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Multilingualism in Classroom Instruction: “I think it’s helping my brain grow”

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Abstract: School systems in many countries typically view the home languages of multilingual students either as largely irrelevant or as an impediment to students’ educational progress. It is frequently assumed that because the teacher does not speak the multiple languages that may be represented in his or her classroom, there are no instructional options other than use of the national language (e.g., English) as the exclusive language of instruction. This normalized assumption is challenged in the present paper. Drawing on research carried out collaboratively with teachers across Canada over a 15-year period, I document ways in which students’ home languages can be incorporated into classroom instruction. This instructional approach, which I label ‘teaching through a multilingual lens’, is supported by an extensive range of research related to the effects of bi/multilingualism on students’ cognitive and metalinguistic development and the positive cross-lingual relationships between students’ first and second languages. The approach is also consistent with a philosophical and theoretical orientation that instruction should focus on teaching the whole child.

Keywords: Bilingualism; Identity; Instruction; Metalinguistic development; Multilingualism; The whole child

Introduction

The quotation in the title of this article comes from Manaana, a grade 6 student (aged 11) in Floradale Public School in the Greater Toronto Area, as he reflected on the experience of reading, retelling, and creating books in his two languages, English and Hindi. This bilingual experience came about as a result of the multilingual approach to literacy development initiated by the teacher librarian in the school, Padma Sastri. Three core elements of Padma’s teaching were the focus of a collaborative research study carried out between the school and researchers at the University of Toronto (Cohen & Sastri, 2006):

1. Padma’s creation of an extensive commercial dual language book collection in the library,
2. short dual language ‘books’ written by students, often with the help of their parents, and
3. reading and dramatization of stories in the school library where students read stories in English to their class and then they, and/or other students, would summarize these stories in their home languages.

At the time of this research, Floradale had a student population of more than 700 students from Junior Kindergarten (age 4) through grade 6 (age 11). These students spoke 44 different languages and their families came from 88 different countries of

origin. In typical elementary schools across Canada (and elsewhere) prior to the 2000s, this rich linguistic and cultural diversity would have been treated with 'benign neglect'. Teachers might be positively oriented to students' languages in a general way but most of them saw no possibility of teaching or promoting these languages. As a result, most schools in English Canada (outside of Quebec) were 'English-only zones', not because there were any explicit rules against the use of other languages but because teachers, students, and parents assumed that the curriculum should be delivered through English and a major goal of school for immigrant-background students was to ensure they learned English as rapidly as possible.

In Canada, these assumptions began to change in the early 2000s as a result of a series of collaborative projects undertaken by schools and university researchers (Cummins & Early, 2011). Educators began to question through their practice the assumption that schools had no option but to be English-only zones. In this article, I describe a number of these projects that have taken place over the past 15 years and then try to articulate the broader empirical research and theoretical principles that underlie the success of these projects.

But first, let us return to Manaan. In an interview with researcher Sarah Cohen, he expressed his delight at the opportunity to tell or retell a story in Hindi, his first language (L1): "It feels great, I feel perfect; I feel like I'm back in India." He feels good about the feedback he gets from his teacher (Padma Sastri): "When I say a story in Hindi my teacher says, 'You were very good and your pace was good.' That makes me feel good." As he listens to stories in English but prepares to retell them in Hindi he also speculates on how the interchange between his two languages is affecting his brain and his cognitive functioning:

I think it's helping my brain grow because first I'm hearing it in English when Mrs. Sastri is reading the story and I divide my brain in two parts: this part is English and when she is reading my memory's going in here, going toward there, and coming in Hindi so I feel like my brain is growing at the same time.

(Cohen & Sastri, 2006).

Some researchers call this process of language interchange *translanguaging* (e.g., Celic & Seltzer, 2011; García, 2009; Lewis, Jones, & Baker, 2012). In the sections that follow, the instructional possibilities of translanguaging, or what I have called teaching through a multilingual lens (Cummins, 2014), are explored. The heading of each section expresses the major point being made.

Instructional possibilities of translanguaging

1.0. Young children very quickly internalize the status differential between their home languages and the school language and this contributes to rapid language loss

The rapidity with which elementary school students internalize the monolingual language norms of the school environment can be illustrated in the experience of a grade 1 student (age 6) who felt embarrassed to use Cantonese (her L1) in calling her grandmother from the school office. The student reflected on this experience when she

was in grade 5 after her teacher (Perminder Sandhu) had opened up a discussion of multilingualism within her class, sharing with her students the numerous languages she had learned growing up in India and asking students to reflect on and write about the languages they knew. The school was highly multilingual, but up to that point, very little explicit attention had been paid to students' languages.

I am not always comfortable speaking Cantonese when I have to go to the office for some reason. I don't like it because a lot of teachers are at the office and I don't like speaking it in front of them. I know that they are listening to me. I get nervous and afraid. For example, once I didn't feel very well in grade 1. So my teacher sent me to the office to call my grandma. My grandma doesn't speak English and she also can't hear very well, so I had to speak in Cantonese very loudly for her to hear. So when I spoke to my grandma, I felt very nervous.

In this example, the student clearly would not have been reprimanded for speaking Cantonese in calling home. However, by the age of 6, she had already internalized the conviction that English was the only legitimate language within the school. The fact that she still remembers this experience four years later highlights just how much it affected her emotionally at the time.

Wong Fillmore (1991) was one of the first researchers to document the loss of language skills in early childhood in an interview study involving more than 1,000 California families (most of them Spanish-speaking). More than 60% of the families judged monolingual English day-care or preschool provision to have exerted a negative impact on family communication as a result of loss of L1 skills on the part of children. By contrast, preschool programs that utilized children's L1 exclusively were associated with significantly less language loss.

In summary, the mother tongues of immigrant-background children born in the host country or who arrive at an early age are fragile and susceptible to rapid replacement by the dominant language. Under these circumstances, these children will not experience the cognitive, linguistic, and personal benefits of bilingualism that Mana'an described so insightfully.

Is it possible for the school or preschool to communicate very different messages to young children that might change the typical trajectory of L1 language loss? The projects reviewed in the following section suggest that students (such as Mana'an) will take pride in their L1 abilities when educators communicate to them that knowledge of two or more languages is an intellectual accomplishment that is valued by the school or preschool.

2.0. In linguistically diverse contexts, educators must teach through a multilingual lens in order to teach the whole child

Most teachers in western countries would agree that we should try to teach 'the whole child'. They understand this term as implying that we should try to develop positive and supportive relationships with students, teach in a way that engages their interests and abilities to the extent possible, and motivates them to engage actively with learning.

However, in practical terms, what does the idea of teaching the whole child mean in a context of linguistic, cultural, and religious diversity?

Listen to Sidra, a grade 7 (age 13) student who had arrived in Canada two years previously, express her feelings and experiences as a newcomer to Canada:

I was new, and I didn't know English. I could only say little sentences. I wore cultural clothes, and people usually judge a new person by their looks. If they see the clothes that I am wearing are not like their clothes, they will just think that I'm not one of them. If we had any partner activities, no one will pick me as their partner and I felt really, really, left out and kids also made fun of me because I looked different and I couldn't speak English properly.

Sidra talks about the struggle to express herself, not just linguistically, but also culturally. Her 'cultural clothes' are an expression of an identity that her peers have rejected, causing her to feel 'really, really left out.' But Sidra also had caring teachers who welcomed her into school. As she explained,

Teachers in school were really helpful. They tried their best to make me feel comfortable in class. I was the only person in grade 5 who wore cultural clothes. The teachers liked what I wore. They tried to talk to me and ask me questions. I liked telling teachers about my culture and religion. It made me feel more comfortable and welcome.

She concludes by saying "It is nice when teachers respect me". These excerpts from Sidra's 6-page account of her transition from Pakistan to Canada provide a glimpse into the inner world of a newcomer student. Her experiences show that human relationships are of central importance in children's adjustment to schooling. Engagement in learning, particularly for newcomer students, is fuelled as much by feelings and emotions as by cognition. Despite her still-limited access to academic English, she writes extensively because she has a lot to share, and she knows that her teacher, Lisa Leoni, is genuinely interested in her experiences and insights. Sidra's account also illustrates the opportunity that teachers have to create environments that affirm the identities of newly-arrived learners, thereby increasing the confidence with which these students engage in language and literacy activities.

One of the most powerful and obvious ways of affirming newcomer students' identities and teaching the whole child is to affirm the value and legitimacy of their home languages. It is hard to argue that we are teaching the whole child when school policy dictates, either implicitly or explicitly, that students should leave their language and culture at the schoolhouse door. At the preschool level, an outstanding example of teaching the whole child is the ***Linguistically Appropriate Practice (LAP)*** framework, supported by more than 50 concrete instructional activities, developed by Toronto-based researcher, Roma Chumak-Horbatsch (2012). She describes LAP as follows:

LAP brings linguistic diversity to life. It opens the door to all languages and gives them a place in the program. It links children's two language worlds, promotes bilingualism, engages families and communities and helps all children understand and experience linguistic diversity. (<http://www.ryerson.ca/mylanguage/lap/>).

A variety of other instructional ideas, based on the same empirical and theoretical perspectives, are presented below.

2.1. Teaching through a multilingual lens: Instructional examples

The idea of teaching through a multilingual lens brings together both the ways in which educators construct their identities and the instruction they actually implement in their classrooms. As noted previously, most educators (and students) have assumed that only the dominant language is appropriate for use in schools serving culturally and linguistically diverse students. In opposition to this assumption, an increasing number of educators have begun to explore ways in which students' home languages can contribute to their learning and ease their adjustment to schooling in a new country. Their instruction has consciously positioned students from linguistically diverse, low-socioeconomic status, and marginalized communities as powerful learners, capable of generating knowledge and insights, rather than as passive recipients of instruction.

Four categories of teaching through a multilingual lens can be distinguished (Cummins, 2014). These range from the very simple to the more elaborate and can be implemented in both primary and secondary schools across the grade levels:

- Simple everyday practices to make students' languages visible and audible within the school;
- Encouraging students to use their home languages for reading, research, note-taking etc.;
- Using technology in creative ways to build awareness of language, geography, and intercultural realities;
- Dual language project work.

2.1.1. Simple everyday practices to make students' languages visible and audible within the school

Although the activities listed below are very simple to implement, their symbolic value for students should not be underestimated. They illustrate how teachers can build powerful relationships with their students by implementing policies and practices that explicitly acknowledge students' languages and cultures within the school.

1. Each day, one or two students bring a word or phrase from their languages into the classroom and explain why they chose that word/phrase and what it means. All students and the teacher learn the word or phrase and its English equivalent. The multilingual words and English translations that the class has learned can be displayed in a 'multilingual corner' in the classroom. The words can also be included into a computer file that can be printed out or displayed on a smartboard on a regular basis for review by students and teachers.

2. All students including the teacher learn simple greetings (hello, thank you, etc.) in the languages of the classroom. Students who speak these languages are the 'teachers'. The 'teachers' can also show their peers and teacher how to write a few simple expressions in different scripts (e.g., Arabic, Chinese, Greek, etc.).
3. During the morning announcements or school assemblies, students give greetings and say a few words in different languages (with follow-up translation in the school language).
4. At school assemblies, teachers who speak additional languages say a few words in a language other than English and a student also gives greetings in a language other than English.
5. Examples of students' work in English and L1 are prominently displayed in school corridors and at the entrance to the school in order to reinforce the message to parents and students that students' linguistic talents are seen as educational and personal assets within the school.
6. School signs (e.g., for the main office) are displayed not only in English but also in languages of the community. Students could also be invited to construct and display multilingual versions of other signs in the school (e.g. Exit signs).

These simple activities have the potential to sensitize students to the sounds and writing systems of different languages and counteract the ambivalence and even shame that many students develop in relation to their languages. The acceptance of students' languages within the classroom can also be linked to other curricular content. For example, if a Syrian student has brought an Arabic word to share with the teacher and her classmates, this could be extended to demonstrating where Syria is on a map of the world and explaining some salient aspects of its culture and history. Some examples are presented below.



