How people learn English as second language

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How people learn English as second language

English has long been considered the language of choice for non-native speakers of English. As the language of commerce has helped enhance its place among the languages, learning English occurs, however, is very complicated in terms of its acquisition. Someone who studies the learning of English as a second language (ESL) is Seran Aktuna.

Born in Nicosia, in the Turkish sector of the Mediterranean island of Cyprus, Aktuna received her bachelor’s degree from the University of Nicosia in the country of Cyprus, the University of Essex, England, her master’s degree in linguistics from Columbia University and her doctoral degree in educational linguistics, also at the University of Essex. Today she is a professor in the Department of English Language and Literatures at the University of Illinois Edwardsville. Not being a native speaker of English, she said, gave her a particular advantage in understanding the perceptions of students learning a new language.

“Before I was teaching English, I was aware of the processes that my students were going through,” she said. “I was aware of their processes and problems and I knew strategies that might work for them. I also knew about the theory of learning and teaching in the professional and also in a personal way.”

She said that she saw more demand for teachers of ESL. “It seems that the language has taken on a lot of importance,” she said. “Non-native users are adapting the language to the needs of their countries and governments spending a lot of money on foreign language education in the American cities, thinking that it would give them an advantage in the globalized world,” she said.

What she saw in her native country, moreover, found that the ability to learn English as a second language during childhood would probably be the most important thing. “If a child starts learning a language at a fairly young age, being perhaps as young as three or four years old, they already begin to develop the linguistic system that can help with a second language learning to different sets of rules and pronunciation patterns and on, and they have to deal with both. There is also a sort of pressure on children to be exactly like their classmates, which can have this psychological barrier in terms of their ability to acquire their new language. However, Aktuna dismisses the idea that children raised in bilingual environments should only be spoken to in one single language.”

“That’s definitely not right,” she said. “They are receiving input in Spanish, Chinese at Japanese at home, and when they come to school it’s different set of rules and pronunciation patterns and on, and they have to deal with both. There is also a sort of pressure on children to be exactly like their classmates, which can have this psychological barrier in terms of their ability to acquire their new language.”

Learning about other faiths helps to increase acceptance and understanding of the spiritual path of our neighbors,” she said. Three guest speakers will discuss their belief systems as members of the Sikh, Mormon and Christian Science religions, followed by a question-and-answer session facilitated by Peter Huesen, U.C. assistant professor of music and Diversity Council member.

Representing the Mennonite faith will be Ray Mortensen, a local member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Mortensen was born and raised in Salt Lake City, Utah. He has served in several positions in church leadership, including teacher and Bishop of the local congregation in Godfrey. He also completed a three-year mission in the central United States. Professionally, Ray is the chief compliance officer for Genesis Wealth Management Group, a Registered Investment Advisor firm. He serves as the president elect of the Rotary Club of the Riverbend and as an ambassador for the Riverbend Growth Association.

For more information on this panel discussion, please contact Scary the Scarecrow Contest.

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“We’ve got an awful lot of stuff from the community every year,” said Sid Denny. “This year we got a real flood of items. We have a lot of businesses, antique toys, plastic toys, we’ve got a little bit of everything.”

In total this year the sale of the items totals several hundred thousand dollars with the bid total in the five figure range. All proceeds help to support the Stephenson House and the first auction, which is this year’s auction. There are a lot of large items: tables, benches, dressers, and chairs are among the major large items that were raised.

Over the past 10 years, the auction average $5,000 to $6,000 after all fees are paid. They have continue with the successful auction. All money raised goes back into the running of the house and educational programs provided. “It all goes to the programming,” said Denny. “To support the educational programs and the tours for the community. Mostly the educational programs for students to District 7 and kindergarten to fourth grade students.”

This year the auction is Sunday morning at 9 a.m. on WSIE, 88.7 FM, St. Louis. For more information on the auction and the bidding places, visit the website at http://www.stephensonhouse.org. A flyer with a list of some of the items to be auctioned can also be found on the website.

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The Diversity Council of Lewis and Clark Community College will present a comparative religion panel, entitled “Appreciating Our Differences: Faiths of the World,” on Oct. 2, in the Alton Whitney O’Mei Theater inside the college’s Student Center.

The diversity council explains: “We are everyone to come together peacefully and to listen respectfully to the beliefs of others.”

The event is being organized by the college’s divinity council. The Diversity Council of Lewis and Clark Community College will present a comparative religion panel, entitled “Appreciating Our Differences: Faiths of the World,” on Oct. 2, in the Alton Whitney O’Mei Theater inside the college’s Student Center.

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