

# LANGUAGES EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

Volume 5 Number 4, 28 July 2011

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## BILINGUAL INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

### Language learning in Indigenous communities

*House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, 8 July 2011*

The role of Indigenous languages in Closing the Gap and improving outcomes for Indigenous communities is the subject of a new inquiry by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. The inquiry will examine the benefits of giving recognition to Indigenous languages, and how Indigenous languages can be used in education to improve competency in English. In addition, the inquiry will examine current maintenance and revitalisation programs for Indigenous languages.

This is the first parliamentary inquiry to examine the direct contribution that the learning of Indigenous languages can make to overcoming disadvantage and achieving competency in English language. The Chair of the Committee Mr Shayne Neumann MP stated, "This is a topical inquiry to be launching during NAIDOC week - a week in which we celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Australia's Indigenous people. Language is such an important part of a person's culture and identity. By examining how we can give attention and proper recognition to Indigenous languages in Australia, we are also walking the path of reconciliation by giving attention and proper recognition to Indigenous cultures and identities."

Mr Neumann added, "Our Committee's recent report into the overrepresentation of Indigenous youth in the criminal justice system, *Doing time - time for doing*, found that self-healing and connection to culture programs have been highly effective in getting people back on track. Additionally we found that Indigenous language interpreting and translating services were inadequate, particularly in remote communities."

"There seems to be a belief in Australia that we are a monolingual nation and that only Standard Australian English can benefit a person, both educationally and vocationally. If we look outside of Australia, the evidence is overwhelmingly to the contrary. The benefits of being able to speak multiple languages are tangible, particularly in Europe. The Committee aims to look at what's working, as well as looking for innovative measures to improve competency in English in communities where English is a second language."

The Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Minister for the Arts have asked the Committee to inquire into and report on language learning in Indigenous communities. The Committee will broadly examine the benefits of giving attention and recognition to Indigenous languages, with a focus on:

- The contribution of Indigenous languages to Closing the Gap and strengthening Indigenous identity and culture
- The potential benefits of including Indigenous languages in early education and measures to improve English competency and education outcomes in Indigenous communities
- The effectiveness of current maintenance and revitalisation programs for Indigenous languages, and
- The effectiveness of the Commonwealth Government Indigenous languages policy in delivering its objectives and relevant policies of other Australian governments.

The Committee invites submissions to the inquiry by 19 August 2011. For the full terms of reference and advice on making submissions see the Committee's website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/atsia> or contact the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4559.

Read more: <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/atsia/languages/index.htm>

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## INDIGENOUS ANTHEM

### **Kutju Australia: a familiar tune with a brand new sound**

*Eleri Harris, ABC News, 07 July 2011*

Our national anthem has hit a fresh note with the translation of Advance Australia Fair into Central Australian Luritja language by Northern Territory MP Alison Anderson and folk musician Ted Egan.

Celebrating NAIDOC week, School Education Minister Peter Garrett today promised \$130, 000 to distribute the translated song to schools across the nation in a special kit.

Ted Egan hopes to increase knowledge and awareness of Aboriginal languages and to reinvigorate the national anthem through promoting Kutju Australia and working on further translations.

"It's a beautiful project," Ted says.

"We're aiming to go to the speakers of the other remaining Australian languages and say, would you like to do this with your kids?"

Listen online: <http://blogs.abc.net.au/canberra/2011/07/kutju-australia-go-forward-australia.html>

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## TOWARDS A NATIONAL CURRICULUM

### **Calls for a better education curriculum**

*Nikita Vaz, Latrobe Valley Express, 11 Jul, 2011*

THE State Government has rejected the latest education national curriculum draft on the grounds that it would seriously undermine the quality of language teaching at local schools.

Victorian Education Minister Martin Dixon said the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority's proposal to decrease the hours spent on learning a language would "drive down the quality of language teaching".

ACARA's proposal was to decrease the hours from 700 to between 300 and 400 hours for years prep to seven.

"Being able to speak a second language opens up new horizons for people... and also helps support Australia's multicultural society," Mr Dixon said.

"If implemented, the current draft would drive down the standards of languages education in Victoria."

Australian Education Union president Mary Bluett said the union supported Mr Dixon in the matter, as local schools would be put in "a very difficult situation".

