

Cambridge
Public Policy

SRI

The value of Languages



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

The value of Languages

Ideas for a UK Strategy for languages

A report of a workshop held in Cambridge in October 2015 to discuss current deficiencies in UK language policy, to put forward proposals to address these, and to illustrate the strategic value of languages. Representatives from government departments and bodies included: Ministry of Defence, UK Trade and Investment, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Ofsted and the devolved administrations.

Cambridge
Public Policy

SRI

Executive Summary

A UK Strategy for Languages

A successful UK strategy for languages is one where the full contribution of languages to the UK economy and society is realized. Central are questions of prosperity and well-being; international relations, diplomacy, security and defence; education and training; identity and social cohesion.

- Since language issues are central to many key issues for the UK today, a cross-government approach is essential
- Education policy for languages must be grounded in national priorities and promote a cultural shift in the attitude towards languages
- Language policy must be underpinned by organizational cultural change
- Champions for languages both within and outside government are vital

What concerns are there now?

- Decline of languages and language learning in the UK from schools through to higher education
- Business lost to UK companies through lack of language skills
- The UK's 'soft power' and effectiveness in conflict and matters of national security is limited by a shortage of speakers of strategically important languages
- The UK is under-represented internationally, for instance in the EU civil service or in the translating and interpreting departments of the UN
- The community and heritage languages spoken in the UK are at times undervalued

What are the benefits of a UK Strategy for Languages?

- UK businesses can participate fully in the global market place using the language and communication skills of their workforce
- The UK is able to maximize its role and authority in foreign policy through language and diplomacy
- Educational attainment in a wide range of languages brings with it personal cognitive benefits as well as the 'cultural agility' vital to international relations and development
- Languages enhance the cultural capital and social cohesion of the different communities of the UK

Contents

Executive Summary	3
Background and Context	5
Part 1: Benefits of a UK Strategy for Languages	6
GOAL I: UK businesses are able to participate fully in the global market place using the language and communication skills of their workforce	7
Case Study: The Value-Added Recruit	8
Case Study: The value of language skills to SMEs	10
GOAL II: The UK is able to maximize its role and authority in diplomacy, security and defence	12
Case Study: Counter-Terrorism and MOD	14
Case Study: The Value of Languages in GCHQ	15
GOAL III: Educational attainment in a wide range of languages is supported and encouraged.	16
Case Study: Mapping infectious diseases – science and languages working in partnership	18
Case Study: Language learning as transformative – the experience of a Cambridge medical student.	19
GOAL IV: Languages enhance the cultural capital and social cohesion within England and the devolved administrations of the UK.	20
Case Study: Language and Conflict Resolution in Northern Ireland.	21
Part 2: Facilitating and Delivering a UK Strategy for Languages	22
Cross-government approach	23
Organizational culture change	24
Education and training	24
Communications and public campaign.	26
Research on multilingualism and language learning	26
Future action	27
Workshop Participants.	28

Background and Context

The role and contribution of language to the UK economy and society is both rich and varied. It stretches from enabling economic growth and prosperity through the language and communication skills required to enable UK business to participate in the global market place; to the ‘soft power’ and diplomatic skills through which the UK’s role and authority in foreign policy is manifested; to enhancing the cultural capital, educational attainment and social cohesion within England and the devolved communities of the UK both now and in the future.

Several policy documents have recently addressed UK language policy such as *Languages: The State of the Nation*¹, *Global Futures in Wales*², a *Scots Language Policy*³ and an Ofsted report on *Key Stage 3: the wasted years?*⁴, which highlights concerns regarding the level of achievement in modern foreign languages.

A workshop and discussions held in Cambridge in October 2015 discussed mapping where responsibility for language sits within government, in order to encourage dialogue between different government departments and with researchers, to promote the value of languages nationally. Language policy is not just restricted to foreign language learning, but deals with key strategic issues for the UK today and in the future: national security, diplomacy and conflict resolution, community and social cohesion, migration and identity. Indeed, speakers and representatives from government came from a range of departments including Ministry of Defence, UK Trade and Investment, Department for Education, HEFCE, GCHQ, Education Scotland, Welsh Government, Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure Northern Ireland, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and Ofsted.

The overarching goal of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages (APPG), chaired by Nia Griffith MP and co-chaired by Baroness Coussins, is to achieve a coherent, cross-departmental strategy for languages. In its 2014 ‘Manifesto for Languages’ circulated before the last general election, the Group highlighted the need for a ‘National Languages Recovery Programme’ to address the decline of languages and language learning in the UK and its cost to the UK economy and society. Citing cases such as the loss of language departments and degree courses in the UK, the lack of native English speakers in the EU civil service and in translating and interpreting departments of the UN, and serious issues arising from inadequate language services in the criminal justice system and healthcare, the Group propose an audit of language skills across the UK civil service and a step change in policy to make commitments towards improving school language learning; a wider recognition of linguists and language skills; wider participation of schoolchildren in language learning; encouragement of the involvement of business and employers including tax breaks and other incentives to train and recruit home-grown linguists; and a commitment of languages in the UK university sector.

