schools, independent schools, and charter schools; elementary, middle, and high schools; and urban, rural, and suburban schools.

The long road to 09 Lima

*(DLIFLC)...*Natela Cutter

The Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center has supported the training for native and heritage speakers of designated strategic languages of interest for the Army since the program's inception in July 2003. More than 1,200 Soldiers have graduated from the program supporting the need for various dialects of Arabic, Dari, Pashto, Kurdish, and Persian Farsi. On the ground in Jalalabad, in the eastern part of the country, Acheson and his colleague Spc. Hafiz Sekandari, a native of Afghanistan, spend their days interpreting for their commanders, working with local hire translators to ensure the quality of work, and interacting with the Afghan border patrol, Afghan National Army Soldiers, and locals. "I like my job because I feel productive here and I feel that I am making a difference," said Sekandari, who is from the Afghan capital of Kabul and has been living in the United States for 20 years.

To smooch or shake?

*(The Oklahoma Daily)...*Coco Courtouis

Meeting strangers is part of any exchange program. But when greeting a new student for the first time, differences show up and it's time to kiss and tell. "It's definitely one of my major culture shocks," said Alexandre Decoene, a French graduate student studying Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering. "I do two kisses to a girl, shake hands to guys I don't know well; otherwise, I do two kisses, too," Decoene said. But Decoene quickly found out it doesn't work this way in the United States. Even among exchange students, how to approach others can be confusing. "I spent the first day with a Taiwanese girl and the day after, when I saw her, I wanted to kiss her on the cheeks, but she thought I was trying to kiss her," Decoene said. Sidonie Monier, a French foreign language student had the same problem. "The first week, an American guy held out his arms so I came to him and kissed him on the cheeks. He stopped me and looked at me funny," Monier said. "I thought about it the whole day." Here I try to adapt to the people I greet. I do kisses to Europeans, I bow to Koreans and I shake hands of Americans," Cho said.

Senate Panel Votes to Freeze Funding for Key K-12 Programs

*(Education Week)...*Alyson Klein

The bill also included nearly \$150 million for the Investing in Innovation grant program, which provides grants to scale up promising practices at the district level. And a handful of programs would be eliminated, including Voluntary Public School Choice, which got \$25 million in fiscal year 2011, and the Foreign Language Assistance program, which got \$26 million in fiscal year 2011.

New Head at Fieldston School Is an Unconventional Choice

*(New York Times)...*Rachel Ohm & Jenny Anderson

Sitting amid unpacked boxes in his office overlooking Central Park this month, Damian J. Fernandez, the new head at the Ethical Culture Fieldston School, took a moment to reflect on Felix Adler, the educator and social reformer who founded Fieldston in 1878 as a tuition-free school for workingmen's children. Academically, he hopes to strengthen the foreign-language program, to start students earlier and require fluency. He wants to strengthen the high school science and math programs, he said, "in a way that enhances creativity and problem solving," and bring ethics — a core Fieldston subject — "back to its right fullness."