"This puts schools in a tough spot, because they would then be forced to ignore the national curriculum on this issue," Ms Bluett said.

"Languages are highly valued by the local community and parents, they (the Federal Government) should be setting a minimum number of hours and not a maximum number of hours."

Read more: <http://www.latrobevalleyexpress.com.au/news/local/news/general/calls-for-a-better-education-curriculum/2222221.aspx>

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## ENGAGING WITH ASIA

## **Call to scrap 'biased' Chinese culture classes**

*Anna Patty, Sydney Morning Herald, July 13, 2011*

A CHINESE government-funded languages and culture program, being introduced in NSW classrooms this month, has sparked political controversy and calls for its removal.

A petition with more than 4000 signatures tabled in the upper house of the NSW Parliament calls for the government to remove the Confucius Classroom Program from the schools where it operates: Chatswood Public, Fort Street High, Mosman High, Kensington Public, St Marys Senior High, Kingsgrove North High School and Coffs Harbour High.

The government has confirmed that controversial topics, including the Tiananmen Square massacre and China's human rights record, will not be discussed in the program, raising questions about China's influence over content.

The petition states that foreign governments should not determine what is taught in NSW schools and that the curriculum should be free of propaganda.

"The teaching of Chinese language and culture is welcome in NSW schools but it should be available free from the influence of the Chinese Communist Party doctrine and censorship."

China pays NSW schools more than \$200,000 to promote its language and culture through the Confucius Institute, based at the Education Department's Ryde office.

The sudden proliferation of institutes worldwide has prompted concerns that the Communist government is using the non-profit public centres as a tool to enhance its image.

Greens NSW MP John Kaye said impressionable students were being exposed to a "biased view of Chinese history, human rights and world affairs because the NSW government is too cheap to pay for properly qualified teachers".

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/education/call-to-scrap-biased-chinese-culture-classes-20110712-1hcdf.html#ixzz1TfnFuvEi>

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## **NSW Minister defends schools' Chinese funding for language classes**

*AAP, July 13, 2011*

THE NSW government has defended the funding of Chinese language classes in schools by the Chinese government, insisting they have no political content.

A petition with more than 4000 signatures has been tabled in the upper house of the NSW parliament, calling on the government to remove the Confucius Classroom Program from a number of Sydney schools, Fairfax reported today.

The petition states foreign governments should not dictate what is taught in NSW schools, and that the curriculum should be free of propaganda.

Education Minister Adrian Piccoli says the Chinese government is only funding language courses and language teachers.

"There is no political content from the Chinese government or from any other government which supports languages in NSW government schools," he told AAP.

China was not the only country which had expressed interest in funding languages taught in Australian schools, Mr Piccoli added.

"The Italian government has put some money towards it," he said.

"We strongly support the teaching of languages."

Read more: <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/breaking-news/nsw-minister-defends-schools-chinese-funding-for-language-classes/story-e6frf7jx-1226093642332>

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## ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

### Silenced voices: Languages dying off around the globe

*Tim Johnson McClatchy, The Californian, Jul. 5, 2011*

Only two people on Earth are known to speak the Ayapanec language, Manuel Segovia and Isidro Velasquez, old men of few words who are somewhat indifferent to each other's company.

When Segovia and Velasquez pass away, their language also will go to the grave. It will mark the demise of a unique way of describing the lush landscape of southern Mexico and thinking about the world.

Ayapanec isn't alone in its vulnerability. Some linguists say that languages are disappearing at the rate of two a month. Half of the world's remaining 7,000 or so languages may be gone by the end of this century, pushed into disuse by English, Spanish and other dominating languages.

The die-off has parallels to the extinction of animals. The death of a language, linguists say, robs humanity of ideas, belief systems and knowledge of the natural world. Languages are repositories of human experience that have evolved over centuries, even millennia.

"Languages are definitely more endangered than species, and are going extinct at a faster rate," said K. David Harrison, a linguist at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania and author of "When Languages Die." "There are many hundreds of languages that have fewer than 50 speakers."

Hot spots for endangered languages may not be where you think. They include places such as Oklahoma, which holds the highest density of indigenous languages in the United States, partly because faraway Indian tribes were forcibly relocated there in the 1800s; northern Australia, home to many small and scattered aboriginal groups, and Central Siberia, which has 25 Turkic, Mongolic and other languages that face extinction.

