
ELNA UPDATE

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WORLD LANGUAGE & WORLD LANGUAGE PROBLEMS

HIGH ILLITERACY RATE IN UNITED STATES

Ironically, while English seems to be maintaining its status as the most widely used language in the world, the rate of illiteracy in the U.S., the country with the greatest number of English speakers, has been shown to be even higher than previously thought. A new study released by the U.S. Education Department says that nearly half of the nation's 191 million adults aren't proficient enough in English to perform such simple tasks as writing a letter about a billing error, or calculating the length of a bus trip from a printed schedule.

The Education Department tested more than 26,000 Americans with questions on everyday matters such as understanding a newspaper article, understanding written instructions for prospective jurors, filling out a bank-deposit slip and reading a bus schedule.

The study found, as previous ones have, that nearly 10 percent of Americans say they have difficulty reading and writing, the usual definition for illiteracy. But the study went further, testing various levels of literacy. Five levels were established. The tests indicate that between 40 million and 44 million Americans perform on the lowest level. They cannot perform such tasks as locating a particular street on a street map, entering personal information on a simple form, etc. Another 40 million perform on the second lowest level: they are unable to write a paragraph summarizing information on a chart about schools or answer a specific question about a newspaper story.

"This is a national problem," said Madeline Kunin, deputy secretary of education. "We cannot be competitive as a nation or improve the standard of living unless we are able to improve the literacy rate.

"The overall educational level of Americans has increased in terms of schooling and even in fundamental literacy. But the demands of the workplace simultaneously have vastly increased.

We simply are not keeping pace with the kinds of skills required in today's economy."

Insufficient education and an increasing number of adults whose first language is not English were given as important reasons for the high rate of illiteracy. (*San Francisco Chronicle*, Sept. 9, 1993)

FRENCH THREATENED

Some recent events have made a number of French speakers worry about the future of French, which is still the second most widely used language after English in diplomacy and international commerce.

"What will remain of French, a beautiful language which unites us, after 1993 when all the European states will become provinces of Europe?" Nicifore Soglo, Benin's president, asked recently. Soglo was speaking in Paris at the 4th meeting of leaders of Francophone countries.

His question echoed the fears of French speakers raised by the Maastricht Treaty. They fear that future efforts to maintain a special status for French in France might be seen by the "Super-State" government in Brussels as attempts to resist the "free flow of wares and services in the European Union." French speakers wonder how long French can remain the 2nd international language after the Maastricht treaty goes into effect.

"They Want to Save French" was the headline for an article in the French newspaper *La Nation* which announced the formation of the Italian-French Cultural Association, whose goal is to "spread the use of French, which is suffering attacks from the English language."

Arguments about "Franglais" words (English terms imported into French) intensified after the publication of the new Dictionary of the French Academy. The Academy accepted several terms borrowed from English, such as "baby-food, badge, bestseller" and "camping" but didn't accept others (e.g., "compact disk, computer, walkman").

The French newspaper *Le Monde* recently published a manifesto signed by 800 intellectuals which asked the French government to intervene against the "English virus." This followed a recent action by the French Parliament, which decided to

write into the Constitution the words "French is the national language of the Republic." (*Heroldo de Esperanto*, May 31, 1993, Jul. 10, 1993)

INTERNATIONAL ESPERANTO NEWS

JULES VERNE AND ESPERANTO

Jules Verne (1828-1905), acknowledged as one of the fathers of science fiction, foresaw many of today's scientific marvels, including submarines and flights to the moon, in such classic novels as *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* and *A Voyage to the Moon*. Few of his readers know, however, that Verne also predicted that Esperanto would one day become the international language. At the time of his death in 1905 Verne was working on a novel called *Voyage d'étude*, about a French expedition to the Congo. One of the expedition's members is an Esperantist, who teaches the other members Esperanto so that they can communicate with the inhabitants of the Congo, who have already learned Esperanto. (In the novel Esperanto is in the process of becoming the international language, but has not yet caught on in France.)

Voyage d'étude was to appear in two versions, one with the novel's dialogues in French for those who had not yet learned Esperanto, and another with dialogues in Esperanto for Esperanto readers.

