

# Languages over the past 40 years

Does history repeat itself?

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## Introduction

Covering all four nations of the UK, the British Academy Report (2013) on the current state of languages in UK society offers a stark message. Among its claims are that 'there is strong evidence that the UK suffers from a growing deficit in languages skills' and that 'the range and nature of languages being taught is insufficient to meet current and future demands'. It argues that 'a weak supply of languages skills is pushing down demand and creating a vicious circle of monolingualism' and it states that 'languages spoken by British schoolchildren, in addition to English, represent a valuable future source of supply' (British Academy, 2013: 4-5).

Given the enormous efforts made over several decades across the UK with the aim of enabling education at primary and secondary school to help the UK become more multilingual, it would be easy to become disheartened. Nonetheless, there have been many successes in languages at school where the aim is not limited to the largely instrumental perspective that properly informs the British Academy Report. The report deserves to be taken seriously, but one remembers another prestigious report (the Nuffield Languages Inquiry, Nuffield Foundation, 2000) that created great interest but was not implemented to the extent that had been hoped. Moreover, although the National Languages Strategy<sup>1</sup> did not apply across the UK as a whole, it was a major initiative, yet where is it now?

When thinking of languages policies in the UK, we recognise that there are four nations, each with its own administration for education at school. Admittedly, there are similarities between England, Wales and Northern Ireland (e.g. the terms 'GCSE' and 'Key Stages') whereas Scotland differs in its curriculum and its national examinations. Moreover, pupils in Scotland go to secondary school one year later than elsewhere in the UK. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are similar, in that education at school in each case has a responsibility for contributing to the maintenance and revitalisation of a heritage Celtic language (Gaelic, Irish and Welsh).

All four nations have significant numbers of students at school with a home 'community language' such as Punjabi, Urdu, Polish, Cantonese. The challenge

for our educational systems is to find ways of building on the skills possessed in sometimes partial and halting form by young people at school who belong to communities that speak these languages, so that they benefit from having a home language as well as English and our society benefits both culturally and instrumentally.

#### FOUR EMERGING CHALLENGES

Despite the variations referred to above, I now turn to four challenges that are common across the UK, all of which have emerged strongly over the last 40 years. These have been and still are:

- enabling the learning and use of additional languages to flourish when English is increasingly the dominant language not only of the UK but also of globalisation
- extending the learning of a Modern Language successfully across the full range of abilities in the early years of secondary education
- achieving good numbers taking languages from the point at which they become optional, usually post-142
- implementing Modern Languages at Primary School (MLPS).

The first of these challenges arises from the nature of UK society. The other three all arise from policy decisions, directions, intentions or aspirations. No nation in the UK has been convincingly successful in meeting any of these challenges. However, I shall reflect on some issues that have arisen over the past 40 years or more and will be happy to share some thoughts at the end.

#### METHODOLOGIES COMPARED

I was asked that my discussion should start from 40 years ago. This was roughly when I became a member of staff at the University of Stirling. At this time, the fourth challenge (above) was already in difficulty, and the Bursall Report (Bursall *et al.*, 1974) would effectively remove MFL from most state primary schools until a second wave of MLPS would begin in the early 1990s. However, attempts to meet the second challenge (above) were in full swing, and this necessitated a big methodological re-think.

The first research book I purchased in my new post was the *Pennsylvania Project* (Smith and Berger, 1968). Although the project took place in the USA, the issues it confronted applied equally in the UK. It sought to evaluate the relative merits of three approaches to MFL teaching: the traditional method based on grammar-translation (GT); the audio-lingual (AL) method based on teaching functional skills; and a modified version of this. The findings did not

show significant differences among the three approaches. Such however was the climate of the times that Rebecca Valente wrote in some frustration: 'succinct press releases have proclaimed the superiority of the traditional method and the disgrace of the language laboratory' (Valente, 1969: 396).

As a pupil at secondary school, beginning in the early 1950s, I experienced the GT approach, and as a young schoolteacher towards the end of the 1960s I tried out AL in class and the language laboratory. I admired the expertise that went into the Pennsylvania research. However, my experience as a student at school and then in schoolteaching had alerted me to possible differences between an approach elaborated by experts and the same approach implemented in class by teachers.