Read more: <http://www.thecalifornian.com/article/20110705/NEWS01/107050325/Silenced-voices-Languages-dying-off-around-globe>

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### Educators work to preserve endangered Alaska languages

*Mike Dunham, Anchorage Daily News, July 11th, 2011*

If Alaska's Native languages vanish in the next generation, it won't be because people didn't try hard to keep them alive, says Gary Holton.

"There are significant efforts with Yup'ik immersion schools and teacher training programs," said Holton, associate professor of linguistics in the Alaska Native Language Center and director of the Alaska Native Languages Archive at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

He pointed to an ongoing documentation effort, dictionaries and teaching of the endangered Deg Xinag and Han Athabascan dialects. Even Eyak, technically extinct, is benefiting from a language revival program that recently held workshops in Anchorage and Cordova, he said.

But he admits that the situation is critical for many of the state's indigenous languages.

Read more: <http://www.adn.com/2011/07/09/1960330/many-alaska-native-languages-endangered.html#ixzz1TgliNwYL>

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## Plan to preserve endangered languages

*Bethany Hiatt, The West Australian, July 26, 2011,*

Charged with the task of keeping endangered languages alive, Aboriginal language teachers from across the State spent most of their school holiday break at a training course in Perth.

Education Department Aboriginal languages co-ordinator Lola Jones said it was important for children to be exposed to languages that belonged to the area in which they lived.

"It's part of Australia's linguistic heritage," she said.

The scheme to train Aboriginal people to teach their languages in schools has run for 13 years.

Teachers had to create their own teaching resources because none was available commercially.

Languages covered in the training course which ran last week included Nyoongar from the South West, Yawuru from Broome, and Walmajarri and Gooniyandi from the Fitzroy Crossing area.

"One small part of language revival is having languages taught in schools," Ms Jones said. "Yawuru is a very endangered language. There is only a handful of older fluent speakers left."

More than 50 public schools teach an Aboriginal language. Nyoongar is the most common language taught in WA, offered at 21 schools.

"There are more schools that would teach language if we had more language teachers, which is why this training is so important," Ms Jones said.

Source: <http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/wa/9913171/plan-to-preserve-endangered-languages/>

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## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### CANADA: Postcards From the Classroom: What's in a Language?

*Zein Odeh, Huffpost Canada, 7/15/11*

Multilingual education is a topic that elicits much discussion and attention. Some believe that growing up in a multilingual setting may temporarily delay speech for some children, while proponents attest to the fact that it encourages a whole new level of thinking.

Saying that I am biased in the midst of this linguistic tennis match is an understatement. I grew up speaking three languages: English and French at school, and Arabic at home. I live in Canada and I teach at a French school rooted in bilingualism whose mission it is to foster the love of learning languages. Just to reinforce where I stand on this subject, I am about to board a plane to Jerusalem for the summer where I plan on honing my Arabic skills, and spending time in schools and centres populated equally by Israeli and Palestinian children.

Needless to say, I am fascinated with how and why students learn new languages. After all, a language is part of one's identity. It is a reflection on both how we chose to express ourselves, as well as our cultural history and norms. Educational researchers, such as Ellen Bialystok, support this claim, as does my own personal experience.

As with most lessons in life, the most impactful are those that are the most challenging.

Read more: [http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/zein-odeh/bilingual\\_b\\_895414.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/zein-odeh/bilingual_b_895414.html)

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### CANADA: Duality makes bilingualism sustainable

*Hon. Mauril BÉlanger, Telegraph-Journal, July 23rd, 2011*

That said, some people are and always will be deeply opposed to bilingualism and linguistic duality. Economic considerations are often given as the reason for not granting rights, as in *Arsenault-Cameron v. Prince Edward Island*. They are also the reason behind the suppression of rights and gains, as the federal Conservatives have done on two occasions by eliminating the Court Challenges Program.

It's one thing for Conservative members to publicly question the cost of duality for health and education. But it's another for them to imply that bilingual institutions are a better option, and their statements demonstrate a total lack of understanding.

It's obvious that they fail to recognize the constant threat of assimilation as the dominant underlying factor. Assimilation is what duality - whether in education, early childhood programs or health - is intended to counter. Mr. Carrier, the Commissioner of Official Languages, is absolutely right when he says that duality is essential if not vital.

