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## Pupils' Language Competence in the Primary School: A Literature Review

*Argyro Kanaki, University of Dundee*

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**Abstract:** This paper, which forms part of an ongoing PhD study, attempts a summary overview of research on pupil competence in modern languages in the primary school, as presented by a Systematic Literature Review (SLR). The research question for the SLR was: "What sort of evidence do research papers present for pupil competence skills and language progress in the primary school?" The paper reflects on the literature review findings in regard to pupil language competence and the recommendations for practitioners and policy makers they offer.

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**Keywords:** Pupil Language Competence, Pupil Language Skills, Primary School, Modern Languages

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### Introduction

In recent years there has been a growing interest in introducing Modern Language instruction to children at ever younger ages. This tendency derived from the European Union's commitment to enable all of Europe's citizens to learn two languages in addition to their mother tongue, as first outlined in the Barcelona Agreement (European Council, 2002:19). Henceforth, L1 means 'native language' or 'mother tongue' whilst L2 and L3 mean the first and second additional language learned respectively. In Scotland, the Scottish Government has promoted the 1+2 language policy and has introduced the teaching of the first additional language from the beginning of the primary school (Scottish Government Working Group, 2013).

This interest in early language learning gave a strong rationale to a search of the literature for evidence about language teaching and learning, its impacts on the primary pupil, and methods of early L2 acquisition. As part of this first step to "establish a reliable evidence base for recommendations to schools, teachers and CPD providers" (Davies et al, 2013:81), I undertook a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) looking at primary pupils' modern language competences and awareness. In this article, I examine the overall findings of the SLR, and present a conclusion with recommendations for researchers, teachers and policy makers.

### Research Question and Methodology

My initial search produced a total of 731 published articles from a wide range of international sources. I applied further broad filters to this collection by a brief review and some broader electronic sifting. Acceptable studies had to be based on empirical research, either qualitative or quantitative, and also clearly show a methodology (e.g. sample sizes, research instruments, analytic methods). I imposed a chronological limit {2008-2014}, for reasons to do with the timing of language teaching policy initiatives. There were two further filters, one for taught second language, which removed projects from multilingual environments or with bilingual pupils, and one filter for pupil age, to maintain a focus on primary school environments. Finally, I had to impose a geographical filter on the origins for the remaining studies. This depended on

a judgement concerning whether primary school education systems housed arrangements similar to the standard UK pattern.

Thus, the selected literature highlighted in this article only refers to modern languages taught in primary school settings. It also excludes studies involving bilingual pupils (who speak another language at home). English is covered as an L2 only when English is not the dominant language of the community. However, such studies were accepted only from countries where there is a strong dominant language and where there are no linguistic variations that compete for recognition and dominance in the community. This was to exclude research from situations like the Indian subcontinent, or China, where many languages can be used in a school area, school lessons may be taught in a national language, rather than the local ones, and L2 can often be a passport language, such as English. Through the filter I tried to extract only nation states where people are monolingual citizens who recognise themselves as native speakers of a specific language, again to improve comparability between studies. Time wise, this literature review includes studies, published between 2008 and 2014, which relate to schools taking pupils from early years to the last year in primary, before the secondary school transition.

From the original 731 articles 67 remained after the application of these filters. These were re-read, analysed for content, and ranked thematically according to how precisely they focussed on my research issue. The identified research issue for this systematic literature review was to identify pupil competence in the taught L2; for example what sort of evidence the papers presented for development of competence, skills and language progress in the primary school.

## **Evidence from the Systematic Literature Review Selection**

The selected articles from the Systematic Literature Review produced interesting findings about pupil progress in modern language knowledge, competence and skills in the primary school. The spectrum of evidence that appears in the literature includes multiple themes such as:

- language awareness, and metacognitive skills
- intercultural awareness
- searches for personal and collective identity
- motivation

Sometimes, the answer to the research question about pupil competence is well hidden among literature about teaching techniques and teacher language skills and those topics which might define, produce or underlie ML competence in the primary classroom. The development of certain skills or even the lack of those skills are often noted only in specific contexts related to specific teaching approaches and, or teaching methods. Nevertheless, this systematic literature review did distinguish some clear evidence responding to the formal question of pupil competence as a research aim.

## **Language Awareness and Metacognitive Skills**

There is evidence that pupils develop language awareness, cognitive and metalinguistic skills through their L2 learning in the primary school. White and Horst (2012) show that pupils can

develop cognate awareness and recognise cognate similarities and differences between languages if they receive cross linguistic instructions from their teachers, who explicitly compare L1 and L2. The researchers claim that “teaching and practicing abstract cognate rules was feasible in late elementary school” (ibid: 192-193). Fortier and Simard (2008) also show that pupils can formulate metalinguistic knowledge. Pupils in their study showed linguistic sensitivity towards error, and reflect on grammatical errors and meanings, by explaining why these constitute a grammatical or syntactical error. According to Fortier and Simard (ibid), pupils develop this skill only when teachers’ approach is not limited to the communicative approach, now the staple of standard ML teaching practice in Scotland and across the other UK education systems. Teachers must also draw pupils’ attention to linguistic forms, and particularly morphosyntactic norms, i.e. drawing pupil attention to words and their spellings, their position in the sentence and their functions. On the other hand, language competence can sometimes also be achieved through fairly subtle alterations to teaching practice. Kirsch (2012), for example, found that even quite young Anglophone pupils were able to develop a range of language learning strategies without receiving explicit strategy instruction from their teacher. In her study pupils deployed “memorising strategies” (ibid: 390), writing and practising language (ibid: 394), developed learner autonomy, and reflected on their language processes and strategy use (ibid: 395) when their teacher adopted a supportive role through ‘scaffolding’ pupils’ learning, i.e. by offering them ways to solve problems and evaluate their own learning, rather than openly solving challenges for them and keeping the evaluation of learning as an activity for the teacher alone.

Other studies prefer to discuss language competence in the more traditional four language skills format (speaking, reading, writing and comprehension). Kruk and Reynolds (2012) conclude that “immersion as an educational context that exposes children to an additional language can be beneficial to reading achievement”. In their study, young Anglophone “at-risk” readers in primary school grew greater phonological awareness, developed better decoding skills, and reached a higher reading comprehension level by experiencing an L2 immersion school programme than did their counterpart control group. Another study (Björn and Leppänen, 2013) showed how pupils developed phonological awareness and strengthened L2 production and reading skills through a computer-based intervention programme. Pupils received teacher’s L2 pedagogical intervention alongside their participation in educational computer games. According to the researchers (ibid:687), “students need to have good “learning to learn” skills in order to achieve the best possible results from their learning”; i.e. pupils need to know both how to learn and that they are learning.

## **Intercultural Awareness**

There is also some evidence that pupils develop cultural awareness, often taken as an important component of language competence, through L2 learning in the primary school. Barton et al. (2009) evaluate a project focussed on L2 teaching and learning in primary schools. They conclude that pupils developed intercultural awareness, and positive attitudes towards the “foreign”, when they received a language awareness programme side by side with L2 instruction. Pupils reported being more interested in finding out similarities and differences between cultures and being more aware of “the importance of understanding cultural

differences” (ibid:155) when involved in L2 learning. Moloney (2009), investigating intercultural competence in upper primary school language learners, also found that pupils became more aware of their cultural identity and noted changes to their mentality as they learn other languages and other cultures side by side. This suggests that young learners will always negotiate their intercultural identities and memberships in the target culture groups whilst they learn an L2. Lastly, Gruson and Barnes (2012) emphasise the development of intercultural awareness in primary school language pupils through the employment of computer-mediated communication (CMC). Their study showed that both the Anglophone and non-Anglophone pupils modified the language that they use, and adjusted it, in order to facilitate comprehension of their respective school partners in France or England. According to the authors, this is “an important aspect of young learners’ (intercultural) communicative competence” (ibid: 86) because they show awareness of language difficulties met by their partners, and because they are able to manipulate their own L1 in order to get their communicative messages across.

## **Identity**

The notion of identity is another element that attracts the interest of researchers and which comes up in studies about pupils’ language knowledge, skills, and competence. Specifically, this is usually taken to mean the construction of the personal and collective identity of pupils through L2 teaching and learning in the primary classroom. The notion of identity construction is usually combined with the development of intercultural awareness (cf. Moloney, 2009). However, Aro (2012) shows convincingly that the newly constructed language learner’s identity is always influenced by authority, rather than by the constraints and liberations of a new language, or fresh understanding of their old one. Pupils express beliefs and points of view according to what authority has prescribed and how learners view learning opportunities both in and outside of the classroom: “Such beliefs may thus influence how the children voice themselves as learners and users of L2.” (ibid: 343).

## **Motivation**

Another area commonly mentioned in the research is pupil progress. This always means ‘changes in pupil competence’, so I have treated papers about ‘progress’ in L2 as the same as papers about ‘competence’ in L2. There is an assumption that motivation always brings language development. That is why motivation is associated with the development and progress, in language knowledge, skills and competence on the part of young language learners in the primary classroom. According to the evidence from different studies, pupil skills and competence are very frequently associated with the notion of motivation, which is considered as the driving force and the unquestionable impetus for learning (Dörnyei, 2005).

Martin’s (2012) evaluation of the Key Stage 2 (Primary School) Language Learning Pathfinder Project in England found that most pupils were positive about language learning. However, a number of challenges would need to be overcome to ensure that positive attitudes would remain so in the long term. For example, some pupils reported feeling “frustrated at their own limited progress and complained about the amount of repetition and lack of challenge in



lessons” (ibid: 360). This points to the importance of good initial and continuing teacher education, and the importance of transition arrangements between primary and secondary school.

Another two studies which associated motivation with language progress and foregrounded teaching and learning (Macrory et al, 2012; Phillips, 2010) reported that pupils developed listening and speaking skills through video-conferencing, and their positive learning experiences there increased their motivation and confidence.

Some studies explored reasons for demotivation. Tierney and Gallastegi (2011) specifically researched pupils’ attitudes towards modern languages in the primary school, and they find that pupils’ motivation is based on their enjoyment of classroom activities and their desire to speak the language of others (ibid:495). They also mention that “boredom [and] lack of interest in activities such as copying or listening to tapes” (ibid: 495) demotivate them. At the same time, pupils refer to their own perception of the difficulty that an L2 presents. However, the study (ibid) shows strongly that pupils’ motivation continues as long as they manage the language difficulties, and see themselves as language speakers. Cable et al. (2012) also report decreased motivation due to the teaching of language in a non-communicative, and not obviously purposeful, context, especially with increased amounts of the use of commercial resources, and a lack of progression.

## **Implications for Language Learning and Teacher Education**

In an era where the 1+2 Approach is beginning implementation for the primary school in Scotland, local authorities are just starting work on the practicalities of the policy. In this part, I look at other relevant literature and consider, as a first step towards informed discussion of the policy and its implementation, what the literature reveals about pupils’ language progress in the primary school. I also introduce some additional literature which did not emerge from the SLR but supports the discussion. What should be straightforward information gathering for practitioners who seek practical guidance from language teaching theory is, however, complicated and confused. This time, I think, the complexity comes from massive overlays of political opinion and spin originating in many opposed institutions and sources at local, state and national levels. In my opinion, it reflects a wide variety of entrenched ideological viewpoints.

## **Implications for Language Awareness and Metacognitive Skills**

To cut through this discursive undergrowth, teachers in search of ways to measure and achieve language competence, or progress in learning, might wish to consider a focus on language awareness and the development of metacognitive skills. The research suggests that primary school pupils are definitely able to develop metacognitive and metalinguistic skills, as well as language awareness. This, in turn, implies that teachers develop the requisite pedagogic knowledge to boost just that explicit knowledge of language which leads, for example, to an awareness of, and ability to correct, error (Driscoll et al., 2004). “Young learners can be trained to explore languages as explicit and dynamic systems” (Bouffard and Sarkar, 2008:22). This is an aspect of teaching that primary schools can use as a focus. In order to develop and boost

language awareness and metalinguistic skills, primary school teachers should be confident in their own use of both L1 and L2. They should be able to make and activate associations between L1 and L2, and draw their pupils' attention to similarities or differences between the languages.

### **Implications for Intercultural Awareness**

Pupils can learn a language without necessarily developing intercultural awareness but, as Woodgate-Jones and Grenfell (2012: 341) argue, "a good deal of cultural information is soaked up by the second language learner, and this helps develop understanding and empathy with the culture, which itself will enhance motivation and subsequent learning". On the other hand, simple cultural facts about other countries can have very little relevance to a learner who has no personal experience of travelling and no real notion of the other country (ibid). Another concern for teachers is how to assess the development of intercultural awareness (Vogt and Tsagari, 2014:385). While pupils are studying an L2 intercultural awareness is more clearly delineated as an area for the personal and social development of the primary school pupil when it is also an area of special interest for policy makers and practitioners (Curriculum for Excellence, Modern Languages Principles and Practice, no date).

### **Implications for Identity**

The search for individual and collective identity needs to be rethought as it impinges on the L2 curriculum in the primary school. This means that practitioners need to look at "what kinds of things learners deem important and worthwhile when learning and using the language and how learners view learning opportunities both in and outside of the classroom" (Aro, 2012:343). Not just language teaching practitioners but increasingly the whole school staff in Scottish primary schools will need to think about the role of both L1 and L2 in moulding pupil identity. Pupils take ownership of their language learning and their classroom L2 discourse in sense-making activities both as modern language speakers in their own right (L2), as well as language learners, that is that they have both user and learner identities at the same time (St John, 2010).

### **Implications for Motivation**

As we saw above, in the earlier section of the paper, motivation is in general use as a proxy for measures of development of language skills. It is therefore another area that needs to be taken into consideration in any informed discussion, simply because it cannot be separated from discussion of language skill development that is more difficult to measure. Keeping motivation alive is indeed a key factor for Modern Language survival as a school subject, throughout the age range. Tierney and Gallastegi (2011:495) suggest that teaching approaches that have not worked should be minimised or eliminated. Martin (2012) recommends that pupil motivation should be encouraged and developed in all its different varieties, integrative and instrumental, extrinsic and intrinsic, as part of the primary language learning experiences. Sparks et al. (2009) have shown a positive correlation between L2 achievement and motivation. However, we should bear in mind that when students demonstrate high interest and engagement in

language lessons there is no necessary implication that students will attain better proficiency levels. We can witness this when that competence is measured according to the European Survey on Language Competences (Araújo and de Costa, 2013). Further research is needed into the role of research variables such as pupil motivation and pupil lesson evaluation and their effect on pupil progress in language learning to give us deeper, and more reliable, insights into the whole process of teaching and learning languages at primary school level.

## Concluding Thoughts

Given the priority accorded by the Scottish Government to the 1+2 approach to language learning there is an opportunity for language practitioners and policy makers to revisit current practice in the view of recent studies and relevant literature reviews on primary school language learning and teaching. However, I agree with Mitchell (2010) who states that changing practice is a complex activity in itself, and there are multiple factors that can influence outcomes: the educational system, traditional pedagogic cultures, institutional cultures, and the beliefs and performance of individual language practitioners all play a significant part. These factors also have their influence on local student language experiences, the vital arbiters of eventual performance. We clearly need more exploration and research to make sense of organising that multilingual approach in Scotland.

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# Modern Languages in Scotland: Learner Uptake and Attainment 1996-2014

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*James Scott PhD*

*University of Dundee*

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**Abstract:** Drawing upon a substantial evidence base and employing both quantitative and qualitative methods, this paper examines the post-war 'rise and fall' cycles of Modern Language (ML) uptake and attainment in Scotland in the context of both political and educational governance of Scottish education at national, local authority and school levels. The paper provides a systematic attempt to gather the available evidence on patterns of ML enrolment and attainment and the causes of these patterns. The findings of the paper suggest a strong link between the fluctuating nature and quality of Scottish politico-educational governance and the periods of growth and decline in Modern Languages. These findings are of particular interest as the current downward trends in ML uptake and attainment are nearing levels only once reached before in the late 1980s. The paper offers some insights into why this may be the case and how these issues might be addressed.