1. http://www.britac.ac.uk/policy/state_of_the_nation_2013.cfm

2. <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/global-futures-a-plan-to-improve-and-promote-modern-foreign-languages-in-wales/?lang=en>

3. http://www.creativescotland.com/___data/assets/pdf_file/0018/31590/Scots-Language-Policy-June-2015.pdf

4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-3-the-wasted-years>

Part 1: Benefits of a UK Strategy for Languages

- i. UK businesses are able to participate fully in the global market place using the language and communication skills of their workforce
- ii. The UK is able to maximize its role and authority in diplomacy, security and defence
- iii. Educational attainment in a wide range of languages is supported and encouraged
- iv. Languages enhance the cultural capital and social cohesion within England and the devolved administrations of the UK

GOAL I:

UK businesses are able to participate fully in the global market place using the language and communication skills of their workforce

We know from the *Born Global*⁵ research project that employers view languages as a ‘value-added skill’, employers gain from the linguistic skills of modern languages graduates but also from the ‘cultural agility’ which comes from knowing other languages and cultures. These skills are also applied in a range of occupations.

Language skills in business include both speaking additional languages and having good English language skills. Modern recruits need to be flexible, mobile, have more than one language and possess cultural agility. Research shows that British candidates for jobs often lack these skills compared to their international peers.

UK Trade and Investment has a group of culture and language advisers who deal with company requirements in their regions, assisting with exports and supporting small to medium enterprises (SMEs), who wish to break into international markets. Experience in this environment suggests that businesses underestimate the importance of language and cultural skills, whether in negotiating with potential international partners or even translating websites. A current scheme exists whereby postgraduates offer language help to businesses. One of the difficulties in making the case for languages here lies in explicitly quantifying the business lost to UK companies through lack of language skills, although some work is doing just that⁶.

A UK national languages strategy should ensure businesses are able to communicate what they are looking for in language skills, such as through case studies, in order for education policy (including higher and further education and apprentice training) to support the development of the skills required for modern recruits. Languages could be included in the new government-supported apprenticeship schemes.

In its report, *Language Matters*, the British Academy (2009) highlighted the lack of foreign language skills amongst UK (born and educated) researchers, which limits the career opportunities available to researchers as part of collaborative research groups and may damage UK research scholarship through its inability to contribute to international projects, and win competitive international research funding.

5. British Academy, *Born Global – Rethinking Language Policy for 21st Century Britain*

6. See, for instance, the report produced by Professor James Foreman-Peck: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-costs-to-the-uk-of-language-deficiencies-as-a-barrier-to-uk-engagement-in-exporting>

Key Points

Where we are now

- British candidates for jobs lack additional language skills and cultural agility compared to international peers
- Businesses underestimate the importance of cultural and language skills
- Emerging quantitative evidence of business lost to UK companies through lack of language skills

How to improve

- Language strategy makes the link between education and the skills required by businesses
- Education policy supports skill requirements of the modern recruit
- Include languages in new apprenticeship schemes

GOAL II:

The UK is able to maximize its role and authority in diplomacy, security and defence

The relevance of 'soft power' and language skills as part of UK cultural assets in the world today has been highlighted by a recent House of Lords select committee⁹. The committee reported that the UK capacity to 'build connections is constrained by the small number of its citizens who are able to speak foreign languages', which is relevant to the influence and engagement required in modern international relations (paragraph 225).

In its work around the subject of conflict, stability and security, a report from the British Academy references the declining interest and investment in language and area studies, in the UK and other Western countries, adding to problems in conflict areas such as Afghanistan, by "ensuring that the pool of expertise and access to 'deep' knowledge about countries in conflict have become limited". Such knowledge provides historical and cultural contextualization, which is important in post-conflict state-building efforts¹⁰.

The crucial role of language and cultural understanding in the work of the armed forces was brought home in recent experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan. Since these conflicts, the military has sought to implement language skills training¹¹ throughout its organizations, as a core competence, as directed by the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff (VCDS).

The Defence Requirements Authority for Culture and Languages (DRACL) is the single point of contact for Culture and Languages related issues. This organization follows the Defence Systems Approach to Training (DSAT) to ensure thorough analysis, design, delivery and evaluation of language education. DRACL is the custodian of Culture and Language information and standards and uses the NATO STANAG Ed 4 as the basis for their assessments. DRACL's responsibilities cover Foreign Language Training (FLT), English Language Training (ELT) and Cultural Training (Cul) within the MOD. The importance and utility of Languages on Operations can be seen by the Joint Doctrine Note 1/13 'Linguistic Support to Operations'.

Language examination results are recorded as a competence, current for three years, which can be utilized, at short-notice, for operations or urgent tasks. DRACL administer a language award scheme to promote and incentivize MOD personnel to undertake language examinations. These cover a spectrum of one-off payments from £360 for a lower level western European language to £11,700 (including a daily rate of pay for actual use) for a high level, operationally vital linguist. This scheme has been very successful in persuading MOD personnel to declare their language skills, and to attend the exam, to a point where two thirds of the MOD Language Capability does not need expensive residential courses.