Verne first learned about Esperanto when he heard a lecture by Theophile Cart, a famous French Esperantist of the day. Soon after hearing the lecture Verne began work on the novel. A few months later he died, with the novel unfinished.

When the fragment of *Voyage d'étude* which Verne had written was recently rediscovered in the city of Nantes, Verne's birthplace, a French publisher printed the novel for the first time, as part of a collection of unfinished novels and short stories by Verne called *San Carlos*. An English translation has not yet been scheduled. (*Heroldo de Esperanto*, Jul. 10, 1993, *Eventoj*, Sept. 1, 1993)

ESPERANTISTS IN THE NEWS: ISTVÁN NEMERE

He may not be a household name in the U.S., but in his native Hungary István Nemere is as well-known as Stephen King and Tom Clancy are to American readers. Nemere is the author of 153 novels and short story collections which have sold more than 9 million copies, mainly in Hungary. These sales figures are especially amazing considering that Hungary has only about 11 million in-

habitants. Nemere is so popular in Hungary that there is a national Nemere Club for fans who enjoy getting together to read and discuss his books.

Although Nemere has not yet been translated into Western European languages, with the exception of German, his name is well-known to Esperantists around the world - because he also writes in Esperanto. Why would a bestselling novelist choose to write in Esperanto? One reason is that Nemere knows he can reach a more international readership via Esperanto. Although Nemere's books have been translated into about a dozen languages, most of these languages are spoken only in small Eastern European countries or former republics of the Soviet Union, and have relatively few speakers outside these countries. So Nemere's Esperanto works allow him to reach readers in other parts of the world.

The sometimes controversial themes of Nemere's works gave him another reason to write in Esperanto. Many of the topics in his novels were once too politically dangerous to be written about in Hungarian under Hungary's former communist regime. One such theme, a hydroelectric project on the Danube, became the basis for Nemere's Esperanto novel *La alta akvo* (*The High Water*).

Nemere is now the most popular novelist in Esperanto, and the most prolific. He has written 14 books to date in Esperanto. Two of Nemere's Esperanto novels won "Book of the Year" awards, and several have now been translated into Hungarian and other languages.

Nemere writes in several genres, and about many topics. In Esperanto he has written science fiction (*La fermita urbo* [*The Closed City*]) and *Terra*), fantasy (*La Monto* [*The Mountain*]) and thrillers (*Vi povas morti nur dufoje* [*You Can Only Die Twice*]). His themes have included apartheid, terrorism, euthanasia, and the search for Nazi war criminals. (*Esperanto*, June 1993)

ESPERANTO NEWS NOTES

Bruno Dalla Pozza, an Esperantist from Saipan in the Mariana Islands (a U.S. dependency), won three gold medals last autumn in the international judo championships held in Perth, Australia.

The Esperanto League for North America (ELNA) now has an electronic mail address. If you or someone you know has access to an on-line computer service and would like to receive information about Esperanto or ELNA, you can send a request for information to ELNA at: elna@netcom.com. You can also send information requests by fax to ELNA at (510)653-1468, or call 1-800-828-5944.

UPDATE TO THE ELNA BOOK SERVICE CATALOG 1993

BONA MESAĜO DE JESUO, LA (laŭ Johano). Trans. Gerrit BERVELING. A new translation of the Gospel according to John. 1992, 91p. Paper. Brazil.
BON007 \$5.95/\$5.65

BONA MESAĜO DE JESUO, LA (laŭ Luko). Trans. Gerrit BERVELING. A new translation of the Gospel according to Luke. 1992, 90p. Paper. Brazil.
BON006 \$5.95/\$5.65

BONA MESAĜO DE JESUO, LA (laŭ Marko). Trans. Gerrit BERVELING. A new translation of the Gospel according to Mark. 1992, 63p. Paper. Brazil.
BON002 \$5.95/\$5.65

BONA MESAĜO DE JESUO, LA (laŭ Mateo). Trans. Gerrit BERVELING. A new translation of the Gospel according to Matthew. 1992, 84p. Paper. Brazil.
BON001 \$5.95/\$5.65

