

Become bilingual for kisses

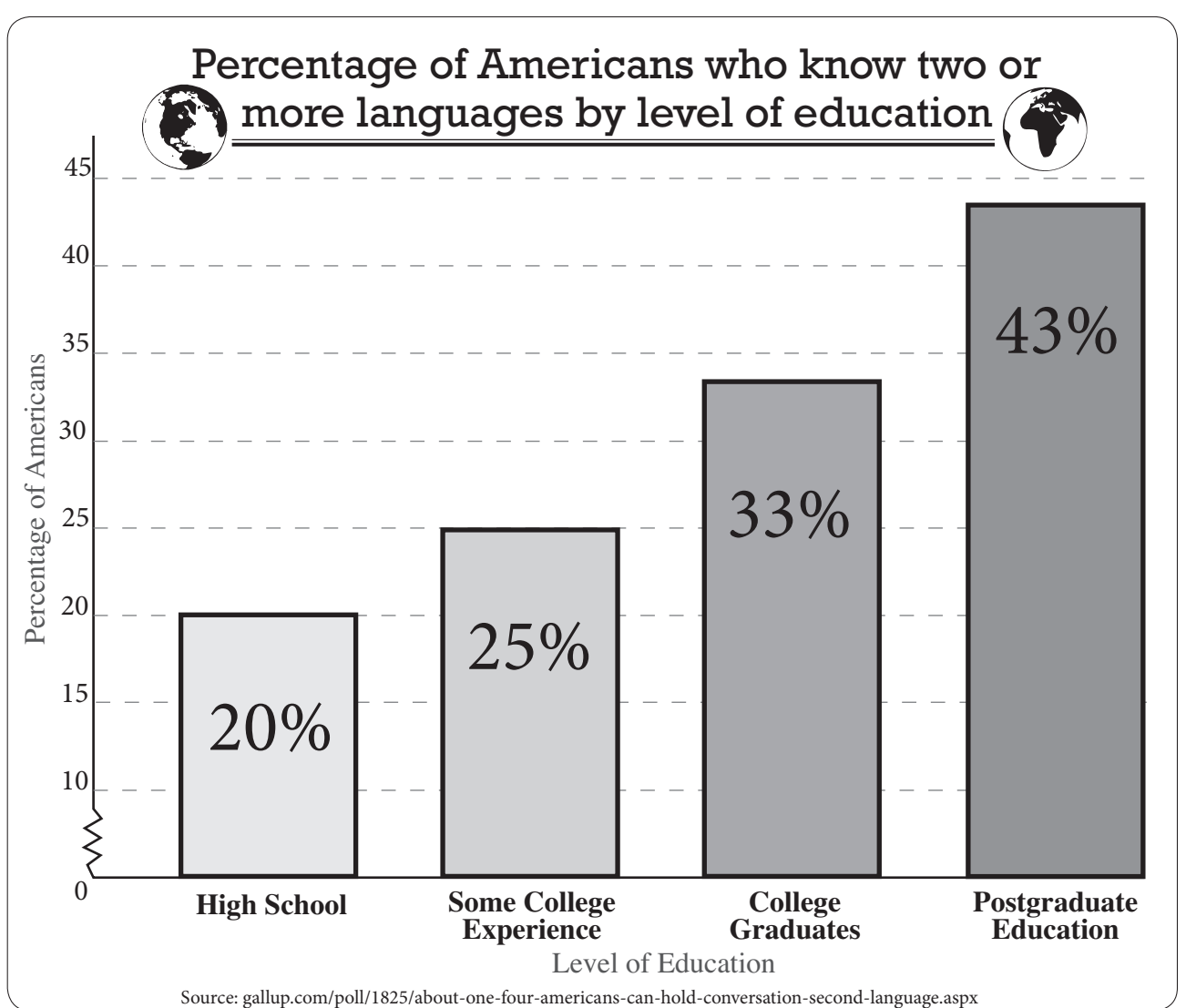


Bill Townsend

I just wanted to get French kissed. No, it's not what you're probably thinking. I'm not talking about a kiss with tongue, just a normal kiss. You see, I had happened to be fortunate enough to score a date with a French girl who was way out of my league. There was just one problem with our date — she couldn't speak English well, and let's just say my French wasn't so "parfait." Because we couldn't say much, we got significantly better at charades the longer the date went. Honestly, she probably didn't fully understand me when I said, "You want to go out on a date?" More likely she picked it up as me asking her if she wanted to hang out on a certain day or time. No matter the case, I hoped the girl fully was aware of why she sat there in the small café.

As we continued to struggle with our communication, she tried her best to ask if I could speak Spanish or German. Sadly, I told her no. So with no real way to connect, I soon asked for the check and the date was finished. I look back at that moment and realize I lost a great opportunity to have a wonderful time with someone because I wasn't bilingual. It's one thing to never have been forced to learn another language, and it's another to be stuck in a situation where you need to know it. This moment goes to show how much we can miss by not being able to properly communicate in a language other than English.

As Truman students, and as United States citizens, we generally only speak English. After all, we live in such a big country that mainly focuses on one language. So why would we ever need to learn a second one? Is it really a necessary task you need to adhere to? Many of us acknowledge it's bad not to know at least two languages. Yet, they still make no attempt to learn. Arguably, it's because this country is closed off to a lot of foreign language exposure. However, in a growing international world where relationships with foreign countries are becoming more important, many of us still don't give an effort to learn something other than English. This aspect of our culture puts us at a disadvantage for the future global market that is becoming more dominant.



