

March 2011

Languages in the News

How Children Learn Languages

This report cites Dr. Charles Yang's *The Infinite Gift*. Yang is an Associate Professor of Linguistics at the University of Pennsylvania. Organized in six concise parts, the report provides, in easy accessible language, the phenomenon that is language acquisition and the known factors which influence it. It debunks the myth that if a child is exposed to too many languages at once, s/he can become confused.

This report appears on the website Early Advantage. Early Advantage is an independent publishing company known for the marketing of *Muzzy*, the early language learning program produced by the British Broadcasting Corporation. The mission at Early Advantage is to develop effective language learning programs for young children.

Click here to read [How Children Learn Language.](#)

Russia Requires More Fluent Bureaucrats

An article in United Press International reported that Russia is stepping up its foreign language proficiency requirements for its bureaucrats. The article claims that during recent public speaking engagements, Russian officials mistranslated statements from Russian to English, resulting in comic (or offensive) mistakes. Russia set a goal that 20 percent of its workforce will be fluent in a foreign language by 2020 and currently requires all new hires to speak English fluently.

Click here to read [Russia requires more Fluent Bureaucrats.](#)

Raising Children Bilingually

The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) offers a series of articles that answer parental concerns about learning two languages at once. It includes a guide for starting an elementary foreign language program, advice on tapping heritage languages, and addresses fallacies about bilingual education. The site also contains a bibliography of reference works on the topic, listservs, and websites.

Click here to read the articles [in Raising Children Bilingually.](#)

Tips and Tools for Early Language Learning

Oral Language Archive

The Oral Language Archive is a collection of recordings of native speakers for the study of foreign languages developed at Carnegie Mellon University. The audio recordings are available in French, Spanish, German and Japanese. They present short dialogues (1-3 minutes) on topical issues related to traveling and living internationally and include native speakers in a variety of accents and dialects.

A few sample dialogues for each language are available on the site, and transcripts and translations of the audio recordings can be downloaded for free. CDs of the full volume of audio recordings are available with licensing agreement purchase. The site also includes information on how to use the audio recordings for individual and classroom learning at different levels of instruction (beginning to advanced).

Click here to access the [Oral Language Archive](#).

Asia Society Kids

The Asia Society has devoted part of its website to activities for children, which includes stories, art, languages and games. Children visiting the site can read stories from Asian culture, learn to count in Chinese and Hindi, put together a map of China, decipher early human writing, make an origami bunny, learn about festivals/holidays and explore Australia, Iran, and China.

Click here to access the [Asia Society Kids](#) page.

FLENJ Advocacy

The Foreign Language Educators of New Jersey (FLENJ) website includes a variety of resources to support advocating for language learning. It includes tips for teacher advocates, general advocacy information, information for parents and administrators, and links to supporting research such as *English is Not Enough*. Some links on the site are no longer active.

Click here to access the [FLENJ Advocacy](#) page.

This issue of *Newsworthy* was compiled by Tammy Dann. Send any comments, questions, or information for future issues of *Newsworthy* to Tammy Dann at trdann@q.com.

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