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**Keywords:** language statistics, language policy, language initiatives, governance, Scotland

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## Introduction

There has been repeated (although not sustained) discussion in Scotland, both within educational governance groups and the media, of Modern Languages (MLs) as a declining subject area in schools, resulting in intermittent government action to address ML issues. There has, however, been little research or evaluation of the causes of decline or the extent of the problem since a sequence of papers from the Scottish Centre for Information on Language Teaching (SCILT) in the mid to late 1990s. The most significant of these papers was the so-called FLUSS report, *Foreign Languages in the Upper Secondary School: A Study of the Causes of Decline* (McPake et al, 1999), which provided an in-depth analysis of the then-current ML situation and analysed its causes. FLUSS followed immediately after the last major evaluation report on MLs by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education [HMI, later HMIE]: *Standards and Quality, primary and secondary schools, 1994-98: Modern Languages* (HMI, 1998). The joint impact of the 1998 HMI report and FLUSS caused high-level political action but subsequent HMIE reports (HMIE, 2005a, 2005b, 2007) on MLs have failed to achieve such impact, reflecting further decline in societal interest in MLs and changes in the balance of influence within Scottish educational governance. This impression is further reinforced since no major research has taken place in this curricular area since FLUSS, although SCILT have very lately examined recent ML trends in a sequence of papers (Doughty 2013a, 2013b, 2013c).

In an era where accountability has been paramount, it seems unusual that the last three significant research and evaluation documents date from two decades ago. This paper seeks to partially redress this gap, examining how uptake and attainment across MLs have changed since the middle/late 1990s. The paper also provides a context for these changes by examining the patterns of learner involvement and success leading up to 1996 and relating any rise and fall in that earlier period to contemporaneous governance actions designed to improve education in the wider sense and/or MLs in particular. Previous studies related to the topic of this paper have examined societal responses to foreign countries and their languages; the motivations of learners, parents and teachers and aspects of pedagogy and resourcing. This study, however, examines the post-war 'rise and fall' cycles of Modern Language uptake and attainment in the context of both political and educational governance of Scottish education at national, local authority and school levels.

## **Methodology**

This paper is an extension of some aspects of the work carried out for a recent doctoral thesis. As does this paper, the thesis adopted a Mixed Methods Research (MMR) approach, combining and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data sets through a two-stage process of triangulation. The choice of an MMR approach was made as it supported a combination of qualitative and quantitative research and offered a means of dealing with the need to use both predetermined and emerging methods (Creswell, 2003:17).

This study draws upon a substantial evidence base originally gathered for the thesis, comprising national, local authority and school policies; Scottish Examination Board (SEB)/Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) data from 1965 to 2014 on language availability, course enrolment and attainment statistics; minutes, papers and testimonies of members of national working parties; national agency documentation; Inspectorate reports on individual schools and on Modern Languages as a whole; previous research on Modern Languages in primary and secondary schools; national, local authority and school publications and website pages relating to Modern Languages and, lastly, a set of eighty questionnaires provided to key governance agents (at national, authority and school levels) and forty follow-up interviews with selected key governance agents.

Triangulation of the data and analysis of the subsequent findings have demonstrated that the decline of Modern Languages is not a new phenomenon, although the process has again accelerated, particularly within the last decade. The research has also examined why, how and how effectively governance systems, groups and linkages have functioned, providing a new insight on why Modern Languages policies and initiatives at all governance levels have not consistently generated the intended outcomes in terms of learner/parent/headteacher interest and/or motivation, course enrolments or improved levels of attainment.



## Context

Universal secondary education, a pre-1939 objective, did not come into being in Scotland until the years following the Second World War (Paterson, 2003). Before this post-war growth, MLs in Scotland were the province of ‘a bookish minority’ (SED, 1947: 90) among secondary pupils and were not part of the primary curriculum. Due to a combination of factors including the post-war ‘baby boom’, parental aspirations for a better future (including university entrance) for their children, the decline of Classics, the 1950 replacement of the grouped Leaving Certificate by individual awards and finally the impending arrival of Ordinary Grade qualifications in 1962, that position changed radically during the 1950s, leading to an increasing demand from learners for the new Ordinary Grade ML courses and for ML Highers (Paterson, 2011:110-111; Philip, 1992; SEB, 1947: 78-82; SEB, 1959a: SED, 1959b).

The rise of MLs was not, however, merely a result of rising populations or of a clamour for ‘qualifications for all’ in a system which at that time split young people between senior secondary schools for the most able and junior secondaries where learners were more likely to encounter practical subjects than MLs. By the mid-1960s, governmental statistics (Paterson, 2003, p.133; Philip, 1992, p.110; SEB, 1965, 1966, 1967) confirmed that MLs had experienced significant growth, both in the extent of the curriculum occupied and in the proportion of examination entries attracted, for the last decade. In the mid-1960s, MLs appeared to be one of the main components of the Scottish curriculum (Johnstone, 1999:527) - alongside English and Mathematics, the Sciences and the Social Subjects – for any pupil with a desire to do well, either in tertiary education or the world of employment.

This proved, however, to be the first of two ‘high water marks’ for MLs. As Figures 1-2 demonstrate, the subsequent two decades through to the mid-1980s saw both learner enrolment for ML courses and learner attainment in these courses fall steadily. Both Tables are ‘standardised’ to remove the impacts of rapidly changing learner populations (rising rapidly to the mid-1970s, briefly holding at those levels and then falling away equally rapidly) by calculating the ML enrolment or attainment as a percentage of the overall enrolment or attainment across all subjects at the same Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels. In effect, the two tables show the ‘market share’ of ML enrolment and attainment at Levels 3-5 (O Grade, then S Grade, then ‘old’/‘new’ National Qualifications), Level 6 (Higher) and Level 7 (Certificate of Sixth Year Studies, then Advanced Higher) and follow parallel paths from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s, with attainment inevitably somewhat lower than enrolment.

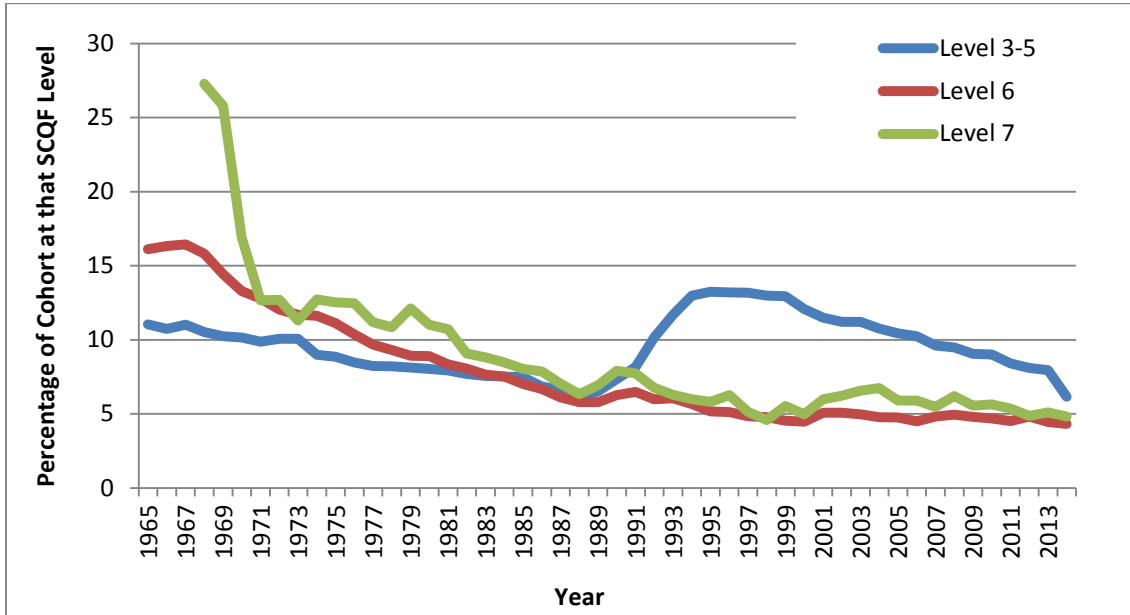


Figure 1: ML Enrolments (1965-2014) at Levels 3-5 combined, and 6-7 as Percentages of Overall Uptake at Those SCQF Levels

NB. Level 7 courses did not commence until the late 1960s: French was one of the first three subjects offered, followed by other subjects in the following year, thus distorting the first few percentages.

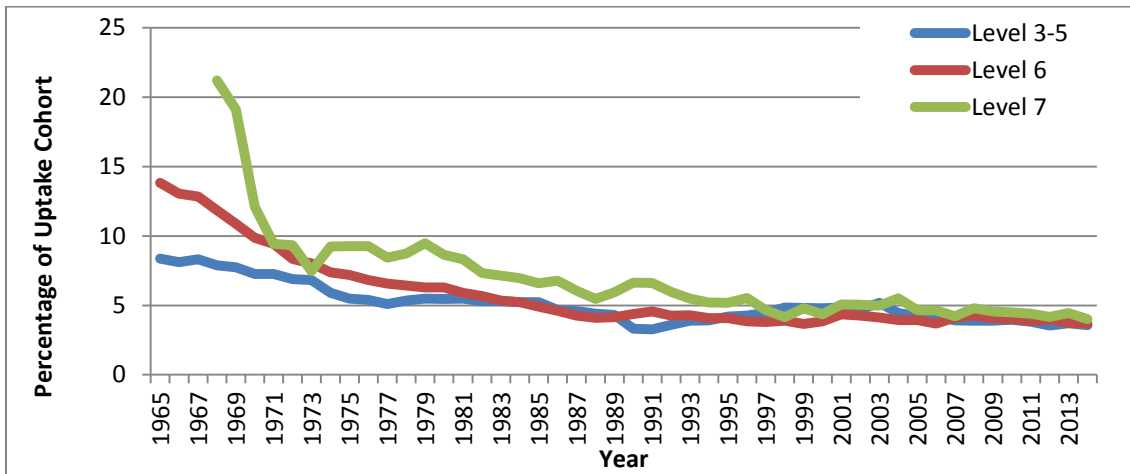


Figure 2: ML Attainment (1965-2014) at Levels 3-5 combined, 6 and 7 as Percentages of Overall Enrolment at Those SCQF Levels

The rise in enrolment and attainment to the mid-1960s has been explained. Why did the subsequent decline occur? Strangely, the two decades until the mid-1980s had seen little research before Scott (2014) and almost none in the ML context. No HMI evaluation of MLs as a subject area was carried out until 1990 and that occurred at a moment when, as will be seen, MLs again appeared to be prospering. Analysis of governmental, SEB, HMI and local authority records and of prior research across all subject areas (as opposed to specific ML research) identified significant influences operating in this period. The first of these, the cross-party move towards the democratisation of education through the second post-war phase of Raising the School Leaving Age (to 16) and the introduction of comprehensive schools, was unfortunately characterised by a lack of coherent policy, planning or

development activity (Paterson, 2003, p.138), failing to provide appropriate accommodation, learning materials or teacher training to cope with a radically changed clientele in many schools (Woodin, McCulloch & Cowan, 2012) – with inevitable consequences for attendance, behaviour, course enrolments and attainment (Paterson, 2003; Watt, 1991). These issues were accompanied by Scottish universities' withdrawal of requirements for an ML Higher as an entrance qualification for many courses, but also by a continuing diversification of available Level 3-5 courses. The effect of these changes was to increase the pressure on able and average learners to consider moving from an 'elitist' subject still taught by methods derived from Classics using materials designed for the most able and derived from discredited educational theories (Johnstone, 1999: 527-529).

A ML champion appeared in the later 1980s in the person of (Lord) Michael Forsyth, the incoming Conservative Minister for Education at the Scottish Office. The views of respondents to this study are remarkably consistent: Lord Forsyth has not generally left a positive mark in their memories, but almost all confessed to admiring his significant success in improving ML enrolment and, to a lesser extent, attainment although a majority expressed concern about his centralist approach. It is worth noting, however, that his ML initiatives had significant support from ML teachers' organisations at the time (Johnstone, 1999: 528). His rationale was that, with EU entry looming, British/Scottish citizens needed to be prepared to capitalise (through becoming a multilingual workforce) on the opportunities to go out into Europe to take up job opportunities.

As **Figures 1-2** demonstrate, the outcome of the Forsythian 'Languages For All' initiative, set out in *Circular 1178: The Teaching of Languages Other Than English in Scottish Schools* (SED, 1989) and implemented through the associated Standard Grade and 5-14 initiatives, was to double the proportion of S3/4 learners involved in an ML course. **Figure 2** must be read carefully for this period as the percentage of Level 5 (Credit) course attainment inevitably declined because of the large number of new learners in ML (and other) courses, many of whom – as a result of "Languages For All" – were pupils of average/lower ability. Attainment in MLs across Levels 3-5 (only Level 5 is shown), however, appeared to mirror enrolment, seeming very promising in the early to mid-1990s. Nevertheless, there were signs of issues to come in the Level 5, 6 and 7 enrolment and attainment Figures for the early/middle 1990s as a brief surge from 1989, built upon the rapid rise from 1988 in S4 enrolment and attainment, gave way within five or six years to a return to decline (although French continued to benefit for several more years). Thus, the position in 1996, the starting point of this study, displayed both positives (sustained growth in S4 enrolment and aspects of attainment, followed by a period of stability) and negatives (a return to decline in S5 and S6).

## Discussion of Findings

This study provides a systematic attempt to gather the available evidence on patterns of ML enrolment and attainment and the causes of these patterns since FLUSS (see Table 1 for a summary). The quantitative findings presented here are an extension of those presented in Scott (2014) and, with Figures 1-2, offer a comprehensive analysis of ML enrolment and attainment patterns across the 50 years since examination statistics began to be compiled.

In setting the context, Figures 1-2 looked at MLs en masse to establish the rise and fall and (partial) rise of MLs in relation to other subjects in the period from 1965 (HMI were still responsible for examinations in the first years of O Grade and these results are not available) to 1996. From 1996, individual MLs are considered, both as raw data and as proportions of overall enrolment and attainment, so that their individual progress or decline may be examined. Figures 1-2 have already shown the decline in 'market share' after 1996 but the level of detail is significantly enhanced in the tables of this section.

Before examining the data on enrolment and attainment, it is important to give a brief chronology of key events related to ML development and governance. These are only a summary of the related quantitative findings of Scott (2014) but permit the changes in ML Figures to be considered against wider events, including curricular and qualifications initiatives, the establishment, operation and reports of national working parties, national/local authority political changes (both structural and policy-related) and the issues of key policy and advice papers from government or national agencies.

The curriculum experienced by Scottish learners in the late 20th century derived from a sequence of major curricular initiatives built on (but intermittently contradicting) previous initiatives. Those listed here include the Munn and Dunning, 5-14 and Higher Still initiatives, all of which were in various stages of implementation in 1996, making this one of the most pressurised period for educational development in Scottish history. These were accompanied by major qualifications changes, including the on-going implementation/amendment of Standard Grade throughout the 1990s, the creation of a new qualifications agency in 1997, and the appearance of 'old' National Qualifications in 1999-2000. A significant majority of respondents to this study considered these parallel, but largely educational, changes to be too much for the educational system to sustain and such was the stated view of teaching unions at the time. However, these were also overlaid with further changes. The frequently reviewed curricular agency, the Scottish Consultative Committee on the Curriculum (SCCC), was amalgamated with the Scottish Council for Educational Technology to create a larger agency, Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS), in 2000 and the status of HMI was changed to that of an executive agency slightly later, removing the Inspectorate from their role as one of three components of governmental governance (Scottish ministers, civil servants and inspectors) to become an 'arms-length' national agency (although this was partially reversed in 2011).

Almost all respondents to this study related these agency changes to further changes in national and local governance where UK governmental action led to three further highly significant impacts on the educational governance system. In the first change, the Regional Councils created by the Wheatley Report of 1969 and the Local Government Act of 1973 were replaced by smaller and, as respondents' views almost all suggest, less capable 'unitary' councils in 1996. Academic writers and politicians (e.g. Green, 1999) considering this period have described the difficulties experienced in the two years before the change and the first two years of the new councils. These years also coincided with the end of 18 years of Conservative rule and the arrival of a UK Labour government for whom education and, as it soon became clear, accountability and quality assurance were major foci.

However, this changed again as responsibility for Scottish education passed to the newly created Scottish parliament in 1999.

Thus, the seminal moments for MLs - the publication of the highly critical HMI report in 1998 and the FLUSS findings in 1999 - arrived in the midst of the five major curricular and qualifications initiatives, the major restructuring of curricular, qualifications and inspectorial agencies and, not least, wholesale changes to political structures, personnel and leadership at council and national levels. It might be considered surprising that any coherent action was taken at all during this period, given the unprecedented (before or since) scale of change and the degree of pressure on the system. Then, in August 2000 the SQA failed to issue results to all pupils in the first year of the then newly revised National Qualifications. The findings of the ensuing national enquiry led to significant changes in the structure and leadership team of the SQA as well as to the status and structure of HM Inspectorate. The SQA Crisis of 2000, as I term it, provided the most visible manifestation of the strain upon those attempting to take forward these multiple and complex changes. These enforced agency changes occurred in parallel with a 'development overload' (numerous simultaneous national initiatives including a complete restructuring of local authorities and their education teams). This resulted in a significant short-term diminution of capacity and direction in the Scottish politico-educational governance system, followed by lesser but longer-term impairment of the system.