Effective communication is important for the successful application of military and diplomatic skills, and through the 'Whole Force Concept', language skills are identified from heritage speakers, second language speakers and linguists. These can be tested through the MOD language examinations, run by DRACL. Currently MOD language training is conducted through the Defence Centre for Language and Culture (DCLC), which opened in 2014. Students are trained to NATO standards across four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Students are able to train for up to two years, including cultural skills and time spent in the appropriate country. Core languages taught by MOD personnel and contractors are: Arabic, Dari, Farsi, French, Pashto, Russian, Spanish and English as a foreign language. These language courses are currently being re-designed to focus on employment skills and task-based learning.

The Culture Capability framework is split into three levels of aptitude; Awareness, Competent and Expert. Cultural training is still in embryonic form but is developing fast. As well as the cultural skills included in the residential courses at DCLC there are also two culturally specific courses to allow MOD personnel to attain the Cultural Competent and Expert levels.

The Army has instituted a Language Policy in order to change organizationally how language is perceived. Currently, any sub-unit command must have a basic language skill. The Army is now funding around 2,500 soldiers a year to get a basic language skill at the equivalent of CEFR A2 level and it is hoped that this proactive approach will be adopted by other forces.

Key Points

Where we are now

- The small number of UK citizens who speak foreign languages is reducing our 'soft power'
- Pool of expertise and deep cultural knowledge of conflict areas is limited
- Shortage of skills in strategically important languages e.g. Mandarin, Russian, Arabic

How to improve

- By visiting schools and engaging with professional bodies for linguists GCHQ is making efforts to strengthen language skills
- The Ministry of Defence (MOD) and armed forces are taking steps to implement language skills training as a core competence through the 'Whole Force Concept'
- Both MOD and GCHQ offer training courses and incentives to its workforce to encourage language skill development

9. House of Lords Select Committee on Soft Power and the UK's Influence (2014) Persuasion and Power in the Modern World.

10. Mats Berdal (2015) Afghanistan and After – Reflections on Western Interventionism and State Fragility in the post-Cold War Era in Rethinking State Fragility (London, British Academy) p. 15.

11. Although the term Language 'education' is more accurate, the military use the term 'training' for both training and education

GOAL III: Educational attainment in a wide range of languages is supported and encouraged

It is encouraging that the Department for Education has put a language in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc)¹² as a core subject alongside English, mathematics, science, computer science and history or geography. However, a broader cultural change is required in order to help schools deliver an education strategy for languages that changes the mind-set that the UK is 'bad' at languages and also that languages can only be learnt by educational high achievers.

Language policy has not traditionally been high on the agenda of universities, despite widespread internationalization strategies. Data for A-level entries for modern languages shows decreasing numbers for French and German, although an increase for Spanish and other languages. The British Academy Report, *Language Matters*, highlighted the decline in UK researchers in languages and area studies with adverse consequences for securing future research funding in these areas, and the detrimental effect on securing research funding for the UK into global challenges such as security, terrorism and international crime, within which language and area studies play an important part (p. 2).

There are some encouraging moves. Modern languages and related area studies are considered to be subjects that are both strategically important and vulnerable by HEFCE (alongside STEM and quantitative social science). Through Routes into Languages (2006-2016) universities have been active at collaborating with, and making the case for, languages in schools. Increased take-up of institution-wide language programmes in universities is evidence of impact.

In a significant step, University College London (UCL) decided to make a GCSE or equivalent in a foreign language compulsory for all entrants; students without such a qualification are required to obtain one once they are enrolled. Possible conflict with university access policies needs to be overcome in order to extend this requirement to other universities.

At the same time, the study of languages within degree programmes is declining. This is important because it is here that the higher skill in language proficiency and cross-cultural agility are achieved, as well as deeper cultural and societal aspects of language learning.

The message about the value of languages has to be put forward to influencers (head teachers, parents, peers) earlier in pupils' lives in order to make languages more valued when subject choices are made. The experience of *Routes into Languages*¹³ or the employment of student ambassadors in schools has shown that a positive experience of language learning can generate huge enthusiasm. However, it is vital that such changes in attitude translate into increased take-up of languages at GCSE and A-level, where currently negative factors such as availability of languages, timetable issues, poor teaching, and league table pressures often outweigh positive considerations.

12. The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is a performance measure for schools, awarded when students secure a grade C or above at GCSE level across a core of five academic subjects.

13. Funding for Routes into Languages will cease in summer 2016 after which the collaborative spirit of HE working to promote languages in schools is likely to decline.

