



# THE LANGUAGE & CULTURE WEEKLY

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## [CURRENT NEWS 23 FEBRUARY 2012](#)

### **DLNSEO HIGHLIGHT**

#### [Boren Scholar Appears in Viral Video](#)

*(Boren Awards)*

Cody White, a 2011 Boren Scholar who is currently studying in Moscow, is featured in the video "Touch Russia." The video, which was filmed in partnership with Russia Beyond The Headlines, follows Cody as he experiences various aspects of Russian culture. Cody is an engineering major at West Virginia University. He is currently studying Russian language, history, politics, media and culture with the School of Russian and Asian Studies (SRAS).

### **DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

#### [Human Terrain Systems and the Moral Prosecution of Warfare](#)

*(Parameters)...*Dan G. Cox

The recently developed and implemented Human Terrain System (HTS) Project was designed to play an important role in developing cultural knowledge for the US military and is critical to mission success and the moral prosecution of warfare.<sup>1</sup> But this program is new and, admittedly, not perfect. Human Terrain Teams (HTTs) were designed to play a key, on-the-ground role in bridging the cultural and personal identity gap between western military forces and the foreign cultures in which they operate.

#### [DLIFLC graduates stronger Spanish linguists](#)

*(DLIFLC)...*Brian Lamar

Eight students of the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, who are the first class of the Spanish Basic Course Extension Pilot program, graduated Feb. 2. The course was extended 10 weeks to allow teachers to work with students to gain higher language proficiency levels and acquire better regional



knowledge of the Caribbean, Central, and South America. "Learning another language is not just about grammar and syntax. It is also about making the effort to connect, to communicate, and to understand. Making that effort is one of the most powerful tools we have to build true partnerships," said SOUTHCOM Commander, GEN Fraser.

#### [100 Story Project - Dr. Don Fischer: The Defense Language Institute](#)

*(YouTube)*

Dr. Don Fischer details the history of the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California.

### **STUDIES**

#### [Speaking in tongues: Language diversity around the world](#)

*(The Economist)*

DESPITE the idea that English is spoken in America, Chinese in China, and Russian in Russia, most of the world is far more diverse than the presence of big national languages suggests. In fact, monolingual countries are hard to find. The chart below measures language diversity in two very different ways: the number of languages spoken in the country and Greenberg's diversity index, which scores countries on the probability that two citizens will share a mother tongue.

### **DOMESTIC**

#### [ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012](#)

*(ACTFL)*

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines are a description of what individuals can do with language in terms of speaking, writing, listening, and reading in real-world situations in a spontaneous and non-rehearsed context. For each skill, these guidelines identify five major levels of proficiency: Distinguished, Superior, Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice. The major levels Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice are subdivided into High, Mid, and Low sublevels. The levels of the ACTFL Guidelines describe the continuum of proficiency from that of the highly articulate, well-educated language user to a level of little or no functional ability.

### **INTERNATIONAL**

#### [Latvians say "no" in Russian language vote](#)

*(EuroNews)*

Preliminary results on Saturday showed an overwhelming majority of Latvians had voted “no” in a referendum to decide whether Russian should become the country’s second official language. Nearly 80 percent of Latvians voted against proposals introduced by a national movement of Russian speakers. Analysts say the turnout, at nearly 70 percent, indicates the strength of feeling among many ordinary Latvians, who are keen to distance themselves culturally from their former Soviet rulers. (Video included).

### **How do you become fluent in 11 languages?**

*(BBC)*

Twenty-year-old Alex Rawlings has won a national competition to find the UK's most multi-lingual student. The Oxford University undergraduate can currently speak 11 languages - English, Greek, German, Spanish, Russian, Dutch, Afrikaans, French, Hebrew, Catalan and Italian. Entrants in the competition run by the publishers Collins had to be aged between 16 and 22 and conversant in multiple languages. Alex drew on all his skills to tell BBC News about his passion for learning languages and how he came to speak so many. Includes a video with Alex speaking all 11 languages.

### **Digital tools 'to save languages'**

*(BBC)...*Jonathan Amos

Facebook, YouTube and even texting will be the salvation of many of the world's endangered languages, scientists believe. "Small languages are using social media, YouTube, text messaging and various technologies to expand their voice and expand their presence," said K David Harrison, an associate professor of linguistics at Swarthmore College and a National Geographic Fellow. "It's what I like to call the flipside of globalisation."