The future directions of the curriculum in general and of MLs in particular were arguably sealed during a period when seven Ministers (with widely differing agendas) carried responsibility for education in the eight years from 1996. The 1998 HMI Report on MLs had replaced the optimism of the 1990 Report with a starkly negative view of the subject and FLUSS (McPake et al., 1999) had uncovered concerns about the motivations of pupils, parents, ML teachers and headteachers alike.

Despite the turmoil, but perhaps goaded by significant press criticism, Helen Liddell - the third of the seven Ministers - established a Ministerial Action Group (a sign of the increased extent of political control: previous committees had been multi-agency committees of SCCC, SEB and HMI personnel) in 1998. This body produced the Citizens of a Multilingual World (CMW) report (Scottish Executive, 2000), which replaced compulsory P6 to S4 Modern Languages with an 'entitlement' to 500 hours of ML learning (at unspecified stages of the curriculum). Both the CMW report and the funding which underpinned it were endorsed by the then Minister for Education Jack McConnell but left to his successor for subsequent implementation due to McConnell's unforeseen elevation to First Minister. In these changes, the initiative somehow lost its secondary school direction and shrank to become an initiative limited almost entirely to primary schools. Two cogent HMIE reports (HMIE, 2005a, 2005b) identified these issues but were apparently ignored by civil servants and politicians alike.

**Table 1: Key Documents and Events Impacting upon ML Enrolment and Attainment**

Document/Event	Date	Type	Impact on ML provision
Munn Report (on structure of the curriculum in Yrs 3 and 4)	1977	S.E.D./C.C.C. Report	S1/2: Compulsory (para. 4.11) S3/4: Elective (para. 4.11) (but most able 'should be encouraged') S5/6: availability as a multi-level option
Curriculum and Assessment for the 90s	1987	S.E.D. Report	S1-4: Compulsory S5/6: Optional
Circulars 1178 and 1187	1989	S.E.D. Circulars	Pre-P6 and S5-6: optional P6-S4: compulsory
Curriculum Design for the Secondary Stages – Guidelines for HTs	1989	S.C.C.C. Report	S1/2: Compulsory S3/4: Compulsory S5/6: Optional
Higher Still: Opportunity for All	1992	S.O.E.D. Report	S1/2: No comment S3/4: Compulsory S5/6: Optional
Curriculum & Assessment in Scotland: Guidelines: MLs	1993	S.O.E.D. 5-14 Guidelines	P1-P7: Not considered S1-S2: Compulsory
Replacement of Regional Councils	1996	Political Change	Initial difficulties and later decline in capacity due to staffing cuts
Creation of Scottish Qualifications Authority	1997	Agency Change (from SEB and SCOTVEC)	Initial difficulties in implementing new qualifications
Standards & Quality, primary & secondary schools: MLs	1998	HMI Report	Sweeping condemnation of teaching, leadership (at various levels) in MLs
Establishment of Scottish Parliament	1999	Political Change	-
FLUSS	1999	Research report	Evidence on causes of ML issues incl. climate of negativity
Creation of Learning & Teaching Scotland (LTS)	2000	Agency Change (from SCCC and SCET)	-
Introduction of 'old' National Qualifications	2000	Qualifications Change	SQA 'Crisis' of 2000
Citizens of a Multilingual World	2000	Ministerial Action Group report	No compulsion. Individual entitlement to 500 hours' ML learning. Optional beyond this.
Modern Languages: 5-14 National Guidelines	2000	LTS.: Revised 5-14 Guidelines	P1-P5: Not compulsory P6-S2: Compulsory
Ministerial Response to <i>Citizens of a Multilingual World</i>	2001	Scottish Executive	Entitlement for all in S3-S6. ["Local authorities will be provided with financial support to help them ensure that this entitlement is available in schools in their area." (p.8)]
CfE: Building the Curriculum 3: A Framework for Learning and Teaching	2008	Scottish Government	S1-S3: ML compulsory (from Experiences and Outcomes) – but not sustained in all schools S4-S6: optional
Creation of Education Scotland from HMIE and LTS	2011	Agency Change	Reduction in inspection and curricular support staff; removal of subject specialist HMIs.
Language Learning in Scotland: A 1+2 Approach	2012	Scottish Government: Language Working Group Report	P1-P7: L1= mother tongue. L2 compulsory from P1-S3; L3 to be introduced from P5 at the latest (by 2020) S1-S3: L2 compulsory; L3 required for part of S1-S3

The backdrop against which these ML changes occurred was one in which the incoming coalition Scottish Executive implemented the major national agency changes previously described and resolved the question of 'who speaks for Scottish education' – a role previously claimed by HMI (McPherson & Raab, 1988) – in favour of the Scottish Parliament. Given the five major curricular/qualifications developments already active, it is presumably a facet of individual ministerial priorities that two further major priorities were added. The sixth was the *Curriculum Flexibility* (Scottish Executive, 2003) initiative. However, the seventh, *Curriculum for Excellence* [CfE], effectively removed the sixth but left its two substantive actions, the repeal of the national secondary curriculum guidelines (SCCC, 1999) and the implementation of Circular 3/2001 on local control of the curriculum, in place. With the significant development implications of CfE rapidly coming to dominate Scottish

educational debate, the remnants of Curriculum Flexibility quietly left headteachers with effective control of the curriculum in their schools (although respondents to Scott (2014) indicate this was not consistently the case in all authorities).

Only in 2012 did MLs return to consideration when Dr Alasdair Allan, the junior Education Minister, launched the ‘1+2’ Initiative (Scottish Government, 2012a, 2012b) in an attempt to reinvigorate both Modern Languages in the Primary School (MLPS) and also in the early secondary period. Unfortunately, at the time of publication, this appears to be under threat from the latest in a line of mutually conflicting initiatives (e.g. 10-14 and 5-14; the Howie report and Higher Still; Curriculum Flexibility and Curriculum for Excellence; Citizens of a Multilingual World and Circular 3/2001) as the very positive intent of 1+2 has been prematurely affected by the significant reductions in ML enrolment and (even more so) attainment brought about by some schools’ and authorities’ implementation of the new National 3-5 courses in S4.

What impacts have these developments had on ML course enrolments and attainment? The effects may be best seen through examining the three major MLs (in terms of uptake and tradition) separately from the set of minor MLs, as the scales of operation vary widely. The three major MLs – now French, Spanish and German in order of size – display the patterns set out in **Figure 3** below. It shows that French and German display similar enrolment patterns wherein both approximately held their positions until the implications of the repeal of the curricular guidelines and the ML aspect of Circular 3/2001 became clear. Thereafter, sustained decline set in, accelerating after 2007 and again in 2014. Spanish has gained at their expense, but the rise of 3000 candidates is not significant against the loss of almost 40,000 French and German candidates since the late 1990s. However, **Figures 1 and 2** show the decline more clearly as the raw figures are slightly clouded by a small ‘bulge’ passing through the pupil population.

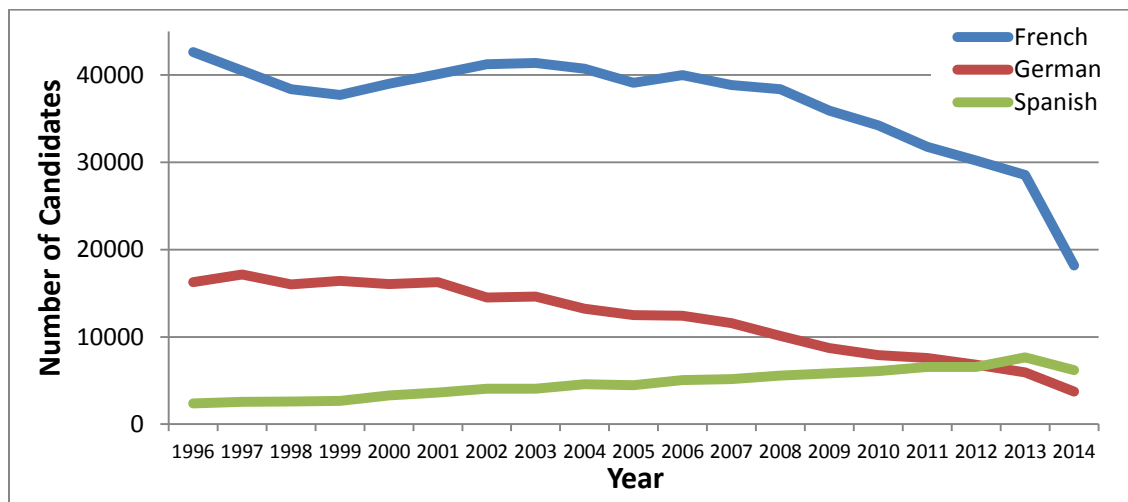
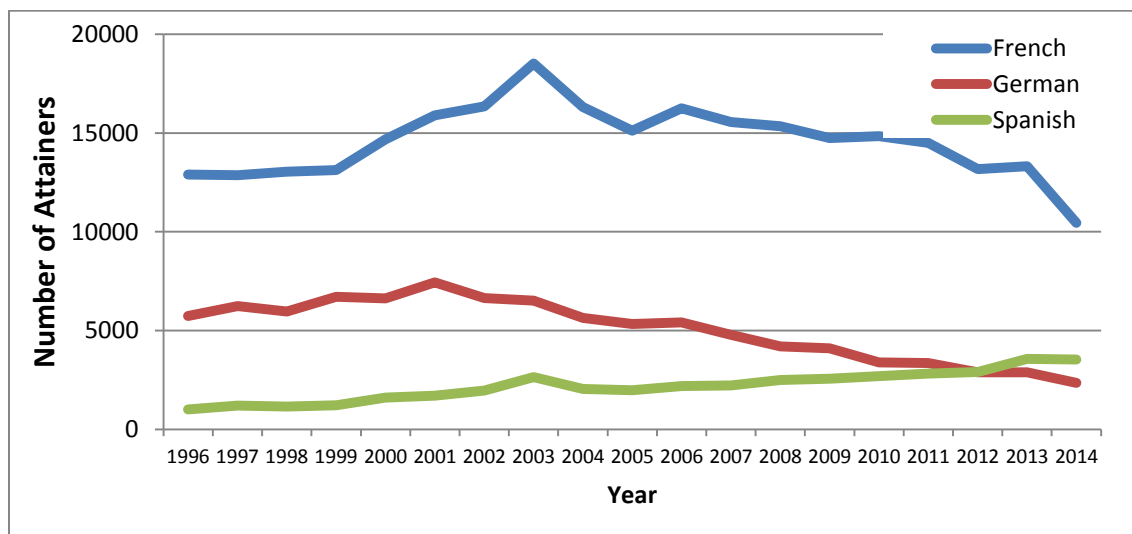


Figure 3: Major Modern Languages: Numbers of candidates at SCQF Levels 3-5 combined, 1996-2014



**Figure 4** displays Level 5 (Credit/Intermediate 2/National 5) attainment; these are the S4 pupils who *may* choose to take a Higher ML in S5 or S6. Despite the motivational concerns of FLUSS in 1999, the Level 5 aspect of *Languages For All* continued to improve until 2001 or just after (in the case of French). This period of growth from 1987 to around 2001 represents the only substantial manifestation of a positive outcome to any politico-educational initiative in MLs since the campaign to introduce Ordinary Grade qualifications in the 1950s.



**Figure 4: Major Modern Languages: Attainment at SCQF Level 5 (Cr./Int.2/Nat.5) only, 1996-2014**

Thereafter, increasing ‘flexibility’ in school curricular structures (i.e. increasing removal of compulsion to take an ML in S4 and, in some schools, S2/3) - possibly combined with the motivational issues identified by (teacher/headteacher respondents to) FLUSS (but not substantiated by many parent/pupil respondents to the report) and with increasing numbers of vocational options - gradually caused a decline in attainment. This decline may be seen to have accelerated from around 2006-07 but there is no evidence to suggest why this has occurred. There are several possible factors, including further societal disdain for foreign matters (European Commission, 2006, 2012), governmental failure to react to the HMI reports (HMIE, 2005a, 2005b) warning that all was not well, the period from 2001 to 2012 when there was little ML policy development or governance activity (except training MLPS teachers), the change of political administration in 2007 (bringing with it changed priorities and a principal focus away from educational matters), or the rapid decline in the capacity of many local authorities’ core education teams brought about by the 2008 fiscal crisis or the Scottish Government – COSLA Concordat’s removal of ‘ring-fenced’ budgets.

A further sharp decline in both enrolment and attainment in 2014 is clearly linked to the latest in a lengthy set of ‘unintended consequences’ in Scottish educational policy. In this case, the move to an extended period of Broad General Education in S1-3 (a later Curriculum Review Group construct, rather than an aspect of the National Debate on Education), had led to a move by around a third of schools to reduce the number of S4



courses from 8 to 6 and somewhat less than a third to move to 7, with the remainder retaining 8 courses despite the temporal constraints. The overall effect of these actions has been to reduce S4 course enrolment by slightly less than 12% (roughly equivalent to the average number of courses taken reducing from less than 8 before CfE to slightly less than 7 in 2014). The worst effects have been seen in '6-course' schools where MLs have often had to compete for learners' interest with all other subjects apart from English, Mathematics, Science and Social Subjects. Since many pupils have taken more than one Science or Social subject, this has left MLs competing for the final curricular slot with all other subjects. Unfortunately, the ML effects of this have been profound with one-year reductions in enrolments of 37% in French, German and Chinese and 20-25% reductions in enrolment in Spanish (previously a consistent growth subject for 20 years), Gaelic (Learners) and Urdu. Only Italian, whose enrolment pattern has been increasingly erratic over the last decade, displayed a slight improvement (after a sharp drop the year before). ML attainment statistics were slightly worse than these, with French, German and Chinese showing S4 attainment drops of over 40% and the others over 20%.

One remaining factor is worth consideration. **Figure 5** shows the percentage of candidates attaining Level 5 and then moving on to Higher. Despite the growth and decline of the major MLs during the period from 1996, the pattern for French and German is remarkably consistent: around 30-40% of those who pass at level 5 continue to study the subject at Higher in the subsequent year.