Reflecting for example on the GT approach that I had experienced as a beginner learner of French at age 12 in my first year of secondary education (there being no modern languages in Scottish state primary schools in those days), I enjoyed it. We began by focusing on the phonetic written representation of all of the sounds of French – e.g. the phonetics for the four different nasal sounds in *un bon vin blanc*. This helped greatly with correct pronunciation. Later in our first year we were taught the alphabetical spelling of the words we had learnt phonetically, so we were not knocked off course by the strange-looking way in which these words were spelled alphabetically. Also, we were taught the grammar of written French, and to learn from grammar books and dictionaries. By the end of our second year we had covered all of the tenses of French and were working our way through genuine texts of French literature, such as Jules Verne's *Adventures of Captain Hatteras*.

C'était un hardi dessein qu'avait eu le capitaine Hatteras de s'élever jusqu'au nord, et de réserver à l'Angleterre, sa patrie, la gloire de découvrir le pôle boréal du monde ... après avoir poussé son brick le Forward au-delà des mers connues, enfin, après avoir accompli la moitié de la tâche, il voyait ses grands projets subitement anéantis!

This ignited my imagination through phrases such as *au-delà des mers connues* (beyond the chartered seas). We also learnt Latin. The two languages were taught in the same way: reading, writing, vocabulary and grammar, leading to genuine literature, with no distractions in the form of spoken language. Yes, it was a one-sided approach that suited top-stream pupils and that would not be fit for purpose today. I never met a real French person during my entire time at school, but both French and Latin as a means of creating an imagined reality were superb. Then, as now, the amount of time per week for learning modern languages was very limited, but the approach was ruthlessly efficient in that it almost completely cut out spoken language and emphasised learning on the basis of linguistic principles, taking the willing learner quickly and efficiently to a valued literary pay-off. Some of the problems experienced in modern languages today arise in my view from too much being attempted in too limited a time-frame.

## Comprehensivisation

With the advent of comprehensive schooling in the 1960s, the extension of a modern language across the full ability range in the initial years of secondary education got underway. Language laboratories, tape recorders, overhead projectors, film-strips, duplication machines (producing an infinite supply of 'worksheets'), were used in order to make the language accessible to the much wider range of students. A few audio-visual French and German courses came to dominate the scene. These helped but I remember analysing one such course based on a family of white Caucasian ethnicity: a father and a mother (married to each other), two boys (tending to be mischievous), a girl (well-behaved) in a detached house with garage (containing car and bicycles) and garden – not much connection to the lives of many UK pupils learning the language or of young people in the foreign country concerned.

At the time the Scottish Office Education Department was willing to fund research projects on foreign language teaching in schools. I was fortunate to have the opportunity of working with the outstanding Rosamond Mitchell and Brian Parkinson in a study producing a segmental analysis of the discourse of MFL classrooms in the first year of secondary education in 1977/1978 (Mitchell *et al.*, 1981) in which a well-known audio-visual course was used. Classrooms were found to be 'busy, work-oriented places, with a heavy emphasis on oral FL activities' but it was found also that

these large amounts of oral FL usage were limited in several ways. Most of the observed FL activities involved the intensive, repetitive manipulation of very restricted sets of language elements; extensive exposure to any richer FL diet was rare ... Missing also was any effective individualisation of the language learning process. The pupils in the classes we studied received virtually identical language experiences, which moreover almost always centred on the teacher.

(Mitchell *et al.*, 1981: 66)

Three HMI reports offer a picture of the situation in England. Their 1977 report found that most MFL teachers had difficulty in dealing with low-ability groups. Their 1985 report, however, found sufficient evidence that a foreign language experience for all up to the age of 16 can be feasible and beneficial, but their 1989 report found continuing problems with the teaching of modern languages in inner city or urban schools.

Gradually a more learner-centred approach emerged in the late 1970s and continued through the 1980s. This was the era of 'personalisation' in which pupils were encouraged to learn the MFL so as to be able to talk about their own real selves. This was an excellent idea as an antidote to the audio-visual stereotypes described above, so long as over time it grew in range, complexity and depth in order to keep up with students' emerging interests and cognitive development

– but sadly this did not always happen. This was also a time to work towards 'graded objectives' which were to some extent influenced by functional-notional syllabus design, as enunciated particularly by the Council of Europe, and to engage in a variety of 'communicative' activities. Teachers were encouraged to use diagnostic assessment for providing feedback to learners; and to collaborate across schools, often under the banner of Graded Objectives in Modern Languages, so there was an Oxford group, a Leicester group, a Lothian group etc. Brian Page (2004) rightly argues that GOML was about much more than graded objectives; it was about teachers engaging in reflection, discussion and collaboration across many different aspects of their activity. Collaborative developments such as these made a highly positive contribution to MFL teaching in schools.