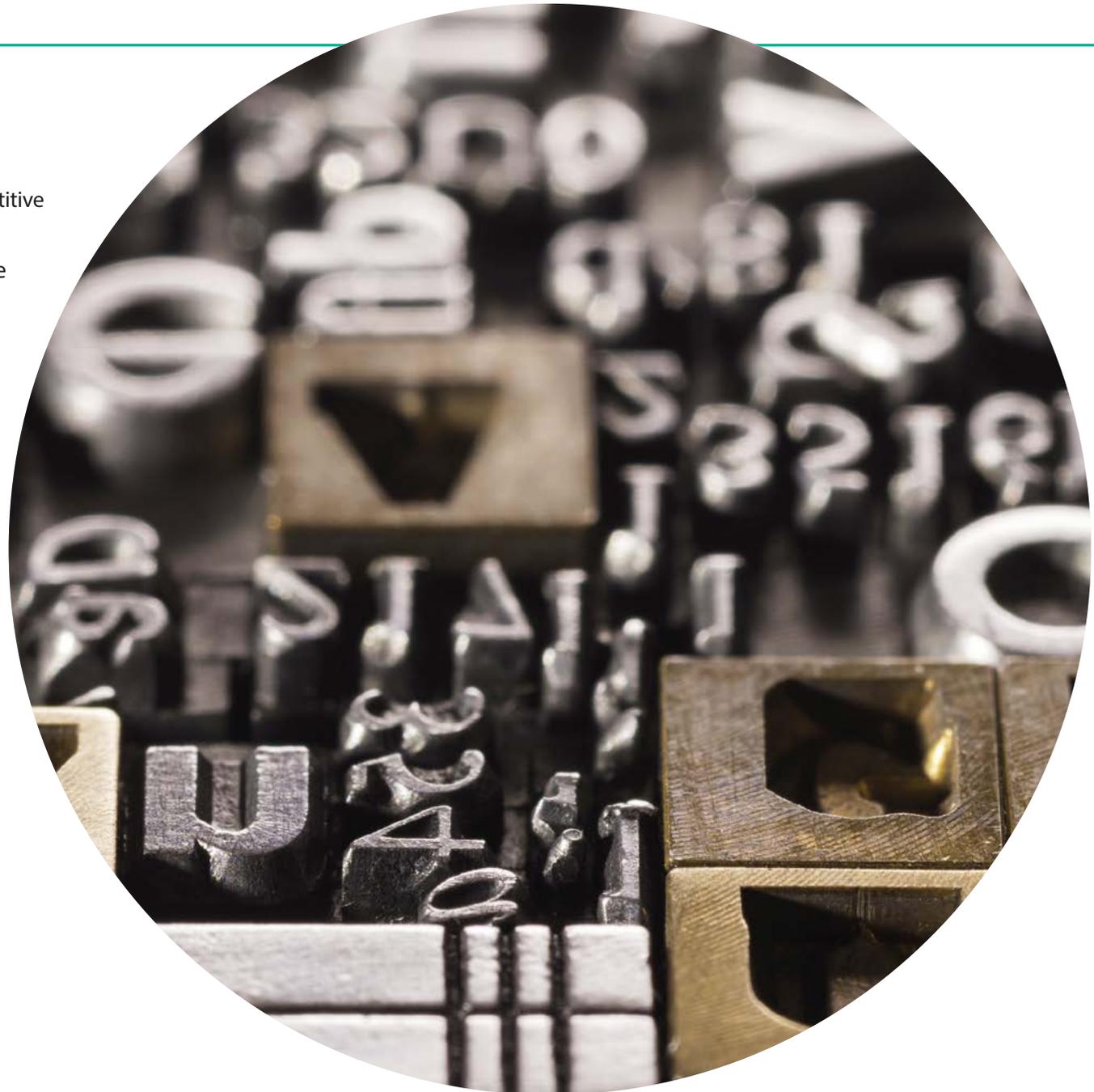
Key Points

Where we are now

- Graduates who offer only English are at a competitive disadvantage to their multilingual peers
- British graduates often have limited experience of life outside the UK
- Study of languages within degree programmes is declining and there is low take-up of languages at GCSE and A-level

How to improve

- Increase number of young people learning languages in formal education and widen range of languages offered
- Modern languages community defines what is distinctive about learning languages and the benefits to individual employers and society from learning languages
- Use role models, ambassadors to encourage positive experience of language learning
- Ensure languages feature in any measurement of attainment for schools and colleges



Case Study: Language learning as transformative – the experience of a Cambridge medical student

Jocelyn Wyburd, Director, The Language Centre, University of Cambridge

At the University of Cambridge, students and staff of any discipline can take language courses in the University's Language Centre or, where appropriate, the Engineering Department's Language Unit. These courses are taken by some 1850 learners annually, of whom c. 54% come from STEM disciplines. Why? Employability is one big motivator, as scientists increasingly compete for jobs in global organizations with peers who are multilingual, especially as English-medium instruction abounds in other countries and English becomes the dominant medium for publication of scientific research outputs. But the experience of one medical student who took a Spanish course in the Language Centre before engaging in intensive Spanish learning in rural Guatemala during the summer demonstrates how language learning by scientists can achieve so much more.