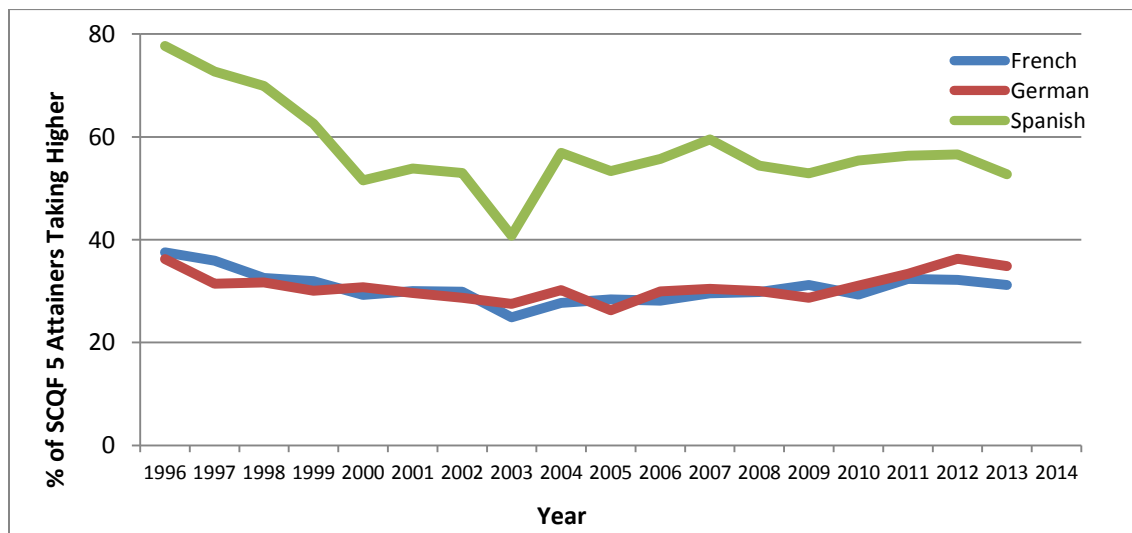
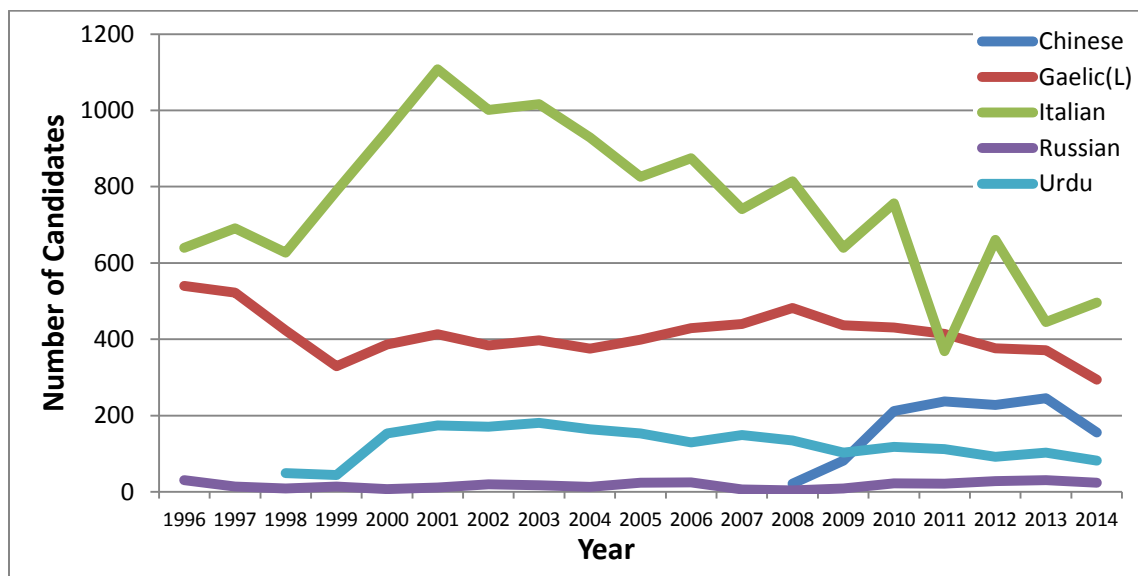


Figure 5: Major MLs: Subsequent Year Higher Uptake as a Percentage of the Stated Year's Level 5 Attainers

Many of the remaining 60-70% are pupils for whom an SCQF5 ML pass represented their terminal achievement as they would proceed down a mathematical, scientific, social science, technological or creative/aesthetic pathway. A smaller number would be pupils who had wished to continue with MLs but whose grade at Level 5 perhaps too low (e.g. a borderline pass) to continue at Higher and a further group would include pupils with

some interest in MLs but stronger grades in other subjects, prompting a re-think of S5/6 pathways. What is intriguing is the consistency of the figure irrespective of pass rates and uptake changes. Respondents to this study had mostly suggested that only those learners with an absolute commitment to MLs were continuing to take an ML at Level 5 and then Higher. That does not seem to be borne out by **Figures 3-5** as, irrespective of the fluctuations in uptake and attainment, the Higher intake rate remains at 30-40%. This requires further investigation.



**Figure 6: Minor Modern Languages: Enrolment at SCQF Levels 3-5 combined, 1996-2014**

The Spanish graph demonstrates the language's original role as a second language for serious linguists: hence the original 77% conversion rate to Higher. That this declined to a *reasonably* steady 50-55% is an indication that it has become the principal ML for a wider group of learners, although there is clearly still a group of linguists in the figures, thus holding it well above the Higher progression level for French and German.

The impact of the educational and political factors noted earlier on the major subjects are also apparent with respect to the minor (by uptake and length of existence) ML subjects although, having much smaller learner populations, they do not fully parallel those seen in the major subjects – as is clear from **Figures 6-7**:

The decline of Russian and Urdu is apparent in **Figure 6**. Concerns also arise from the recent decline in enrolments for Chinese, despite its Scottish Government priority status. Likewise, the decline of Gaelic (Learners) after 2007 is significant, particularly given the political and financial investment made since then by the current government. The greatest concern is for Italian which, after a significant increase to 1100 candidates around 2000, was seemingly on the verge of a breakthrough to more significant status but has since plunged to less than half its peak level, accompanied by significant fluctuations in enrolment.

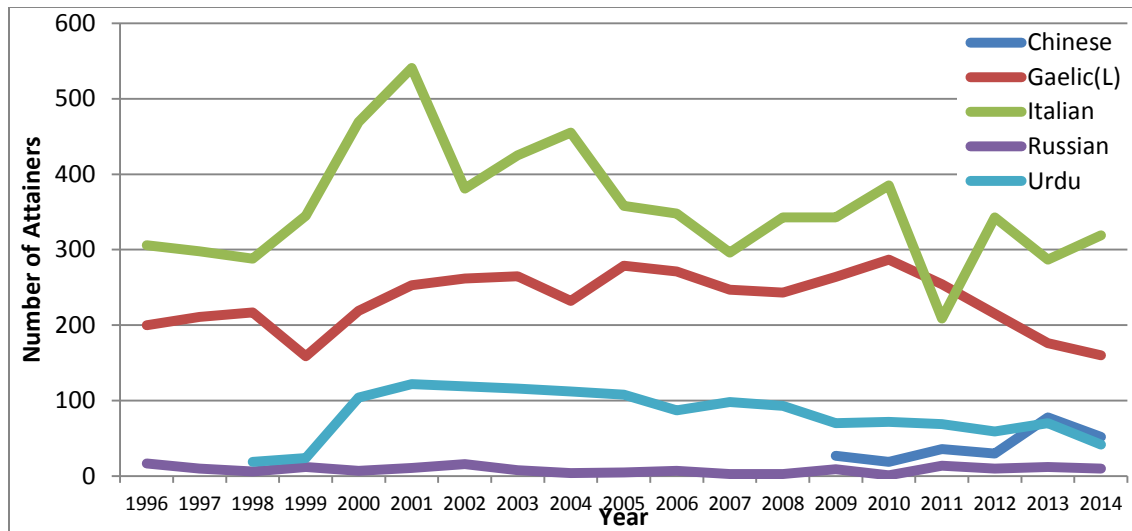


Figure 7: Minor Modern Languages: Attainment at SCQF Level 5 (Cr./Int.2/Nat.5) only

The picture for attainment (**Figure 7**) is of equal concern for Chinese, Urdu and, since 2010, Gaelic (Learners). Over the period, Italian has fluctuated wildly but, uniquely, retains a level of SCQF Level 5 success similar to that in the period of growth. However, this comes from a rapidly shrinking candidate base, again suggesting that Italian may be sustained by ‘second language’ linguists.

## Concluding Thoughts

The ML subjects have sustained multiple impacts on both enrolment and attainment, linked to educational and political initiatives and actions. Some of these impacts have been unintended, often because of the unanticipated (and unplanned for) mutual impacts of multiple national initiatives. Some, however, arguably reflect a long-term view which has appeared in many government documents (SED, 1947, 1959a, 1959b, 1967, 1972; SEED, 2001) that Modern Languages is only for ‘the bookish minority’ (SED, 1947: 21) and is thus optional for the majority from S4-S6, S3-S6 or even from S1 to S6.

Although periods of ML growth (and their causes) may be observed, there have been greater periods of decline, particularly in the era defined by ‘unitary’ councils and devolved government. In the twenty years since 1996 there have only been five years (to 2001) where growth or stability might be claimed. Decline recommenced in 2001, accelerated after 2007 and increased again in 2014. Significant innovation overload, rapidly changing political and educational foci, a period of neglect (both of MLs and of the HMIE evidence (2005a, 2005b) which might have led to improvements) and structural changes to government, national agencies and local authorities alike appear to have significantly impeded progress in MLs.

The recent appearance of the Scottish Government 1+2 initiative (Scottish Government, 2012) provides a welcome reassertion of the need for Modern Languages. As ever, however, the “Law of Unintended Consequences” appears to control the destiny of MLs as this positive step in the earlier part of children’s education is already compromised by the

significant downturn in uptake for "new" National Qualifications ML courses in S4. 1+2 is also dependent upon the willingness and ability of local authorities and their schools to take up the challenge of 1+2 and to see it as an important priority, rather than one priority of the many which must be juggled and somehow supported in a period of financial and staffing difficulties. It must therefore be hoped that the Scottish Government's provision of funding to support 1+2 is assigned by Councils to support the initiative for which it was intended.

The issues summarised in this section and exemplified in the earlier sections of the paper are significant causes for concern. Further research and evaluation would inform renewed planning for improvement.

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## (Turning Our) Back to the Future? Cross-sector Perspectives on Language Learning

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*Lynne Jones and Hannah Doughty*

*University of Strathclyde*

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**Abstract:** This paper reports on the analysis of a subset of the data related to a wider project about perspectives on language learning as part of the launch event of the Scottish Government's 1+2 language policy in November 2012. Transcriptions of interviews with learners from primary, secondary and tertiary education sectors were compared and contrasted using an iterative coding process. The findings suggest that the lack of challenge in the language curriculum, previously identified by McPake *et al* in 1999, continues to act as a demotivating factor, compounded by poor transition arrangements between education sectors. A subsequently conducted literature review revealed commonalities with our own findings. Some recommendations for stakeholders in languages education are put forward for consideration.

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**Keywords:** modern languages in the primary school, transition, cross-sector links, Curriculum for Excellence, 1+2 language policy

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### Introduction and Background

In the autumn of 2012, Scottish Government asked SCILT, Scotland's National Centre for Languages, to collect views about language learning from students of all ages across Scotland, in line with Recommendation 34 of the Report by the Working Group on Languages (Scottish Government, 2012). Opinions gathered would be edited into a short film, to be shown at the national official launch event of the Scottish Government's 1+2 language policy in November 2012. The policy had been announced in the Scottish National Party's election manifesto:

We will introduce a norm for language learning in schools based on the European Union 1 + 2 model - that is we will create the conditions in which every child will learn two languages in addition to their own mother tongue. This will be rolled out over two Parliaments, and will create a new model for language acquisition in Scotland. (Scottish Government manifesto commitment, 2011)

The whole film project involved 143 language learners from one nursery school, five primary schools, five secondary schools and one higher education institution. The interview footage was edited into a 3-minute video clip for the national conference, as per Scottish Government instruction. In addition, three sector-specific clips were produced, which are now hosted on the YouTube channel of the SCILT website.

During the editing process, we noticed that a number of comments echoed findings from previous research (McPake, 1999; SCILT 2011a; SCILT 2011b) and we therefore decided to undertake a closer analysis of the data. Significantly, an important curriculum change had taken place in Scottish education over the timeframe under

consideration, 2001 - 2012. As can be seen in Figure 1, we assume that the university students (Y1-Y5) had predominantly experienced the '5-14' curriculum. The 'Curriculum for Excellence' (CfE) was introduced in 2004 so the S4 students in our study likely experienced both 5-14 and CfE during their primary education. The P6 and P7 language learners only had experience of CfE which has a stronger focus on formative assessment and on working across traditional subject boundaries. We therefore wondered whether the responses from this latter group in particular might reflect a different experience of teaching and learning.

The preliminary findings were shared in the form of a research poster at a cross-sector event during the Engage with Strathclyde week in April 2014. Following further analysis, the more detailed findings were presented at the Annual Conference of the Scottish Association of Language Teaching (SALT) in November 2014.

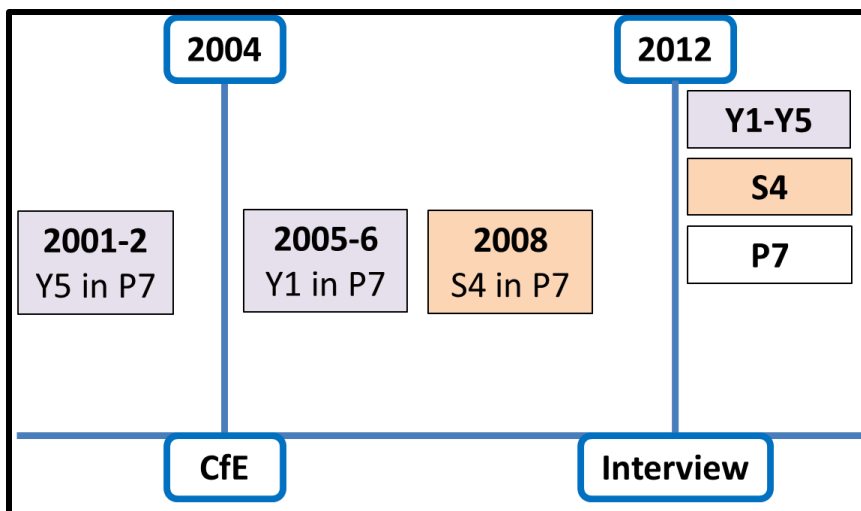


Figure 1: Timeline indicating curriculum experience of participants

## Methodology

Given the relatively limited timeframe, it was decided to contact local authorities across central Scotland and students at University X, located close to SCILT. Quality Improvement Officers (QIOs) with responsibility for language provision in schools were contacted by email. QIOs from five local authorities consented to participate and provided the names of relevant schools. An information and consent form was issued by the schools to the parents/guardians of all participants (143 in total) and interview times agreed. Through the Language Ambassadors programme running at University X, seven students for whom a language formed part of their degree volunteered to be interviewed for the film project.

Given the large number of participants and the large amount of film footage, it was essential for us to apply criteria to help refine the focus of our analysis. Since the norm in Scottish primary schools up until the introduction of the 1+2 language policy was for languages to be taught from P6 and P7 we decided to analyse only interview footage with learners from these year groups from that sector. In the case of the secondary



language learners, we decided to concentrate on the S4 learners as they had recently moved into the Senior Phase. The selection criteria were not applied to the university participants as there were only a small number of volunteers.

The interviews were semi-structured, covering the same aspects, but phrased as appropriate to the age of the participants:

- Languages other than English spoken at home and/or learnt at school/university
- Pleasurable and challenging aspects of language learning/being multilingual
- Linkages made between any plans for the future and the role of languages within these
- 'Eureka' moments linked to language learning
- Messages for the politicians and educators at the Languages Conference

The interviews were both video and audio-recorded and then transcribed. We analysed the transcripts in an iterative manner, starting with some likely coding categories, such as learner motivation; impact of family background or language role models; communication; employment; and emotions. However, as expected, the coding process revealed further categories, such as relevance and repetitiveness.

Overall we assumed that since the data was originally collected with the acknowledged intention that views would be showcased at a national conference, participants would hold, or profess to hold, largely positive attitudes towards language learning. At the same time, we cannot be sure that participants in our study were selected in line with the above assumptions. For example, we do not know whether QIOs sent a request to all schools in the authority to volunteer or if specific schools were identified and then invited or nominated to participate.

## Findings

### Language Learner Perspectives - University

Interviews were held with seven students from a range of stages: one female student from Year 1 (Deirdre), two female students and one male student from Year 2 (Clare, Carol and Chris), one female student from Year 4 (Betty) and two male students from Year 5 (Alex and Andy) (NB: all Year 3 students with language options were unavailable for interview as they were on their year abroad stay). There was a fairly even gender distribution amongst the participants, which does not in fact represent the gender split for any of the European languages at SQA Higher Grade in general, as it very much female-dominated: In 2012, male uptake was 23% for Spanish, 25% for French, 27% for German, and 29% for Italian. It is also important to note that apart from the two Year 2 female participants, all other students were learning a language in conjunction with a vocational subject, (most notably law), suggesting that students' motivation for language learning had a strong instrumental focus. An overview of the HE participants is provided in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: University Interview Participants Overview**

Name	Gender	Year	Main Degree	Language(s)
Alex	M	5	Mechanical Engineering	Italian
Andy	M	5	Law	Spanish
Betty	F	4	Journalism & Creative Writing	French
Clare	F	2	Languages	French & Spanish
Carol	F	2	Languages	French & Spanish
Chris	M	2	Law	Spanish
Deirdre	F	1	Law	French

Year 2-5 students would not have experienced any of the CfE reforms, which were introduced in 2004 as they would already have finished primary school at that time. Deirdre, the only Year 1 student participant, might have experienced the beginnings of the reform

### **Motivation for language learning – ‘Eureka’ moments**

All university participants in the study were Student Language Ambassadors, i.e. they had volunteered to go out to schools to give promotional talks on the benefits of language learning, or to participate in language promotional events. We therefore assumed that their language learning motivation would be very high, and this was indeed reflected in their responses with regard to their present language learning experiences. However, the interviews revealed that this had not always been the case.