Bilingual institutions do not counter assimilation. You could even argue that they contribute to it.

Duality - the coexistence of two education systems, two boards, two schools, two daycare centres, two hospital administrations - contributes to greater social cohesion, respect for oneself and others, equality and, lastly, bilingualism. But a form of bilingualism that fosters harmony, respect and openness rather than assimilation. In short, a viable and sustainable bilingualism.

Read more: <http://telegraphjournal.canadaeast.com/opinion/article/1425930>

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## **EGYPT: Goethe-Institut provides 16 grants for German language education training**

*Goethe-Institut, July 13, 2011*

The Goethe-Institut has provided 16 grants for faculty members of German language departments at Egyptian universities and universities in North Africa and the middle east to attend a Goethe-Institut training course entitled "Summer School...Transitions: Language and Cultural Studies".

As part of the program, the Goethe-Institut held a panel discussion, led by German Ambassador Michael Bock, Dr. Ingrid Köster, director of language department in the Middle East and North Africa, Mrs. Mona Ayoub vice director of DAAD, and political scientist Dr. Lars Geiser, to discuss the current political transition in the region and its effect on the role of educators.

The Goethe-Institut is providing 16 full grants to allow educators to participate. The announcement of the grants comes as the Goethe-Institut aims to increase grants given to Egyptian educators in order to support the education programs of Egypt.

The grants are among 160 given by the Goethe-Institut to study teaching methods of foreign languages in Germany, as well as a range of Goethe-Institut programs to support 50 training courses in Egypt annually.

Read more: <http://www.ameinfo.com/270503.html>

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## **IRELAND: The importance of foreign languages**

*26 signatories, C/o UCD School of Languages, Letters to the Editor, Irish Times, July 11, 2011*

At a time when Ireland's interdependence within the European Union is greater than ever before, accepting an inability of our citizens to understand their European neighbours would be politically inadvisable to say the least. Internally, it would foster the same grim parochialism from which Ireland has only very recently emerged.

Indeed, in a country that has become more multilingual over the past decade, and the better for it, any decision to end the foreign language requirement as well as rule out mandatory foreign languages at primary schools, would be all the more deplorable and would fly in the face of EU language policy.

The Minister is correct in acknowledging the need for science subjects to be studied in Ireland. However, he is wholly incorrect in thinking that learning a European language would somehow stand in the way of this. After all, scientists elsewhere in the European and wider world seem perfectly able to combine language learning with being scientists.

Favouring Chinese, as the Minister suggests over French, German, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese, will not solve our problems. It will not make us better scientists, better medics or better businesspeople. It will only make us less international and more driven by a naive belief in an economy, but with no critical tools to see where this economy comes from and how it is situated - whether we like it or not - in wider political, cultural, psychological and yes, linguistic contingencies.

Read more: <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/letters/2011/0711/1224300493975.html>

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## **ISRAEL: Age no excuse for failing to learn a new language**

*Catherine de Lange, New Scientist, 22 July 2011*

IT'S never too late to learn another language. Surprisingly, under controlled conditions adults turn out to be better than children at acquiring a new language skill.

It is widely believed that children younger than 7 are good at picking up new languages because their brains rewire themselves more easily, and because they use what is called procedural, or implicit, memory to learn - meaning they pick up a new language without giving it conscious thought. Adults are thought to rely on explicit memory, whereby they actively learn the rules of a language.

But some linguists now question whether this apparent difference in language-learning ability reflects our attitudes to young children and adults rather than differences in the brain. "If adults make a mistake we don't correct them because we don't want to insult them," says Sara Ferman of Tel Aviv University, Israel.

Ferman and Avi Karni from the University of Haifa, Israel, devised an experiment in which 8-year-olds, 12-year-olds and adults were given the chance to learn a new language rule. In the made-up rule, verbs were spelled and pronounced differently depending on whether they referred to an animate or inanimate object.

Participants were not told this, but were asked to listen to a list of correct noun-verb pairs, and then voice the correct verb given further nouns. The researchers had already established that 5-year-olds performed poorly at the task, and so did not include them in the study. All participants were tested again two months later to see what they remembered.

"The adults were consistently better in everything we measured," says Ferman.