On his return, he wrote: "As an aspiring doctor, I have always had a desire to work in the developing world. I have my heart set on spending a significant part of my career in Latin America; to me, it is a region of the world that perhaps falls into the shadow of Africa and thus is often neglected. Too often, foreign aid fails to acknowledge and understand the local culture and language. Medical knowledge alone is no good; understanding the local beliefs and having the ability to liaise with local communities is equally, if not more, important. I came out here with the intention of developing my Spanish so that one day I could return, as a doctor, to help the people of Latin America. With much time to learn and reflect on my travels, however, I realized that this is no longer what I want. I do not just want to be another foreign aid doctor, trying to save as many lives as I can with my own hands. This was the most important lesson I learnt; the people of Guatemala do not want foreigners to come in and pretend they know what is best for their country. Their culture is too proud to want a handout; I learnt that in order to create a sustainable difference to Latin America, one must work to empower local change makers.

Instead of trying to help whomever I can with my own hands, I should help train and motivate Guatemalan doctors, nurses and community health workers. I should liaise with governments to improve their policies and public health initiatives. My time in San Pedro showed me that Latin America does not need another foreign aid doctor; it needs an opportunity to develop. It has convinced me to pursue a career in global health and advocacy, to help strengthen the healthcare systems of Central and South America. And for that, the ability to communicate in Spanish is not merely helpful, it is crucial. My time in Guatemala has transformed my career aspirations, and fuelled a real drive in me to make a sustainable difference."

GOAL IV:

Languages enhance the cultural capital and social cohesion within England and the devolved administrations of the UK

The devolved administrations have given greater priority to language strategy.

Creative Scotland has recently published a language policy for Scots. The Scottish government has adopted the EU 1+2 model, which requires the teaching of the first foreign language right through primary school and into secondary across a ten year span, and the teaching of a second foreign language to be introduced from Primary Year 5 at the latest.

Primary teachers in Scotland are being trained in order to implement the policy and a plan enhances transition from primary to secondary school. Work is also done with heritage language speakers and new refugees.

In 2011 the Welsh government published *Supporting Triple Literacy*, which offered guidance to schools teaching languages at KS2 and KS3. The *Language Trends survey for Wales* (2015) drew attention to low language uptake at KS4, and identified languages not being valued by pupils and parents as well as the advantages of existing bilingualism not being exploited for additional language learning. A common complaint is option blocks and competing subjects to languages. New policies outlined in *Global Futures* (the Welsh government's "Improving and Promoting Modern Foreign Languages Plan") are aiming towards 'Bilingual plus 1' with formal teaching of a modern foreign language from year 5 onwards. Centres of Excellence have been established in Wales and a mentoring scheme whereby final-year undergraduates mentor year 9 pupils. The use of digital technologies is being explored in order to improve the teaching and delivery of modern languages.

In Northern Ireland, language policy has been developed within the context of a fractured community and conflicting perceptions of identity, and the heritage languages of the two major ethnic communities are treated as a separate political issue to that of modern foreign languages. There is currently no legislation for an Irish Language Act, although this was referenced in the St Andrews Agreement of 2006; it may still be a possibility in the future. The Liofa initiative aims to make 20,000 people fluent in Irish by 2015, and an area in West Belfast has been designated as a Gaeltacht (i.e. Irish-speaking) area.

Key Points

Where we are now

- Scotland and Wales have both developed language plans, which include enhanced formal teaching of modern languages through primary and secondary school
- These policies are informed by the EU policy for competence in three languages (mother tongue + 2)
- Policies are being developed to promote the indigenous languages of the UK

How to improve

- Acknowledge structural barriers to maintaining language teaching in schools such as transition to secondary school and restrictive option blocks and try and overcome them
- Begin language education early in primary school and invest in teacher training
- Recognize and support enhanced skills associated with bilingual children
- Make use of digital technologies to improve teaching and delivery of modern languages

Part 2: Facilitating and Delivering a UK Strategy for Languages

- i. Cross-government approach
- ii. Organizational culture change
- iii. Education and training
- iv. Communications and public campaign
- v. Research on multilingualism and language learning

i. Cross-government approach

Key Points

- National strategy for languages to cut across departments in order to support Department for Education to deliver effective education policy around languages
- Build on existing Cross-Whitehall Language Focus Group with Cabinet Office leadership and effective ministerial support
- Involve department such as BIS, DCLG and devolved administrations as well as external bodies in national strategy for languages

Since language issues are central to many of the key issues for the UK in the twenty-first century, responsibility for language policy cannot be a matter solely for the Department of Education. Rather, a national strategy for languages must cut across departmental interests and thereby support the Department for Education in delivering an education policy grounded in national priorities and promoting a cultural shift in the attitude towards languages.

There is a pressing need to broaden cross-departmental cooperation on language policy, building on the existing Cross-Whitehall Language Focus Group. This group is limited in what it can achieve and requires enhancements to engage more in strategic decisions.

The following developments would be welcomed:

- first, an effective leader, possibly from the Cabinet Office, who would be able to coordinate across departments;
- second, effective ministerial support (such as a Minister for Languages) in order to engage with other ministers and departments; for example, in Wales the First Minister is responsible for the Welsh language;
- third, external or networking leadership, in a role akin to the Government Chief Scientist, who could organize campaigns and mobilize executive support for coordination on languages policy. Such a role would require targets, resources and authority in order to be able to recommend operational decisions.

