

## Languages in the News

*By the time job-seekers see the importance of languages, is it too late?*

With increasing globalization and a growing Spanish-language (and other languages) population in the United States, bilingual workers appear to be in demand. A quick search on various job sites, including those of temporary staffing agencies, turns up an array of jobs seeking bilingual candidates, from cashier to teacher to bill collector. According to recent figures from the U.S. Census Bureau, 37 million U.S. residents over age 5 speak Spanish at home, with millions more using languages such as Chinese, Urdu, and Russian at home and many reporting that they speak English "less than very well." The Globalization and Localization Association is a professional organization for the language industry and its website has quite a few resources. It has formed a program with the staffing agency, Manpower, to emphasize foreign language proficiency for job candidates.

Click [here](#) to read *By the time job-seekers see the importance of languages, is it too late?*

*10 Superb Psychological Advantages of Learning another Language*

This article summarizes a wave of new research showing 10 psychological benefits to learning another language. Each benefit listed references the associated study, in case the reader would like to read more about each specific benefit. The 10 benefits include: Brain growth, staving off dementia, hearing language better, becoming more language sensitive, boosting your memory, multi-tasking more effectively, increasing attention span, better brain activations, new ways of seeing, improving first language ability, and exploring another culture.

Click [here](#) to read *10 Superb Psychological Advantages of Learning another Language*.

*The Bilingual Brain is Sharper and More Focused, Study Says*

Researchers at Northwestern University found differences between bilinguals and monolinguals in how they process the sounds of speech. The study involved testing 23 high school students who were fluent in English and Spanish and 25 who only spoke English. Researchers tested involuntary neural responses to speech sounds. In comparing the two groups, the bilingual adolescents were better at detecting the fundamental frequency of speech sounds when there was background noise. The researchers claim that bilinguals are good at determining what is and what is not relevant, have more resilient brains, and are more proficient at multitasking and setting priorities. Preliminary research also shows that speaking more than one language aids the memory and delays the onset of dementia and Alzheimer's disease. The Center for Health Studies in Luxembourg reports that the more languages a person is able to speak, the less likely she or he will develop cognitive problems. The report concludes with current findings from the researchers at the University of British Columbia's Infant Studies Centre who claim that babies raised in a bilingual family show from birth a preference for each of the native languages they heard while still in the womb and can readily distinguish between them, even when the languages are very different, such as English and Japanese or English and Punjabi.

Click [here](#) to read *The Bilingual Brain is Sharper and More Focused, Study Says*

# Tips and Tools for Early Language

## WEBSITES

### Speaking Avatars

Voki is a free service that allows you to create personalized speaking avatars and use them on your blog, profile, and in your language classes. An avatar is a computer user's representation of him or her. Click on "get started" to create your own avatar. You can choose the facial features, clothing, and accessories of your avatar. Choose a background and record your voice using your phone or a microphone connected to the computer. Set up an account to publish your avatar.

Children under the age of 13 years old cannot have an account.

Click [here](#) to create your own avatar.

### Pandora

Pandora is a free music service for residents of the United States. Users can create "stations" based on artist, song, composer, or genre. The site provides lyrics to the songs, music by similar artists and information about artists, albums, and songs. For the site to be free, some advertisements are played.

The Latin genre includes Brazilian, Latin America, Mexico, Salsa, Flamenco, Latin Pop, Reggaeton, and Tropical. Songs and artists in languages other than English and Spanish are limited.

Click [here](#) to access the free music of Pandora.

**VideoEle** VideoEle is a site of free educational Spanish videos. All of the videos are separated into levels. The videos range from different elements of the Spanish language such as vocabulary and grammar to cultural artifacts. Transcripts and a work booklet accompany each level. The site is intended to be self-guided, however, teachers may find it better to pick and choose, which videos they would like to use as supplements to their lessons.

Click [here](#) to access VideoEle.

## APPS for iPads, iPods and iPhones

### Penyo Pal

Learn French vocabulary - Penyo Pal - the free game is with fruit vocabulary. You listen or read the word, then match a picture to it. The other 2 games to purchase are The Banker (40 words related to math numbers, money, finance and banking or The Artist (40 words related to colors, art tools, supplies and instruments). They can each be purchased for \$.99, \$3.99 or \$5.99.

### Animaux

Learn French for Kids. Only the Animaux flashcards are free. You hear and see the word in French and English with an accompanying picture of a cute color drawing. You can purchase all the flashcards (Moyens de transport, Corps, Choses, Alphabet, Chiffres, Formes, Couleurs, Temps, Musique, Hobbies, Nourriture et boissons, Fruits et legumes) for \$3.99. This seems like a good review of vocabulary that a child could do alone or with a parent.

This issue of *Newsworthy* was compiled by Janine Erickson. Send any comments, questions or information for future issues to her at [jerickson@nnell.org](mailto:jerickson@nnell.org)

Thank you to Heather Hendry and Zhihong Li for providing the links and to Tammy Dann and Alice Charkes for providing the apps used in this issue.

Thank you to Tammy Dann, Veronica Guevara, Sally Hood, Zhihong Li and Kennedy Schultz for their work writing summaries.