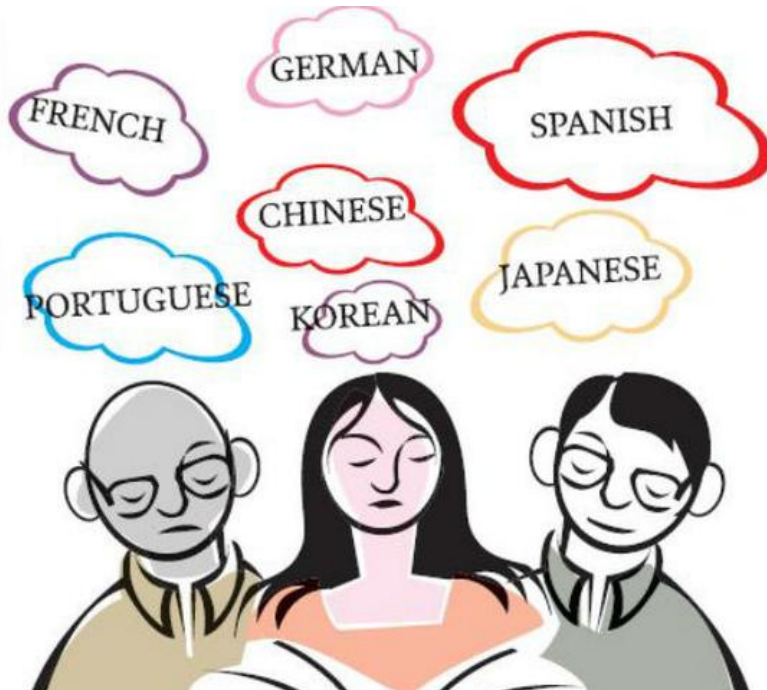


Bengaluru, February 19, 2016

Foreign language takers drop, but BU centre optimistic

• Staff Reporter



Uncertainty over the university's trifurcation last June said to have hit intake

The Centre for Global Languages, Bangalore University, which recorded a 20 per cent slump in student enrolment last year, hopes that the State government's interest in attracting foreign investors will see their classes full again.

For the 2015-2016 academic year, 351 students enrolled with the department for various language courses. In 2014-15, the number was 441.

Even French, the second most popular language, has seen a drop from 105 students to 73. Sources in the university attribute this to the uncertainty over the BU trifurcation issue last June, the time of admissions.

German, however, continues to remain a popular subject with the student strength averaging at 105 in the last three years.

Link with jobs

According to teachers, interest in foreign language is linked to job opportunities. Srividya Ananthapadmanabhan, Head of Education at Sakuraa Nihongo Resource Centre, a Japanese language school, said there are many such job opportunities in software and logistic companies.

"Many students, particularly from Tier II cities, take these courses and pass the Japanese language proficiency test as the grammar and language construction of Japanese is similar to their mother tongue (Kannada), and they can pick up the language quickly," she said. She added that many who work with Japanese companies too learn the language if they have to travel to the country for on-site projects.

The Centre for Global Languages offers four levels of language training of 160 hours each in 11 languages, and also has an M.A. programme in Japanese and a PhD in French. Anticipating the need for formal learning, the centre plans to start M.A. programmes in Spanish and German from the 2016 and 2017 academic years.

No takers for Finnish, Arabic

Jyothi Venkatesh, coordinator of the Centre for Global Languages, told *The Hindu* that the demand for foreign language courses is usually directly proportional to the job opportunities available. For instance, Finnish was a very popular course but with the decline of the Finland-based Nokia, the number of students opting for the language has dropped, she said. There were no takers for the subject this year. Other languages that have no takers are Russian, Arabic and Italian. Among the European languages, there is demand for Portuguese but the centre has no teachers.

A peek into Japanese culture

The 2016 instalment of the annual Indo-Japanese cultural programme, Japan Habba, will take place at the Jnana Jyothi auditorium at Central College campus on Sunday. Apart from the popular Japanese tea ceremony, the day-long event will see dance performances, sale of old Japanese books, a display of traditional games and, of course, good food. The Habba is conducted by Bangalore University in association with the Japanese consulate and other partners. The theme of the programme is Chochin (Japanese lantern). Meanwhile, on February 28, the Centre for Global Languages, BU, in association with the Karnataka State Higher Education Council will conduct an international

language fair where foreign students from different colleges in the city will participate.

The popular, and the not so popular

| Language | 2015-2016 | 2014-2015 | 2013-2014 |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| French | 73 | 105 | 94 |
| German | 106 | 104 | 107 |
| Spanish | 61 | 66 | 74 |
| Japanese | 61 | 76 | 72 |
| Chinese | 33 | 46 | 34 |
| Korean | 17 | 24 | 22 |
| Portuguese | - | 20 | - |
| Total | 351 | 441 | 403 |