In order to provide support for this structure and decision-making body, a mapping exercise across government should be carried out in order to identify the respective need for action.

The current Cross-Whitehall Language Focus Group could be expanded to include departments such as BIS, DCLG and to have appropriate working groups to ensure protection of classified issues. Working groups could also include DfE, HEFCE, Ofsted, and the devolved administrations in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, as well as bodies such as the British Council and the British Academy, which have expertise and interest in these issues.

ii. Organizational culture change

Key Points

- Use examples such as the Armed Forces and Metropolitan Police to promote organizational culture change in other sectors
- Include efforts by GCHQ to strengthen language skills amongst its recruits, and measures to help professionalize its linguist workforce
- Encourage and reward language training amongst employees
- Recognize positive contribution language skills and linguists can make to business

For the promotion of languages to be successful nationally, it must be accompanied and underpinned by organizational culture change.

Two examples of how this is already working well come from the Armed Forces, as we have already seen, and the Metropolitan Police. The Metropolitan Police are currently running a recruitment campaign, which requires applicants to be able to speak one of 25 languages (in addition to English), ranging from French and German through to Arabic, Farsi, Polish and Yoruba. Its website notes 'Whilst our police officers are able to effectively carry out their duties without the ability to speak a second language, a police constable with this skill is an asset in helping both themselves and their colleagues to more effectively engage with the community and deal with everyday policing situations in our diverse city'.

iii. Education and training

Key Points

- Emphasize distinctive skills and rewards that learning languages brings in order to underpin education and training strategy
- Assist schools to deliver languages strategy that changes current mind-set around languages
- Draw attention to consequences of declining language and area studies in higher education
- Pursue language requirements for higher education admission

Whilst there are positive signs, as detailed below, the overall trend in foreign language learning in UK schools and universities is downward. This contrasts with our EU counterparts who have made efforts to increase requirements for school and university students to learn languages. Without improvements in language take-up in schools and universities, the UK's ability to compete in the global market place will be inhibited.

There are some positive developments in language education policy that seek to reverse this trend. There is now a statutory requirement for a language at Key Stage 2 and the choice of language is not restricted. At Key Stage 3 the curriculum is more humanities-based and the new GCSE and A-level curriculum have a broader and richer cultural content than previously. The UK government has demonstrated its commitment to languages by making them part of the EBacc attainment measure at Key Stage 4. The government's stated aim is for 90% of pupils to achieve the EBacc, but policies need to be put in place to ensure this happens and is supported by parents, teachers and headteachers. This will include making the broader case for studying languages as described here.

There are lessons to be learnt from the devolved administrations on valuing indigenous (and heritage) language speakers. Wales and Scotland are to be applauded for their 2+1 and 1+2 policies, which have been taken up by First Ministers, taking them beyond education policies. Each of the four different governments has its own political agenda and policy for languages. In Scotland, an eight-year programme from 2012-2020 allows time to build support for the policy from primary school teachers.

The value of English language as an asset should be at the heart of language education policy, as well as a positive approach to literacy in more than one language.

Harsh and inconsistent marking was cited as a disincentive for language choice at GCSE and A Level, although there are positive moves here by Ofqual to improve the situation. Concerns about equality of standard between 'learnt' languages and 'heritage' languages are not helpful to the promotion of language qualifications in the UK. There are also concerns that qualifications in several languages have been lost since the *Asset* qualifications were abandoned, meaning there is now no option other than GCSE. It is, however, welcome news that GCSE and A levels in a range of lesser-taught languages are to be retained.

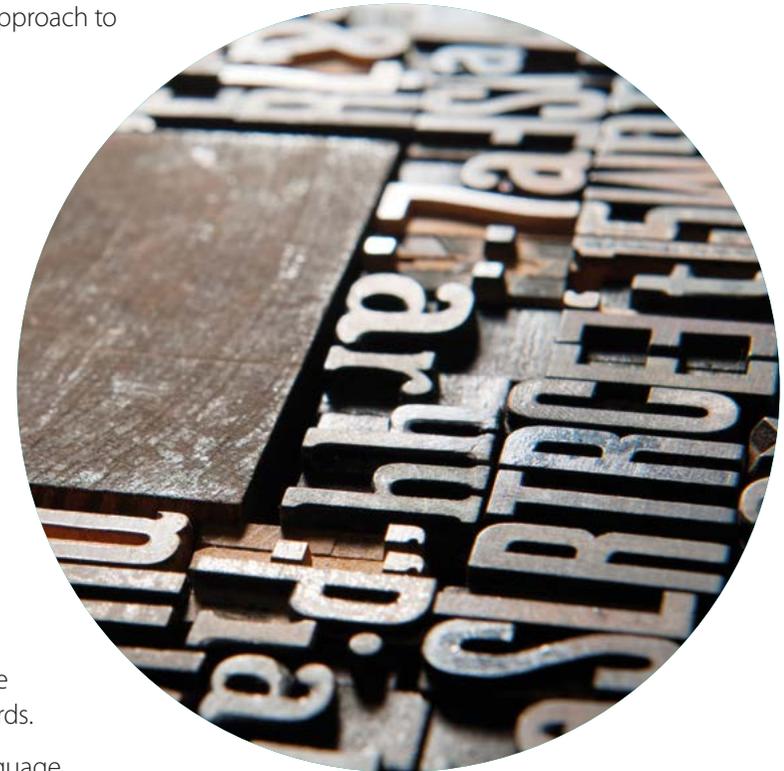
A strategy for education policy in relation to languages should be maintained throughout the school system. In Scotland there is support for language education policy in primary schools. In the recent Ofsted report *Key Stage 3: The Wasted Years?* problems were highlighted in teaching pupils aged 11-14. Quality of provision of teaching needs to be important in Key Stage 3 to ensure students opt to take languages at GCSE. The new Ofsted inspection framework, which requires high performing schools to offer a broad and balanced curriculum should encourage a focus on languages.

