

Re: What's MEXT in English?

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It seems to me I heard somewhere that Jed Rothwell wrote in article
<Dj6Uc.23808\$nx2.4128@newsread2.news.atl.earthlink.net>:

>Kevin Wayne Williams writes:

>> *I think that many Indians would bristle at you not thinking of them as
>> native speakers of English.*

>*Yes, I acknowledge that in my last sentence. I listed India as an extreme
>example. Places like India and Sweden show that after a nation reaches a
>certain level of fluency, it is bilingual and there is no need to hire
>"native speaker" instructors. Paul Blay and many others have suggested that
>Japan needs more native speaker instructors. Of course I agree that would be
>a good idea, but there is a limit to how many you can bring in, and after a
>while there should be a limit to how many you need. If Japan were to fire a
>bunch of its present incompetent English teachers, it would probably make
>more progress than it could by hiring an equal number of foreign native
>speakers.*

[...]

>*I know little about conditions in Europe, but my daughter lived in Germany
>for a year. She says she knew little kids there who spoke English fluently
>mainly because they like to watch "The Simpsons" on TV. That is their main
>source of instruction. I imagine the same approach would work in Japan. If
>children at home were given televisions that showed only English programs,
>they would soon learn English. Especially if, as I proposed earlier,
>starting in sixth grade all instruction in all subjects was exclusively in
>English. That would do the job in a single generation. I doubt the Japanese
>public or government would go along with this modest proposal, since it
>would lead to the demise of the Japanese language over the next few hundred
>years. I think several minority languages in Europe, such as Icelandic, are
>headed for oblivion because they cannot compete with English.*

Perhaps if they had had TV in Germany before the war they would have been able to use English properly; good thing the Simpsons came along to rescue their language education programs. I suppose mutatis mutandi that might apply equally to France, Spain, and other European countries as well . . .

sci.lang.japan: Re: What's MEXT in English?

>Being bilingual is a large burden on the student. I know very few Americans
>who have preserved immigrant languages for more than three generations. I
>cannot think of a single third-generation Japanese-American I know who
>speaks Japanese, except people who learned it in school, the way I did
>(along with me, in one case). In my opinion, a bilingual culture is in an
>unsteady, temporary state, and sooner or later it will shift to the
>exclusive use of one language or the other. Perhaps countries like India
>prove I am wrong, but my prediction is that within a hundred years nearly
>everyone on earth will speak English as a second language, and within a
>thousand years all other languages will be extinct. That is a terrible
>thing, but it seems unavoidable.

. . . so I suppose the logical extension of the Simpsons' influence may
well mean the disappearance of the other European languages, leaving
only Simpsonese English?

--

Don

Old age is when you start saying "I wish I knew now what I knew then."