Figure 1: Multilingual sign for the school office in Crescent Town Public School, Toronto District School Board

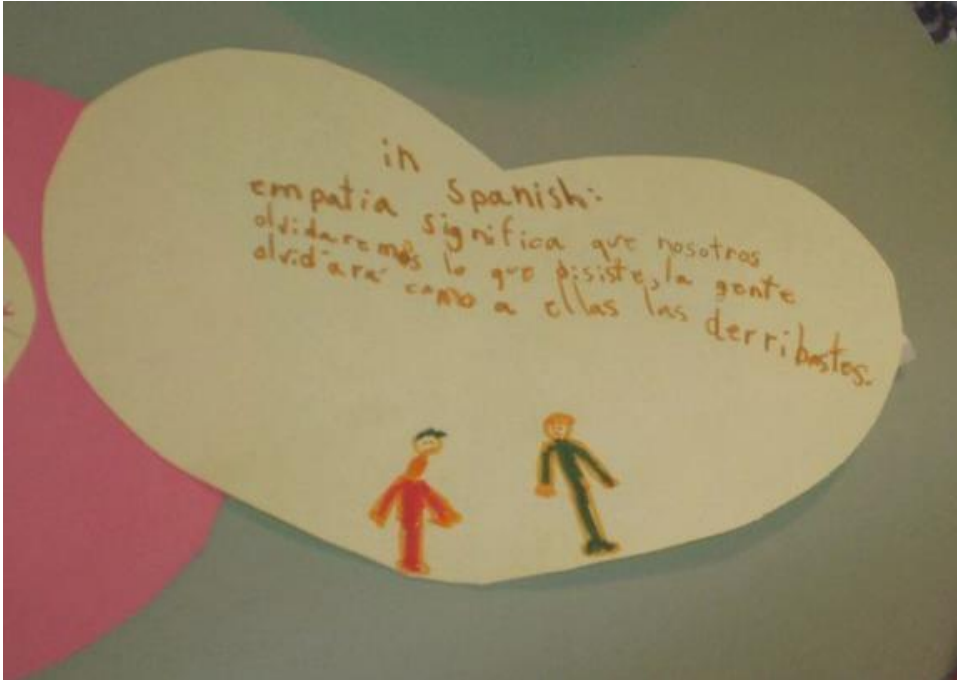


Figure 2: Example of student work in Spanish displayed on corridor wall in Crescent Town Public School, Toronto District School Board

2.1.2. Students use their L1s for reading, research, note-taking, and other academic work

7. Encourage newcomer and bilingual students to use the Internet to access L1 resources relevant to their school work in English. This might involve activating and expanding their background knowledge of content (e.g. researching the concept of photosynthesis in L1). Building up this L1 knowledge will make L2 content and texts more comprehensible and promote two-way transfer across languages.
8. Encourage newcomer and bilingual students to use L1 (or both L1 and English) for group planning of projects which will be presented to the wider class in English. In these cases, students' limited English skills do not prevent them from using their full cognitive capacities in carrying out the project.
9. Encourage newcomer students to read and/or tell stories in L1 in the home both as a means of expanding L1 knowledge into literate spheres and also expanding their knowledge of the world.
10. Ensure that the school library has a good collection of L1 and dual language books for students to check out and read. Dual language books written by students in the school can also be included in the school or classroom library (see Chow & Cummins, 2003). The school could also work with parents to set up a home language book exchange in the school library where parents could donate L1 books that their children have finished reading or have grown out of. Parents could then borrow these books to read at home with their children. The advantage of this kind of initiative goes beyond just providing children with reading materials in their L1; it also promotes genuine collaboration between

- parents and the school, communicates to parents the importance of both reading with children and actively developing their children's L1 abilities.
11. Invite community members to come to class to read and/or share their stories (e.g. about coming to the UK) in English or community languages. If the visitor uses a community language, translation can be provided by bilingual community members (e.g. home language teacher or tutor). Naqvi and colleagues (2012) have reported that this kind of classroom exposure to multiple languages results in stronger linguistic growth in the dominant language of schooling.
 12. In social studies at intermediate or high school levels, encourage students to research issues and current affairs using Internet sources in their L1s. Parents may be able to assist in this process. Students then bring this information back to class and differences in perspectives across different languages, cultures, and ideologies can be discussed.
 13. In Science, encourage multilingual students to use their L1 in project work. For example, if students were working in groups to create posters of the various bodily systems (e.g. respiratory system, digestive system, etc.), students could label the various organs and parts of the body in their home languages as well as in English.



Figure 3: Library books in multiple languages, Crescent Town Public School, Toronto District School Board

2.1.3. Use technology in creative ways to build awareness of language, geography, and intercultural realities

14. Encourage students to use Google Translate (www.translate.google.com) for a wide variety of purposes. For example, to aid in the 'language teaching' outlined above (cf. Section 2.1.1) or to assist newcomer students in creating dual language books or projects. For example, students write in L1 and then use

- Google translate to generate a rough version in English. This rough version is usually sufficient to enable the teacher and other students to understand what the student is trying to express. The teacher and/or other students can then help the newcomer student edit this rough version into coherent English prose.
15. Google Earth can be used to 'zoom into' the towns and regions of students' countries of origin. Students can adopt a comparative approach to compare aspects of their countries of origin to UK realities. For example, in the study of history, students from particular language groups could work together to create a timeline showing what was happening in their countries of origin at particular stages of history. In science, students could investigate what the effects of climate change are likely to be in their countries of origin in comparison to the UK.
 16. Students' languages can be integrated in creative ways into a variety of content instruction (e.g., language surveys in a data management unit in mathematics, probability of students in a class speaking particular languages etc.).

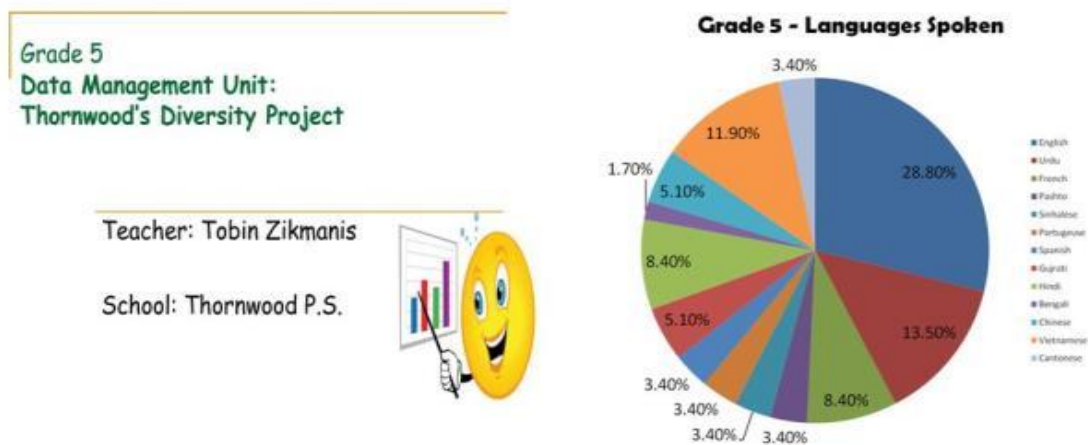


Figure 4: Slides from PowerPoint presentation by grade 5 teacher Tobin Zikmanis documenting language survey project in Thornwood Public School, Peel district Board of Education.

2.1.4. Dual language project work

17. Students can write and web-publish dual language books or publish curriculum-related project work using programs such as PowerPoint. Students can also create videos using iPads or similar technologies. Sidra's dual language book (Figure 5) was created as a class assignment to write a story for an audience of younger children. Some of the short dual language books created by students in teacher-librarian Padma Sastri's class can be viewed at <http://multiliteracies.ca/index.php/folio/viewProject/5> (see also Gallagher, 2008).
18. Students can express their ideas and insights through poetry in L1 and English. Poetry allows the author to express profound meanings in relatively few words. Students could write first in English or in their home language, depending on their comfort level in each language. Then they could translate from one

language to another, possibly working with other students from the same language background. Examples of multiple themes for stimulating student (and parent and teacher) writing can be found at <http://authorsintheclassroom.com/examples-of-books-index/>. These themes include: I am books, Where I'm from books, I can books, as well as themes focusing on A person in my life, My name, Understanding the past, creating the future (Ada & Campoy, 2003).

19. Students can collaborate with partner classes in distant locations (across the world or across the city) to carry out a variety of projects involving dual or multiple languages. These projects could focus on social justice issues (e.g., environmental policies, income disparities, etc. in different countries), language awareness, or other substantive curriculum-relevant content.



Figure 5: Sidra's English/Urdu dual language book written in grade 7, 2.5 years after her arrival in Canada from Pakistan.

3.0 Instructional practices based on teaching through a multilingual lens are strongly supported by empirical research and theoretical understandings of bilingual academic development

The research basis for teaching through a multilingual lens is summarized in the sections that follow.

3.1. Bilingualism has positive effects on children's linguistic and educational development.

More than 200 research studies carried out during the past 50 years demonstrate that students who continue to develop their abilities in two or more languages throughout their primary school years gain a deeper understanding of language and how to use it effectively. They have more practice in processing language, especially when they

develop literacy in both, and they are able to compare and contrast the ways in which their two languages organize reality. Barac and Bialystok (2011: 54) summarized their review of the research as follows: “the experience of speaking two languages yields cognitive benefits in the areas of attentional control, working memory, abstract and symbolic representation skills, and metalinguistic awareness”. The most consistent findings are that bilinguals show more developed awareness of the structure and functions of language itself (metalinguistic abilities) and that they have advantages in learning additional languages (Adesope, Lavin, Thompson, & Ungerleider (2010). In short, Manaan’s insight that active use of two languages ‘helps his brain grow’ is supported by an extensive body of research evidence.

3.2. There is a strong positive relationship between the development of bilingual students’ L1 and their success in learning academic skills in the school language.

Children who come to school with a solid foundation in their L1 develop stronger literacy abilities in the school language. When parents and other caregivers (e.g. grandparents) spend time with their children and tell stories or discuss issues with them in a way that develops their L1 vocabulary and concepts, children come to school well prepared to learn the school language and succeed educationally.

The positive effects of L1 development on L2 academic development has recently been demonstrated in a large-scale longitudinal study involving 202,931 students carried out in the Los Angeles school district in California. These students entered Kindergarten (age 5) as English language learners between 2001 and 2010. Thompson (2015) examined the length of time these students required to develop sufficient English academic proficiency to be reclassified as no longer needing English language support services. Students who entered kindergarten with high levels of L1 academic language proficiency were 12% more likely to be reclassified as English proficient after 9 years than students who entered with low levels of L1 academic language proficiency. Those who entered kindergarten with high levels of English academic proficiency were 13% more likely to be reclassified than those with low levels of initial English proficiency. Students who entered kindergarten with high levels of proficiency in both their languages (English and L1) were 24% more likely to be reclassified than students who entered with low levels of academic L1 proficiency and low levels of academic English proficiency.

These findings suggest the importance of preschool programs that promote not only students’ knowledge of the dominant school language but also, to the extent possible, students’ knowledge of their home language. They also suggest that preschool and primary school educators should communicate explicitly to parents the importance of developing their children’s home language abilities as well as encouraging development of L2 skills (e.g., through preschool participation).

3.3. Spending instructional time through a minority language in the school has no negative consequences for children's academic development in the majority school language.

One of the most strongly established findings of educational research, conducted in many countries around the world, is that well-implemented bilingual programs can promote literacy and subject matter knowledge in a minority language without any negative effects on children's development in the majority language (e.g., August & Shanahan, 2006). These findings demonstrate that L1 and L2 academic language skills are interdependent or manifestations of a common underlying proficiency.

When students are learning through a minority language (e.g., their L1), they are acquiring more than just language skills in a narrow sense. They are also learning concepts and intellectual skills that are equally relevant to their ability to function in the majority language. Students who know how to tell the time in their L1 understand the concept of telling time. They know that there are 24 hours in a day, 60 minutes in an hour, and 60 seconds in a minute. In order to tell time in their L2, they do not need to re-learn the concept of telling time; they simply need to acquire new labels for an intellectual skill they have already learned. Similarly, at more advanced stages, there is transfer across languages in academic and literacy skills such as knowing how to distinguish the main idea from the supporting details of a written passage or story, identifying cause and effect, distinguishing fact from opinion, and mapping out the sequence of events in a story or historical account. The transfer of skills, strategies, and knowledge explains why spending instructional time through a minority language entails no adverse consequences for the development of academic skills in the majority language.

3.4. Identity matters: To reject a child's language in the school is to reject the child.

When the message, implicit or explicit, communicated to students in the school is: 'Leave your language and culture at the schoolhouse door', students also leave a central part of who they are—their identities—at the schoolhouse door. This implicit rejection of a major part of the student's identity may undermine their confidence and the likelihood that they will participate actively in classroom instruction. By contrast, when teachers are proactive and take the initiative to affirm students' linguistic and cultural identity, students' confidence in their own abilities and academic potential will be reinforced. Recall what Sidra said about how much she appreciated her teachers respecting her by showing interest in 'her cultural clothes' and talking to her and asking questions about her culture and religion: "It made me feel more comfortable and welcome".