There is concern about current levels of teacher supply in languages if an education strategy for languages is to be achieved. There are lower levels of undergraduates studying foreign languages, which leads to teacher shortages, and figures suggest only half of the teacher training places required to deliver the EBacc are filled.

Consistency in language outcomes and assessment standards is needed. Currently, different parts of government use different standards. The Common European Framework could be used to provide consistent assessment and standards.

To encourage language take-up in higher education, HEFCE could introduce incentives such as league tables on language student numbers and attainment.

Measures should be put in place to encourage languages as lifelong learning, for example the British Chamber of Commerce favours tax breaks for firms which invest in language training for employees.



IV. Communications and public campaign

Key Points

- Media campaign to change perceptions about language learning and emphasize the benefits (trade, influence, defence etc.)
- Link findings of the latest language research to public engagement strategy
- Highlight the role of languages in successful careers of high profile figures (business leaders, sportsmen and women, political leaders)

In order to support cultural and organizational change as well as policy change, a media campaign is required to focus on communicating the value of languages in the variety of areas highlighted in this report: for example, the importance of languages for business and trade; soft power, security and defence; cross-cultural understanding and mediation; cognitive performance and career development.

A communications and public campaign should link the findings of language research with a public engagement strategy to change and develop public perceptions about the value of language and the variety of ways in which languages and language learning can contribute to the economy and society. The British Academy has recently highlighted the role of languages in the careers of high profile business leaders, sportsmen and women, political and other public figures. Languages could learn from the contribution of academics who adopt public roles and hence raise the profile of their subject, such as classics (Mary Beard), history (Simon Sharma), physics and astronomy (Brian Cox).

One potentially fruitful avenue to explore in any public campaign would be to work together with colleagues in the STEM subjects who have been successful in establishing them as important with the general public and policy makers.

V. Research on multilingualism and language learning

Key Points

- Research to inform evidence-based policy
- New £4m initiative at Cambridge funded by Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) will study the benefits of multilingualism to individuals and society, and transform attitudes to languages in the UK
- Growing evidence of the cognitive benefits of multilingualism and language learning across the lifespan

There is range of research being conducted in different disciplines demonstrating the value of bi-/multilingualism and language learning. For example, there is increasing evidence from research of the challenges monolingual Anglophones face in communicating in English in lingua franca environments¹⁴.

One of the most exciting current research areas relates to the cognitive benefits of language learning. Strong evidence is now emerging to show the effect of bi-/multilingualism on cognitive functions across the lifespan, in healthy aging and in brain disease. For instance, later onset of dementia in bilinguals has been demonstrated in large studies from three continents (Canada: Bialystok et al 2007; India: Alladi et al 2013; Belgium: Woumans et al 2015)¹⁵. New evidence for the better resilience of a bilingual brain against disease comes from a recent paper showing that bilinguals have a significantly better cognitive recovery after stroke than monolinguals (Alladi et al 2015)¹⁶. Better cognitive functioning in multilinguals has also been found in healthy ageing, again in three continents¹⁷. These advantages are also available to those learning languages; improvement in some cognitive functions such as attention has been demonstrated following intensive language learning)¹⁸.

Future action

- It is vital that we communicate clearly and simply the value of languages for the health of the nation. English is necessary, but not sufficient.
 - The association of language and culture is essential, and is a key factor adding value to language learning.
 - Languages should be for everyone, yet currently 20% of state schools dis-apply children from the statutory requirement from age 13. There is a misapprehension that languages are only for the brightest pupils.
 - Effort should be made to tackle structural barriers to the promotion of modern languages at secondary school such as: timetabling/blocks; poor transition between primary and secondary schools; assessment issues.
 - We must improve communication and schemes and resources for language training. At our meeting a UKTI scheme for postgraduates was not well known, as was the fact that the Erasmus scheme is open not just to linguists in universities.
 - It is important to improve the status of languages and linguists. Whilst there are language bonuses at GCHQ, in the civil service there are not special pay scales for government linguists as there are for government scientists. The self-esteem of bilinguals and community language speakers has to be raised, and they should be encouraged to perceive themselves as linguists. We also need to popularize the importance of languages and linguists, for instance by having a TV champion for languages.
- If languages are considered strategically important and vulnerable, then there needs to be some ring-fencing of funding for this area. Some successful programmes such as Routes into Languages will not be funded in the future.
 - England is lagging behind the situation in Scotland and Wales, where there is an active Minister and more coherent strategy. The case for a designated Minister for Language Policy, perhaps situated in the Cabinet Office should be carefully examined.