English is not the most spoken language in the world, it's Mandarin Chinese. Furthermore, there are more people with Chinese and Spanish as their first language than English. As China becomes more of an economic powerhouse, Chinese soon could become very crucial to know. Every day, more and more Hispanics come into the United States, many of whom cannot speak English very well. This means more Hispanics in schools, the work force, clients, etc. This can reach a broad spectrum of fields, including healthcare, lawyers, politics, factory employers, etc. All of this change is occurring right before us, and yet our country still is sitting with its eyes closed as though it's sleeping.

Our language barrier even could affect our insight on a global scale. For example, the European Union, as a collective unit, is the world's largest economy. The vast majority of these countries within the E.U. think change can happen and hope exists in the future for the organization.

However, one country that strongly feels different about the E.U. is Great Britain. In fact, anyone with a slight bit of knowledge concerning the E.U. would tell you England has a different point of view of how well the organization is doing. As U.S. citizens, what are we more likely to read? A Spanish article that has an optimistic message in its media about the E.U. — that not very many of us can read — or a British article that's pessimistic, but in English? The point is one only can imagine how much information the general U.S. public lacks because it only has access to the insights of world affairs that are presented in English.

I'm writing about this because as Truman students, we should be aware the job market is slowly changing and developing each year. With every passing day there is more competition to get hired for a great job. Knowing that, understand there is no doubt that a demand for bilingual workers is growing. Not many of us stress foreign language enough, and my hope is you consider studying a foreign language a little more. It's easy to take a language class at Truman, and if you choose to take your studies further, studying abroad in a country that speaks that language can provide a challenging, yet rewarding, adventure.

If you aren't sold by the aforementioned reasons to pick up a second language, do it for the experience of getting to learn more about the world. The distinct differences in all of our languages hinders us from truly understanding one another. It's crazy, but the different views you discover could change everything you see about your life and the world around you.

Oh, and to go back to my story, I didn't end up learning French. Which might mean I will never get my much-desired French kiss. Instead, I decided to learn Spanish. But hey, I hear the tequila kisses in South America aren't too bad!

Bill Townsend is a senior economics and English major from Monett, Mo.

Halloween deserves an entire month



UmmeKulsoom Arif

It's almost Halloween and the costume hunts are in full swing. Candy fills the store aisles, from pumpkin-shaped peanut butter cups to highlighter-orange colored chocolates and cream filling, and carved pumpkins and fake spiderwebs are appearing on porches. The spooky spirit readily is infecting everyone — including the Christmas decorations.

Three aisles away from the delicious Halloween candy, there is a 3-foot-tall statue of Santa Claus grinning at customers, waiting for just the right moment to release a mechanical screech and a laugh worthy of a haunted house before launching

into a horrifying dance accompanied by Christmas music. Across the aisle are the "Elf on a Shelf" dolls, sitting and staring with glassy eyes and gleeful grins, waiting to come to life as soon as you turn your back. Two shelves above those evil elves is a display of ornaments, from sparkly red letters to Santa Claus sitting on a miniature house.

It might only be October, month of the spookiest pumpkins, but Yuletide cheer is on its way. It has started with holiday flavored creamers — white chocolate and peppermint, raspberry and peppermint, and just plain old peppermint, sexy elf and Mrs. Claus costumes for Halloween, and racks of holiday sweaters ready for sale. And Halloween hasn't arrived yet.

Let's talk about how much of a travesty this is. Halloween is the greatest holiday for young and old alike. It doesn't involve getting up at the crack of dawn because a small child managed to pick the lock to your bedroom and now is jumping on your chest while your ribs break. It involves holding said small child's

hand and going on a walk in chilly-but-not-quite-freezing weather to collect candy for yourself and for the small child who later will be more than willing to share those sweets. It doesn't involve driving hours in bad traffic and poor weather to see family you don't really like.

It involves staying home with your friends and drinking apple cider while gorging yourself on chocolates you solicited from your neighbors. It doesn't involve gross and humiliating ugly holiday sweater contests. It involves dressing up like a Pokémon or a Disney Princess or a vampire — non-sparkly, of course — that you bought or made yourself, a testament to creativity and dedication.

During Halloween, it's perfectly OK to wear your finest clothes and carry a double-sided axe while claiming to be an IRS agent, or planning to dress as a super-sexy quesadilla — though some plans fall through — and on what other holiday are you going to be able to get free candy from strangers?

Christmas might have ice skating, but Halloween has haunted houses

and costumed flash mobs, and those two activities are safer than bladed shoes. Let's not forget the weather either — the weather outside rarely is frightful and the bonfire has delightful s'mores.

I can cut Christmas some slack for giving us nearly a month off of school — though I credit New Year's for that too — but Halloween deserves to have at least the entire month of October dedicated to it. No Thanksgiving merchandise, no singing Santa Claus statues, no plush turkeys and definitely no ornaments — not until Nov. 1. And not a moment sooner, thank you very much. No other holiday is as creative, grateful or generous as Halloween — let's not forget that.

UmmeKulsoom Arif is a junior creative writing and justice systems major from St. Louis, Mo.

AROUND THE QUAD

How are you celebrating Halloween?

I'm going to my friend's dorm to pass out candy to kids.

Renee Baharaeen
Junior



I'm going to a costume party.

Jordan Reed
Senior



I'm going to a party through Campus Christian Fellowship.

Tiffany Tubbs
Junior



I'm working the trick-or-treat for UNICEF.

Brandon Bolte
Senior