Read more: <http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg21128224.000-age-no-excuse-for-failing-to-learn-a-new-language.html>

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## **MALTA: The vital importance of bilingualism in Malta**

*Martin Scicluna, he Malta Independent Online, 27 July 2011*

We have been fortunate in Malta that the founding fathers of our Constitution almost 50 years ago were far-seeing and broad-minded enough to make English one of the official languages of Malta, after Maltese

That decision has ensured that, in the Mediterranean, in a sea where modern civilisation began, in an island that borders both Africa and Europe and acts as a bridge between them, that is uniquely placed at a crossroads, a nation that is blessed with the facility to learn, speak and use English, we gain an advantage over other countries in this region of incalculable proportions.

English is increasingly the language of global communication. It is spoken as a second language by around 375 million people. As I write this, about 200 million Chinese are in the process of learning English. It has official status in at least 75 countries, with a total population of over two billion. A quarter of the world's population speaks it.

Read more: <http://www.independent.com.mt/news.asp?newsitemid=129445>

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## **PHILLIPINES: Learning with the mother tongue**

*Dr Florangel Rosario Braid, Manila Bulletin, July 22, 2011*

If House Bill 3719 authored by Rep. Magtanggol Gunigundo eventually gets passed into law, the mother tongue will be the primary medium for pre-school to Grade 6. English and Filipino will be taught but only as separate subjects not as the primary medium of instruction.

Earlier, former DepEd Secretary Jesli Lapus had issued DepEd Order 74 which changed the language of instruction from bilingual to a trilingual one to include the mother tongue.

These initiatives support UNESCO's policy advocacy based on numerous research findings which cite the positive impact of MTBMLE (Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education) on learning and cognition.

I thought that the essays contained in the collection of essays, *Starting Where the Children Are*, edited by Ricardo Ma.Duran Nolasco, Francisco Andes Datar, and Arnold Molina Azurin, should be brought down to various multisectoral venues where they can be more widely discussed and dissected. This, before public consultations on the proposed law are conducted.

On the use of the first language as a primary medium of instruction, here is a sampling of comments from some educators: "The pupils were clearly engaged in the learning process;" "It is not only the students that are animated and energized, but the teachers as well;"

"Students learn better with the mother tongue and are better able to apply what they learn;" "L1 (first language) facilitates the learning of a second and a third language and more;" "Countries that use the mother tongue usually garner comparatively better scores in mathematics and science."

Read more: <http://www.mb.com.ph/articles/327895/learning-with-mother-tongue>

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## **SOUTH AFRICA: Found in translation**

*Cornia Pretorius, Mail & Guardian, 20 July 2011*

At the start of another school day, Mariliza Pieters displays the patience and persistence that only grade one teachers have been blessed with.

The 25 chattering children in front of her are slow to settle down. In anticipation of what the teacher is going to say, some tiny hands are scratching around in messy bags for pencils and papers.

Pieters, unfazed by their restlessness, charges into the first lesson of the day: "One, two, three, eyes on me."

"In your exercise books look for 'd' for dog. Not 'b' for ball; 'd' for dog."

When she repeats the instruction, Primrose Qokela follows suit. Sitting motionless in the back of the class, Qokela's voice is inaudible - except to the seven-year-olds in the class. She speaks into a tiny radio microphone that transmits her voice to the black wireless earphones some of the learners are wearing like crowns, others like necklaces.

Qokela is the Setswana interpreter in Pieters's English-medium class at the Laerskool President Pretorius in Potchefstroom in North West. As one of five interpreters at the 114-year-old school, she is part of a ground-breaking project that is, among others, exploring an alternative method delivering mother-tongue education in a multilingual South African society.

Read more: <http://mg.co.za/article/2011-07-20-found-in-translation/>

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## **SOUTH AFRICA: Language 'main issue' in literacy, maths marks**

*Karl Gernetzky, BusinessDay, 2011/07/22*

The switch to English or Afrikaans as a medium of instruction from grade 4 onwards is widely cited for the country's poor performance in the Annual National Assessments released last month. The national average performance in grade 3 was 35% for literacy, and 28% for numeracy, while grade 6 pupils achieved an average of 28% in languages and 30% in mathematics.