4.0 Conclusion

When educators within a school develop language policies and organize their curriculum and instruction in such a way that the linguistic and cultural capital of students and communities is strongly affirmed in all the interactions of the school, then the school is rejecting the negative attitudes and ignorance about diversity that exist in the wider society. In challenging these discriminatory power relations, the school is holding up to multilingual and immigrant-background students a positive and affirming mirror of who they are and who they can become within this society. Multilingual children have an enormous contribution to make to their societies, and to the international global community when schools focus on teaching the whole child rather than seeing the child only as a 'second language learner'. Instruction of immigrant-background students is much more likely to be successful when the school bases its policies and practices on two core pedagogical principles:

- Students' cultural and linguistic experience in the home is the foundation of their future learning and we must build on that foundation rather than undermine it;
- Every student has the right to have their talents and abilities recognized and promoted within the school.

In short, the cultural, linguistic and intellectual capital of our societies will increase dramatically when we stop seeing culturally and linguistically diverse children as 'a problem to be solved' and instead open our eyes to the linguistic, cultural, and intellectual resources they bring from their homes to our schools and societies.

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Linguistic creativity in language learning: Investigating the impact of creative text materials and teaching approaches in the second language classroom

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Abstract: This paper presents the rationale for *Linguistic Creativity in Language Learning*, a classroom-based research project. The project investigates the impact of using literary texts on learners' second language literacy, motivation and linguistic and non-linguistic creativity. It also explores how different teaching approaches ('creative' versus 'functional') may modulate the effects of exposure to texts. The participants in the study are learners of French and German in English secondary schools in Year 9 (age 14). The initial pilot study results presented in this paper suggest that learners view language learning as difficult but generally worthwhile, and express an interest in experiencing 'real-life' applications of the second language. The project aims to address this need by generating practical advice for novel teaching methods using authentic text materials in the second language classroom.

Keywords: creativity, motivation, literature, authenticity, teaching approaches

Background

Linguistic Creativity in Language Learning is the Education Strand (Strand 7) of a larger project, *Creative Multilingualism*, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) as part of its Open World Research Initiative (OWRI). One of the central aims of OWRI is to enhance the perceived value of language learning and to strengthen the take-up and learning of languages in schools and wider society (see also Gayton, 2017). *Creative Multilingualism* explores how multilingualism stimulates creativity, what types of creativity are involved in multilingualism, and how creativity manifests itself in multilingual processes. Strand 7 is a collaborative initiative between the Universities of Reading and Cambridge, exploring language learning and linguistic creativity in schools. More specifically, Strand 7 investigates how the use of literary texts and creative teaching approaches impact learners' second language literacy development (reading, writing, vocabulary, and understanding of figurative language), their motivation for language learning, and their linguistic and non-linguistic creativity. The participants in the study are approximately 550 Year 9 learners (age 14) of French and German across 14 secondary schools in England, drawn from a range of different socio-economic contexts. Learners' motivation and language development are particularly important at this stage of schooling because learners are about to make crucial decisions as to whether they should continue learning foreign languages and select them as an option for GCSE, the examination taken by learners in England at age 16.

Rationale

The design of the project was guided by the following three research questions:

1. What is the impact of exposure to L2 literary texts on learners' motivation and linguistic creativity, compared with exposure to non-literary texts?
2. How do different teaching approaches ('creative' versus 'functional') modulate the effects of exposure to literary or non-literary texts?
3. How does exposure to the two text types and teaching approaches modulate learners' general creative abilities?

Rationale for the study

RQ 1: Text types (Literary versus non-literary texts)

In England, the National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages (2014), new GCSE and A-levels place greater emphasis than before on the use of authentic written materials, including literary sources. The National Curriculum states that learners should "read literary texts in the language" which will in turn "stimulate ideas, develop creative expression" and help learners "write prose using an increasingly wide range of grammar and vocabulary and write creatively to express their own ideas and opinions" (Department for Education, 2013). Literary texts are also included in the new GCSE examinations for MFL, where in writing learners are required to demonstrate their ability "to make independent, creative and more complex use of the language" (Department for Education, 2015). It is thus implied that exposing learners to literary texts will develop their ability to use language more 'creatively', as well as stimulate their motivation for language learning. While this assumption seems intuitive and plausible, there is in fact little empirical evidence of the superiority of using literary texts rather than more factual texts with teenage language learners, because research to date has paid little if any attention to this issue (Paran, 2008).

Previous research has not only concentrated on the use of literature with adult learners but has rarely directly compared the use of literary and non-literary texts. As it is arguably important that educational policy and curriculum design are supported by research evidence, the Linguistic Creativity project sets out to investigate whether exposure to L2 literary texts does indeed enhance linguistic creativity and which teaching approaches should be adopted to achieve the intended effect. It takes into account the wide range of skills subsumed under the term 'linguistic creativity', differentiating between a 'narrow definition' referring to the ability to generate novel linguistic combinations, and a 'wide definition' referring to discourse-level linguistic creativity, such as the creative use of language to convey the story grammar, the artistic use of language to achieve stylistic effects or the use of language to express emotions and personal views (Figure 1).

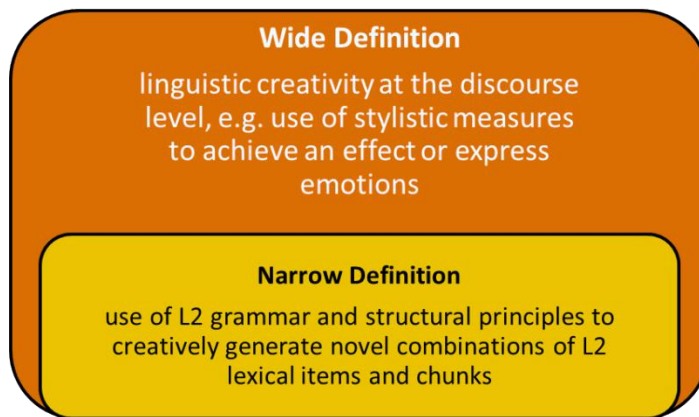


Figure 1: Narrow and wide definitions of linguistic creativity

Several factors suggest that engaging with L2 literature may have the potential to enhance learners' motivation to learn the L2, as well as linguistic creativity in both the narrow and the wide sense. First, exposure to L2 poetry in particular might facilitate the development of linguistic creativity in the narrow sense, i.e. the ability to combine lexical items creatively. At the initial stages of L2 acquisition learners start off using formulaic sequences, but then they gradually break these chunks down (Myles, Hooper & Mitchell, 1998). This enables them to generate novel combinations of words themselves. Exposure to literature, and to poetry in particular, has been argued to lead to enhanced 'noticing' of how language works. It involves the use of novel linguistic forms and combinations and thus naturally draws learners' attention to formal aspects of language (Hanauer, 2001).

Exposure to L2 literature may also support linguistic creativity in the wider sense. Poetry draws upon a range of more and less conventional stylistic means to communicate emotional states, express opinions and emphasise key messages. The often repetitive structural pattern of poetry means that these stylistic features become more salient for readers (Hanauer, 2001), helping them to adopt L2-idiomatic modes of expression, such as emphasising, creating cohesion and expressing emotions.

A wide range of vocabulary is also important for linguistic creativity. However, research indicates that pupils learning French in England (aged 11-16) acquire only 170 words a year, with progress being particularly slow in Years 8 and 9 (ages 13-14) (Milton, 2006). Learning vocabulary through reading may be more effective if learners have a deeper sense of 'involvement' and process the language more deeply (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001). Reading literary texts may well facilitate more elaborate and involved processing because poetry is emotionally as well as cognitively engaging. This is also potentially true for texts containing metaphorical language, which learners need to process more deeply (Hoang, 2014). Thus, figurative, metaphorical language within poetry may increase learners' chance of retaining new vocabulary and structures encountered in texts. However, these claims are largely speculative as there is little empirical research on the relationship between metaphors and L2 vocabulary retention to date. This study aims to address this gap in the research.

Another crucial factor impacting the success of vocabulary acquisition is learners' intrinsic motivation to acquire the second language (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001). Low motivation for and uptake of language learning have been linked to low levels of proficiency, self-efficacy, L2 confidence and enjoyment of learning the second language (Erler & Macaro, 2011; Graham, 2004). Indeed, there is evidence that learners who choose to pursue a language post-16 cite an intrinsic interest in the language and its culture for making that choice (Fisher 2001; Graham, 2004). Likewise, a sense of personal relevance (Taylor & Marsden, 2014) has been found to be a key factor in determining whether adolescent learners in England chose to continue language study after the age of 14.

RQ 2: Teaching approaches ('creative' versus 'functional')

It is likely that the effect of L2 literature exposure depends on how these texts are used in the classroom. Therefore, this study not only explores how the use of different text types (literary versus non-literary) impacts language learning, but also compares different teaching approaches ('creative' versus 'functional'). Indeed, previous research suggests that teaching approaches may modulate the impact of literature in the second language classroom (Paran, 2008). Using a personalised and creative approach, encouraging personal responses, Kim (2004) found a positive impact of L2 literature exposure. The personalised approach provided learners with opportunities for extended spoken output, thus leading to a great deal of interaction and an increase in learners' communicative competency. However, Donato and Brooks (2004) found the opposite effect, if teachers lacked skill in using literature, resulting in them doing little more than asking factual display questions about texts.

This suggests that the learning outcome depends not only on the materials used, but also on how they are used. To investigate the interaction between text type and teaching approach, our project will compare the outcome of different teaching approaches, using identical materials. Each text type (literary and non-literary) will be administered using two different teaching approaches. We call the first of these the 'creative' approach. It involves activities relating the materials to learners' personal, emotional and intellectual experience, e.g. by asking students how they like the text and why or by asking students to write their own poem or turn the poem into a dramatic performance. This is contrasted with what we call a 'functional' approach, which focuses on grammar and vocabulary, e.g. by asking students to underline examples of the perfect tense in the text or to answer information-gathering comprehension questions about the text.

RQ 3: How does exposure to L2-literature and creative teaching approaches modulate learners' general creative abilities?

Language and cognition are not separate but intricately interrelated (Pavlenko, 2011). Hence, this study goes beyond exploring creativity on a purely linguistic basis and takes into account learners' general creative abilities. The term creativity describes a range of cognitive processes enabling individuals to come up with novel, yet appropriate, solutions to a given problem. This involves diverging from conventional thought patterns. Bilingualism has been shown to enhance creative abilities (Cushen & Wiley,

2011; Kharkhurin, 2009, 2010; Leikin, 2012; Ricciardelli, 1992) because bilinguals draw upon greater cognitive resources to generate original solutions. Second language learners are emerging bilinguals, so in this project we predict learners' creative abilities to increase as they grow their L2 repertoire.

There are however few studies exploring the relationship between second language learning and general creativity in instructed contexts. Landry (1973) found second language learning in primary schools to improve non-verbal creativity. Fourth graders who had learnt a second language scored significantly higher than the non-language group. Similarly, Lasagabaster (2000) investigated verbal creativity in relation to different bilingual education models in the Basque region: (i) bilingual immersion, (ii) partial bilingual immersion, (iii) monolingual / no immersion. Students in the bilingual immersion programmes outperformed students in the monolingual programme in creativity, suggesting that teaching approaches have the potential to modulate creative performance and that instructed bilingualism enhances creative abilities. The students in Lasagabaster's (2000) study were aged between 10 and 14 years, so their age range was comparable to that of learners in our study.

In this study, we are exploring the specific impact of exposure to L2 literature and creative teaching approaches on general creative cognition. Given the figurative nature of literary language, exposure to L2 literature may well enhance the creation of new metaphorical form-meaning mappings and connections, thus creating new pathways for divergent thinking. The creative linguistic means employed in poetry in particular may foster divergent thinking. Indeed, Scott and Huntington (2002) found an increase in cultural awareness and cognitive flexibility amongst a group of university students studying a French poem about Côte D'Ivoire, compared to a group of students presented with a fact sheet about the region. Whether the same will be found with adolescent learners is an area we are keen to explore.