## Upper secondary school

A major problem has been the diminishing numbers taking a MFL to the highest level in the upper secondary school. Suzanne Graham (2004) indicates that the numbers taking French at A-level in England, Wales and Northern Ireland dropped from 27,245 in 1990 to 15,605 in 2002, while Joanna McPake *et al.* (1999) indicate that in Scotland the numbers taking the Higher examination in French dropped from 11,610 in 1976 to 4,840 in 1997.

Graham's (2004) study looked at students in Year 11, the final year of compulsory education, leading to GCSE, in Year 12 (AS level); and Year 13 (A-level). The Year 11 students were from top-ability sets and expressed positive attitudes towards French, but those predicted to obtain high grades were not convinced they were necessarily doing well at French. Graham considered this might indicate low self-esteem and reported: 'this suggests that students do not feel that success in an external examination is necessarily the same as achieving linguistic proficiency' (Graham, 2004: 186). One of Graham's conclusions was that Learner Strategy Instruction might be a good way of helping learners become aware that their learning might be improved if they learnt to employ strategies appropriately and effectively.

McPake *et al.*'s (1999) study identified a 'climate of negativity' in which a number of negative factors conspired together. These included examiners' comments that the standards of performance at Higher were not necessarily high; the views of some principal teachers that some students taking Higher were not interested in the subject and were not necessarily capable of bridging the big gap from Standard Grade in Fourth Year to Higher in Fifth Year; a more general social view (e.g. among parents and in businesses) that learning languages can be difficult and tedious, allied to the absence of any strong belief in the instrumental value of language learning. As Graham was to find subsequently in England, students judged to be competent by their teachers did not themselves necessarily feel confident about the languages skills they were acquiring. The researchers took the view that this lack of confidence among

competent students was the most serious consequence of the climate of negativity. When the students were invited to reflect back on the course they had taken, leading to Standard Grade in Fourth Year, they tended to dislike the 'self-centred curriculum' (too much repetitious 'personalisation?'), the 'excessive emphasis on grammar and vocabulary' and the 'lack of intellectual challenge'. It was interesting that these high-attaining students had found French to be 'difficult' but 'not intellectually challenging'!

## MLPS

By the early 1990s there was a 'new show in town' in the form of a second wave of MLPS. It has featured strongly in the policies and the activity of both the European Commission and the Council of Europe.

During the 1990s, Scotland was the UK's front-runner with its national pilot projects followed by the implementation of its generalisation phase. It was considered essential to implement the generalisation speedily, on grounds of equity for all Scottish primary schools. So, a substantial fund was created to allow classroom teachers to obtain a certain number of days release over four terms, in order to receive training in French, German, Spanish or Italian and in MLPS pedagogy. This ensured one trained MLPS teacher in every Scottish primary school – a situation that I applauded.

However, Scotland can no longer claim to be leading the UK. As a result of the National Language Strategy, England has impressively built up its provision. The British Academy Report indicates that, by 2007, 57 per cent of primary schools in England offered MLPS, that by 2010 this figure had risen to 92 per cent, and it stated that languages were on track to become part of the primary school National Curriculum by 2014. An Ofsted report (2011) judged achievement to be good or outstanding in more than half of the primary schools visited. Most progress was in speaking and listening, with not many examples of systematically planned reading. The report stated that pupils' enjoyment was very clear and that teaching was good in two-thirds of the 235 lessons observed. This is not perfect but the show seemed to be heading in a good direction.

Nonetheless, some hard questions must be asked of MLPS. Blondin *et al.* (1998) found that pupils enjoyed learning an additional language at primary school but their spoken language largely consisted of formulaic expressions. This applied across several European countries including those with English as the MLPS language. Pupils did not seem to have internalised a system of rules that would enable them to create their own utterances in spontaneous speech. There could be a number of possible explanations for this, and no doubt improvements could be made through a better-informed pedagogy, but one has to consider whether the MLPS model can reasonably be expected to lead to the sort of creative language use that one would like to see. After all, the MLPS model is based on a drip-feed approach, with relatively small amounts of time each week,

and quite often from teachers who lack real confidence and fluency in the MLPS language. As a result, MLPS pupils are highly unlikely to be receiving substantial amounts of MFL input.

Carmen Muñoz (2008), a world expert in this field, has stated that: 'an early starting age produces long-term benefits when associated with greater time and massive exposure, as in immersion programmes, but not when associated with limited time and exposure, as in typical foreign language learning classrooms' (p. 582). When evaluating the National Bilingual Education Project in Spain, I regularly was told that the conventional model of MLPS was not delivering what parents and decision-makers in Spain wanted, hence their interest in exploring stronger models such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and bilingual education.

The Early Language Learning in Europe (ELLiE) project (Enever, 2011), undertaken by experts from several European countries, presents a somewhat more positive picture of MLPS pupils' proficiency than in Blondin *et al.* (1998). For many learners there was a significant increase in vocabulary and complexity during the first years of FL teaching, though formulaic expressions were still the most common type of utterance. ELLiE issues a healthy challenge to the CEFR level descriptors as benchmarks for early primary foreign language learning (FLL), claiming they are not appropriate and suggest a limited appreciation of the real processes of early FLL. It also confirms that early primary FL teachers need a high level of fluency – a view that not everybody involved in MLPS shares, with some claiming it suffices for the teacher to be always just ahead of the class. I also welcomed their perception that some of the characteristics of successful MLPS teachers are generic, not languages-specific, reflecting their role as general primary school teachers. These included capacity to create a positive and safe relationship with the children, being supportive to them, making sure the children have successful experiences, and showing skill in keeping the children focused on task.

Another research report that potentially has something to offer MLPS in the UK is the USA study by Taylor and Lafayette (2010). Their research was focused not on what the pupils could do in the MFL but rather on the impact that their early MFL learning might have on their learning of other subjects such as English, mathematics, science and social studies. Over Grades 1–3 there was a clear advantage for MFL pupils as compared with a carefully matched non-MFL group.

The way forward for MLPS arguably should include: (1) devising a clearer and better-grounded rationale for doing it – there *are* good reasons but these have not been clearly stated or disciplined sufficiently by the best research evidence; (2) making the MLPS model work as well as it possibly can, despite its inherent limitations; and (3) systematically exploring other models where circumstances allow. To put all of our eggs in basket (2) would clearly indicate lack of national ambition, so I favour a variety of provision on the ground with innovations in (3) complementing the main provision in (2), and with a substantial research programme to monitor progress and guide development.

## Need for alternative models

Some of the alternative models vary according to the amount of instructional time per week in the target language. I shall mention two.

First there is the (roughly) 25 per cent model, as in Järvinen's (2008) CLIL study of learners at Grades 1–3 in Finland. Students receiving 25 per cent of their curriculum in English were compared with mainstream students receiving MFLPS. The CLIL students' English language development was quicker but also different. After a one-word phase in Grades 1 and 2, they were producing 'full-blown' sentences in Grade 3, whereas the mainstream pupils failed to do this even by the end of Grade 5. On three years exposure and instruction at 25 per cent these young learners had developed implicit L2 learning. It was also concluded that teachers needed to focus on accuracy as well as on fluency, to explore deep meaning (e.g. subject-specific concepts and higher-order thinking skills), to challenge pupils' comprehension, and to create opportunities for pupils to produce fairly elaborate spontaneous stretches of expression, not simply one- or two-word utterances.

Second, there is the (roughly) 40–50 per cent model of bilingual education or early partial immersion (EPI). The UK's first experiment in EPI in a foreign language, with local authority and government backing, was in an Aberdeen primary school (Johnstone and McKinstry, 2008). Set in a locality of substantial socio-economic disadvantage, the school provided EPI in French from Primary 1 to the end of Primary 7. The evaluation report stated that the pupils had reached a level of proficiency in French that went far beyond what could be expected of MFLPS. They had shown that they could use French in order to access with profit other areas of their curriculum, with no disadvantage to their English, environmental studies or mathematics. Their ability to cope with a fast flow of French input from their native-speaker support teachers was particularly impressive.

However, a hard lesson had to be learnt. Financial difficulties meant that the local authority could not fund the project to continue the project. It no longer exists. The pupils and their parents had been let down. This raises the serious issue of the 'sustainability' of innovative projects. We need innovation, but a 'sustainability plan' needs to be built in from the start.

## Complementary schooling

Complementary schooling usually takes place for a few hours at weekends and is run by particular minority linguistic communities to help their children maintain the home language. CILT UK<sup>3</sup> has played a major role in supporting complementary schooling. A study by McPake *et al.* (2007), reflecting three of the UK's CILTs, indicates the importance of finding ways of providing support for complementary schooling, rather than leaving it to the linguistic communities alone, since teachers in complementary schools often have considerable difficulties in accessing suitable professional development.

Some world-class research has been done on complementary schooling in the UK. Both Creese and Blackledge (2010) and Li Wei (2011) show how dynamic and creative the processes of interaction between complementary teachers and their students can be. Creese and Blackledge discuss the merits of 'translanguaging' as an alternative to the assumption that the community language should necessarily be passed on monolingually. Li Wei similarly discusses Chinese complementary school classroom processes from a multicompetence perspective in which code-switching and mode-switching by both teachers and students can take place. Li Wei claims that the pupils: 'use their language skills to simultaneously further and flout the norms of behavior in the school ... they exploit the full sets of their linguistic resources to showcase their creativity and critically by challenging the teacher's authority and traditional Chinese ways of teaching and subverting the pedagogic task' (2011: 381).

MFL teaching in mainstream UK schooling can learn from this. There have been times when an almost tyrannical imposition of classroom interaction exclusively in the MFL has taken place. It is important to provide substantial exposure to the MFL, but at the same time pupils' first or national language is a major resource for them as learners. Good teaching finds ways of productively linking the two languages together. The complementary schooling research shows that the instincts and the creativity of pupils can be a resource on which teachers may draw.

## X-medium education

One of the greatest success stories in UK languages education over the past 30 years must be X-medium education. The most recent research evidence on Gaelic-medium education by Fiona O'Hanlon (2010) and colleagues confirms a picture which applies to Welsh-medium and Irish-medium also: pupils who have English as the language of their home but who are entered by their parents for this form of education become highly proficient in the immersion language without detriment to their subject attainments. In addition, they gain the cognitive, cultural, linguistic and personal benefits of having become bilingual. Wales has undoubtedly given a lead on this form of education, not only in the UK but also at world level through the expertise of many excellent scholars and innovators, e.g. Colin Baker's seminal *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* (2011). Irish-medium education has also become well-established in Northern Ireland, with 21 stand-alone schools and 12 schools with Irish-medium units attached to English-medium host schools.

The stakes are as high as can be. Without a successful provision of Welsh- and Gaelic-medium education from the early years at school onwards, the future existence of these languages would be at risk, especially Scottish Gaelic with its low speaker-base. As Li Wei (2011) has stated in the context of complementary schooling, bilingualism and multilingualism by their very nature can give rise to tensions, and sometimes to conflict, whether ideological, cultural, personal or

other. These tensions have to be confronted in societies, communities and individuals. In Welsh-, Irish- and Gaelic-medium education, I believe that outstanding progress has been made. Those involved are up for the double challenge of providing an excellent education for pupils while at the same time playing their part in the maintenance and revitalisation of three unique indigenous speech communities.

## Conclusion

So far as languages education in UK schools is concerned, does history repeat itself? I shall mention two senses in which this may possibly be true to some limited extent, one sense in which the situation has not changed, and one sense in which there is encouraging progress.

The two senses in which history may to some extent be repeating itself are: (1) a clear move at government policy level in England to go back to a more traditional model of modern language teaching; and (2) a clear move in England and maybe also in other parts of the UK to go back towards a situation in which teachers in schools had to do it all by themselves rather than rely overmuch on advice and support from outsiders at local or national level.

I shall briefly explain these two points:

First, I have already discussed the knowledge-based curriculum and grammar-translation-and-literature approach that I experienced as a beginner learner in the early 1950s. Recently the BBC News website of 6 February 2013<sup>4</sup> reported the Secretary for State for Education in the coalition government as saying that 'pupils should be taught a core knowledge of facts and information', and that 'language teaching will have a clear emphasis on the importance of translation, including the study of literature of proven merit'. This echoes my own earlier experience. Although there is some merit in what was said, a much more rounded and better-informed picture of the aims and principles of languages education for today's world is needed.

Second, in my days at school we had teachers but no languages assistants, no local authority advisers, no CLIL UK, no researchers. However, from the mid-1960s a significant infrastructure supporting languages at school emerged and made a major contribution in support of teachers. It included local authority (LA) advisers, Association of Language Learning (ALL), CLILT and eventually the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland CLILTs, plus links with partners on the continent of Europe as facilitated by the European Commission and the Council of Europe, and also with increasing participation from higher education institutions (HEI) staff involved in languages teacher education and research. In my view, the 1980s and 1990s were a brilliant time in which to be a languages professional, as networks at local, national, UK and European levels built up. There was exchange of information and ideas and healthy debate, in which research increasingly played a role.

However, some of this infrastructure has been downsized. LA advisers are less numerous than they were; CLILT in London has been moved elsewhere and incorporated into another organisation, losing its invaluable research library (and invaluable library staff); annual funding for the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) in Graz has been stopped. We are not back to the days of my schooling but have moved in that direction.