Jill Adler, Wits professor and the Firststrand Foundation's mathematics education chair, said the use of language was crucial for students to be able to grasp complex mathematical concepts, and this was leading to poor maths results. She said diverse levels of fluency were significantly complicating teaching as, "in order to teach mathematics, you need to simplify language".

The Grade 6 Systemic Evaluation National Report of 2005 showed students who studied in their mother tongue achieved a national average score of 69% in language, whereas students taught in a second language achieved only 32%.

Those who wrote mathematics in their home language achieved an average score of 48,13%, while the average score of those using a second language was 23,19%.

Read more: <http://www.businessday.co.za/articles/Content.aspx?id=148991>

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## **SOUTH AFRICA: Students should learn an African language**

*IOL News, July 25 2011*

Higher Education Minister Blade Nzimande on Sunday challenged South Africans to learn African languages.

He cited the enthusiasm shown by a group of American students, who are studying the Zulu language, as an example that others should follow.

"This should serve as an encouragement to all South Africans including our own kids and communities that they learn at least one African language not just German, or French, because now they see that others take an interest in African languages," Nzimande said.

He was welcoming a group of American students who were visiting KwaZulu-Natal for a Zulu language course.

The language study programme supported by a United States education agency also has students in Nigeria learning Yoruba while others are learning Swahili in Tanzania.

The students in South Africa will return to the United States on August 8. - Sapa

Source: <http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/students-should-learn-an-african-language-1.1104816>

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## **SOUTH KOREA: English worship**

*Deauwand Myers, The Korea Times, 07-13-2011*

The English language owes its ubiquity to British power. Advancements in war technology and naval exploration created, for several hundred years, the largest empire ever known. Britain's ex-colony, the United States, became a new kind of empire, and even in its current economic hardship, is the richest and most powerful nation in all of human history.

With this power came all the attendant privileges and problems. One of its privileges, that of English being the lingua franca of our time, makes it easier for American and British citizens (and her commonwealth nations) to globally interact.

But English is not the only language a student must know to be successful in the world. Asia's fetishizing and romanticizing English, even ascribing magical powers to those who can master it, is wrong. There are racial, ethno-centric implications in this English worship. The more you can speak English, the more Western (white), sophisticated, and erudite you are.

Chinese and Spanish are widely used languages as well, and I wish Korean education would broaden its scope and enrich students' academic lives with a menu of options in language learning.

Read more: [http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinion/2011/07/137\\_90817.html](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinion/2011/07/137_90817.html)

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### **UK: Keeping the Cornish language alive by taking tips from our Manx cousins**

*This is Cornwall, 26 July 2011*

RECENTLY I was fortunate enough to go to the Isle of Man (IoM) for five days to research Manx language education at pre-school level.

As part of my trip I visited three nurseries and two playgroups that provide full-time Manx language education to children between two and five years.

The Manx language schools are run by a charity called Mooinjer Veggey (MV), which has been in existence for about 13 years. Places at the nursery schools are funded by the IoM Government and the schools are all very popular.

Part of the reason why I wanted to visit these schools was to develop my own professional practice as a Cornish-language early years teacher and to gain useful and relevant knowledge and experience to help contribute to the development of Cornish-language early years education in Cornwall.

I went to the IoM because the Manx language is not only a Celtic language like Cornish, but of all the Celtic languages the situation of Manx is closest to Cornish in terms of its stage of revival.

Both languages are spoken by roughly 1 per cent of the population and are on the United Nations' critically endangered list of languages.

Read more: <http://www.thisiscornwall.co.uk/Keeping-Cornish-language-alive-taking-tips-Manx/story-13011817-detail/story.html>

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### **USA: San Mateo County joins school biliteracy effort**

*Neil Gonzales, Mercury News, 07/21/2011*

San Mateo County has joined a statewide effort to encourage students to become multilingual.

Last month, the county Office of Education board approved launching the "Seal of Biliteracy" program to recognize local students who have achieved mastery in English and one or more foreign language.

"The beauty of this is it's celebrating biliteracy and encouraging mastery of English and another language," county education office spokeswoman Nancy Magee said.

The county office is working with several districts to create a formal, common system that gives seals or awards out to eligible students in the elementary, middle and high school levels, Magee said. Although the program is not expected to bring new resources to enhance multilingual learning, she said, it does provide "motivation for students to take advantage of the support that already exists."