ĈU VI PAROLAS TENDARE?, Renato CORSETTI & Mauro LA TORRE. A short introduction to Esperanto, with an emphasis on speaking, for young people. Meant to be used in a classroom or with a group of young people. Fourth edition 1992. 96p. Paper. Netherlands.
CUV001 \$8.00/\$7.60

DANKON, AMIKO!, Claude PIRON. Another short novel in simple Esperanto for intermediate learners by the popular author. 1990, 36p. Paper. Austria-Hungary. ISBN 963 571 110 7
DAN004 \$4.50/\$4.25

DEKTRI HORLOĜOJ, LA, James THURBER. Trans. Ralph LEWIN. A short novel for children by one of America's favorite humorists. 1993, 42p. Paper. Ill. USA. ISBN 1-882251-04-0
DEK006 \$3.95/\$3.75

ESPERANTO • LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND COMMUNITY, Pierre JANTON. Trans. Humphrey TONKIN, Jane EDWARDS & Karen JOHNSON-WEINER. Updated version of one of the most popular works about Esperanto. 1993, 169p. Paper. USA. ISBN 0-7914-1253-9
ESP047 \$14.95/\$14.20

GERDA MALAPERIS! • vortlisto/wordlist, Claude PIRON. An Esperanto/English wordlist to accompany *Gerda malaperis!*. Lists the new words for each chapter, and has brief grammar notes. 1993, 28p. Paper. USA. ISBN 1-882251-05-9
GER003 \$2.75/\$2.60

KANTO DE L'KOLIMBO (Libro IV), Richard AMORY. Trans. Earl GALVIN. The fourth book of a

modern gay novel dealing with a mythical Indian tribe and its gay heritage. 1993, 11p. Paper. USA.
KAN005 \$1.25/\$1.15

LASTA ĈEVALO, Josef RUMLER. A new poem. Highly acclaimed by William Auld. 1992, 47p. Paper. Brazil.
LAS003 \$7.25/\$6.90

MAJSTRO KAJ MARGARITA, LA, Miĥail BULGAKOV. Trans. S.B. PROKOVSKIJ. What happens when the devil comes to Moscow? This comic novel is a modern classic of Russian literature. 1991, 376p. Bound. Russia.
MAJ003 \$28.00/\$26.60

MALFACILAS ESTI DIO, Arkadij kaj Boris STRUGACKIJ. Trans. Aleksej ĴURAVLJOV. One of the best novels by Russia's leading science fiction writers. 1992, 168p. Paper. Russia. ISBN 5-7312-0019-X
MAL005 \$5.00/\$4.75

METROPOLITENO, Vladimir VARANKIN. A classic Esperanto novel about a young Russian engineer who helps build the Moscow subway. Third edition 1992, 264p. Bound. Russia.
MET005 \$15.75/\$14.95

NIA FUNDAMENTO SUB LUPEO, G.F. MAKKINK. An in-depth study of the *Fundamento*. Should be on the bookshelf of every serious Esperantist. 1990, 128p. Paper. Belgium. ISBN 90-71205-39-8
NIA001 \$14.50/\$13.75

SONETOJ, Marie UNDER. Trans. Hilda DRESEN. New edition of a sonnet collection by an important Estonian poet. 1988, 62p. Paper. Brazil.
SON006 \$4.75/\$4.70

VIVO DE LANTI, E. BORSBOOM. A biography of the founder of SAT, the Esperanto World Non-nationalist Association. 1976, 273p. Paper. Ill. France.
VIV002 \$18.25/\$17.35

VOJAĜO AL DISIĜO, Spomenka ŠTIMEC. Short stories by one of Esperanto's most acclaimed new writers. Several of the stories were prize winners. 1990, 91p. Paper. Hungary. ISBN 963 571 106 9
VOJ007 \$8.95/\$8.50

VUALO DE L'TEMPO, LA, J.H. SULLIVAN. 20 short stories by an English Esperantist. 1983, 116p. Paper. Belgium-Spain. ISBN 90 6336 028 2
VUA001 \$8.00/\$7.60