The sense in which I believe the situation has hardly changed at all takes me back to the four challenges that I mentioned earlier in this chapter. They have been with us for decades. Our ways of attempting to meet these challenges have evolved and diversified considerably – but they remain major challenges rather than general success stories.

Let me now identify one area in which history is not repeating itself and in which the future stands a chance of being better than the past. This is represented by a clear growth in the numbers of researchers based in UK universities who do much of their research on languages at school, very often working collaboratively with schoolteachers. Some of the UK university researchers working in this area have achieved real eminence internationally, and thus languages education at school has much to gain. This is a far cry from the teacher trainers of the past, often based in Colleges of Education, for whom collaborative research in schools, with publication in top international journals, was simply not part of their job.

Looking to the future, I believe that university researchers have a major role to play. In fact, I believe that the plethora of advice and information that is now becoming available to teachers from a range of not-very-authoritative sources may be something of a problem. Having studied several UK websites for languages teachers, I become concerned when a report is taken out of context by persons who may be teachers, curriculum developers or policy-makers, its meaning is somewhat distorted and is used for promotional purposes – this is particularly true of some of the claims on behalf of younger learners and also CLIL. University research on schools has much to offer. Rosamond Mitchell (2003) has challenged the notion that progression in the acquisition of an additional language at school is like climbing a ladder. Her view that there are a number of components of proficiency with recurrent trade-offs and backsliding, is superior to the simplistic ladder model. We need to think of ways in which important research insights such as this can inform teachers' thinking and belief systems. As such, I welcome the 8 Principles<sup>5</sup> as elaborated by Ernesto Macaro and Suzanne Graham which seem not only accessible to busy teachers but also arise from research that is of high quality. Finally, I welcome ICT research such as that by Magda Phillips (2010) on video-conferencing between primary school pupils in England and France. Putting people in touch with each other and helping to create new communities of practice, involving two countries, schools, teachers, pupils, and researcher, is a fitting way in which to conclude.

## Reflective enquiry

- 1 Progression in the acquisition of a modern language is often described in terms of climbing a ladder, ever upwards from one step to the next. In this chapter I draw attention to some researchers who challenge this view. So, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the 'ladder' model? Are there better ways of describing 'progression'?
- 2 Research mentioned in this chapter shows that children learning a modern language at primary school seem to be heavily reliant on 'formulaic expressions' in their spoken output. What is the value of formulaic expressions, and what might teachers do in order to help their students at any stage of their education produce a spoken output that is less formulaic and more creative, flexible and still accurate?
- 3 Overwhelmingly in UK schools the dominant model in languages education is based on the 'language as a school subject' with limited amounts of time available for it in a crowded curriculum. Two questions arise: (a) What might primary and secondary schools do in order to make this model work as effectively as possible? and (b) What, if any, alternatives to this model exist that would be realistic and sustainable?

## Further reading

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## Notes

- 1 The Languages Company was set up in order to support the National Languages Strategy and to implement the Languages Review of 2007. In 2011 the Coalition Government decided not to continue with the Languages Strategy and to cut most central funding for languages. In common with most other bodies, The Languages Company received no further funding from the Government. ([www.languagescompany.com/about-us/supporting-the-languages-strategy.html](http://www.languagescompany.com/about-us/supporting-the-languages-strategy.html).)
- 2 The British Academy Report (2013) states that in England in 2004 languages were made optional post-14. In 2011, 43 per cent of the cohort took a MFL GCSE (down from 78 per cent in 2001). In Northern Ireland, in 2007 languages were made optional at secondary post-14, and from 2007–2011 the numbers taking French, German and Spanish dropped 19 per cent. In Wales, a foreign language has never been compulsory post-14 but the HMI (Wales) report (HM Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales, 2009) indicates that between 1999 and 2007 the numbers taking GCSE in a modern foreign language dropped from 41 per cent to 28 per cent.
- 3 CLIL UK consisted of CLIL The National Centre for Languages, based in London, and its counterparts Scottish CLIL (University of Stirling), CLIL CYMRU (Cardiff) and NICILT (Queens University, Belfast). CLIL The National Centre for Languages has since then been incorporated into the CfBT Education Trust, and Scottish CLIL is now SCILIT (University of Strathclyde). [www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-21346812](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-21346812).
- 4 Downloaded from: <http://pdcinmfl.com/category/unategorized/>
- 5