The program is modeled after the one spearheaded by Californians Together, a statewide coalition of parent, education and civil rights groups that formed in response to Proposition 227, a ballot measure approved by the state's voters in 1998 that curtailed bilingual education.

Read more: [http://www.mercurynews.com/san-mateo-county/ci\\_18527867?ncllick\\_check=1](http://www.mercurynews.com/san-mateo-county/ci_18527867?ncllick_check=1)

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### **USA: Echo Park school decides that learning in two languages is better than one**

Logan Street Elementary in Echo Park will begin a new dual language program in the fall for kindergartners. The program will be offered to both English-learning and English-speaking students with the intention of producing students who are bilingual and able to read and write in both English and Spanish.

Logan is the second school in the area to introduce the dual language program to its curriculum. Highland Park's Aldama Elementary implemented its English-Spanish dual-language immersion program at the urging of many middle-class, English speaking parents who wanted their children to be fluent in Spanish.

Educators stress that new dual-language programs are different from the maligned bilingual ed classes of the past. Still, many say the dual-language program at Logan could prove to be a tough sell.

"Parents for years have been told that bi-lingual education is not best choice for their children, it's going to take a lot of outreach to change their minds about a dual language program," said Cheryl Ortega, a former Logan teacher and director of bilingual education for the United Teachers Union Los Angeles.

Ortega says the Spanish dual-language program differ from the bilingual language programs that were implemented in many schools during the 1970s. Those bilingual classes, which served only Spanish-speaking students, were taught bilingually until the second or third grade.

Read more: <http://www.theeastsiderla.com/2011/07/echo-park-school-decides-that-learning-in-two-languages-is-better-than-one/>

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### **USA: American Sign Language on the Brink of Extinction**

*The Takeaway, July 27, 2011*

American Sign Language could be a dying form of communication, thanks to dwindling education funding and technological alternatives.

Many deaf people are adamant that sign language will always be essential, but state budget cuts are threatening to close schools that teach it.

This adds to the existing debate in the deaf community, between those who communicate with sounds and high-tech cochlear implants, and those who utilize sign language.

Read more: <http://www.thetakeaway.org/2011/jul/27/american-sign-language-threatened/>

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### **USA: Language manuals website provides a cultural education**

*Marisa Riley, The University Star, Jul 27 2011*

Speech etiquette is dictated by cultural norms, and a Texas State assistant professor is attempting to streamline the information.

Rahual Chakraborty, communication disorders assistant professor, is having his graduate level multicultural backgrounds students develop a website that would combine information on cultural backgrounds with corresponding speech language pathology.

The website, Multicultural Manuals Database, aims to benefit speech language pathologists (SLPs) and the understanding of their bilingual and multicultural clients.

Chakraborty said knowing whether or not it is appropriate to maintain eye contact while speaking to someone of different cultural background can change a speech language pathologist's diagnosis, and the website would attempt to intertwine the two types of information.

Read more: <http://star.txstate.edu/node/4360>

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## **USA: Teacher program aids indigenous speakers**

*Claudia Melendez Salinas, The Monterey County Herald, 07/27/2011*

For years, migrant education administrators asked for teachers who speak the indigenous languages of Mexico to come to California.

The problem was, for Mexican teachers to participate in the Binational Teacher Exchange program, they must speak English, and no teachers fluent in Spanish and other indigenous languages qualified.

This year, thanks to a pilot program of the California Department of Education and the Oaxacan Department of Education, a group of indigenous language speakers from Mexico could participate.

Through the program, teachers took an intensive, month-long English-language course at CSU Sacramento before being dispersed through California's migrant regions. Monterey County received four speakers of indigenous languages.

On Tuesday, the county Migrant Education Program held its annual Binational Cultural Event, which served as a farewell to the four and 17 other Mexican teachers who have been working with migrant children and their parents for about a month. Sixteen were from Michoacan and five from Oaxaca, two states with the largest emigration to the United States.

Read more: [http://www.montereyherald.com/local/ci\\_18557953?nclick\\_check=1](http://www.montereyherald.com/local/ci_18557953?nclick_check=1)

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- Languages Education : <http://www.languageseducation.com/news.htm> (monthly)
- Ensemble - Music Education : <http://www.ensemble.org.au/news.htm> (monthly)
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