Methods

Our project will take the form of a longitudinal study conducted over a period of 10 months, starting in autumn 2017 and finishing in summer 2018. We will provide materials for teachers to use during the intervention. For each language (French and German), schools will be split into groups following a teaching intervention based on literary texts (poems) and groups administering a teaching intervention based on non-literary texts (newspaper articles). The text materials will be matched on a range of criteria indicating readability, such as word number, word length, word frequency, sentence length, cognates and subordination (Benjamin, 2012; Uitdenbogerd, 2005). Each group will undergo a phase of using functional teaching approaches, and a phase of using creative teaching approaches. Each phase will last around 7 weeks. At the start and end of each phase, there will be pre- and post-tests assessing learners' attitudes, their vocabulary size, reading skills, writing skills (linguistic creativity), metaphor awareness and general creative performance.

It has been challenging to design tests that are both accessible to Year 9 learners and also tap into linguistic creativity and general creativity. Brief details of some of our tasks are outlined in Table 1:

Table 1: Examples of tasks

| | |
|---|---|
| Reading task | Learners will be presented with a short text in German / French and asked to summarise the text in their own words in English. |
| Writing task | To assess productive skills, as well as linguistic and non-linguistic creativity, learners will be shown a picture and asked to write anything they like about it in the target language. Linguistic creativity in the narrow sense will be captured by formal indicators, such as lexical diversity, syntactic complexity and deviations from formulaic patterns. Linguistic creativity in the wider sense will be assessed, for example, by evaluating learners' ability to express emotions and opinions. |
| Vocabulary | We will use a simple yes/no test based on Meara and Milton (2003) to assess the size of learners' vocabulary knowledge in either French and German. In addition, we will use simple L2 to English translation tests to assess how well learners retain vocabulary presented in the texts. |
| Questionnaires assessing attitudes and motivation | A questionnaire will capture learners' attitudes and motivation. Metaphors are a great way of qualitatively assessing learners' attitudes towards and beliefs about the second language, so we will be asking learners to describe their learning experience in metaphorical terms (Fisher, 2013). |
| Creativity (verbal & non-verbal) | The Abbreviated Torrance Test for Adults ATTA (Goff & Torrance, 2002) assesses divergent thinking. It generates scores for fluency (number of ideas), flexibility (variety of ideas) and originality (novelty of idea). The test assesses both the verbal and figurative expression of creative thought. |

Pilot Study results

To establish whether the designed test materials were adequate for Year 9 learners, a small pilot study was conducted with French (N=31) and German (N=39) learners. We present some preliminary observations of interest from the from the metaphor task in the questionnaire and from the writing task.

In the questionnaire, learners generally expressed positive attitudes towards language learning. They gave low agreement ratings to statements such as "English people don't need to learn foreign languages" or "Learning other languages is a waste of time". Their metaphorical descriptions of the L2 (Table 2) show that they appreciate the importance of learning the L2 ("important-ish", "creamy stuff in Lindor"), but that they are finding the acquisition process difficult ("hard to break through") or boring ("sitting in lessons"). Hence, they display a general willingness to learn foreign languages, but feel that the process of learning could be made more attractive. Moreover, learners express an appreciation of authentic language use ("using the skills outside of school"), suggesting that the use of authentic texts, such as literature, might have a positive impact on language learning. By comparing German to a "cake", made up of "loads of parts to make one thing, like how they join words together", one learner also demonstrated their awareness of linguistic creativity.

Table 2: Metaphor task questionnaire (German)

| If German was a food it would be ... | ... because... |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Cake | it's got loads of parts to make one thing, like how they join words together |
| Cake | I like the icing (using the skills out of school), not the cake (learning it or sitting in lessons) |
| Lindor | it's difficult to break through the shell to get to the creamy stuff inside |
| a bowl of cereal | boring but important-ish |
| slightly spicy, very hot sausage | there are some harder bits and it takes a while before you're ready |

The writing task was designed to tap into the core research interest of this study, linguistic creativity. Results revealed that learners were unused to responding to open-ended questions requiring more 'creative' responses. On average learners produced no more than 36 words in the picture-based activity with the word count ranging from as few as 2 words to 107 words. This underlines the challenges teacher face when asked to work towards the goal of L2 linguistic creativity. We hope our project will provide them with some guidelines to make that challenge more manageable.

Conclusion

This study investigates the impact of the use of literary texts and creative teaching approaches on learners' attitudes towards language learning, as well as on their linguistic and non-linguistic creativity. Thus, it tests a key claim inherent in the MFL National Curriculum and new GCSEs, namely that exposure to L2 literature enhances linguistic creativity and improves attitudes and motivation. An important aim of the study is not only to make concrete recommendations for practitioners, but also to find out whether aspects of language policy and curriculum design really do stand up to scrutiny from research. At each stage of the project, it will be important for us to get feedback from practitioners as well as from our participating teachers. We will have plenty of teaching materials to be made freely available at the end of the project, as well as some fascinating findings which we will present at the final project conference.

You can 'watch this space' by looking for updates on our website:

<https://www.creativeml.ox.ac.uk/research/language-learning>. For further updates, you can also follow us on Twitter @creativelang

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Modern Languages in the multicomposite primary classroom: Meeting the challenge

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Abstract: This small-scale practitioner enquiry explores why some primary multicomposite class teachers from two local authorities perceive that teaching a modern language in multicomposite class is more challenging than in a 'straight' class. We examined and assessed previous research findings on teacher pedagogies, practices, values and beliefs within non modern language contexts in the multicomposite class. Building on those, we invited teachers to reflect on and compare how their own pedagogy and beliefs influence teaching and learning of literacy and modern languages in their multicomposite classes. In our analysis we explore local literacy as well as modern language challenges and opportunities, such as transferability. This enquiry provides a Scottish perspective on the topic and opens a dialogue about modern languages in the multicomposite class, a hugely neglected area.

Keywords: Modern Languages in the primary school; multicomposite classes; literacy

Introduction

The purpose of this enquiry was to examine some of the perceptions, issues and strategies employed in the teaching of modern languages (ML) in multicomposite classes (MCC). We (the researchers) had identified this as an area of concern and one where there seemed to be little research and few opportunities for further professional development. We were keen to conduct this research in order to identify ways of improving the teaching of ML in MCCs and to use our findings and recommendations to support colleagues and to start discussions on what appears to be an area that has been somewhat neglected. We decided to collaborate to increase the sample size and to widen the geographical spread of the research as we were interested to know if there were regional differences. We started by examining previous research on the pedagogy of multicomposite classes and then invited MCC teachers to compare their approaches to the teaching of Literacy and ML. Taking into account both the literature review and our findings, we make recommendations for both further research and strategies to support MCC teachers.

Research questions

What pedagogies and practices underpin the effective learning and teaching in primary multicomposite classes?

In the case of ML, to what extent do these pedagogies and practices meet the current needs of learners and reflect the professional values and beliefs held by practitioners?

Rationale

Quail and Smith (2014) observe that, given the prevalence of MCCs throughout the world, it is remarkable that relatively little research has focused on its impact on teaching approaches and learner outcomes. Birch & Lally (1995) and Little (2001, 2004, 2006) call for greater levels of research into the methods and techniques of multi-composite teaching. Little (2001, 2004) suggests that multicomposite teaching is invisible to policy makers so training is neglected. The need for research remains in 2017.

Most research indicates that pupil outcomes are of a similar level whether pupils are in 'straight' or MCCs (Mulyran-Kyne, 2004; Veenman, 1995).

However, findings show that many teachers perceive the multicomposite context as more challenging and there are concerns about delivering for all pupils. Mulyran-Kyne (2004) reports that most teachers find MCCs very difficult and less satisfying, or an added burden on the teacher and an inferior education for pupils. UNESCO (2015) highlights how MCC teachers find their work particularly challenging when teaching a curriculum designed for 'straight' classes.

Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence, however, is expressed in stages across year groups thus somewhat facilitating / encouraging multi-grade working more than other curricula. Berry (2013) advocates curriculum frameworks based on themes and proposes changes in instructional materials for teachers.

Some research suggests that very little difference exists between 'straight' and MCCs and that multicomposite organisation is more "natural". Pratt (1986) expresses the anthropological view that the natural way children are socialised is in mixed age groups. On leaving school, people are rarely organised by age.

Wilkinson and Hamilton (2003) argue that the nature and quality of instruction in the classroom are more important than the type of class. Veenman (1995) observes that teachers in MCCs tend to stick to the same practices as 'straight' classes and Little (2004) argues that knowledge of multicomposite teaching strategies is needed by all teachers.

Some support for MCC teachers currently exists. Veenman (1995) advocates cooperative learning, popular today in all class types. Using this can improve productivity as it develops higher order thinking and encourages positive social behaviour – a possible strategy for ML in a MCC. UNESCO's 2015 publication provides practical approaches. They are, however, generic with no focus on teaching ML in MCCs.

In Scotland, Crichton & Templeton (2010) concluded that models of training and continual professional development for PLL should be developed to ensure that primary teachers develop appropriate teaching methodologies and sufficient competences in the target language to provide an effective model to learners at this crucial stage in their language learning. It is unclear whether multi-composite approaches would be part of this. Anecdotal evidence suggests this is not the case, and there is little reference to multicomposite teaching in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and no offering for multicomposite classes in career-long professional learning (CLPL) programmes or at

national languages events and conferences. This research is, therefore, an initial attempt to identify what is actually happening when a ML is taught in a number of Scottish primary MCCs.

Methods

Terminology

Most literature defines multicomposite classes as two or more stages taught by one teacher. Some break it down into composite two stages with one teacher, and multicomposite, more than two stages with one teacher.

Research Design

An online questionnaire was selected as the most effective tool as it would obtain a lot of information from a large group of teachers in a non-threatening way. It was also inexpensive to administer, suitable for easy comparison and analysis and could be used to record behaviours as well as opinions, attitudes, beliefs and attributes. We had hoped to follow up the questionnaire with small group interviews with respondents but time constraints meant this proved impossible.

Once our research question and objectives were clear we created questions based on the strategies identified in UNESCO's "Practical Tips for Teaching Multigrade Classes" (2015). Respondents were asked for information on their use of each strategy when delivering Literacy and ML. Literacy was chosen as the comparator curriculum area because of the strong links and significant overlap between it between Literacy and ML. Teachers with experience of multicomposite agreed that these strategies were relevant to the Scottish context and demonstrated excellent awareness and understanding of the challenges and opportunities relating to multicomposite teaching. We were, however, aware that including explicit strategies might influence the nature of responses so we also provided the opportunity for respondents to describe any other strategies they used. The questionnaire was in 3 sections, set out clearly in table form with plenty of space for written comments. A combination of open questions and multiple-choice were produced in order to generate mainly qualitative and some quantitative data. Before emailing the questionnaire to our sample, it was trialled on two multicomposite primary teachers from different LAs and their feedback was incorporated into the final design.

In Local Authority 1, the questionnaires were emailed to 150 Language Ambassadors regardless of whether they were teaching in a multicomposite class. The intention was that they would forward the questionnaire to multicomposite colleagues. In Local Authority 2, the questionnaire was emailed to all six members of the Multicomposite Self Help Group and an additional 20 schools with multicomposite classes.

Responses

We received responses from ten teachers across the two Local Authorities. Responses related to eleven multicomposite classes (four with two stages, four with three stages,

one with four stages and two P1-7 classes). There are eleven responses in terms of classes because one respondent was teaching in two different schools.

We expected a low response rate but were disappointed that it was so low. This may have been because we carried out the research at a particularly busy time in the school year. Different timing might have produced more responses.

Findings

My multicomposite class and me

Background in Modern Languages

Respondents possess wide- ranging experience, qualifications and skills, from those with absolutely no ML prior knowledge, skills, training or teaching experience of ML in primary school (4), to those with ML qualifications at Honours Degree level (6), who had also participated in additional professional development, e.g. the Modern Languages in the Primary School programme of the early 1990s, as well as more recently in the ‘Training the Trainer’ programme and other sessions in support of the Scottish Government’s 1+2 language policy.

Table 3: Teacher confidence

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| very confident | 1 |
| confident | 3 |
| quite confident | 4 |
| somewhat lacking in confidence | 2 |
| not confident at all | 1 |

Table 4: Approaches to ML Delivery

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Embedded | 1 |
| Discrete | 2 |
| Topic related discrete | 1 |
| Discrete and embedded | 6 |

Pedagogical Approaches – Teaching Literacy

Teaching Literacy: Differences between ‘straight’ class and MCC

Four out of nine respondents saw few or no differences between teaching literacy in a “straight” and a MCC. Perceived differences referred to the wider range of pupil ability, prior knowledge, ages, maturity, pupil needs and increased requirements around planning and differentiation. Respondents also reported that there was more scope for pupils to peer support and that it can be easier to provide appropriate challenge for pupils in the multicomposite setting.

Approaches for effective learning and teaching of literacy skills in MCCs

Respondents employed a wide range of strategies in teaching Literacy, differentiating by ability and learning style. Teachers used varied tasks and approaches including Interdisciplinary learning (IDL) and ICT. There was significant reference to pair and group work and self and peer assessment.

Challenges: teaching literacy in a MCC

Respondents identified 2 clear categories of challenge – “within the class” and “more structural”. In-class challenges focused on meeting the needs of all pupils, ensuring all kept on task whilst making progress. There was also a need for a variety of stimulating resources “to keep learning fresh and motivating”. Structural challenges were around the lack of support in a small school and issues around sustainability, especially as the precise make up of a MCC can change yearly.

Opportunities: teaching literacy in a MCC

Six out of ten respondents completed this section. The MCC was seen to provide better opportunities for buddying, scaffolding, developing independence, providing appropriate challenge, peer tutoring etc.

4.3 Identified Teaching Strategies

Table 5: Use of UNESCO strategies in teaching literacy and ML (No. of respondents)

| | Strategy | TD/IL* | Regularly | | Sometimes | | Occasionally | | Never | |
|---|--|--------|-----------|----|-----------|----|--------------|----|-------|----|
| | | | Lit. | ML | Lit. | ML | Lit. | ML | Lit. | ML |
| 1 | Teach all stages together | TD | 3 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | Teach 1 stage while others work independently | IL | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| 3 | Teach 1 topic to all stages and at varying degrees of difficulty | TD | 4 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| 4 | Develop activities for non-taught groups | IL | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| 5 | Develop peer, cross-age and cross-class teaching strategies | IL | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| 6 | Relate learning with daily life | TD | 7 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

* TD = Strategy that is primarily teacher directed; IL = Strategy that promotes independent learning. NB: Totals vary because 1 respondent did not complete the literacy section and not everyone responded fully to every section.

In this sample all strategies are used at least occasionally in teaching literacy. However, four out of six are never used in ML by up to 50% of respondents. Strategy 1 is used most frequently in ML teaching. Strategy 2 is used in Literacy to varying degrees by everyone but 50 % never use it in ML. Half of respondents use Strategy 3 regularly in ML. One respondent stated that it is the most common strategy she uses in ML but many never use it. Strategy 4 is used by everyone when teaching literacy, whereas 50% never use it in ML. Similarly, everyone reported using strategy 5 regularly or at least sometimes in literacy, but almost 40% never use it in ML. However, one respondent recorded under “never” in ML, actually responded “Not yet”, indicating that she anticipated using it in the future. Strategy 6 is used regularly in literacy teaching by most respondents and is widely used in teaching ML but not as frequently.

Examples of how each strategy is used in the teaching of literacy and modern languages
 Respondents provided wide- ranging examples, particularly for Literacy where examples cluster around the skills of Reading and Writing, with specific references to spelling, punctuation and grammar. Some respondents refer to discussion and using ICT, music and visual prompts. ML examples frequently refer to games, classroom routine, ICT, songs and vocabulary with little specific reference to the 4 skills common to both Literacy and ML.

Analysis

My multicomposite class and me

Teacher confidence

Most respondents had some ML training. Generally confidence mirrored levels of prior knowledge and / or experience in the ML / teaching of ML, with some non-confident teachers already using some of the familiar multicomposite literacy strategies for ML e.g. using Strategy 1 to teach songs and games. However, the teacher with an Honours degree in French felt only 'confident' in delivery of ML.

Approaches to ML Delivery

We tried to relate approach to teacher confidence level but the small response rate did not provide enough evidence. With the "discrete and embedded" approach sometimes the respondent is the discrete teacher and another teacher embeds or vice versa. Sometimes the respondent does both. However, it is positive that the combination of the discrete and embedded approach is the most common, reflecting uptake of the 1+2 rationale.

Pedagogical Approaches – Teaching of Literacy

Teaching literacy: differences between 'straight' class and MCC

The findings that almost 50% of teachers perceived there to be no difference reflects results found in the literature. One respondent stated that the knowledge of the child is what is important rather than its age or stage that we should teach. This implies that strategies are needed to meet learner needs regardless of type of class and that differentiation is key to teaching in either type of class. The P5-7 respondent believed that differentiation and organisation of tasks and resources are essential. A teacher's ability to differentiate effectively is one of the most demanding skills and becomes heightened with the extra variables that often need to be addressed in the multicomposite class (UNESCO, 2015)

Approaches for effective learning and teaching of literacy skills in MCCs

Results indicate that respondents are highly skilful at delivery of literacy. Most respondents state clearly a range of approaches that literature outlines as effective in meeting learner needs for literacy. All approaches could also be used in a 'straight' class emphasising again that meeting individual learner needs are paramount and that the nature of the class is not the overriding factor in successfully meeting those needs. This has implications for teaching ML. Those teachers who are confident at teaching Literacy can use most of the identified strategies to teach ML. Transferability of strategies is key here.

Challenges: teaching Literacy in a MCC

These match the generic multicomposite literature in terms of the challenges that teachers identify. Veenman (1995) stresses the importance of pupils developing independence and interdependence through cooperative learning. This is a key challenge for teachers ensuring that pupils can cope when the teacher has to manage multiple groups at different levels. The implication here is to ensure that there is availability of resources for different levels, also applicable to ML.

Opportunities: teaching literacy in a MCC

These match the opportunities identified in the generic multicomposite literature and this enquiry's results, demonstrating that teachers are aware that using the identified multicomposite strategies is effective for teaching Literacy.

Identified Teaching Strategies**Use of UNESCO strategies**

In this sample it is clear that a wider range of teaching strategies is used when teaching Literacy than when teaching ML - all of the strategies identified by UNESCO are used by all respondents at least occasionally in the teaching of Literacy whereas 2 /3 of them are never used in ML by roughly half of the respondents.

Classification of the different strategies into those which are primarily teacher directed (TD) (Strategies 1, 3 and 6) and those which promote independent learning (IL) (Strategies 2, 4 and to some extent Strategy 5) reveals that ML lessons tend to be more teacher-led whereas independent learning strategies are used more widely in the context of literacy. All respondents use IL strategies at least occasionally in literacy (apart from Strategy 5 where 2 respondents stated they never used this in literacy). Significant numbers reported that they never use these strategies in the ML context. This analysis is confirmed by the fact that the most TD strategy (Strategy 1) is the one which is most widely used in ML. On closer examination of individual responses, those who identify as "somewhat lacking in confidence" or "not at all confident" are more likely never to use IL strategies than those who describe themselves as more confident. This tendency should however not be overstated as the more confident respondents also answered with "never" for some of the strategies.

Examples

Examples of how the strategies are used also point to some significant differences. Literacy examples tend to be linked to the different skills of literacy whereas there is much more reference to content and activities (vocabulary, games, song etc.) in ML. Although the teachers do not refer to them, the skills are, however, necessarily present in the ML activities cited: "creating and delivering presentations" involves writing and talking, and probably also reading and / or listening; songs, games and classroom routines involve listening and talking etc. Further investigation could identify why teachers use different terms to describe what they do in the different contexts.

Key Findings & Recommendations

Key Findings

Respondents are clearly aware of effective ways to deliver literacy. They are less aware of how to apply these ways in the delivery of ML.

Respondents have plenty of experience of differentiating resources in literacy but are less confident in doing so for ML.

All of the UNESCO strategies are employed in the teaching of literacy but the range is much narrower when teaching ML

Teacher-directed strategies rather than those which promote independent learning are more widely employed in ML compared with literacy.

There may be some correlation between level of confidence and the use of strategies which promote independent learning in ML but this is not conclusive.

Recommendations

There is a need for:

increased awareness about how transferable literacy multicomposite strategies are for ML

teachers to be shown how to break down resources, especially different genres, in ML in order to differentiate for those who need challenge and for those needing support. This could be incorporated into initial teacher education and career-long professional learning

increased understanding of how the existing ML activities link into the skills which are common across Literacy and ML

support for teachers to develop their use of Independent Learning strategies in the ML context

further research into the different challenges posed by the nature of Literacy and ML in Scotland today, e.g. the fact that (the majority of) pupils come to the classroom with extensive prior knowledge of English so the teaching of basic vocabulary is not necessary. This is clearly not the case for most pupils in ML. Teachers need support and resources to help pupils acquire vocabulary in such a way that they are moving beyond the word/phrase level and are developing the 4 skills through an ML experience that is as varied, differentiated and meaningful as that which is provided for Literacy.

support that is specifically targeted at teachers of MCC to help them with the challenges presented by planning and differentiation in particular.

Concluding Thoughts

Some Scottish primary teachers perceive that teaching ML in a MCC is more challenging than in a 'straight' class. Previous studies clearly describe those challenges in non-ML contexts and identify pedagogies and practices used to underpin the effective learning and teaching in primary MCCs to meet those challenges.

Most respondents in this enquiry describe similar challenges, especially for ML. Results have enabled the researchers to gauge more locally to what extent pedagogies and practices in each context (literacy and ML) meet the current needs of learners and reflect the professional values and beliefs held by local practitioners. Many opportunities for teachers, already experts at delivering literacy, have been highlighted, especially transferability of good practice from established curricular areas such as literacy to ML.

Where a MCC teacher lacks confidence in a ML and in order for effective ML learning and teaching to take place, training and support in how to use ML resources for planning and differentiation in all four skills is essential. More research into how best to deliver such ML training is strongly recommended.

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Modern Languages in Scottish Primary Schools: An Investigation into the Perceived Benefits and Challenges of the 1+2 Policy

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Abstract: This article reports on the views regarding the key benefits and challenges of the Scottish Government's 1+2 language policy as expressed by primary school teachers across Scotland via an online questionnaire (n=243) and five staff in a large primary school in Scotland through semi-structured interviews. Interview participants believed that the policy would help raise the profile of languages and increase the number of languages taught at primary school. They were also in favour of starting language learning at an earlier age. The challenges identified by questionnaire respondents were feeling incompetent in teaching languages and a lack of available training. A key challenge of the policy is sustainability in the long term as the allocation for training and resources in support of the 1+2 policy is gradually being withdrawn.

Keywords: 1+2 language policy, Scotland, critical period hypothesis, transition, language proficiency

Introduction

Scotland introduced Modern Languages in the Primary School (MLPS) almost 30 years ago, in 1989 (Tierney & Gallastegi, 2011: 483) and the importance of learning foreign languages has always been stressed by Scottish ministers (Crichton & Templeton, 2010). As a Scottish languages student, who learnt languages throughout my primary and secondary school stages, this subject area was one of great interest.

In 2011, the manifesto of the Scottish National Party (SNP) restated its support for languages:

“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”.

After the re-election of the SNP to government, the above manifesto commitment led to the introduction of a new language policy in 2011, *Language Learning in Scotland: A 1+2 Approach*. The aim of the policy is offer every child the opportunity to learn an additional language from Primary 1 (age 4-5) a further additional language from Primary 5 (age 9). Two key rationales for the introduction of the policy, according to the Scottish Government Languages Working Group (2012) were the belief in the importance of having a second language in today's increasingly globalised world, and in the benefits of learning from a younger age.

Research question, aims and objectives

The overall research question of this study was: 'What are the perceived benefits and challenges of the 1+2 policy, according to the perceptions of teachers?'

The study was initially informed by the evidence provided in the Scottish Government Languages Working Group report. After consulting additional literature, several sub-questions arose which guided the investigation of the main research question. These were:

- 1) What are the perceived benefits of learning an additional language from a younger age?
- 2) To what extent is transition from primary to secondary school being considered?
- 3) To what extent do primary school teachers feel qualified enough to teach the additional language(s)?
- 4) What are the potential benefits of the 1+2 policy?
- 5) What are the benefits of using Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)?

Data Collection

The author chose a large primary school that was easily accessible, and employed both face-to-face interviews and an online questionnaire for the data collection. The questionnaire (see Appendix 1) consisted of open response questions, multiple choice questions, and rating/scale questions, which allowed quantitative analysis of a large number of responses. This method was also chosen as, due to participants being able to complete the questionnaire in a short time, it was felt this would improve the response rate (Kumar, 1996). A convenience sampling method was used to recruit participants in the questionnaire survey. In order to maximize the sample size, the questionnaires were aimed at teachers in all primary schools across Scotland. An online survey method (SurveyMonkey) was used to allow easy access and completion of the questionnaire. Participants were recruited by sharing a questionnaire on a Facebook group for Scottish primary school teachers. A total of 243 responses were collected and analysed.

The quantitative data was complemented by semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 2). Three primary teachers were interviewed, as well as a head teacher, and a parent who was assisting teachers with language classes and had a key role teaching the language within this school. In terms of their language proficiency, one of the teachers had studied French at university level, however was teaching German to her class. The other two teachers had high school level French, and were both teaching French to their classes.

In order to respect the anonymity of the participants, codes were assigned to each participant, in the form of 'P1', which are provided in the following table.

Table 6: Interview participants

| Participant | Role |
|-------------|---|
| P1 | Parent, who also volunteers in the classroom with language classes |
| P2 | Primary one teacher, also in charge of implementing the 1+2 policy |
| P3 | Primary two teacher |
| P4 | Primary four teacher, who also teaches private French classes to young children |
| P5 | Head teacher at primary school |

Discussion of Findings

Critical period hypothesis

According to the Scottish Government Languages Working Group report (2012)

There is a considerable body of evidence which indicates that young children learn languages more easily than older learners in terms of mental flexibility and the ability to focus on the input they receive. It is also true that children need to be exposed to sufficient quantities of 'engaging' input in order to learn (and maintain) another language..

In line with the literature review findings, interview and questionnaire respondents differed in their views regarding the 'best' age to begin language learning. There was unanimous agreement from the interview participants that the introduction of a language at a younger age would be beneficial. This was mostly due to the belief that children have fewer inhibitions at a young age, and therefore are not embarrassed or nervous when speaking in another language, thus being more receptive to language learning. In addition, one of the interview participants commented on the fact that learning a second language can improve the child's mother tongue, with one adding that they have noticed improved phonological awareness in some of the pupils. She suggests that this could be related to language learning. This finding seems to support Murphy et al.'s (2015) theory that the introduction of L2 improves the child's L1 as it enables children to view language in a more systematic way. Furthermore, in line with Driscoll and Frost's (1999) research, some participants commented that by introducing languages at a younger age, pupils will be at a much more accelerated stage when they reach secondary school. However, one interview participant felt that older learners would actually pick up languages a lot faster as they are better at listening and taking in information. This view reflects the findings of Abello-Contesse (2008) that older children are in fact more efficient language learners.

In addition, when questionnaire respondents were asked about the main benefits of the policy, the most frequent response was that children are learning from a younger age and that young children learn languages more easily than older learners. The majority of questionnaire respondents disagreed that language learning is not suitable for

children with additional support needs (ASN). This opposes Wire's (2005) belief but to some extent agrees with van Wengen's (2013) findings, although respondents gave no details as to why they felt that language learning was (not) suited to children with ASN.

The transition to secondary school

Regarding the transition to secondary school, it seems that there is no specific national guidance or clear expectation of local arrangements for cluster working to establish effective transition practice from primary to secondary school as per Rec. 8 in the Report by the 1+2 Working Group:

that primary and secondary schools work effectively together to ensure articulation between the sectors in terms of content, skills and approaches to learning and to enable effective transition, progression and continuity between P7 and S1, particularly for the L2 language.

The literature highlights that this could be problematic. As cited by Bolster (2004), if there is such a large focus on language learning in the primary school, the hard work that has been put in is wasted when the pupils reach secondary school as they will fail to build on what has been achieved. In addition, Chambers (2012) argued that the secondary teachers will be unaware of what has been taught previously, leading the students to be taught repeated work, or work which is at too high a level.

The questionnaire responses are split in their views on the challenge of transition. 25% disagreed with the statement "The transition from primary to secondary school regarding languages will be problematic", 29% were not sure either way, and 33% agreed. These results perhaps suggest that transition arrangements depend on the school context of the individual respondent, e.g. whether or not their school has a transition strategy in place. Overall, however, transition to secondary school must be considered a challenge still to be overcome.

Language proficiency of primary teachers

Regarding teacher confidence levels, the interview participants at the primary school felt it depended on the individual teacher's language proficiency, and the stage/CfE level of learners. The parent helper commented that she found it difficult to maintain order and control when teaching, due to not being their allocated class teacher. This is in line with Martin's (2000) argument that pupils view non-class teachers as "outsiders".

The top challenge identified in the questionnaire was that teachers do not feel competent and/or confident enough to teach languages. This mirrors Barton et al., and Legg's research (2009; 2013) which shows that teachers feel uneasy about teaching languages due to their lack of knowledge on the subject. However, in another question, over half of the questionnaire respondents said they would feel confident enough to teach a second language to their class. This demonstrates that there is inconsistency in the views expressed.

Research by Barton et al. (2009) concluded that the best way to solve issues of confidence was to make resources readily available and provide teacher training, which is something that has been done at the primary school participating in this study. However, the most common challenges identified by the questionnaire respondents were indeed related to lack of resources and lack of teacher training available to help implement the policy effectively. Teacher training too has resource implications (Scottish Languages Working Group, 2012) and one of the participants warned that by 2020 the policy would need to be self-sustaining since funding allocated for teacher training in support of the 1+2 policy might no longer be available. Furthermore, 38% of teachers in the survey disagreed with the statement “There is adequate training available to help to train teachers” and a further 16% strongly disagreed. In addition, 76% of questionnaire respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the aims of the 1+2 language policy can only be achieved and sustained if sufficient funding is available. Loss of funding will also affect schools that have spent this on annual subscriptions to online learning platforms (31%), as those fees may no longer be affordable.

Economic benefits and job prospects

Only 45% of questionnaire respondents agreed that language skills boost employability, which was one of the perceived policy benefits cited by the 1+2 Working Group. There are also key documents in the literature that back up the claim that language learning improves job prospects and knowledge of languages helps the economy (British Chambers of Commerce 2012, CBI/Pearsons 2015, 2016, 2017). Since learners also have entitlement to career education perhaps there needs to be closer collaboration between language teachers on the one hand and careers advisers in schools on the other.

Increased cultural awareness and openness

The research conducted by the Nuffield Foundation (2000) found that language learning in the early years “enhances literacy, citizenship and intercultural tolerance” (p. 6). This view was reflected in the interview and in the questionnaire responses, with 65% of the latter agreeing/strongly agreeing with the statement that the policy will improve cultural awareness of the pupils. However some have argued that there needs to be a shift in the language teaching method if it is to have an effect on the student’s level of cultural awareness (Ben Maad, 2016; Ho, 2009). Similarly, one interview primary school teacher participant highlighted that raising cultural awareness through language learning would be dependent on the language pedagogy employed.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

There are a number of studies which comment on the benefits of learning content through another language, i.e. combining content and language (Dalton-Puffer & Smit, 2007; Dourda et al, 2014). However, only one questionnaire respondent and none of the interview participants considered this approach. This unexpected finding merits further investigation

Cross-curricular linking

It seems that although the recommendations of the 1+2 language policy state that language learning should be part of what is already being taught in the primary classroom, primary teachers still view the inclusion of the language element as another pressure on the timetable and curriculum. Certainly, all the interview participants at the primary school unanimously identified this aspect as a key challenge and 66% of questionnaire respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement “The curriculum is very busy and there are other priorities which must come before language learning and the 1+2 policy.”

Greater number of languages

It is interesting to note that one of the top benefits mentioned from the questionnaires, and the interviews was that the policy “will encourage more young people to speak languages.” Respondents related this to more languages being taught at their school. This particular benefit was not something that was revealed from the initial review of the literature.

Benefits and challenges of the 1+2 policy

Overall, more respondents viewed the policy as having more challenges than benefits (48%) rather than the other way around (31%), with 16% believing there to be an equal amount of benefits and challenges.

Research participants identified the following as benefits of the 1+2 language policy:

- children will be learning languages from a younger age
- children will experience greater enjoyment in language learning
- children will have increased cultural openness and awareness
- the profile of languages will be raised
- there will be a greater number of languages taught at primary school.

They identified the following as challenges to the implementation of the policy:

- the transition to secondary school
- the (lack of) language proficiency amongst primary teachers,
- pressure on the timetable and curriculum,
- lack of teacher training and resources to help implement the policy, and sustaining the ambitions and aspirations of the 1+2 language policy beyond 2020-2021.

Some Final Thoughts

The results of the questionnaire survey and individual discussions revealed that there were more similarities than differences between the findings of the literature review and the views expressed by the participants. It could therefore be concluded that the participants in this study hold broadly similar views to those highlighted in the current literature. However, given the size of the study and the limited number of participants,

the views of the participants in this study are not generalizable to the wider teaching population in Scotland. This was a small scale study with strict time constraints and it was difficult to gain access to many interviewees. Therefore, it would be interesting to repeat this study on a larger scale, where more teachers could be sent questionnaires and different schools around Scotland could be focused on, rather than one primary school in particular for the interviews. In addition, more representatives from relevant government bodies could be interviewed. This would allow a more generalizable conclusion on the perceptions of the benefits and challenges of the policy. The ability to generalise findings is further restricted due to the methodological approach used as this study is analysing perceptions of different stakeholder groups.

From a personal point of view, I believe that in order for the policy to be effectively implemented and sustained, a transition strategy between the primary and secondary schools should be considered. If this is not achieved, then the opportunities and benefits created by the policy are likely to be wasted. In addition, sufficient investment needs to be provided to maintain training and immersion programmes. Without appropriate amounts of dedicated funding teachers may no longer receive the appropriate training, this in turn would make it difficult to sustain the policy in the long term.

There are a number of uncertainties around the 1+2 language policy at time of writing. First, implementation is still in progress and L3 has not yet been properly embedded. Second, the policy was introduced before the Brexit vote in June 2016. It is still unclear in what ways, if any, the eventual outcome of the Brexit negotiations may affect the planned implementation process. Of course, it could be argued that an even bigger importance will be placed on language learning once Britain is no longer part of the European Union, and there may no longer be as much importance placed on the English language in Europe. This would indeed be an interesting future study!

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire and Summary of Responses

1. What is your position in the school?

For responses to Questions 2-5 and 8 see Table 2

6. In your opinion, what are the main benefits of the 1+2 policy?

7. In your opinion, what are the main challenges of the 1+2 policy?

9. How much do you agree with the following statements? (for responses see Table 3)

10. Is there anything else you would like to add or ask regarding the benefits and challenges of the 1+2 policy?

Table 7: Responses to Q2-5 and 8 (n=243)

| 2. How much do you know about the 1+2 Policy? I know... | | | | |
|---|---|---|-----------------------|-----------|
| nothing about it 0% | a lot about it and how it is intended to work 35% | a fair amount about it 46% | a little about it 19% | Other |
| 3. When did you hear about the 1+2 Policy? | | | | |
| Before its implementation last year 70% | Only when it was being implemented last year 19% | More recently 3% | Other 7% | |
| 4. Have you been directly involved in the 1+2 policy yourself? | | | | |
| Yes, I have helped implement it at my school 16% | Yes, I have taught my primary class a language under the 1+2 guidelines 46% | Both of these 20% | Other 19% | |
| 5. In your view, does the 1+2 Policy bring about...? | | | | |
| More benefits than challenges 16% | More challenges than benefits 48% | An equal weighting of benefits and challenges 31% | Other 5% | |
| 8. What did your school/local authority choose to spend the funding on for the 1+2 Policy? | | | | |
| Online packs and resources 31% | Language specialist 15% | Teacher training & immersion programmes 36% | I don't know 43% | Other 12% |

Table 8: Responses to Q. 9 (N=243)

0=Strongly Disagree; 1=Disagree; 2=neither Agree nor Disagree; 3=Agree; 4= Strongly Agree

| How much do you agree with the following statements? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. Language Learning should be an important part of the primary school curriculum | 2% | 10% | 15% | 41% | 32% |
| 2. The transition from primary to secondary school regarding languages will be problematic | 4% | 25% | 29% | 33% | 9% |
| 3. Language learning should be a priority in primary school | 10% | 28% | 25% | 27% | 9% |
| 4. The 1+2 policy will improve the cultural awareness of young people | 3% | 14% | 18% | 48% | 17% |
| 5. The 1+2 policy will encourage more young people to speak and study more languages | 2% | 16% | 29% | 40% | 13% |
| 6. 6. The 1+2 policy will in turn improve job prospects for future students as languages are vital in the workforce | 2% | 18% | 35% | 33% | 12% |
| 7. Younger children learn languages more easily | 1% | 2% | 9% | 48% | 39% |
| 8. Younger children pick up languages better as they have no inhibitions | 2% | 5% | 18% | 42% | 34% |
| 9. Younger children become more confused when they are learning a second language | 13% | 44% | 25% | 15% | 2% |
| 10. Learning a second language is not suited to children with additional support needs | 13% | 43% | 28% | 13% | 3% |
| 11. Children find language learning enjoyable | 2% | 5% | 23% | 50% | 21% |
| 12. The curriculum is very busy and there are other priorities which must come before language learning and the 1+2 policy | 2% | 13% | 19% | 35% | 31% |
| 13. I feel I am/would be competent enough to teach a FL | 16% | 22% | 7% | 34% | 21% |
| 14. There are enough resources available to help with language teaching | 12% | 34% | 14% | 31% | 10% |
| 15. There is adequate training available to help to train teachers | 16% | 38% | 14% | 28% | 4% |
| 16. There is enough support provided from senior managers and/or LA | 16% | 35% | 26% | 21% | 2% |
| 17. The 1+2 policy can only be sustained if funding is available | 1% | 10% | 13% | 38% | 38% |
| 18. I feel that my school has employed an effective strategy for implementing the 1+2 policy | 8% | 28% | 28% | 31% | 5% |

Appendix 2: Semi-structured interview questions with prompts

- What can you tell me about the 1+2 policy in general?
- How does it work in the class- can you briefly explain to me what an average lesson would involve? -prompts: CLIL
- Do you think 'younger is better' when it comes to teaching languages?
- What do you perceive the benefits of the policy to be? -prompts: cultural awareness, economic benefits/job prospects
- What do you perceive the challenges of the policy to be? -prompts: transition to secondary school, proficiency of language teachers
- what is your language proficiency?
- What resources/ training are you provided with?
- Is there anything you would like to add?

An Incredible Journey: Becoming a Language Assistant in Quebec

Edward Bugler

University of Portsmouth

Abstract:

The purpose of this article is to highlight the many possibilities and opportunities that open up through language learning, using my experience as reference. Firstly, I expand on my various motivations for language learning from a young age up to where I am today. Secondly, I describe my first few days of moving to Quebec, Canada, for my placement year abroad. Lastly I outline the ways in which my year abroad has impacted on me as a person and on what I see are the potential benefits of language learning more generally.

Keywords:

Quebec; British Council; Language Assistants; motivation; benefits of language learning

A little about me

I am a final year undergraduate at the University of Portsmouth reading *International Relations and Languages*. Throughout 2016-2017, I worked as a British Council language assistant in Quebec, Canada. That year was a compulsory part of my undergraduate degree. The placement was paid and set in the exquisitely beautiful Quebec City. Since completing my year abroad and getting involved with the language learning development programs, many exciting things have happened: I was asked to be a guest speaker at the London Language Show symposium; I regularly give presentations and do guest speaking at local schools on the importance of learning languages; I have become a British Council Language Assistant Ambassador and I have been offered several jobs around the world, and especially in China, to teach English.

What turned me on to language learning?

My first memory for wanting to learn languages came at the age of around 12 when my best friend and I realised we could have secret conversations, perhaps about teachers or classmates we disliked. As the story goes, we first tried to learn Elvish after obsessing over the Lord of the Rings trilogy. We discovered relatively quickly that this was going to be far too difficult. We instead decided to learn a language that had perhaps a bit of a better grounding and one that we could both get support from other speakers, we chose French. Little aspects like that spark creativity in kids can be used to inspire kids today to take up languages - ideas that can invoke curiosity and imagination. At 12, I had no interest in planning my career which is so often used to invoke language learning for students. Being told about the professional benefits of learning languages had no effect

on me to want to take up languages. Instead I wanted to describe imaginary worlds I had invented, and I wanted to make a language or be able to understand the Simpsons when I went abroad. I think the small aspects of creativity and imagination among learning are a key tool that should be used to inspire younger generations to learn languages or, better still, intertwined with language learning.

My second memory of wanting to learn languages came at the time I was choosing GCSE subjects. Teachers were, at that point, thoroughly invoking ideas of career prospects and which subjects would be best suited to us - as individuals. I had no idea what I wanted to do in the future, I only knew that I suspected I would not have 'one' job for the rest of my life and I doubted I would stay in Britain indefinitely. With this, French seemed to be an indisputable option. To me, the opportunities that came with learning another language were unlike any other subject. Learning another language meant I was not confined to Britain, United States or other such English speaking countries. Learning French alone gave me the opportunity to confidently speak to 220 million more people, the ability to speak in 29 countries other countries including Canada (Quebec), Haiti, Madagascar and Switzerland. It has given me access to thousands more businesses opportunities and has made me appreciate the cultural significance of other countries and people.

My passion for learning languages took a turn as I finished my second year of University. My career interests were narrower at this point. I now knew I wanted to taper my studies to focus primarily on cultural relations and cultural policy in order to work as someone that promotes cross-culture opportunities for students and business. I have always enjoyed travelling, and you never quite fully appreciate the cultural heritage of an area nor integrate properly with a community without making an effort to speak to them in their mother tongue. To quote Nelson Mandela, "if you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head; if you talk to him in his language that goes to his heart." I felt that if I could encourage more people to learn languages and appreciate foreign cultures, I would be doing my part for communities across Britain taking the leap towards life changing experiences.

From an early age, I had fascination for Canada and after starting university, it had been my goal to try to work towards a year in Quebec, Canada. The country had always inspired me and it was always somewhere I would have loved to visit. After some unsuccessful job applications I discovered the opportunity to become a British Council Language Assistant in Quebec. The programme is very competitive and I was overjoyed when I was accepted after a rigorous selection process. I realised that this was a unique opportunity which would allow me to develop language skills and gain invaluable work experience at the same time. I would also be able to explore the country during holiday period.

Quebec - the first few days

On the 26th of August 2016, it was time to leave the UK and head for 'la belle province'. I arrived in Montreal late after a long flight very jetlagged; I wasn't used to travelling for

such an extended period. Fortunately, our organisers had organised a pickup service to the hotel we (the newly appointed language assistants) were staying at in Montréal for the next few days, so I did not need to worry about any of this. I quickly learnt there was no one holding my hand through this experience though and I would need to quickly develop independence and efficiency (my first of many qualities I learnt or developed on my year abroad). Montreal YUL airport is enormous and somewhat daunting. I don't believe I had ever seen that amount of people in one place before. I remember walking into a huge hangar-like building full of people flying internationally. After walking off the plane, I joined a queue which looked as though it would take at least a full day to clear. Roughly two hours later I was ushered into a room with many more people for work permit acceptance. I had to wait another two hours there, at which point jet-lag severely hit and I was feeling very agitated. After what felt like another eternity, I was sent on my way with my stamped working visa to collect my luggage. I made my way to the shuttlebus and to the hotel. All went well, apart from the French perhaps! I somehow found my way through the endless floors of the airport and pickup points and stumbled upon my bus driver. Even through my tiredness, I had my eyes fixated at the lights and nightlife of Montreal city.

The next few days were meant to prepare us for our role as a language assistant and to prepare us for the expected inevitable culture shock (though this never happened to me). Whilst this was the goal, in reality, these days were spent exploring Montréal and making some incredible, lifelong friends. On the third and final day in Montréal, the time came for us all to go our separate ways around Quebec, some stayed in Montréal, others travelled west towards Ottawa and some were traveling by bus eight hours away to the very remote region of Gaspé! I fortunately hopped on the bus with most of the other assistants who were heading north towards Quebec City. This 'départ' was very emotional, for all of us. Despite the little amount of time that we had spent together, we had somehow managed to gel together as a group very quickly. I believe this could have been because we all had very similar interests and goals, made better by the fact we were all somewhere new, exciting and somewhere we had worked hard towards. Around eight of us got off at Quebec City. We all dismantled our luggage and waited for our mentors to collect us. Not long after, I was greeted by a lovely, bubbly lady with her daughter. She mentioned that she had been doing the programme for a while now and had enjoyed the assistantship program. We made our way to the accommodation I would be staying at for the year, what I would later call home.

My mentor took some time drive me around Quebec to show me a bit of the area, areas I would know like the back of my hand by the end of the year! More towards the end of the afternoon, my mentor drove me to my town and house I would be staying. I remember this particular moment very well. It is good to mention at this point, I did not know anything about my accommodation and where or who I was staying with as I had entrusted my mentor with this. As we drove into the village, I remember first seeing the big skiing mountain on my right. I had seen that there was a mountain close by and I was very excited to learn to snowboard from time to time. I had not realised how close it was to my house, I was able to ski to my house! We stopped directly opposite to the

entrance of the skiing mountain, we pulled into the drive to my house to be, to find around 6 - 8 cars parked outside and my mentor looking at me with a look that showed both fear and intrigue. I hopped out of the car and got my huge suitcases out, within a blink of an eye, everything I had brought with me from the UK including my 20kg suitcases were swiped from my hands by six young kids. I looked up to see a lady with a smile from ear to ear running towards me with arms open. I was now in the hands of the beautifully gentle, amazingly caring, incredibly crazy Laroche family. After spending five minutes or so with this family I had never met before I felt more at home than ever before. I entered the house to find around thirty people from the village to welcome me as the new language assistant. My host family had organised a big sushi night with lots of friends and family from the village where we would make our own sushi and eat them all together. I had never made sushi before so within hours of being in my village I was already learning a new cultural aspect that I could take with me into later life. Everyone I met that night was beautifully friendly, it was such a warming environment, and everyone was so interested in what I had to say, I honestly felt fully integrated in the community from my first step inside. From this night on, I was settled, I was in my element. I was around people that cared for me and for whom I cared in return. I was in an environment that was beautiful and a place that was constantly teaching me new, exciting things. I did not want it to ever end.

How did my stay in Quebec impact on me as a person?

Learning languages and taking that all important year abroad especially, is incredible and rewarding for so many different reasons. You improve and develop both personally and professionally. The obvious advantage of taking a year abroad in a foreign country with a foreign tongue is that it will improve your linguistic skills rapidly and dramatically. Before moving to Quebec, I had been learning French for at least 6 years. I was in no position to confidently say "I could speak French", however after my placement, I have never felt more confident in my French. Specific areas I have improved my French language dramatically are in the oral skills, listening skills and in my vocabulary, albeit with a Quebecois accent! Areas of my language that could possibly have had less influence are in the written skills because as you make more friends in that country, the more you talk to them using social medias/text, etc. This in turn, can often become abbreviated written language and/or 'slang' language. This can then have some impact on your writing skills in your foreign language. That said, with a little recap on written language especially after the year abroad, you can soon pick up what you should have learnt up to your point of taking a year abroad. With the obvious language benefit of my year abroad out of the way, I am now going to go onto the supplementary impacts that Quebec has had on me.

Firstly, I have become more confident than I ever imagined I would be at this age. Aside from gaining confidence in my non-native language, before taking my year abroad, I would do anything it took to save myself from presentations and performances in school and at University. Now, having completed my year abroad, I have been asked to speak to an audience of up to 300 at the Language Show in London where I was a guest

speaker at the 'Speak to the Future' symposium with the British Council. Before taking my year abroad, I wouldn't have even given thought to the idea of doing an event like this. I am incredibly proud of myself and the personal characteristics and traits. I feel as though I have developed to a stage now where I am confident in so many different areas, socially, professionally and personally. These are areas that I know wouldn't have developed to the extent they are now without pushing myself to learn languages and indulge myself in foreign cultures.

Secondly, when you are learning languages (especially when you get to the point of taking a year abroad), if you expect only to learn that language, you are very much mistaken. You learn a whole new culture and the many things that comes with that. To give some examples of the aspects of Canadian and Quebecois culture I personally learnt during my year, aside from learning French dramatically; I learnt to snowboard, I learnt to track moose, to play ice hockey, a new cuisine and even how to survive a 25km hike in a -40 degrees snowstorm. These are some things you simply cannot learn in most parts of England, nor, arguably in Europe! I have found, to fully appreciate these unique aspects of the foreign culture, one should make at least some attempt to speak the tongue. As mentioned before, when you speak to someone in their mother tongue, you speak to the heart.