For Alex (Year 5), the ‘Eureka’ moment did not occur until his first year at university, following a chance encounter with an Italian student at a party. This led to a decision to spend a year in Italy on an Erasmus grant where he “fell basically in love with Italian.” By contrast, his memories from school were much less favourable:

*In P6 you felt like you were learning set phrases, and when you were in Standard Grade you were learning how to pass an exam. You weren’t learning how to construct or be creative. (Alex)*

For Andy (Year 5), the Eureka moment had come a bit earlier, during a Global Classroom initiative in his senior year. It opened his eyes to different possibilities, and like the other participants in our study, he was supportive of an early start to language learning and wanted to ensure that future young people would still have the opportunity to continue with language study:

*If we don’t keep these doors open for travel and for work opportunities abroad then we’re going to be kept apart from the rest of the world. (Andy)*

Similarly to Alex, Betty (Year 4) could not “remember in High School ever seeing anything to do with what the end result could do for me.” Her Eureka moment only came during her first year studying journalism at a further education college. During a

visit to a television news studio, she witnessed a journalist interpreting during a live broadcast and thought: “It looked brilliant and I want to do that!”

Amongst the Year 2 students, both Clare and Chris had had a positive experience at school. Unusually for a boy, Chris had studied both French and Spanish to Advanced Higher level, and had benefitted from contact with a Modern Language Assistant. He then used his Spanish to good effect when his uncle got married in Spain and he was asked to help with interpretation. For Clare, having had the chance to go abroad during her school year gave her greater confidence in speaking. By contrast, Carole reported that like most people in her French class she felt frustrated by the lack of that contact. She experienced her Eureka moment when she saw her uncle conversing with waiters in a restaurant in several different languages.

*I remember once in a restaurant he was talking to us obviously in English and then he spoke to the waiters and waitresses and he was having a good laugh with them in French and then with this Italian family and I just sat there and I was so envious and I thought ‘Oh, I want to do that one day (Carole)*

Deirdre (Year 1) had not enjoyed her language learning experience at school but during an extended immersion stay with a family abroad that her parents had organised she recognised the relevance of having language skills:

*Learning another language is all about learning how to respect other people (Deirdre)*

### **Summary of Language Learner Perspectives from University**

There were a number of points on which all HE participants agreed: They all felt that an early start would help to normalise language learning and improve cultural awareness. However, they would also have liked schools to provide more challenging and meaningful language learning experiences. They had found their stays abroad both demanding and liberating with their self-confidence increased.

## **Language Learner Perspectives – Secondary School**

All twenty-two secondary school participants were at the time studying at least one language in S4. Due to the self-selection process outlined earlier the students were spread somewhat unevenly across three secondary high schools, code-named Yellow, Orange and Grey. The group from Orange High School was female dominant and many of the participants were speaking a language other than English at home due to their parental background. The group from Grey High School were male dominant, and had studied German since Primary 6. The boy from Yellow High School was interviewed as part of a larger group from different stages. An overview can be found in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Overview of Secondary School Participants**

School	Boys	Girls	Characteristics	Language(s)
Orange HS	3	7	Non-Anglophone heritage	French, Urdu
Grey HS	9	2	Predominantly Anglophone heritage. No multilingual role models	German
Yellow HS	1	0	Anglophone heritage. Father a multilingual role model	French

### **Experience of CfE**

In relation to the HE participants, the language learners from S4 were between three-seven years younger. We are making the assumption that all of them would have experienced some aspect of the new curriculum, although we did not inquire about this during the interviews.

### **Motivation for language learning – ‘Relevance’**

The responses from each group reflected both students’ home background and the range of language options available at their school. For example, in Orange High School, all participants had a non-Anglophone background at home; they also had the opportunity to study two languages, although this did not necessarily include their home language. In Grey High School, the majority of participants were only studying one language and did not have occasion to speak another language at home. The only S4 boy from Yellow High School, had some distant Polish heritage, and he had a positive parental role model since his father spoke several different languages, which he needed for work.

Across all three schools, there seemed to be a consensus that a greater choice of languages should be available to study, even at Orange High School, where a wider than normal range of languages was on offer. Most also expressed the belief that language learning should start earlier than P6 or P7. Like the HE participants, the secondary school students reiterated the desire to avoid repetition between primary and secondary sectors and create a more challenging context in the latter.

*It's good starting to learn [a modern language] earlier so you're not playing when you get to high school (Boy9, Grey HS).*

*Teaching us how to say hello and greetings, it's not really hard to do so [...] You could have all this done [in primary school] and doing the harder stuff once you get into high school (Girl1, Grey HS)*

*We've been learning (French) since P5 and now I'm in S4 and I know so little (Girl2, Orange HS)*

Overall, the boys seemed to have a more instrumentally oriented motivation for language learning than the girls did but there was not always a clear vision about how languages would actually fit into a particular career path. However, there was a clear desire to use the language for REAL purposes, and with immediate relevance to them:

*I want to go travelling and you could do more stuff if you can speak different languages (Girl2, Orange HS)*

*We're teenagers and talking to other teenagers we'll be using up to date and slang [so] we don't need to learn the polite way of saying things (Boy3, Grey HS)*

*I think they should start having exchanges and get more involved in the full culture (Boy9, Grey HS)*

## Summary of Language Learner Perspectives from Secondary School

Like the participants from the HE group, who it has to be remembered were between two and seven years older, the respondents from the S4 groups were supportive of an earlier start to language learning, but also still in agreement that language learning could be made more interesting by making it less repetitive. There was also a call to use the language for real communicative purposes, that seemed relevant to each individual pupil, and this included their preferred choice of language.

## Language Learner Perspectives – Primary School

A total of forty-five P6 and P7 pupils took part in ten group interviews from five primary schools, code-named Blue, Red, Green, Purple and Gaelic. Again, due to the self-selection process, distribution was somewhat uneven across the five schools. Profiles of the primary participants are detailed in Table 3. All were learning French but participants in both Red and Gaelic PS were also learning an additional language (Spanish and Gaelic respectively). The majority of the pupils were from Anglophone backgrounds. There were a small number of multilingual role models in both Red and Green PS, either from non-Anglophone heritage or from family members living and/or working overseas, but none in Blue PS.

Table 3: Primary Interview Participants Overview

School	Boys	Girls	Characteristics	Language(s)
Blue	6	13	Anglophone heritage. No multilingual role models.	French
Red	6	6	Predominantly (but not exclusively) Anglophone heritage. Three multilingual role models	French & Spanish
Green	3	3	Anglophone heritage. No multilingual role models.	French
Purple	2	2	Anglophone heritage. One multilingual role model.	French
Gaelic	3	1	Gaelic Medium Education Unit – multilingual education	Gaelic & French

## Experience of CfE

In relation to the S4 participants, the primary language learners were four to five years younger. In relation to the HE students, they were between seven and twelve years younger and had experienced Curriculum for Excellence throughout their primary education.

## Motivation for Language Learning– ‘Making Connections’

For this group of participants there was a greater tendency to focus on the emotional aspects of language learning than in the previous groups, and there were notable differences between the responses from participants in the Red and Gaelic primary schools on the one hand, and participants from the Blue, Green and Purple primary schools on the other. For example, learners from both Red and Gaelic schools relished the challenges inherent in learning other languages.

*'[If learning a language is tricky] it makes you want to keep going.'* (Boy 2, Gaelic PS)

*'I would like to learn Arabic because I think that's quite challenging'* (Boy 1, Red PS)

However, in the other schools participants expressed feelings of anxiety and boredom which clearly inhibited them in their language learning.

*'I get kinda scared in case I say something wrong.'* (Boy 1, Purple PS)

*'It puts me off a little bit [...] I try to listen and it's hard to learn.'* (Girl 2, Blue PS)

These negative attitudes appeared to be engendered or reinforced by a repetitive language learning experiences.

*'Sometimes you learn something and you go right back after the summer holidays and ... you don't want to learn it again.'* (Girl 5, Blue PS)

*'In Primary you learn something then you go onto [something] different ... I think the first thing you [learn] you keep going on and you redo it every primary, you learn it again and again and again.'* (Boy 2, Purple PS)

Again, the views from the Red group differed in that respect:

*'It's fun learning different languages by playing games instead of just doing it in a text book and on a sheet of paper'* (Boy 5, Red PS)

*'[Our French lessons] are interactive ... it's not just the same thing every single time, we're always doing something different.'* (Boy 3, Red PS)

Like their university and secondary school counterparts, primary participants were very much motivated by real encounters with speakers of other languages. However, the rationales expressed in the Red group were more generic and integrative in nature, making explicit connections between language, culture and people whereas the personal relevance was more marked in the Blue and Green groups

*I'd like to learn Italian because I quite like Italy.* (Boy 6, Red PS)

*[Learning languages] is a really good experience because it lets you socialise with other people that speak different languages.* (Boy 3, Red PS)

*I would like to do Spanish because in my family we sometimes go to Spain and the first year we went we couldn't speak to anybody and it felt quite embarrassing.* (Girl 3, Green PS)

### **Vocational Relevance**

Surprisingly perhaps, the respondents from the primary schools had more to say about the relevance of languages in the world of work, except for the children attending the Gaelic school. Perhaps this was because languages seemed part of their identity, a natural ingredient of who they are and what they do. Across the other four schools the most common view about the usefulness of learning another language was that: 'It'll give you lots of opportunities for jobs.' (Boy 3, Blue PS)

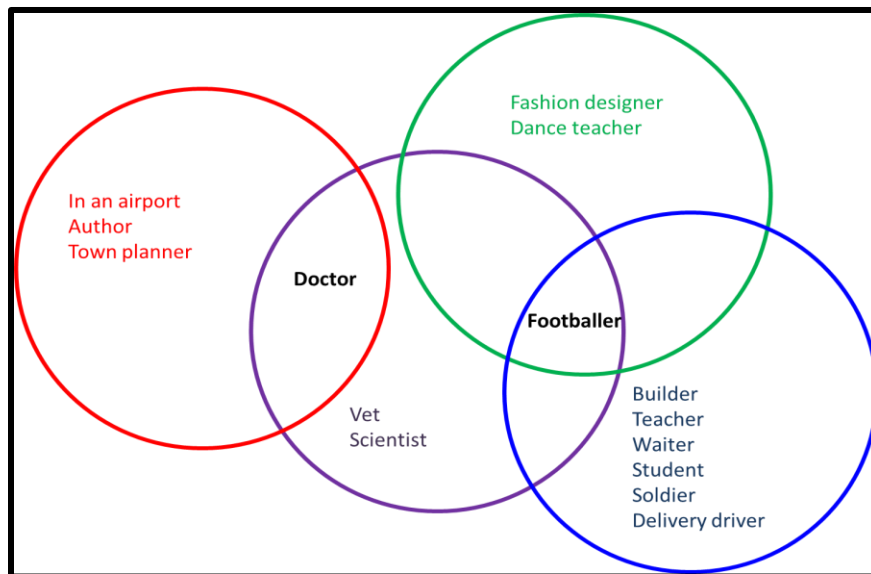


Figure 2: Venn diagram of suggested jobs that would involve language skills

A wide range of jobs were suggested (cf. Figure 2), especially from Blue primary school but again there was a slight but notable difference in perspective between participants from Red Primary school and the others. For example, in Blue PS and Green PS, the children assumed that languages would only become useful IF you had decided, or were obliged by your company, to live abroad.

*If you go for a job and you can't find one in Scotland then you might move to another country. (Girl 4, Blue PS)*

*You can use languages whenever you go to different countries [...but] I've never been abroad. (Boy 1, Purple PS)*

By contrast, children from Red PS spoke about the role of languages in jobs they would do locally in Scotland, e.g. working as a doctor or in an airport.

*My Mum, she works in a company and it uses different languages [...] and they've got people from all around the world, so I could do that when I'm older. (Boy 2, Red PS)*

*If you're like a doctor and foreign people come in, you'll understand them and be able to talk to them. (Girl 5, Red PS)*

*Learning languages would help if you want to work in an airport because loads of foreign people would come and you could speak to them and give directions and things like that. (Girl 3, Red PS)*

### Summary of Language Learner Perspectives from Primary School

Despite the difference in age and curriculum experience primary school participants still expressed many similar views as those from the secondary and university sectors. Any belief in the potential benefits of language learning, or which language(s) to learn seemed frequently linked to the relevance it had to pupils' own lives. Significantly, quite a number of primary pupils already identified repetition and an absence of progression in their learning experiences and expressed some frustration at the lack of creative



application in the language class, suggesting that attitudes to language learning are formed very early on. It was therefore encouraging to note that in the Red Primary School it had been possible to create positive attitudes towards languages in an Anglophone context.

## **Evidence from the Literature**

### **The importance of transition – primary to secondary**

Since the initial aim of the initiative was not motivated by research design principles no literature review had been conducted prior to the interviews being held. The questions had been formulated based on the request from Scottish Government for the launch of the 1+2 language policy. During our subsequent literature review we discovered that coincidentally a team of researchers at the University of Reading (Courtney 2014; Graham et al, 2014) had been conducting a Nuffield funded research project into the transition phase of language teaching from primary to secondary school. Their findings were published in 2014 and highlight that negligence of the transition phase had been identified in several previous studies. For example, forty years ago Burstall (1974) identified poor liaison or transition as a principal contributing factor to the failure of the last major primary languages initiative in England and twenty-four years later Blondin et al (1998) came to the same conclusion. The authors also cite Galton et al (2000) who makes the point that poor transition as a factor across other disciplines, with similar effects, e.g. lack of continuity in pedagogy and curriculum coupled with repetition of content leading to a 'hiatus' in learner progress and decreasing learner motivation. However, with regard to languages, Courtney (2014) believes the problems may be compounded due to different teaching models employed, different languages taught, varying levels of time allocated to language teaching, varying levels of teacher proficiency, as well as the increasingly diverse nature of the pupil population. The need for better transition arrangements had also been highlighted by primary school respondents in the SCILT National Survey (2011a:9).

### **The importance of transition – secondary to tertiary**

Turning to the interface between secondary and tertiary education, again around the time of our interviews, Absalom (2012) had been conducting research into the factors facilitating or hindering continuation of language study in the Australian education system. Absalom's literature review cites findings by Hajdu (2005), Curnow & Kohler (2007) and Ren (2009) from which he extracted a series of factors related to the decision-making process, cutting across the different student groups:

- the benefits of language learning for future career options
- the importance of travel as a motivating factor for language learning
- the centrality of human relationship (either familial or between students and teachers) for successful engagement with language learning



- the integration of culture into the language program as a key element of motivation to continue language learning
- the possibility of using the language outside the classroom context as a stimulus to continue with language study.

As was the case with our own research participants, continuation with language learning was associated with a 'personal relevance' to the learner (Taylor and Marsden, 2014) and the comments from participants in Red PS suggest there may be ways for teachers to help pupils discover this personal relevance.

## **Implications for teacher education**

In our study, implications for teacher education derive from the experiences and perceptions of the learners. There was a consensus among the young language learners about their interest in using their language skills for authentic communication, and in learning about other cultures. Many of the S4 and university participants felt that they had not experienced enough of either during their secondary education.

Almost mirroring our own participant timeline two studies published seven years apart (Kelly et al, 2004; Hennebry, 2011) indicate that teaching about target culture and wider citizenship as part of modern languages lessons in secondary schools in the UK remains rare. Correspondingly, the model of intercultural understanding taught in most UK primary schools is 'static' according to Woodgate-Jones & Grenfell (2012). In their 'dynamic' conceptualisation of intercultural understanding, culture is 'much more variable and constantly shifting' (ibid: 342), chiming with Liddicoat et al.'s (2003) explanation that:

*Cultural knowledge is not therefore a case of knowing information about the culture; it is about knowing how to engage with the culture. (Liddicoat et al., 2003: 8 cited in Woodgate-Jones & Grenfell, 2012: 342)*

Hennebry (2014) also recommends the European Profile for Language Teacher Education: A frame of reference by Kelly & Grenfell (2004) to language teacher educators (EPLTE). A voluntary framework commissioned by the European Commission, EPLTE identifies twenty seven aspects of professional development for early phase languages teachers, under the headings of Knowledge and Understanding; Strategies and Skills; and Values. Practical suggestions for developing each aspect are outlined in the document. Given that teacher education is now widely accepted as being a career-long endeavour, it would be worthwhile for languages teachers to consider the competences being presented, regardless of their length of service.

Certainly, in our view, language teacher education which encourages 'the development of critical and creative agency' (Evans & Esch, 2013: 140) amongst individual teachers and professional communities would go a long way to addressing the issues that emerged in our study. We also agree with Hennebry (2014) that teacher education has a vital role in developing teachers' subject knowledge and professional practice around the interrelated concepts of culture, citizenship and language learning.

## Implications for government

Less than a decade ago the Australian Government commissioned a review of teacher education for language teachers (Kleinhenz et al, 2007), which identified a number of challenges that mirror our own findings as well as those expressed by teachers and senior managers in SCILT's national survey of modern language provision (SCILT 2011a; 2011b), such as:

- The low value placed on languages and cultures within the communities
- Variations in supply and demand for modern language teachers
- Lack of sufficient time, within the 'crowded curriculum' of teacher education courses, for the study of languages pedagogy
- Insufficient language-specific teaching methodology

The report made a number of recommendations to be actioned by government and its associated bodies, some of which could arguably be applied to the current Scottish context, e.g.:

1. Take note of, and provide as models to all universities which train languages teachers, the innovative strategies used by some education faculties to forge strong links and partnerships with schools to establish collaborative approaches to languages teacher education, and suggest mechanisms for sharing these strategies (Recommendation 11)
2. Facilitate discussions which help Education faculties integrate studies of language and culture with professional studies of teaching, to reduce or eliminate the 'languages gap' that occurs when languages are studied at a significantly earlier period than studies of pedagogy, through the promotion of cooperative ventures to provide language-specific languages teaching methodology units. (Recommendation 12)

## Concluding Thoughts and Recommendations

The views expressed by the participants in the interviews on language learning across all three education sectors point to a lack of challenge in the language curriculum over a prolonged period of time. In light of the Scottish Government's commitment to change public attitudes to language learning and the implementation of the 1+2 language policy by 2020 the need to address this issue has acquired new urgency. Good transition arrangements between sectors are in our view crucial elements in that process as they should lead to a better understanding by stakeholders of learner needs and motivation. There should also be closer links with the community, as this might help identify positive role models and create that local and immediate relevancy. We are aware that some collaboration between schools and universities already exists (cf. Doughty, 2008) and with additional support from government these diverse initiatives could be brought together to make the desired sea change in attitude happen.

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## The Provision of European Languages in Anglophone Contexts: Aotearoa/New Zealand in Focus

*Diane Johnson, University of Waikato, New Zealand*

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**Abstract:** The provision of European languages within the New Zealand education system is discussed here in the context of the origins and evolution of language education in the country and the various problems that have been associated with it. These problems include the fact that any discussion of languages inevitably raises issues concerning the endangered status of Māori, the indigenous language of the country, issues which have the potential to highlight deep divisions within society. Hence, there is an unwillingness on the part of successive governments to engage seriously in debate about language needs and aspirations. Only a very small percentage of students at any level of the education system study languages other than English and Māori. Although European languages are studied by over half of those who do study languages, there is very little choice in terms of the European languages on offer. Furthermore, public opinion favours the teaching and learning of Asian and Pacific languages. In fact, two of the languages on offer that originated in Europe, French and Spanish, may have retained their position, in part, because they are, for many New Zealanders, at least as strongly associated with the Pacific and Pacific Rim countries where they are spoken as they are with their countries of origin.

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**Keywords:** European languages; language study; language policy and planning; New Zealand education

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### Setting the Context

The provision of European languages, that is, languages originating in Europe, in Aotearoa/ New Zealand is a fragile and potentially at-risk activity. This is not a recent phenomenon and the fragility is not limited to European languages. The teaching and learning of all additional languages in Aotearoa/New Zealand has always been, and continues to be, an extremely complex issue. In part, this complexity is a product of the country's relatively isolated geographical position, but the origins of an ambivalent national attitude towards the provision of language education can also be traced back to the country's colonial past. In the late 1890s, when the education system in Aotearoa/New Zealand was formalised and made compulsory for all, a succession of educational policy decisions and education acts (see, for example, the Native Schools Act 1867 (Calman, 2012) ) led to the imposition of English as the sole language of educational instruction. The dominance of English in the education sector was to bring the language of the indigenous Polynesian population (Māori) to near extinction with severe punishments meted out to students who spoke their language at school, even during recreation periods. In spite of determined efforts by Māori to revitalise the Māori language, particularly over the past four decades, it remains on the list of the world's endangered languages (<http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/>). The fact that there is widespread indifference to this in the country as a whole has meant that successive governments have been able to avoid any serious commitment to Māori language revitalisation and, of course, the financial implications of such commitment. As a result,

one of the country's official languages is now at a point where it risks being lost within a few generations.

The overall situation in relation to language education in New Zealand is captured by Robert Kaplan in the following observation:

*[Language] education is not adequately provided for in New Zealand, . . . the language situation is essentially not well understood, . . . an element of chaos exists in the various sectors that deal with language and . . . language rights - indeed, the very existence of some languages - are threatened by the failure to deal systematically with language matters. These concerns have, to some degree, been offset by a residual racism in society, by the mistaken belief that English is the only language necessary for New Zealand's development, and by the disturbing absence of real data regarding the language situation (Kaplan 1992, reported in Kaplan, 1993: 3).*

## **The provision of European Languages in the New Zealand education system: First steps**

The current position of European languages in New Zealand's education offerings cannot be appreciated without first understanding its overall development and placing this alongside the development of languages other than those which connect New Zealand to Europe.

When education was first made compulsory in New Zealand in the late 1890s, the curriculum, including modern languages, was a replica of the one on offer in Great Britain at that time. Students at secondary school studied Latin and Greek as a standard part of their education alongside English, science, mathematics and, even though their schools were twenty thousand kilometres away, British and European history. The importance accorded to Latin and Greek was apparent when each of the four New Zealand universities that were founded between 1869 and 1890 prioritised the establishment of a professorial chair in the classics. For a long period of time, enrolments in language papers at university level flourished because Latin (from the beginning) or Greek (from 1903) were compulsory subjects for the Bachelor of Arts degree. From 1917, this requirement for Arts students was lifted but law students were still required to study first year Latin until 1952 (Pollock, 2014).

The abolition in 1917 of the compulsory study of Latin and Greek at tertiary level for Arts students was replaced by a requirement that they should have a 'reading knowledge' of a modern foreign language. This, combined with a growing perception that modern languages were more relevant to day-to-day life than classical ones, led to the emergence of modern languages in schools, with French rapidly becoming the most commonly taught language at both school and university level and with specialist appointments in French being made at the four universities. While German had also begun to be offered, it was generally taught by non-specialist academics at universities. In fact, it was not until 1947, after the end of World War II, that the first full time

appointment in German at a New Zealand university was made (Pollock, 2014). In addition, other European languages, namely Russian, Spanish and Italian, began to be offered at university level and in a very limited number of secondary schools. There were, however, within a very short space of time, three events that would have a negative impact on this relatively positive situation so far as European languages were concerned. The first was the signalling by the UK in the early 1960s of an interest in joining the European Union (EU), it actually doing so in 1973 and, in 1987, it becoming a signatory to The Single European Act, which was designed to create an internal market allowing for free movement of goods throughout Europe. The second was the removal, in the 1970s, of the requirement that students studying for a Bachelor of Arts degree in New Zealand universities should have a reading knowledge of a modern language. The third was the sinking of the Rainbow Warrior in 1985 (see below).

In New Zealand, which had for so long been a key exporter to the UK, debate in the UK about whether to join the European Union and its subsequently doing so was a major concern, one that prompted many New Zealand businesses to seek to diversify their markets, particularly after the creation of a single European market in 1987, and one that also motivated the New Zealand Government to forge closer socio-political relations with New Zealand's Pacific Rim neighbours. As a result of this national shift in economic and political focus, universities and, following their initiative, a small number of secondary schools began to diversify their language offerings, introducing Asian languages, beginning with Japanese, Chinese and Indonesian in the second half of the 1960s (Pollock, 2014). In the late 1980s, a range of Pacific languages were also introduced. A number of other languages, such as Arabic, Croatian, Hebrew and Polish, were also offered for short periods of time in isolated locations but were subsequently withdrawn. European languages were under increasing pressure as the range of languages on offer expanded, with Japanese rivalling for a time French as the most widely studied language. At the same time, the overall number of students studying languages was decreasing.

The second event referred to above, the decision not to require BA students to be able to demonstrate a reading knowledge of a foreign language, led to a dramatic decrease in the number of students studying languages in universities and, due to the wash-back effect, also in schools. Languages departments were forced to enter into a highly competitive market-driven quest for enrolments.

The third significant event referred to above to have an impact took place on July 10th 1985. Under instruction from the French government, undercover intelligence agents bombed a Greenpeace vessel in Auckland harbour. The Rainbow Warrior was on its way to protest against French nuclear tests in Mururoa, French Polynesia. Fernando Pereira, a Portuguese photographer was killed and the event marked the beginning of a period of anti-French and, by association, anti-European sentiment in New Zealand. The drive for Pacific-rim alliances was intensified and many students made the conscious decision *not* to study European languages and, in particular, the French language.



## **The history of language policy development in New Zealand: A lost opportunity?**

According to a 2013 report of the Royal Society of New Zealand (Behrens, 2013), the country is now "home to 160 languages". Certainly, New Zealand, like Australia, is now a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual society. However, whereas Australia has gone beyond its original National Policy on Languages (Lo Bianco, 1987) to a revised Languages and Literacy Policy (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1991) and continues to be proactively engaged with language policy and planning issues, New Zealand has not yet succeeded in putting in place any sort of national languages policy. This makes it extremely difficult to engage in rational language planning of any type.

Throughout New Zealand's history, there have been various attempts to bring the teaching and learning of additional languages into focus, and to regulate their place in the educational offerings of the country. In reality, however, there are relatively few documents that refer specifically to the teaching and learning of international languages in the New Zealand context. Those that do report very similar findings, reach very similar conclusions and make very similar recommendations - all which have largely been largely ignored. This may be, in part, because the recommendations made, even those contained in official reports, are rarely accompanied by detailed supporting information and/or by an analysis of costs and benefits. Some key reports concerned with the teaching and learning of languages in New Zealand are the Thomas Report (Department of Education 1942/ 1959), the Marshall Report (Department of Education, 1978) and a report entitled *Second Languages in New Zealand Education* (Bancroft, 1980). Each of these has a great deal to say about the value of learning modern languages, but very little to say about how New Zealand could, or should, optimize language learning opportunities. The primary advantages of learning languages other than English are seen as being related to first language awareness, intellectual development and cultural awareness and, finally, to reducing isolation and coping and competing in the international arena.

There have been a number of research-based projects which have compared the languages situation in New Zealand with that of comparable regions in Australia (see, for example Peddie, 1994) and/or have discussed the importance of international languages in relation to business activity and the national economy in New Zealand (see for example Dunmore & Rollason, (1967), Enderwick & Gray, (1992); Enderwick & Akoorie, (1993), Watts & Trlin (1994). These, too, have been largely overlooked.

In 1991, after a significant amount of lobbying from language organisations and individuals interested in language issues, the New Zealand Ministry of Education commissioned a report on the language situation in the country and the factors that would need to be taken into account in the establishment of a national language policy. That report, *Aotearoa: speaking for ourselves*, was produced in 1992 (Waite, 1992a & b) and, in common with earlier reports, makes reference to the intellectual and cultural advantages associated with language learning. Thus, international languages are said to



offer New Zealanders the opportunity to “broaden our intellectual horizons” (Waite, 1992b, p. 6) and to “extend our understanding of others” and “improve our general language skills” (1993b, p. 62). The emphasis, however, is now less on the intrinsic value of language learning and more on its economic value:

*New Zealand needs people who can communicate effectively in a range of international languages, and move comfortably in a range of international cultures, in order to improve its diplomatic and economic relations with the world (Waite, 1992a: 6).*

In the project overview, Waite lists the following as priorities:

- revitalisation of the Māori language;
- second-chance adult literacy;
- children’s ESL and first language maintenance;
- adult ESL;
- national capabilities in international languages;
- provision of services in languages other than English.

In relation to the penultimate item, he makes the following observations:

*In the areas of international relations, security, trade and in-bound tourism, New Zealand requires people with language skills in specific international languages, namely the languages of the countries with whom we deal. Some are needed in the public sector, in the Ministry of External Relations and Trade and in the Trade Development Board, but most are required in the private sector. Our international language requirements will change over time, most notably in line with our trading patterns; any forward planning in the area of language capabilities must therefore attempt to anticipate these changing trends.*

*When combined with business and technical skills, a knowledge of the appropriate international language can add a much-needed competitive edge to a company’s performance. Any programme designed to promote international language skills must include a package aimed at pointing out to exporting companies the benefits of employing multi-skilled bilingual people (Waite, 1992a: 21).*

Waite’s report was met with a great deal of enthusiasm by various groups of language professionals and was followed by debates about the issues involved throughout many sectors of New Zealand society. Although the report itself does not attempt to estimate implementation costs or to examine the probable political impact of some of its recommendations, it became evident even before it was released that certain of its recommendations, such as, for example, prioritizing Māori language revitalisation, would be resisted strenuously in some quarters and that that resistance had the potential to be dangerously socially divisive. It also became clear that the report would need to be supplemented by a more detailed study that attempted to quantify language needs (social and economic) more precisely and to set specific targets in relation to

costs and benefits. This, in turn, would require the involvement of a number of government agencies. National language policy and planning must, inevitably, impact not only on education, but also on health, immigration, justice, business and many other key areas of society. For this reason, Kaplan recommended that planning should be “separated as soon as possible from the Ministry of Education” so that others could be “empowered to move policy implementation discussions toward a genuine national policy” (Kaplan, 1992, reported in Kaplan, 1993:3). However, in spite of a number of detailed responses to the Ministry of Education’s initiative in commissioning the Waite report (ibid; but see also Crombie & Paltridge, 1993; Peddie, 1993) and significant encouragement for the policy to be fully articulated and implemented, no follow up action was taken by the New Zealand government. It seems that even the added temptation of enhanced national economic performance was not enough to sway national and Governmental opinion towards the implementation of a national languages policy.

There have been at least two attempts since the effective demise of the Waite report to engage the nation on discussion of the potential value of a national languages policy. The first was initiated in 2008 by the then Race Relations Commissioner, Joris de Bres (de Bres, 2008). The second was initiated by the Royal Society of New Zealand in 2013 (Behrens, 2013). These initiatives also failed to gain any real traction.

## **European languages in New Zealand: A fight for survival?**

The lack of a national languages policy and the problematic context in which the teaching and learning of languages takes place in New Zealand have an impact on the ways in which individual educational institutions choose to organize the delivery of the national curriculum. As a result of recommendation 19 in the Ministry of Education Curriculum Stocktake report (Ministry of Education, 2002), a decision was taken to make it compulsory for schools to provide students in years 7 -10 (ages 8-14) with the possibility of studying a language in addition to the main language of instruction from 2007 onwards. However, they stopped short of mandating that this should be a compulsory part of the curriculum, and they did not make any recommendations about which languages should be made available. Currently the situation is that schools, particularly primary schools, have almost unlimited choice about which language or languages to offer as part of the school curriculum and the uptake of these languages is optional. This means that it is perfectly possible for a student to complete his or her schooling without ever having had the experience of learning another language. This somewhat ad hoc arrangement about the delivery and up-take of languages has a profound effect on the relationships between one sector of the educational system and another. For example, a student beginning further language study at secondary school who has already completed two years of French language study at primary school may be placed in the same class as students who have had no contact with the French language at all, or who may have done a few weeks of French in the context of a programme that provides an introduction to a number of different languages.

There are further problems. For example, a 1994 Education Review Office report notes that the number of hours of language tuition available to students sitting the first level of national examinations in French could vary widely (between 24 and 160 hours) from school to school, with a similar situation in the case of other languages.

The place of languages within the education sector and the ways in which they are delivered has an impact on the attitudes and perceptions of learners and their families and, consequently, on take-up and retention. A study by Shearn (2003) examined attitudes towards the learning of languages other than English and Māori among New Zealand school students in years 8 and 9, the parents of year 9 students, and a wide range of teachers. The findings indicate that "while attitudes to foreign language learning, of both adults and children, were mostly positive", they "nevertheless involved "a complex web of factors". The research data also show that the main reason why only around 50% of Year 9 students elect to study a foreign language, with poor retention rates in subsequent years, is that languages are optional for most secondary students. They also suggest that continuing to study a language requires strong intrinsic motivation in a context in which students believe that this will involve missing out on the opportunity to try other subjects (ibid: i). Shearn also found that the majority of students who opted for, and continued with languages were girls, with boys tending to prefer practical subjects. In fact, in the case of one secondary school, she found that "the minority of boys who were permitted to start a foreign language were discouraged from continuing by the general organisation and ethos of the school" (ibid).

Overall, Shearn (2003) concludes that:

*External factors often outweighed even the most positive attitudes among students, parents and teachers when option subjects were chosen. The low level of language learning in New Zealand, contrasted with the importance it has in comparable countries, was shown to result not so much from negative attitudes but rather from barriers within the education system as a whole and individual school cultures (Shearn, 2003: i).*

In the early 1990s, the Education Review Office (1994) conducted interviews with students who were continuing with the study of a second language to senior levels, concluding that those who were studying a European language were likely to have parents with a university education, most often in the arts and humanities while all of those studying Japanese at senior levels who were interviewed had parents with tertiary education qualifications in areas other than arts and humanities or had parents who were in professional or managerial positions in the public or private sector. This suggests that there is an intergenerational dimension to language study and that the educational preferences and career choices of parents/caregivers can have a profound impact on a) whether children study languages and b) on the choice of language/s studied, with European languages appearing to have greater appeal for those with a particular interest in the arts rather than in commerce.

The findings of a recent survey conducted for the Asia New Zealand Foundation (2014) indicate that attitudes towards language learning are changing, with eight out of ten

New Zealanders believing that school children should learn a language other than English. The overall results of that part of the survey which reports on which languages were deemed important to learn are outlined in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Rank order of language learning preferences and number of secondary school language enrolments in New Zealand (Asia New Zealand Foundation, 2014: 37)**

Language	% of respondents who say students should learn this language	Numbers enrolled in this language at secondary school
Māori	37%	22,729
French	18%	20,478
Japanese	19%	11,888
Spanish	18%	11,573
Chinese	49%	4,218
German	8%	4,185

The organisation responsible for conducting the report referred to above on behalf of the Asia New Zealand Foundation (Colmar Brunton) makes some important points about the data. In particular they note that:

*[There is a] considerable gap between the survey results and the languages most commonly taught in New Zealand secondary schools. The latest statistics published by the Ministry of Education show that French is still the most commonly taught foreign language in New Zealand secondary schools, with 22,478 students enrolled. Although the number of secondary students learning Chinese has increased by close to 150 percent in the past two years, Chinese is still the fourth most common language taught, with just 4,218 enrolments (nearly five times as many secondary students learn French) (Asia New Zealand Foundation 2014: 34)*

While French and Spanish are doing relatively well in comparative terms in relation to current enrolment numbers, it needs to be borne in mind that these languages are not necessarily primarily associated with Europe by New Zealand school pupils, many of whom are more likely to be familiar with variants spoken by their Pacific (New Caledonia and French Polynesia) and Pacific Rim (Latin America) neighbours, with whom they could play a vital role in establishing closer economic links.

The apparent enthusiasm and support for languages indicated in the Asia-New Zealand Foundation report referred to above does not appear to have translated into action. A subtle downward trend in overall enrolments in languages continues. In an article published in the largest daily newspaper in New Zealand, The New Zealand Herald, Tan (2015, April 26th) reports that:

*[The] percentage of students learning a second language in New Zealand secondary schools has dropped to its lowest in over 80 years. . . . Since 2008, the number of learners dropped from one in four to one in five at secondary schools.*

Based on Ministry of Education statistics, Tan (2015, April 26th) reports that "there were 14,054 fewer students learning additional languages last year (2014) compared with seven years ago, when the number was 71,730".

## Recent trends in language study

A statistical overview of the take-up of European languages at various levels in the New Zealand education system between 2007 and 2014, derived from Ministry of Education statistics (available at <https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/home>) provides an interesting snapshot. In the following tables, 'all languages' excludes English and Māori.

Table 2 below records the number of students studying a European language in years 1 to 8 (ages 5-12) from 2007-2014. Table 3 records the percentage of students studying a European language in comparison to overall number of students studying a language.

**Table 2: Number of students studying a European language in years 1- 8 from 2007-2014**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>French</b>	28,256	31,070	25,979	32,435	29,247	31,554	30,594	26,350
<b>Spanish</b>	21,893	23,627	23,778	27,533	23,325	24,319	24,906	24,548
<b>German</b>	11,106	11,503	8,830	11,525	10,659	10,283	9,458	8,089
<b>Russian</b>	114	122	174	55	17	65	180	173
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51,369</b>	<b>66,322</b>	<b>58,752</b>	<b>60,929</b>	<b>63,250</b>	<b>66,161</b>	<b>64,958</b>	<b>59,160</b>

**Table 3: Total number of students studying a European language compared to the total number of students studying all languages in years 1 to 8 from 2007 – 2014**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Total all languages</b>	95,161	99,760	88,628	107,077	102,900	108,356	117,174	120,187
<b>Total studying European languages</b>	51,369	66,322	58,752	60,929	63,250	66,161	64,958	59,160
<b>% studying European languages</b>	54%	66%	66%	57%	63%	61%	55%	49%

Tables 2 and 3 above indicate that, with the exception of Spanish (where there was evidence of modest growth) the number of students studying a European language in Years 1 to 8 of schooling remained relatively stable between 2008 and 2014, but the overall percentage of students studying a European language shows a slight downward trend, particularly since 2012.

The total number of secondary school students studying a European language for the same eight-year period is indicated in Table 4 below. The percentage of secondary school students studying a European language as compared with the percentage of all students studying a language is indicated in Table 5.

**Table 4: Total number of secondary school students studying a European language from 2007 – 2014**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>French</b>	27,284	28,245	27,197	23,856	23,234	22,397	21,570	20,478
<b>Spanish</b>	9,529	10,900	11,161	10,970	11,301	11,372	11,680	11,573
<b>German</b>	6,623	6,251	6,085	5,554	5,200	4,663	4,477	4,180
<b>Russian</b>	29	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43,465</b>	<b>45,396</b>	<b>44,443</b>	<b>40,380</b>	<b>39,269</b>	<b>38,432</b>	<b>37,729</b>	<b>36,231</b>

**Table 5: Percentage of secondary school students studying a European language compared to the total number of students studying all languages at secondary school level**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>TOTAL All languages</b>	363,963	373,979	368,616	356,349	358,434	344,025	342,603	340,181
<b>TOTAL European language</b>	43,465	45,396	44,443	40,380	39,269	38,432	37,729	36,231
<b>% studying European languages</b>	12%	12%	12%	11%	11%	11%	11%	11%

Tables 4 and 5 above indicate that, with the exception of Spanish (where there was an increase of 12%), the number of students studying European languages show an overall decline between 2007 and 2014 and that, at the same time, the percentage of students studying a European language also showed evidence of an overall decline.

So far as the tertiary education sector is concerned, the most recent enrolment data relating to European languages and total tertiary-level enrolments that are available are provided in Tables 6 - 8 below (from Tertiary Sector Language Learning 2003-2010).

**Table 6: Total number of students studying European languages in New Zealand tertiary institutions 2003 -2010**

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>French</b>	870	906	893	866	851	809	970	965
<b>Spanish</b>	1,163	1,159	1,143	1,183	1,192	1,078	1,023	1,106
<b>German</b>	474	472	424	414	420	412	431	444
<b>Italian</b>	233	232	241	218	219	225	225	212
<b>Russian</b>	44	56	44	35	44	40	42	49
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,784</b>	<b>2,825</b>	<b>2,745</b>	<b>2,716</b>	<b>2,726</b>	<b>2,564</b>	<b>2,691</b>	<b>2,776</b>

**Table 7: Percentage of tertiary students studying a European language compared to the total number of students studying all languages at tertiary level 2003-2010**

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>TOTAL All languages</b>	4,929	5,017	5,097	4,810	4,693	4,339	4,283	4,436
<b>TOTAL European languages</b>	2,784	2,825	2,745	2,716	2,726	2,564	2,691	2,776
<b>% studying European Languages</b>	56%	56%	54%	56%	58%	59%	63%	63%

**Table 8: Number of students studying European language as a percentage of the total cohort of tertiary level students in New Zealand, 2005 - 2010**

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>TOTAL All enrolments</b>	504,000	491,000	579,000	502,000	469,000	466,000
<b>TOTAL European language</b>	2,745	2,716	2,726	2,564	2,691	2,776
<b>% studying European Languages</b>	0.54%	0.55%	0.47%	0.51%	0.57%	0.6%

Overall, the total number of students studying a European language at tertiary level in New Zealand remained relatively stable between 2007 and 2010 while the percentage of students studying European languages as compared to non-European ones rose slightly, as did the percentage of the tertiary education cohort as a whole who were learning a European language. In particular, it is relevant to note that, throughout the eight year period covered, over half the students studying an additional language at tertiary level were studying a European language. However, there are four things that need to be borne in mind in considering this data:

- the actual number and overall percentage of students studying European languages was very small (never more than 0.6% of the total cohort of tertiary level students);
- the number of European languages offered was very small;
- two of the European languages offered are widely spoken in Pacific (French) and Pacific Rim countries (Spanish), countries with which contemporary New Zealand identifies closely;
- the data available are very limited with, for example, no indication being provided about how many students who began their study of European languages ab initio at tertiary level, how many were majoring in European languages and how many graduated during the period in question with a qualification that included one or more European languages.

A review of European language and language-related offerings in New Zealand University Calendars reveals a further important issue. It appears that these offerings are heavily weighted in favour of culture and literature rather than language acquisition, suggesting that the primary focus of European language programmes at tertiary level is



not on training students to become expert users of the target language but on familiarizing them with aspects of the literatures and cultures of the countries where the target language is spoken. The assumption that appears to underpin this is that languages students will somehow reach a level of proficiency adequate to manage complex texts on a variety of subjects even though they may have had a very limited number of hours of exposure to their target languages at school, or none at all, and even though they may have had very few hours of class contact at tertiary level devoted largely to language proficiency development.

## Conclusion

There are many highly qualified language teachers and highly professional language associations doing very impressive work in the arena of language education in New Zealand. They are, however, doing so in the face of very considerable odds. The lack of a New Zealand national languages policy, combined with the 'chaos' in the area of languages provision referred to by Kaplan (Kaplan 1992, reported in Kaplan, 1993: 3) means that the environment in which languages are taught and learned is an uneasy one. So far as European languages are concerned, the situation is of considerable concern. Although over half of all language learners in the New Zealand Education system have continued to learn one of the few languages of European origin offered within the education system, the total number of such learners is small as a percentage of tertiary students as a whole. Furthermore, public opinion clearly favours the learning of languages more closely associated with Asian, Pacific and Pacific Rim countries. Unless there is some movement in the very near future towards requiring all young people in New Zealand to become involved in modern language learning, what is now a fragile situation is likely to become a critical one. Once the skills base is lost, it will be very difficult to recover.

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## Languages Curriculum in Victoria and Australia

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*Adrienne Horrigan*

*Secretary, Modern Language Teachers' Association of Victoria*

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**Abstract:** The government of the state of Victoria is very supportive of the teaching of languages in Victoria's schools. As part of the introduction of a national Australian curriculum, the states and territories of Australia are embarking on an ambitious programme of languages education that aims to deliver language-specific curricula for fifteen languages by 2025. Victoria is aiming to implement these fifteen curriculum documents and also to create generic models for other languages not included in the national project. This paper seeks to provide some background information to the policy and give an overview of current developments.

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**Keywords:** language learning, language policy, Australia

**Link to [Appendix: Explanations for Abbreviations and Acronyms](#)**

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### Background and Introduction

Australia is currently in the process of introducing a national curriculum. Up till now each state or territory devised its own school curriculum for primary and secondary students. The "[Shape of the Australian Curriculum](#)", first approved by the council of Commonwealth and state and territory education ministers in 2009, is the document that guides the development of the Australian Curriculum. It was devised by ACARA, the Australian Curriculum and Assessment and Reporting Authority. This paper reflects the position adopted by these ministers collectively in their 2008 [Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians](#). The most recent version was approved by the ACARA Board in late 2012 but this is still a work in progress.

ACARA leads national collaboration to produce the Australian Curriculum from Foundation (the first year of schooling) to Year 10 (henceforth **F-10**) and for some learning areas up to Year 12. The available F-10 curriculum can be viewed at the [Australian Curriculum website](#). It should be stressed that this curriculum is an evolving process, with Maths, English, Science and History in the forefront.

The preamble to the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, sums up the Educational Goals for Australian students:

- Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence and
- All young Australians (will) become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, active and informed citizens.

The Commitment to Action includes

- Developing stronger partnerships
- Supporting quality teaching and school leadership
- Strengthening early childhood education
- Enhancing middle years development
- Supporting senior years of schooling and youth transitions
- Promoting world-class curriculum and assessment
- Improving educational outcomes for Indigenous youth and disadvantaged young Australians, especially those from low socioeconomic backgrounds
- Strengthening accountability and transparency.

Each state or territory reserves the right to implement the national curriculum in a way best suited to their particular and very different needs.

## The Australian Curriculum: Languages

The Australian Curriculum: Languages is designed to enable all students to engage in learning a language in addition to English. The design of the Australian Curriculum: Languages recognises the features that languages share, as well as the distinctiveness of specific languages. There are aspects of the curriculum that pertain to all languages. The key concepts of language, culture and learning, as described in *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages*, underpin the learning area. They also provide the basis for a common rationale and set of aims for all languages. The Australian Curriculum: Languages originally included language-specific curricula for eleven languages and a Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages. The latter is deliberately designed to cater for the 250 or more Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages of Australia.<sup>1</sup>

Professor Angela Scarino from the University of South Australia was the lead writer for the languages curriculum (excluding the Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages – see **Appendix: Explanations for Abbreviations and Acronyms**). In a journal abstract she outlines her thoughts:

*Developing curricula for languages in the context of the Australian Curriculum is a complex undertaking that needs to address a number of demands. These include: the nature of language-and-culture learning for contemporary times within an increasingly diverse linguistic and cultural world; the goals of mainstream education and the ‘given’ curriculum as a whole and language curricula as a part of that whole; the process of transposing concepts from current research into a design for language learning for diverse language learners and diverse languages; the need to achieve jurisdictional and professional consensus about the nature and extent of change that is sustainable and productive for the present and the future.(Scarino, 2014: online)*

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. <http://ausvels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/>

Under ACARA, Chinese and Italian were the first two languages to be developed, followed by nine others. Because the ACARA language curriculum document is designed for specific languages, it seemed earlier in 2014 that there would be about 39 languages currently taught in Victoria without any curriculum provision from ACARA. (Languages developed at that time were – Arabic, Chinese, Italian, French, German, Greek, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Vietnamese with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages still under development).

However, in May 2014 the Federal government allotted additional funding for the development of another three specific languages (Auslan = **Australian Sign Language**, Hindi and Turkish) together with Classical Languages so that those without provision then numbered approximately 35. The state of Victoria is planning to produce generic versions of the curriculum, which will need to be amended to particular language requirements, to cater for all of these languages

## **Victorian Curriculum F-10**

Prior to the planning for the Australian curriculum the state of Victoria used a curriculum framework known as the VELs curriculum (Victorian Essential Learning Standards). The former VELs model (2005) formed the basis for the AusVELs curriculum, which the Victorian government and Catholic schools now use for planning, assessment and reporting and which outlines what is essential for all Victorian students' learning. The name "AusVELs" refers to a combination of the Australian Curriculum and VELs since Victoria is currently in transition from VELs to a local version of the Australian Curriculum. AusVELs incorporates the Australian Curriculum as it is progressively developed.

AusVELs uses an eleven level structure (F-10) to reflect the design of the new Australian Curriculum, whilst retaining Victorian priorities and approaches to teaching and learning. Implementation of AusVELs began in 2013, when schools could use the achievement standards for reporting to parents in some learning areas, and is optional until mandated for 2017.<sup>2</sup>

When the VELs (Victorian Essential Learning Standards for Languages) was developed in 2005<sup>3</sup>, the distinctiveness of different languages was acknowledged through six generic models, e.g.

- Roman alphabet languages
- Non-Roman alphabet languages
- Character-based languages
- Auslan
- Classical Languages

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/languages/preamble>

<sup>3</sup> Cf. <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/P/vceages/studies/lote/lotelistindex.aspx>

- Victorian Aboriginal (Koorie) languages

This is not so in AusVELS. As of 2015 it is planned that the following languages would have their own new specific F-10 curriculum documents: Arabic, Auslan, Chinese, Classical Languages, French, German, Greek, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Turkish and Vietnamese. This leaves other languages, taught in small numbers of Victorian schools, not provided for, e.g. Albanian, Armenian, Bosnian, Chin Hakha, Croatian, Dari, Dinka, Dutch, Filipino, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hungarian, Karen, Khmer, Macedonian, Maltese, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Sinhala, Somali, Swedish, Tamil, Thai, Tigrinya, Ukrainian and Yiddish.

However, as mentioned earlier, Victoria is planning to devise two new generic templates for the new F-10 Australian Curriculum: one for Roman alphabet languages and the other for Non-Roman alphabet languages. This now allows teachers of other languages in Victoria to work on the new national curriculum and so share the new terminology and concepts embedded in the documents designed for the Australian Curriculum: Languages. The creation of two new generic models will increase opportunities for all language teachers to participate in professional learning related to the new national curriculum.

In 2010, when discussing the curriculum for the first four curriculum areas being developed by ACARA, Professor Barry McGaw AO, ACARA Board Chair, stated,

*The overall aim is to produce a final curriculum in English, history, mathematics, and science that equips all young Australians with the essential skills, knowledge and capabilities to thrive and compete in the globalised world and information rich workplaces of the current century. (ACARA, 2010, online)*

This quotation now applies equally to Languages. Students of Languages will be able benefit from access to the curriculum developed by ACARA through its more sophisticated approach to language curriculum design. The ACARA Languages curriculum documents are based on current research into language acquisition, to present a more complex view of communication and interculturality. This new understanding of language interactions involves, for example, the moulding of identity through reciprocal, inter- and intraculturally-complex and dynamic communication. Furthermore, the ACARA model for Languages has recognised the need for language-specific curricula, thereby acknowledging that languages, whilst sharing common elements, are very individual in nature.

During a meeting in March 2014, Andrew Ferguson, President of the MLTAV<sup>4</sup> asked a small group of teachers present for a show of hands about their preference regarding inclusion of all the languages taught in Victoria in the Australian Curriculum. Confronted with staying with “friendly, old and known” VELS vis-à-vis the innovative AusVELS model, the vote went for change, despite the associated problems. The maxim of the celebrated leader Abraham Lincoln comes to mind:

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<sup>4</sup> Modern Language Teachers' Association of Victoria

*The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew. (Lincoln, 1862)*

The statement stresses the need to persevere, and perseverance has indeed resulted in success for language provision in Victoria. The Victorian Government has included in its language policy the requirement that all primary schools offer a language program at Foundation level in 2015 and that by 2025 a language will be mandated for all students up to Year 10 (ages 15/16). In other words, Victoria has accepted the challenge of accommodating its multicultural heritage.

## Summary of VELS and AusVELS

*The curriculum is the defined and mandated set of knowledge and skills that schools must teach and assess, a democratic entitlement rather than an individual determination of what is required for effective participatory citizenship. Languages are no longer an option for Victorian schools – all schools will be required to report on each student every year. Howes (2014)*

In 2004 the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) were developed. The VELS framework of essential learning had three interwoven purposes to equip students to:

- Manage themselves and their relations with others
- Understand the world and others
- Act effectively in the world

The three components of the AusVELS curriculum are designed to enable students to meet the demands of a modern, globalised world:

- the processes of physical, personal and social development and growth
- the branches of learning reflected in the traditional disciplines, and
- the interdisciplinary capacities needed for effective functioning within and beyond school.

The Australian Curriculum has since been developed using the following overarching design structure: Learning areas, General capabilities, Cross-curriculum priorities.<sup>5</sup>

### **LEARNING AREAS (Branches of Learning)**

English, Mathematics, Science, Health and Physical Education, Languages, Humanities and Social Sciences (History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship, Economics and Business), The Arts (Performing and Visual), Technologies (Design and Technologies; Digital Technologies).

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/foundation10/f10index.aspx>

**GENERAL CAPABILITIES (Physical, personal and social development)**

Critical and creative thinking, Personal and social capability, Intercultural understanding, and Ethical Understanding (ICT, Literacy and Numeracy are also categorised as General capabilities).

**CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES (Interdisciplinary)**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, Sustainability.

**Senior Secondary**

Currently there is no planned change to the suite of languages at the senior secondary level. The VCE (Victorian Certificate of Education) is the certificate that the majority of students in Victoria receive on satisfactory completion of their secondary education.

Victoria offers 45 VCE languages in the VCE. Some languages are taught more widely in mainstream schools, (e.g. Chinese, French, German, Italian, Modern Greek, Indonesian, Japanese). The After Hours Community Schools cater for many other languages, e.g. Polish, Bosnian, Hindi, Khmer etc. up to Year 12, under the supervision of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA).

At this time, due to demand, three new VCE studies are being implemented, Vietnamese First Language, Chin Hakha and Karen, both languages of Myanmar.

"Chinese Language, Culture and Society" is under development and is intended for students who have had little exposure to the study of Chinese. . There is a large cohort of students of Chinese and VCE Chinese is already offered at three different levels:

- Chinese Second Language (students who have learned all their Chinese in Australia)
- Chinese Second Language Advanced (students who have resided in a Chinese – speaking country or region for more than 3 years)
- Chinese First Language (students who have had extensive exposure to the study of Chinese)

**Concluding Thoughts**

The new Languages Curriculum in Victoria, whilst still not fully implemented, has a number of innovative and ambitious features. It is trying to cater for a wide range of languages, some with tailored curricula, to allow the cultural components to come to the forefront. The main challenges to successful implementation will depend on both the availability and appropriate training of existing and future language teachers.



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## Appendix: Explanations for Abbreviations and Acronyms

Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages	<p>Prior to the arrival of Europeans, about 250 distinct languages were spoken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups in Australia. Each of these languages had several dialects, and it is estimated that there were at least 600 plus dialects.</p> <p>The languages of mainland Australia are classified as either Pama-Nyungan or Non-Pama-Nyungan. The Pama-Nyungan language family covers 90% of the Australian mainland. The name is derived from the words for man, <i>pama</i> in the north-eastern languages and <i>nyunga</i> in those of the south-west. Non-Pama-Nyungan languages are found in the far north of the Northern Territory and Western Australia. They are a disparate group of languages that vary greatly from each other and from the Pama-Nyungan languages.</p> <p>Many Australian languages have been lost and now fewer than 20 remain 'strong', that is, spoken by people of all ages.</p> <p>There are two traditional languages in the Torres Strait Islands. Kalau Lagau Ya, the language of the Central and Western Torres Strait Islands, is a Pama-Nyungan language, but Meriam Mir, the language of the Eastern Torres Strait, is related to the neighbouring languages of Papua New Guinea.</p>
ACARA	The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is an independent statutory authority with the aim to "improve the learning of all young Australians through world-class school curriculum, assessment and reporting." Further info: <a href="http://www.acara.edu.au/default.asp">http://www.acara.edu.au/default.asp</a>
AFTMLA	The Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations (AFMLTA Inc.) is the national professional body representing teachers of all languages in Australia. The term 'modern' is used for historical reasons and is not intended to exclude any language. The AFMLTA believes that there is value in all language learning and is accordingly interested in promoting the teaching and learning of any language (ancient, modern, 'community', Aboriginal, traditional, international, European, Asian or other). Downloaded from: <a href="http://afmlta.asn.au/about-afmlta/">http://afmlta.asn.au/about-afmlta/</a>
AO	Officer of the Order of Australia
Auslan	Auslan is the sign language of the Australian Deaf community. The term Auslan is an acronym of " <b>A</b> ustralian <b>S</b> ign <b>L</b> anguage", coined by Trevor Johnston in the early 1980s,[3] although the language itself is much older. Auslan is related to British Sign Language (BSL) and New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL); the three have descended from the same parent language, and together comprise the BANZSL language family. Auslan has also been influenced by Irish Sign Language (ISL) and more recently has borrowed signs from American Sign Language (ASL). (Downloaded from Wikipedia entry)
AusVELS	AusVELS is the Foundation to Year 10 curriculum that aims to provide a "single, coherent and comprehensive set of prescribed content and common achievement standards, which schools use to plan student learning programs, assess student progress and report to parents." Further info: <a href="http://ausvels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/">http://ausvels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/</a>
F-10	Foundation to Year 10 (ages 5 to 15/16)
MLTAV	The Modern Language Teachers' Association of Victoria Inc. is a professional association for Languages teachers, and is the umbrella organisation for approximately twenty-two Single Language Associations (SLAs) in Victoria. Further info: <a href="https://www.mltav.asn.au/">https://www.mltav.asn.au/</a>
VCAA	Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education

## Recent Publications – Abstracts and Weblinks

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### **British Academy and Guardian (2015) The seven big language learning issues facing the UK**

In response to the longstanding concerns about modern language learning in the UK, the Guardian and the British Academy launched the Case for Language Learning. During a two-year partnership, the project generated hundreds of articles, discussions, public debates and online Q&A sessions to demonstrate the importance of language learning. This Living Languages report highlights many of the debates and thinking generated by the project, and brings together some of the dominant themes.

Press coverage and download report –

<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/apr/14/seven-language-learning-uk-multilingualism>

### **British Council (2015). World Class: how global thinking can improve your school.**

Over recent years there have been a large number of studies conducted on the impact of international education work in UK schools. The authors have analysed these findings and drawn together the key benefits of implementing international education in primary, secondary and special educational needs schools in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The aims are to show how international programmes have improved literacy and learning, helped teachers' professional development and met inspection requirements.

<https://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/content/world-class-how-global-thinking-can-improve-your-school>

### **British Council Scotland (2015). Connection Scotland to the world.**

This report aims to capture the range, depth and impact of British Council Scotland's work. The data and case studies were gathered by independent researchers and cover British Council Scotland's work over a three year period, from 2011 to 2014. The report demonstrates that using Scotland's cultural and educational assets to forge transnational connections enables the development of trust between nations and people for greater security and prosperity.

<http://scotland.britishcouncil.org/connecting-scotland-world>

### **CfBT Education Trust and British Council. (2015). Language Trends 2014-15: The state of language learning in primary and secondary schools in England.**

Language Trends 2014/15 is the latest in the series of annual reports on language teaching based on online surveys completed by teachers in representative samples of schools from across the country. Surveys of secondary schools began in 2002 and cover both state and independent sectors. From 2012 onwards state primary schools have also been surveyed. This year's report focuses particularly on the initial impact of compulsory status for languages in Key Stage 2 which was introduced in September 2014, and on continuing concerns about the number and profile of pupils who study a language beyond the compulsory phase in secondary schools. Concern about the drop in

the number of pupils taking A levels in language subjects gave rise to two separate inquiries by national bodies in 2014. This report probes further into the issues raised.

<http://www.cfbt.com/en-GB/Research/Research-library/2015/r-language-trends-2015>

### **Rosetta Stone (2015). Multinational means multilingual (Infographic).**

Commissioned by Rosetta Stone, research firm VansonBourne conducted a survey amongst 500 UK and Germany-based execs. 87% of executives state that their organisations rely on more than one critical language, yet 70% agree there is not enough training for staff. The infographic shows the research outcomes in detail.

<http://org.rosettastone.co.uk/content/INFOGRAPHIC-Business-Value-in-Learning-Report>

### **Scottish Government (2015) Scotland's International Framework**

This Framework sets the direction for Scotland's international activity. As the summary says the world is increasingly global, and Scotland must remain internationally relevant. Our people must have the skills and attitudes to seize new opportunities and participate in a global world. This is integral to building a stronger, fairer and more prosperous Scotland. The Framework was developed collaboratively and identified the need for a shared understanding of internationalisation and strategic objectives to help align and prioritise international work.

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/03/3466>

### **UCML (2015). Report on language teaching in degree programmes 2014, UCML.**

A summary of the current state of languages in universities across the UK, on the basis of a survey of contact hours, credit loads and progression routes through the main 'European' languages taught within named degree programmes.

<http://www.ucml.ac.uk/languages-education/he-languages>

### **UCML, AULC, et al. (2015). UCML-AULC survey of Institution-Wide Language Provision in universities in the UK (2014-2015) 22.**

This survey, carried out by members of the University Council of Modern Languages (UCML) and the Association of University Language Centres in the UK (AULC), sought to obtain a picture of the current availability and demand for Institution-wide Language Provision (IWLP) across the higher education sector in the UK. Also sometimes referred to as 'Languages for All', IWLP typically comprises elective language course units taken for academic credit and language courses studied in addition to and alongside a student's degree programme. Students taking these courses have been referred to as 'non-specialist language learners' since they often have little background in foreign language learning, and the courses they study are not a compulsory component of the degree programme for which they are registered. This is the third year in succession that the UCML-AULC survey has been conducted. As there is no other mechanism or agency in a position to compile this data, the UCML-AULC survey is of particular importance.

<http://www.ucml.ac.uk/news/253>

## Downloadable Articles from Other Academic Journals

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Date checked: 28 May 2015

### **Language Learning & Technology (LLT)**

<http://llt.msu.edu/>

Open and free-access journal. Selected titles from Issue 19 (1) – February 2015:

[The Evolving Roles of Language Teachers: Trained Coders, Local Researchers, Global Citizens](#)

[Promoting Pre-Service Teachers' Reflections through a Cross-Cultural Keypal Project](#)

[Supporting In-Service Language Educators in Learning to Telecollaborate](#)

[Teaching Critical, Ethical and Safe Use of ICT in Pre-Service Teacher Education](#)

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### **Language Learning Journal - Current Issue**

**LLJ** is the official journal of the Association for Language Learning (ALL) and its focus is on language education in the UK. Although full access is only available to subscribers you can glean the most important details of the articles from their abstracts. The two most recent issues at time of going to press had as their focus '**Intercultural competence**'.

**Most cited articles** <http://tiny.cc/LLJmostread>

The list of most read articles is updated every 24 hours and based on the cumulative total of PDF downloads and full-text HTML views from the publication date (but no earlier than 25 June, 2011, launch date of the website) to the present.

**Most cited articles** (<http://tiny.cc/LLJmostcited>)

This list is based on articles that have been cited in the last 3 years. The statistics are updated weekly using participating publisher data sourced exclusively from CrossRef.

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### **Language Teaching**

<http://bit.ly/LTJournal>

You can access some of the [top downloaded](#) articles for the previous 12 months. Rankings are updated on a monthly basis.

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### **Yazik: Open Access Research in Teaching and Learning Modern Foreign Languages**

<http://www.yazikopen.org.uk/yazikopen/journallist>



## Selected Events June – December 2015

Check our Events pages: [http://tiny.cc/SCILT\\_Events](http://tiny.cc/SCILT_Events) for further details and more recent editions. If you come across an important language-education related event we have missed please inform us by emailing [scilt@strath.ac.uk](mailto:scilt@strath.ac.uk).

Date	Details
06 June	<a href="#"><u>Starting work as translator or interpreter</u></a> University of Westminster, London.
09 June	<a href="#"><u>Sharing the vision: Advice on Gaelic Education</u></a> Inverness
12 June	<a href="#"><u>Teaching Chinese in Scotland: Pedagogy Meets the Language</u></a> University of Edinburgh
20 June	<a href="#"><u>Spanish workshop for teachers in secondary and further education</u></a> London
25-26 June	<a href="#"><u>Using Film and Media in the Language Classroom</u></a> Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester
26-27 June	<a href="#"><u>Chinese Teaching in the Western World Conference and Workshop</u></a> University of Bath, Bath
29 June – 03 July	<a href="#"><u>1+2 Train the Trainer Summer School</u></a> University of Strathclyde, Glasgow
05-07 July	<a href="#"><u>Gaelic enrichment course for teachers</u></a> South Uist
09-12 July	<a href="#"><u>20th AFMTLA National Languages Conference</u></a> Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
10 -11 September	<a href="#"><u>Multilingual Perspectives on Professional Discourse in Europe.</u></a> Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium
03-05 September	<a href="#"><u>BAAL Annual Conference.</u></a> University of Aston, Birmingham
07 November	<b>SALT Annual Conference.</b> University of Strathclyde, Glasgow. Check the website for details nearer the date. <a href="http://www.saltlangs.org.uk/">http://www.saltlangs.org.uk/</a>
23 – 26 November	<a href="#"><u>4th International Conference on Language, Education and Diversity.</u></a> University of Auckland, New Zealand.
	<a href="#"><u>More Conferences under the BAAL banner</u></a>
	<a href="#"><u>Conferences on Multilingualism</u></a>