14. Hulmbauer, C., Böhringer, H. and Seidlhofer, B. (2008) 'Introducing English as a lingua franca (ELF): Precursor and partner in intercultural communication', *Synergies Europe* 3, pp. 25-36.

15. Bialystok, E. et al. (2007) 'Bilingualism as a protection against the symptoms of dementia', *Neuropsychologia* 45, pp. 459-464; Alladi, S. et al. (2013) 'Bilingualism delays age at onset of dementia [...]', *Neurology* 81, p. 1-7; Woumans, E. et al. (2015) 'Bilingualism delays clinical manifestation of Alzheimer's disease', *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* 18, pp. 568-574.

16. <http://stroke.ahajournals.org/content/early/2015/11/19/STROKEAHA.115.010418.abstract>.

17. For evidence from the UK, see Bak T. H. et al. (2014) 'Does bilingualism influence cognitive aging?', *Annals of neurology* 75(6), pp. 959-963; for Canada, see Bialystok, E. et al. (2004) 'Bilingualism, aging and cognitive control: evidence from the Simon task', *Psychology and aging* 19(2), p. 290; and for Israel, see Kavé, G. et al. (2008) 'Multilingualism and cognitive state in the oldest old', *Psychology and aging* 23(1), p. 70.

18. See, for example, Vega-Mendoza M. et al. (2015) 'The impact of late, non-balanced bilingualism on cognitive performance', *Cognition*. E-pub 14/1/2015 (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25596355>).

Workshop Participants

Co-Chairs

Professor Wendy Ayres-Bennett, Professor of French Philology and Linguistics, University of Cambridge

Baroness Coussins, Co-Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages

Christine Adamson, Ministry of Defence

Linda Allebon, Higher Education Funding Council for England

Professor Catherine Davies, School of Advanced Study, University of London

Ben Earley, Cambridge Centre for Science and Policy, University of Cambridge

Dawn Fahy, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Louise Glen, Education Scotland

Philip Harding-Esch, All Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages and Speak to the Future

David Heath, Welsh Government

Bernardette Holmes, Director, Speak to the Future, Chair of the British Council Languages Liaison Group, Principal Investigator, British Academy Born Global Project

John Hopper, Department for Education

Professor David Howarth, Public Policy Strategic Research Initiative, University of Cambridge

Professor Michael Kelly, LLAS Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies

Head of Language, Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ)

John Madill, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

Professor Nicola McLelland, University of Nottingham

Georgina Norris, Conference administrator

Professor Mícheál Ó Mainnín, Queen's University Belfast

Professor Stephen Parker, University of Manchester

Susannah Poulton, UK Trade and Investment

Cdr Julia Proffitt RN, Director of Defence Centre for Languages and Culture

John Pugsley, Welsh Government

Charlotte Sausman, Public Policy Strategic Research Initiative, University of Cambridge

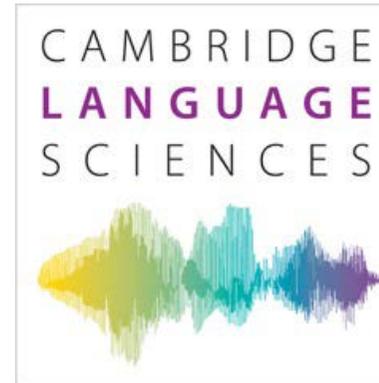
Mark Sims, Ofsted

Professor Nigel Vincent, British Academy

Professor Michael Worton, University College London

Jocelyn Wyburd, University of Cambridge and UCML





**THE CAMPAIGN
FOR LANGUAGES**

UCML
UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
OF MODERN LANGUAGES

CSaP

We are grateful to the following organizations for their support:

- Cambridge Language Sciences SRI
- Cambridge Public Policy SRI
- Centre for Science and Policy (CSaP)
- Speak to the Future, The Campaign for Languages
- UCML University Council of Modern Languages
- Murray Edwards College, University of Cambridge



A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing, consisting of 20 lines.

The Cambridge Public Policy Strategic Research Initiative (SRI) aims to support public policy research across Cambridge University, working with colleagues in science, social science, the arts and humanities, to apply new thinking to public policy problems and promote research and analysis into the public policy process.

For more information, find us at:

www.publicpolicy.cam.ac.uk

 @CamPubPolSRI

Contact the coordinator:

Dr Charlotte Sausman

Research Coordinator, Cambridge Public Policy Strategic Research Initiative
Rm 219, Department of Politics and International Studies (POLIS),
Alison Richard Building, 7 West Road, Cambridge, CB3 9DT

tel: +44 (0)1223 334572

email: cs738@cam.ac.uk



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE