Languages *after* Brexit

How the UK Speaks to the World

editor
MICHAEL KELLY

Languages after Brexit

Michael Kelly
Editor

Languages after Brexit

How the UK Speaks to the World

palgrave
macmillan

Editor
Michael Kelly
Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics
University of Southampton
Southampton, UK

ISBN 978-3-319-65168-2 ISBN 978-3-319-65169-9 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65169-9

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017956098

Cover illustration: Cover design by Fatima Jamadar

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

For Jo

Preface

The UK has always needed people who speak other languages and understand other countries. Now that negotiations to leave the EU have begun, we have more need than ever of such people. Without them, our country will struggle to renegotiate its cultural and commercial relationships with the rest of Europe, and will struggle to build new relationships with other international partners.

Initially, the result of the referendum vote encouraged a spate of public hostility towards languages other than English. If sustained, this would make it more difficult to develop our country's capacity to engage with the wider world, just when we have greatest need. More recently, evidence has emerged that the prospect of Brexit has prompted larger numbers of people to start learning other languages, whether through formal classes or through informal routes. If this continues, it could help to close the gap between our language needs and our capability.

The essays that follow aim to spell out what language capability the UK is likely to need in in the new climate, how well prepared we are and what we can do to be better prepared. There is no area of social life where languages have no impact, and we look at a selection of areas where language needs are a prominent issue. Language capability can take many forms and we focus on the main ways in which language support is provided across the UK. The discussion is designed to respond to the particular circumstances of the UK in the period of uncertainty opened by

the referendum. This does not mean that all of the language issues are unique to the UK. On the contrary, we share many of them with other English-speaking countries, with other European countries and with other countries around the world. That could be the basis of another book.

Brexit is a loosely defined and contested concept, but the title 'Languages after Brexit' recognises that the result of the referendum marked a significant change in our country's position in Europe and in the wider world. Consequently, it has brought our relationship with other languages into sharper perspective. Contributors have emphasised the impact of Brexit in its most general sense rather than focus on the situation at a given moment, but our texts undoubtedly reflect the state of affairs at the time of writing or revising. The chapters of this book were all completed by the middle of June 2017 and do not reflect political changes since then. There have been many twists and turns over the past year. No doubt there will be many more to come.

The idea for this book came from a short piece I wrote for the *French Studies Bulletin* in autumn 2016, asking 'What Does the Brexit Vote Mean for Us?' Judith Allan at Palgrave Macmillan suggested that it would be timely to publish a book on the impact of Brexit on languages while the negotiation process was under way. I jumped at the suggestion and proposed an edited book that would bring together specialists in different areas of language and language policy. I was sure they would rapidly be able to distil their knowledge in a form that would be clear and succinct, presenting the current state of play, and looking forward while learning the lessons of the past. They responded with enthusiasm to the challenge.

Part I provides views on the UK's situation in a multilingual world. It looks at why many people are resistant to other languages, and why the international role of English brings definite benefits but also the drawbacks of being dependent on the goodwill of others. Part II asks what the UK needs in languages. It explores the needs of the economy, business, science and social services, such as the legal system or support for refugees. And it looks at the potential benefits of working in several languages, both for social development and individual mental development.

Part III assesses where the UK currently stands in language capacity. It pays particular attention to language education in the four home nations, with a particular focus on schools. It looks at what is provided in higher education, in community-based learning and in informal learning. It also examines the UK's capacity in translators, interpreters and language teachers. Part IV draws together recommendations for steps that need to be taken to improve our capability in languages and help our country to thrive in the new international environment. It suggests public initiatives, potential actions by government and a long-term strategy for the UK. The recommendations are outlined in summary form in the Appendix.

I am grateful for the enthusiasm of so many friends and colleagues who encouraged me to work on this book, for the support of the editorial team at Palgrave Macmillan and for the helpful comments of the anonymous reviewers. I am grateful to the 25 contributors, who have worked to tight deadlines, bringing together a huge amount of knowledge and fresh insights about this complex area. I am particularly grateful to my wife, Jo Doyle, whose love and support has been a *sine qua non* throughout.

Southampton, UK Michael Kelly

Contents

Notes on Contributors

Wendy Ayres-Bennett is Professor of French Philology and Linguistics, University of Cambridge. She specialises in the history of French and the history of linguistic thought, on which she has published widely. Her research interests include standardisation and codification, linguistic ideology and policy, variation and change. She is Principal Investigator on the multidisciplinary, multi-institution research project, Multilingualism: Empowering Individuals, Transforming Societies, funded by the AHRC under its Open World Research Initiative (2016–20). The project is working closely with policymakers and practitioners to promote the value of languages for key issues of our time, and the benefits of language learning for individuals and societies.

Kate Borthwick is Senior Enterprise Fellow in Modern Languages and Linguistics at the University of Southampton. She is a founding trustee of the Community Languages Trust and served as chair from 2015 to 2016. She leads innovative enterprise projects in the area of technology enhanced learning (TEL); teaches on postgraduate courses in blended/online learning; trains staff; and develops online courses and materials. Her recent work has been in the area of open educational resources in language teaching including leading teams to create Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) within the Faculty of Humanities. She directed an annual e-learning symposium for languages professionals (2010–16) and is chair of the 2017 EuroCALL conference (European Association of Computer Assisted Language Learning).

Helen J.L. Campbell was a staff member of the European Commission Interpreting Directorate-General from 1973 until 2011. During this time, she was active in IAMLADP, the UN-run forum of Heads of Language and Conference Services, where she set up the Universities Contact Group in 2006. As a conference interpreter and trainer she has sat on many test and competition juries as speaker and assessor, and she frequently speaks at university careers events. She is chief examiner and external trainer for the Master of Conference Interpreting at Glendon, York University, Toronto. Her publications include five volumes on legal translation and one on recruitment of conference interpreters. She is a Director of the Educational Trust Board and member of the Council of the Chartered Institute of Linguists as well as a member of the Irish Translators and Interpreters' Association.

Ann Carlisle is Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute of Linguists and the IoL Educational Trust. She is a specialist in French and language management and strategy. She was previously Director of Language Training at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (2004–7) and a senior consultant to the Metropolitan Police Service on language strategy and assessment (2007–13), in both capacities sitting on the Cross-Whitehall Languages Group. She has a particular interest in language use professionally in the workplace—by specialist linguists and non-specialist language professionals—and in promoting the recognition and status of languages as a chartered profession.

Janice Carruthers is AHRC Priority Area Leadership Fellow in Modern Languages and former Head of the School of Modern Languages at Queen's University, Belfast. Her research is in the field of French linguistics, particularly in sociolinguistics, orality, temporality (tense, aspect, connectors, frames), corpus linguistics and language policy. The research project attached to her Leadership Fellowship is on language policy in the three devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. She is a Co-Investigator on the AHRC MEITS project, leading the Queen's strand, which focuses on questions of language and identity in France and Ireland.

Svetlana Carsten is an Honorary Fellow in Translation Studies at the University of Leeds, where she was the Director of Postgraduate Programmes in Interpreting from 2001 to 2010. From 2007 to 2012, she led the National Network for Interpreting, which was a part of the UK government-funded Routes into Languages programme. From 2010 she has led the EU-funded ORCIT project (Online Resources for Conference Interpreter Training) in partnership with eight EU universities. She has published in the field of interpreting and

interpreting studies and holds a visiting teaching position at the University of Manchester.

Tim Connell is Professor Emeritus at City, University of London, having been head of languages there for nearly 20 years. He is deputy chair of the international course board of ESCP Europe, the French *grande école*. He is a graduate of Oxford, Liverpool, City and London universities, and has also studied in Spain and Mexico. He is a Fellow and Vice-President of the Chartered Institute of Linguists. Tim sits on the Academic Board of Gresham College where he is a Life Fellow, and is also Chair of the Gresham Society. He maintains close links in the Square Mile as a Liveryman of the Stationers' and Newspaper Makers' Company, where he sits on the Court of Assistants.

Baroness Jean Coussins Following a career spanning the public, private and NGO sectors, Jean Coussins was made a life peer in 2007 and sits as an independent cross-bench peer in the House of Lords. She also works as an adviser on corporate responsibility. A modern languages graduate from Newnham College Cambridge, she now co-chairs the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages, and is a Vice-President of the Chartered Institute of Linguists and President of the Speak to the Future Campaign. Jean takes a special interest in linguists as well as languages, and campaigns to promote the interests of interpreters working in conflict zones and those working in public service in the UK.

David Crystal is Honorary Professor of Linguistics at the University of Bangor, and works from his home in Holyhead as a writer, editor, lecturer and broadcaster. He studied English at University College London, then lectured in linguistics, mainly at Reading University, where he eventually became professor. Among his publications related to the theme of his chapter are *Language Death* and *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*. He is an Honorary Vice-President of the Association for Language Learning and the Chartered Institute of Linguists. He received an OBE for services to the English language in 1995 and became a Fellow of the British Academy in 2000.

Hannah Doughty works as Professional Development Officer for SCILT, Scotland's National Centre for Languages. She is editor of the organisation's electronic open access journal, *The Scottish Languages Review*, and leads on a number of cross-sector and interdisciplinary initiatives. She initially worked in industry, both in the UK and abroad, before moving into education, teaching French and German across all education sectors. Before moving to her present post at SCILT she was in charge of language and tourism provision at a further

education college and her doctoral thesis explored the reasons behind the decline of modern languages in Scottish further education.

Charles Forsdick is James Barrow Professor of French at the University of Liverpool. He is currently the Arts and Humanities Research Council's theme leadership fellow for 'Translating Cultures'. He has published on travel writing, colonial history, postcolonial and world literature and the memorialisation of slavery. Recent publications include *The Black Jacobins Reader* (Duke University Press, 2016) and *Toussaint Louverture: Black Jacobin in an Age of Revolution* (Pluto, 2017). Co-Director of the Centre for the Study of International Slavery 2010–13, he is currently Chair of the Editorial Advisory Board at Liverpool University Press and a member of the Academy of Europe.

Claire Gorrara is Professor of French at Cardiff University and a specialist on literary and visual cultures of the Second World War. She has been Academic Director of Routes into Languages Cymru since 2014 and is the Academic Lead for the Modern Languages Student Mentoring Project currently funded by the Welsh government as part of its Global Futures programme. She is active as an advocate for modern languages in higher education, within Wales and beyond, and works with partners such as the British Council and the European Commission. She is co-editor of two book series with University of Wales Press, on French and francophone cultures and European crime fictions.

Philip Harding-Esch studied French and Linguistics at St John's College, Oxford and is also a qualified translator. From 2000 to 2011, he worked for CILT, the National Centre for Languages, supporting the national primary and secondary programmes. Since then he has worked freelance on language and education projects including script and language consultancy for television and online media work, school outreach for education initiatives in the UK, and abroad for national and international institutions, and contributing to research projects looking at issues of multilingualism including urban languages, story-telling in language learning and online hate speech. He has been a supporter of Speak to the Future, the national campaign for languages, and provides the Secretariat for the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages on behalf of the British Council.

Gabrielle Hogan-Brun is the author of *Linguanomics: What is the Market Potential of Multilingualism?* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2017). She is Senior Research Fellow at the University of Bristol and has worked with various European organisations on language policy in multilingual settings. She is Series Editor of Palgrave Studies in Minority Languages and Communities.

Bernardette Holmes MBE is Director of *Speak to the future*, the national campaign for languages, and Past President of the Association for Language Learning. She is Director of CLERA (Cambridge Language Education and Research Advisers) and Trustee/Director of CIOL/IoLET. Bernardette actively advises government on language policy and curriculum reform for modern languages and is drafter of the new AS and A-level Subject Content Criteria for French, German and Spanish and writer of the GCSE criteria for both modern and ancient languages. Her current research focus is on languages and employment.

Jennifer Jenkins is Professor of Global Englishes at the University of Southampton, where she is the founding director of the Centre for Global Englishes. She has been researching English as a lingua franca (ELF) for nearly 30 years, most recently in relation to higher education, and has published three monographs on the subject as well as numerous articles and chapters, and a university course book, *Global Englishes*, now in its third edition. She is the founding editor of the De Gruyter Mouton book series, *Developments in English as a Lingua Franca*, and co-editor of the forthcoming (2017) *Routledge Handbook of ELF*.

Michael Kelly is Emeritus Professor of French at the University of Southampton and a specialist in modern French culture and society. He directed the UK Subject Centre for languages, linguistics and area studies (2000–12) and the government-funded Routes into Languages programme (2006–16) to promote the learning of languages. He is particularly active in developing public policy on languages and cultural diversity, in the UK and internationally. He is editor of the *European Journal of Language Policy*. His recent books have focused on languages in war and conflict, and he co-edits a book series on this topic for Palgrave Macmillan. He is a trustee of the *Speak to the future* campaign to promote languages in the UK.

René Koglbauer is Senior Lecturer and Executive Director of the North Leadership Centre at Newcastle University. René is a former President of the Association for Language Learning and is currently its chair of Board of Trustees. René is also Director of Network for Languages North East and is the UK representative to the International German Teacher Association (IDV).

Mícheál B. Ó Mainnín is Professor of Irish and Celtic Studies at Queen's University, Belfast and a specialist in Irish and Scottish Gaelic language and literature. He is Director of the Northern Ireland Place-Name Project (www.placenamesni.org) and co-investigator on Strand 3 of the AHRC OWRI project

'Multilingualism: Empowering Individuals, Transforming Societies' (www.meits.org). His research on place names as a reflection of linguistic diversity and the role of multilingualism in conflict resolution in divided societies links these two projects. He has also published on aspects of dialectology and historical linguistics, and on medieval and early modern literary texts.

Dina Mehmedbegovic currently works as a lecturer at UCL. She co-leads the MA TESOL pre-service programme and leads the PGCE EAL Pathway. Her research focuses on attitudes to bilingualism/multilingualism, minority languages and the positioning of languages in relation to dominance, political power and language disappearance. Her previous roles include that of Deputy Director of the London Education Research Unit (2009–11) and editor of the IOE publication the *London Digest*, with the brief of generating and sharing knowledge on key educational issues in London and global cities generally.

Maria K. Norton is Regional Business Development Manager at the British Council in Italy and a specialist in teacher development, blended learning, bilingualism and CLIL. She has worked with government on three continents over 15 years with the British Council, on postings in Belgium, Portugal, South Korea and Tunisia. With a PGCE (Secondary) in Teaching Modern Foreign Languages and an MA in Applied Linguistics (University of Southampton, 2000) she has trained thousands of teachers around the world. She is particularly active on the language education conference circuit.

Alison Phipps holds the UNESCO Chair in Refugee Integration through Languages and the Arts. She is Co-Convener of Glasgow Refugee, Asylum and Migration Network (GRAMNET); and Principal Investigator for a £2 million AHRC Large Grant, and for a number of other funded projects. In 2012 she received an OBE for Services to Education and Intercultural and Interreligious Relations in the Queen's Birthday Honours. She is an elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and of the Academy of Social Sciences, and appears regularly in the media as well as being a published poet. Her publications and practice-based creative arts research attend to themes of language pedagogy, migratory aesthetics and forms of displacement, and the everyday practices of integration and hospitality.

Myriam Salama-Carr is Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Translation and Intercultural Studies, University of Manchester. Her research focuses on the history of translation, with particular focus on the translation of science and the transmission of knowledge. She is the author of *La Traduction à l'époque abasside* (Didier Erudition 1990) and the editor of *Translating and Interpreting*

Conflict (Rodopi 2007) and of a special issue of *Social Semiotics* on Translation and Conflict (2007). She has co-edited a special issue of *Forum* (2009) on Ideology and Cross-Cultural Encounters, and of *The Translator* (2011) on Science in Translation. She is investigator in a QNRF-funded project on the construction of an anthology of the Arabic Discourse on Translation (2015–18) and co-editor of a handbook on Languages at War (for the Palgrave series Languages at War) to be published in 2018. She was the Director of the National Network for Translation (www.nationalnetworkfortranslation.ac.uk) from 2007 to 2017, and Chair of the Training Committee on IATIS (www.iatis.org) from 2011 to 2016.

Marion Spöring is Senior Lecturer at the University of Dundee and the Chair of the University Council for Modern Languages in Scotland (UCMLS). She trained as a teacher of German and Russian in Hamburg and worked in schools, colleges and universities across Germany and the UK for over 35 years.

Teresa Tinsley is a linguist, researcher and author with more than 30 years' experience in national organisations devoted to languages education. As Director of Communications at CILT, the National Centre for Languages (2003–11), she led the organisation's information, research and publications activities and established the Language Trends series of annual research reports charting the health of languages in schools. In 2011, she founded Alcantara Communications, a specialist consultancy for policy-focused research on languages, whose output has included the *State of the Nation* report on demand and supply for language skills, for the British Academy, and publications on Arabic, Chinese and 'Which Languages the UK Needs Most and Why' for the British Council.

Jocelyn Wyburd is Director of the Language Centre at the University of Cambridge, and is responsible for promoting multilingualism for academic, professional and personal purposes. She was Chair of the University Council of Modern Languages (UCML) (2014–17), serving previously in other roles, over a period of nine years. She was Chair of the National Advisory Board for the government-funded Routes into Languages programme (2013–16), and from 2017 she will serve on the Advisory Boards of the AHRC-funded Creative Multilingualism project and the British Academy Flagship Skills project. She is a Trustee of the Institute of Linguists Education Trust.

List of Figures and Tables

1

Introduction

Baroness Jean Coussins and Philip Harding-Esch

The trouble with languages is that too many Brits seem to think English will do. Since the referendum on EU membership, there have even been media reports of school students sighing with relief that they don't need to bother with their French lessons any more because they won't need it in future. What a contradictory world these young people live in: on the one hand retreating into a post-Brexit 'little island' mindset, and on the other, being in instant contact every second of the day via their smart digital devices with anyone and everyone in the world.

Someone needs to tell them that there are more blogs in Japanese than English; that Arabic is the fastest-growing language across all social media platforms; that the proportion of web content in English is diminishing, while the share of Mandarin is rapidly expanding; that French and German top the list of UK employers' language skill-set wish list; and that only 6% of the world's population are native English speakers, with 75% speaking no English at all.

J. Coussins
House of Lords, London, UK

P. Harding-Esch (✉)
Secretariat, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages, London, UK

M. Kelly (ed.), *Languages after Brexit*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65169-9_1

There is no doubt that speaking English is vital for success in the twenty-first century, whether in business, diplomacy, cultural understanding or research. But speaking *only* English is a huge disadvantage. This doesn't just apply to an internationally mobile elite: a survey in 2011 showed that in the UK, 27% of clerical and admin vacancies went unfilled because of a lack of language skills (UK Commission for Employment and Skills' (UKCES) Employer Skills Survey 2011. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukces-employer-skills-survey-2011). Post-Brexit, the UK needs to up its game in language skills more than ever, if we are to fulfil the government's ambition of becoming a leader in global free trade and a key player on the international stage.

Politically, though, the trouble with languages is that they belong everywhere a bit, but nowhere holistically or strategically. The Department for Education deals with schools, Further Education and Higher Education; the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) handles diplomacy and our role in international institutions such as the United Nations; the Treasury is concerned with export growth; the Ministry of Justice and the Department of Health supply public service interpreters; and the Ministry of Defence teaches the armed forces the languages they'll need to be effective on the ground when deployed. The list goes on: the Home Office, and the Departments for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, International Trade, International Development and others all have a key interest in languages, whether they realise it or not—and that's before we even get to the new Department for Exiting the European Union. What we see is an approach to language skills and needs that is piecemeal, short-term and self-defeating. Taking what appears to be the easy way out by employing native speakers or turning to instant online translation services simply masks the problem, possibly compounds it, but certainly doesn't solve it.

Brexit presents a new opportunity to get languages right in the UK. By doing so, the Brexit process itself will be easier and post-Brexit Britain will be more successful. If the government can grasp the significance of the language issues highlighted in this book, the UK could take some vital steps towards setting itself up for a confident long-term future well beyond Brexit as a diplomatic and commercial player in the world, and especially in the interests of the future life chances and employability of the next generation. There are four essential language-specific objectives

for the government to take on board as part of our Brexit negotiations. These were published in October 2016 by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages. They are introduced below and will be discussed in more detail in later chapters.

First, the government should guarantee the residency status of non-UK EU nationals already living in the UK *and* agree favourable terms for the future recruitment of EU citizens who are needed in jobs for which British nationals can't compete because they don't have the language skills. The second part of this objective should in theory be needed only for the medium term until we have achieved other goals to improve our own supply pipeline of language skills through longer-term educational measures (see below).

In answer to parliamentary questions asked in November 2016, the government said that it did want to protect the status of EU nationals already living and working in the UK, but only if British citizens' rights in other EU member states were protected in return.[1] As far as future migration arrangements were concerned, the government's only answer was that 'various options' were being considered.

This is a good example of how language-related issues are all interconnected and why the government must take a holistic and strategic approach, rather than deal with Brexit department by department. The reason residency status and the future access to employment of EU nationals is so important for languages is that without these people, the teaching of modern foreign languages (MFL) in our schools will collapse. An estimated 35% of MFL teachers and 85% of modern language assistants in our schools are non-UK EU nationals. The UK does not currently produce anything like enough modern language graduates to fill the teacher shortage already predicted, never mind if we make it hard for EU nationals to stay or be recruited. So the Home Office needs to be talking to the Department for Education about this aspect of Brexit.

The interconnectedness goes beyond education. Around one-third of the public service interpreters working in our courts, police stations and the NHS are also non-UK EU nationals. Without them, large numbers of people would have justice or healthcare delayed or denied in what is already a stretched system. So the Home Office also needs to be talking to the Ministry of Justice and the Department of Health.

The second language-specific objective for the Brexit negotiators should be to ensure that the UK retains access to and participation in the EU's Erasmus+ programme, which funds study and work experience abroad. In principle, this one should be a no-brainer. There is precedent for non-EU participation, as both Norway and Switzerland are in Erasmus+. It is also clearly an issue of self-interest. We know that employers favour graduates (in all subjects, not just linguists) who have spent a year abroad and acquired language and intercultural skills. A 2014 study showed that Erasmus+ students had an unemployment rate 23% lower than that of non-mobile students. Without Erasmus+, UK graduates would therefore be disadvantaged in a global labour market. Erasmus+ also plays a crucial role in the supply chain of language recruits to teaching and research in schools and universities. If the government stands any chance of achieving its English Baccalaureate (EBacc) target of 90% of school leavers achieving A–C grade in a modern foreign language by 2020, then we need as many MFL teachers coming through the system as possible.

The viability of modern language degrees at UK universities is already very fragile: over 50 universities have scrapped some or all of their modern language degree courses since 2000, because of a sustained drop in applications. Prospective students, even if they have done one or more languages at A level, don't necessarily relish the increased debt they will accumulate if they undertake a four-year course. Before the referendum, there were already concerns that the present funding arrangements, which limit the cost to students of their Erasmus+ year abroad to 15% of the usual tuition fee, could come to an end. Now, the prospect of the UK coming out of Erasmus+ is already having an impact on undergraduate recruitment. Anecdotal evidence is emerging of university departments having to work hard to convince the worried parents of prospective students that the year abroad will still be an affordable proposition by the time students matriculating in 2017 reach their third year. The year abroad is the jewel in the crown of a good modern languages degree and the government should do all it can to help students and universities continue to fund it and preserve it as an essential part of the value and quality of the course.

The third objective is very specific. The government should give a firm commitment to legislate to replicate the rights enshrined in the 2010 European Directive on the Right to Interpretation and Translation in Criminal Proceedings. Natural justice and the human rights of defendants

and witnesses will suffer if good-quality interpreting services are not guaranteed as of right. The UK's record of compliance with this Directive is not flawless, so it would be risky to leave the provision of court and police interpreters to the policy of individual courts and constabularies, rather than at least having common standards and objectives as set out in legislation, especially regarding the need for quality.

The final language-specific objective is the most challenging, complex and long-term. It is the need for a comprehensive strategic plan, consisting of specific actions to ensure that the UK produces sufficient linguists to meet its future requirements post-Brexit as a leader in global free trade and on the international stage. This plan was already needed before, and irrespective of, the EU referendum, of course. But now we know that in some shape or form the UK has a future outside the EU, the need for a languages strategy is all the more acute. Trade negotiations and other key functions currently carried out by the EU will require UK officials with language skills in the future. Research shows that our language skills deficit is already currently estimated to cost 3.5% of GDP and that the UK is already overdependent on Anglophone export markets. Brexit should be seized on as the catalyst to turn this around (The Costs to the UK of Language Deficiencies as a Barrier to UK Engagement in Exporting: A Report to UK Trade & Investment by James Foreman-Peck and Yi Wang, UKTI, 2014. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-costs-to-the-uk-of-language-deficiencies-as-a-barrier-to-ukengagement-in-exporting).

Any languages strategy must be fully comprehensive, covering not only all ages and stages of education, from primary school to postgraduate research and including apprenticeships, but also business and the civil service. Who knows what linguistic resources we may already have at our disposal, if only we thought it important enough to find out: oddly, the government remains persistently averse to conducting any sort of languages audit across the civil service. Businesses, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), at least seem to appreciate what they're missing. Eighty-three per cent of SMEs operate only in English, yet over half of them say that language skills would help expand business opportunities and build export growth. Unfortunately, the government's support for exporters in terms of language and culture still does not seem adequate. It appears that the new contracts between the regions and the

Department for International Trade (formerly UKTI) have done away with the previously available one-to-one advice on language and culture.

In answer to a parliamentary question asked in November 2016, the government said it recognised the importance of language skills to the export success of our country, and pointed to its new GREAT website, and the country guides available on it, written for exporters.[2] However, the page on 'Face to face communication' fails to mention language at all, and the advice on researching the market mentions 'language barriers' without any guidance on what these might be and how to overcome them. Even the 'more detailed guides' for China, France, Germany, India and the USA make scant reference to language skills, simply advising exporters to get a local agent if they are not fluent themselves. The British Academy's *Lost for Words* report underlines the need for a cross-government strategy, concluding that the UK will be unable to meet its security, defence and diplomacy requirements without one.[3] Cambridge University's *Value of Languages* report further develops this in some detail, with several compelling case studies from a range of sectors.[4]

If an audit of the civil service would be useful in finding out what language resources we may already have, then how much more helpful for the future would it also be to take advantage of the fact that over 1 million school pupils in the UK are bilingual? Too often, these children are seen as an educational problem rather than an educational asset. We know that to realise the potential for the UK to be more successful in world trade we will need a wider range of languages than just the traditional Western European ones taught in our schools, yet we've had to fight hard to keep GCSE and A levels in a number of lesser-taught languages. Children who speak languages like Arabic, Korean, Turkish, Farsi and others at home should have their linguistic skills recognised, nurtured and accredited, and be shown how much more employable they will be as a result, whether in business, diplomacy or education.

We should nevertheless cite existing, homegrown examples of good practice. Scotland's 1+2 (or Mother Tongue Plus Two) policy and Wales's 2+1 (or Bilingual + 1) policy are ambitious, and well thought-out, systems to ensure children have a real opportunity to learn not one but two languages other than English, and include serious plans for the provision of Gaelic and Welsh teaching. It is particularly pleasing to see Wales's new 'Global Futures' MFL strategy for schools being so innovative and

ambitious, after years of underperforming (even by UK standards!). The Department for Education's £10m Mandarin Excellence Programme, which is being delivered by the Institute of Education Confucius Institute for Schools in partnership with the British Council, is more proof that we are capable of implementing new MFL strategies in secondary education when we put our minds to it.

University College London (UCL) shows us that it is perfectly possible to have a modern languages entry requirement for university matriculation. Its policy has been a huge success: those students who have to study a modern language after matriculation in order to meet the requirement have been feeding back that they find these skills to be applicable, and the courses to be enjoyable; and the number of students taking a modern language as part of their degree has increased fourfold since 2000. And even within the civil service, solutions are already there if you look for them.

It was encouraging to see assurances recently from Lord Howe, the Minister of State for Defence, that the FCO is now 'actively working to improve the teaching of Arabic dialects and the scope for including immersion training as part of our in-country training for Arabic students', and to see that the FCO's annual budget for essential language training has been increased by nearly 12% in the last two years. It is also good to see the government recognising that 'the importance of effective local language capability … whether it be a humanitarian crisis or a military operation, the ability to communicate with local partners is vital to any response'.

The Ministry of Defence boasts extensive collaboration with allied partners and its programme of exchanges with those partners is to be applauded, with participants, once qualified, being seen as a 'defence resource' for that language, to be reused in future. It also ensures its language training conforms to NATO Standardisation Agreement 6001 for language proficiency. Liaison with local partners includes work with the UN, the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Societies. The FCO Language Centre is now able to provide training in fully 86 different languages, and the Defence Centre for Language and Culture has the capacity for 40 languages. Most significantly, the armed forces now require language skills for promotion and are conducting personnel audits of 'latent language skills'. Could this approach not be implemented more widely across the civil service?

The challenge of Brexit has provided the opportunity to demonstrate the *urgency* of rebuilding (building?) the UK's capacity in languages. It is also urgent that the government realise that this cannot wait until after the UK leaves the EU, but is an important aspect of the exit process itself, as well as a keystone of future success. Neither is it an issue solely important in its own right; on the contrary, language skills and a serious commitment to improve them will affect the degree to which we can succeed and influence others across the board. In other words, languages are central and instrumental, not an optional extra or afterthought. This must be reflected in the way government organises and presents itself, right now, during the Brexit process, and beyond. The interconnectedness of language issues points to the need for a designated minister with responsibility for cross-government languages strategy, with the authority, research back-up and vision to connect the dots between the various departments and between departments and external bodies and agencies. The Treasury should realise that it is as much in its interests to see increased take-up of MFL at GCSE and A level as it is for the Department for Education.

The trouble with languages is it's easy to agree how important they are, but even easier to do nothing about it. Take, for example, the contradictory policies at play in the education system. Modern foreign languages are now part of the EBacc GCSE performance measure (achieving grade A–C in five core subjects including an MFL), but are not part of the National Curriculum after the age of 14 (which a majority of schools can opt out of anyway); nor are they necessary for schools to achieve full marks under the Progress 8 assessment regime (which measures progress over time in eight subjects, not necessarily including MFL). Evidence from last year's GCSE results suggested that schools are using Progress 8 to opt out of the MFL EBacc requirement. Meanwhile, official guidelines for checks on host families appear to be putting an end to school exchanges, and budgetary pressures are driving the fall in the number of modern language assistants. Universities, bar UCL as mentioned above, won't insist on a modern language GCSE for matriculation because they are too worried about compromising their 'widening access' efforts. Employers say better language skills in the workforce would be good for business, but very few invest in language training for their staff. (Note to Chancellor of the Exchequer: perhaps more would if there were a tax