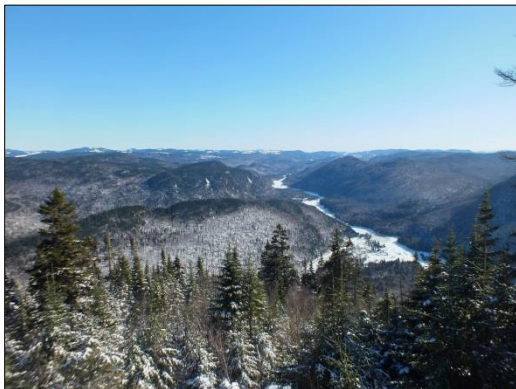
Thirdly, I feel more confident in my professional position. One, disputed 'beauty' of the French language (at least from what I found) is that it can be considered somewhat 'direct'. Meaning, Francophones (and this was evident in my experience of Quebec) say what they want and don't dabble around the lines. This is something that the English have stereotypically struggled with. I myself am no exception, I can think of several times where I have been overly polite and as a consequence, not got exactly what I have wanted from certain situations. Learning French and spending a year in a Francophone country has meant I can now incorporate this French attitude into my day to day life (where necessary!). I am less scared to ask for what I want and not to dabble around the end goal. This has meant I am confident in asking employers for job opening and applying for jobs that are perhaps a little overly ambitious. Furthermore, I feel more socially capable, I can approach conversations easier, I can hold a conversation better – be it with my best friends or with people that I barely know or do not know at all.

From my perspective, the greatest advantage of taking a year abroad was the contacts and friends that I made. I made so many great friends during my year abroad. In my (admittedly biased) view I was neighboured with the friendliest family in the world, and one that also happened to be ex-Olympic acrobatic skiers. This meant I could learn to snowboard with the youngest son (5 years old) who would teach me to snowboard consciously and at the same time, teach me French subconsciously. He had no recollection that my French was not as good as all other adults. I think he started to realise that I couldn't understand him so well when I wasn't doing the things that he was asking (I learnt quickly from this!). The whole experience was great. The family would also host parties and 'sushi nights' which meant I could network with the rest of the village and, from time to time, help them and their kids with English and teach them about British culture. I am, to this day, still in contact with all of my friends I have made

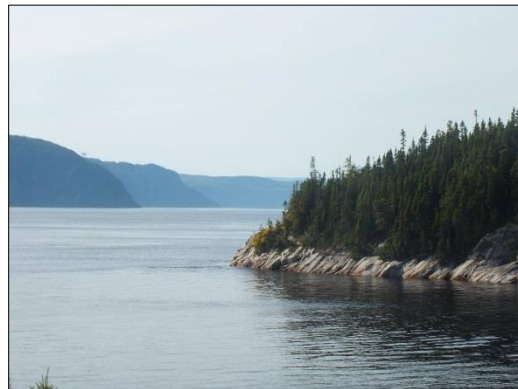
during my year abroad. I know, even now, a year on from the experience, that I could go back and have someone that would host me, someone who would transport me and someone to feed me. This friendliness of the people I met made a real lasting impression on me. It made me really appreciate their way of life and their kindness to people they hardly knew. This is one aspect of life that I have endorsed wholeheartedly. An aspect that I believe has made me a better person today.

A final thought

Language study is actually an interdisciplinary endeavour, one in which you can learn so much more about other subjects. Whether it is talking in French (or whichever language you are studying) about politics, business or science and technology as part of your A-level topics, or translating a text about plumbing into the target language as part of your university course, you gain a much better understanding about a vastly wider range of topics than when working towards a specialist degree. In other words, learning languages can give you the opportunity to learn about all kinds of other disciplines in life. In my view this is a brilliant aspect of language learning and an important point to pass on. Students who are not yet sure about what they want to do in the future should be encouraged wholeheartedly to learn languages because of this interdisciplinary aspect, and because, as I can assure them, having acquired language skills their career prospects will be improve in unexpected ways.



Atop 'Le Relais' ski mountain next to my school



Canadian lake



First days of autumn



End-of-year class photo

Recent Publications – Abstracts and Weblinks

AHRC (2017) [New Research will demonstrate the value of language-led research](#)

The six selected projects are:

- **Multilingualism in Early Modern Literary Culture**
 Dr Peter Auger & Dr Sheldon Brammall, University of Birmingham
 This project will bring together early modernists working in modern languages, English, Neo-Latin and history to develop interdisciplinary perspectives on the contexts and applications of multilingualism in early modern literature.
- **Space to Speak: Non-Han Fiction and Film in China and Beyond**
 Dr Sarah Dodd, University of Leeds
 Emerging from previous AHRC-funded research on new Chinese writing at Leeds, this project will examine how contemporary authors and film-makers in China's borderlands are negotiating with standardised Mandarin and their own minoritised languages in their work, in order to find their own linguistic and artistic space.
- **The Creative Web of Languages**
 Dr Erika Fülöp, University of Lancaster
 This project studies the works of multilingual digital artists and seeks to understand the web's political and cultural potential in supporting multilingual and multicultural identities.
- **Evaluating the effectiveness of e-mentoring and a digital languages resource for foreign language learning in Wales**
 Professor Claire Gorrara, Cardiff University
[First days of autumn](#) This research programme will [End-of-year class photo](#)
 investigate the effectiveness of e-mentoring and a digital languages resource in improving intercultural understanding and multilingual literacy in Year 9 pupils in ten secondary schools in Wales that are either in poorer areas, have low uptake of modern languages GCSEs or both.
- **Watching the Transnational Detectives: Showcasing Identity, Internationalism and Language Learning on British Television**
 Dr Rachel Haworth, University of Hull
 This project will examine the ways in which British television viewers respond to languages and multiculturalism in a range of well-loved crime dramas from France, Italy and Germany. It explores the impact these series have on audiences' perceptions of nationhood, foreign languages and cultures, and language learning.
- **"¡Yo soy Fidel!": Post-Castro Cuba and the Cult of Personality**
 Dr James Kent, Royal Holloway, University of London
 Following the death of Fidel Castro in 2016, the world's media projected iconic images of the former Cuban leader, underscoring Cuba's long and complex relationship with photography. Drawing on fieldwork and practice-led research, this project will consider the ways that iconic Cuban images are produced and consumed in different transnational contexts.

Alberta Teachers Association (2017) [Literature Review on the Impact of Second Language Learning](#)

This literature review investigated whether and how learning a second language affects language learners. It focused on research in the following areas: **cognition, academics, personal life, society at large, economics** and **intercultural understanding**. In addition, special attention was paid to the extent to which students with exceptionalities and other language learners are able to acquire additional languages. Learning languages takes time and effort, and the amount of time it takes depends on a number of factors. Some of these include the learning context, learning goals and the age of the learner, to name just a few. Most often, learning a second language has a positive impact on the language learner. At times, however, learning languages may pose challenges. The research presented here focuses both on the benefits and the challenges associated with learning a second language.

American Academy of Arts and Sciences (2017) [America's Languages: Investing in Language Education for the 21st Century](#)

In this report, the Commission on Language Learning recommends a national strategy to improve access to as many languages as possible for people of every region, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background—that is, to value language education as a persistent national need similar to education in math or English, and to ensure that a useful level of proficiency is within every student's reach.

Some Key Findings:

- The ability to understand, speak, read, and write in world languages, in addition to English, is critical to success in business, research, and international relations in the twenty-first century.
- The United States needs more people to speak languages other than English in order to provide social and legal services for a changing population.
- The study of a second language has been linked to improved learning outcomes in other subjects, enhanced cognitive ability, and the development of empathy and effective interpretive skills. The use of a second language has been linked to a delay in certain manifestations of aging. [...]
- One of the biggest obstacles to improved language learning is a national shortage of qualified teachers. [...]
- Native American languages are distinct in political status and history, and are the object of school- and community-based reclamation and retention efforts aligned with the Native American Languages Act of 1990.

BAAL Publications

In addition to other items, the following conference proceedings are now available online:

- Andrew Harris & Adam Brandt (Eds.) 2010/2017. Language, Learning, and Context. Proceedings of the 42nd Annual Meeting of the British Association for Applied Linguistics, 3-5 September 2009, Newcastle University.
- Martin Edwardes (Ed.) 2009/2017. Taking the Measure of Applied Linguistics. 41st Annual Meeting of the British Association for Applied Linguistics, 11-13 September 2008, Swansea University.
- Martin Edwardes (Ed.) 2008/2017. Technology, Ideology and Practice in Applied Linguistics. 40th Annual Meeting of the British Association for Applied Linguistics, 6-8 September 2007, The University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK.

BAAL Language Policy SIG: [Minutes of AGM](#) (as part of BAAL Conference 2017)

British Academy (2017) [The Right Skills: Celebrating Skills in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences](#) (AHSS)

The arts, humanities and social sciences help us to understand ourselves, our society and our place in the world. They are vital to our ability to understand and learn from the past and analyse the present, in order to innovate and build for the future.

The services sector represents 80% of the UK's economy, and it has a crucial role to play in the UK's current and future economic growth. The financial services, legal services, professional services such as IT, accountancy and architecture, heritage, hospitality, retail and advertising, and the rapidly growing creative industries, depend on the skills which study of the arts, humanities and social sciences develops. These are areas in which the UK has a strong competitive advantage, and which can contribute to raising the productivity of our economy and to growing the nation's overall wealth.

We need a better understanding of whether the UK has the right balance of skills for the future. So it is timely to hold a debate about the place of education and skills in securing prosperity for society. It is critical that the arts, humanities and social sciences are included at the heart of this debate.

This is the first overarching study of the skills developed through the study of the arts, humanities and social science. In this report we identify the skills which are innate to the study of these disciplines, and look at the contribution which their graduates make, to the economy through the employment routes they take and in other ways they engage with society.

The study is underpinned by a body of evidence which includes new analyses of data on employment outcomes of graduates and focus groups with students, as well as existing literature.

British Council (2017a) [Languages for the Future \(2nd report\)](#): The foreign languages the United Kingdom needs to become a truly global nation

Press Release Statement: Languages for the Future identifies the priority languages for the UK's future prosperity, security and influence in the world. It updates the British Council's 2013 report. The report considers the outlook for the supply and demand for language competence in the years ahead and looks at the linguistic dimension of a variety of economic, geopolitical, cultural and educational factors, scoring languages against these. As in the 2013 report, the same five languages top the list: Spanish, Mandarin, French, Arabic and German. They appear some way ahead of the next five, which are: Italian, Dutch, Portuguese, Japanese and Russian. The report argues that, in a new era of cooperation with Europe and with the rest of the world, investment in upgrading the UK's ability to understand and engage with people internationally is critical.

British Council (2017b) [Language Trends 2016/17](#)

Press Release Extracts: Analysis of examination statistics in the Language Trends Survey 2017 – now in its fifteenth year – highlights that in summer 2016, 65 per cent of pupils in Inner London took a language GCSE compared to just 43 per cent in the North East. More than that, participation rates over the last three years indicate that London is the only part of the country where the percentage of pupils taking languages to GCSE is currently increasing. Access to language learning differs along socio-economic lines too. Pupils in schools in more deprived areas are less likely to sit a language GCSE or to be given the chance to study more than one foreign language. These pupils are also more likely to be allowed to drop languages after only two years or even to be withdrawn from language lessons altogether [...]

At secondary level, some state schools with very low uptake in languages say they are successfully increasing numbers, stimulated by the EBacc measure. Meanwhile 38 per cent of state schools are planning for numbers to increase year on year [...]

There is a marked decline in the number of pupils studying more than one language, particularly in the independent sector where 45 per cent of schools report a decrease in dual linguists. Fewer opportunities to talk with native speakers and experience other cultures first hand – such as through school exchanges or hosting language assistants in the classroom – is also seen to be negatively impacting languages uptake in schools. There is some concern that this may be exacerbated even further by the UK's decision to leave the European Union [...]

British Council (2017c) [Language Trends Wales](#)

British Council Wales has published its third Language Trends Wales report, which finds that teachers are 'extremely worried about the future of modern foreign languages'.

Headline statistics from the report include:

- More than a third of Welsh schools now have less than 10% of Year 10 (14-15 year olds) studying a modern foreign language.
- 44% of schools have fewer than five pupils studying a foreign language at AS level and 61% have fewer than five foreign language pupils at A level
- 64% of MFL departments have just one or two full-time teachers, with one third depending on non-British EU nationals for their staff
- Take up of modern foreign languages is continuing to fall in years 10 and 11 indicating that numbers will decline further in 2017 and 2018

British Council (2017d) [Next Generation UK](#)

The UK's decision to leave the EU has left many young people feeling uncertain about the future and with questions about how the UK's place in the world may be recast. While some perceive an opportunity to carve out a new future, others are anxious that Brexit will diminish the UK's influence on the global stage. With the backdrop of this moment of transition, the British Council commissioned Demos to undertake independent research for Next Generation UK, aiming for honest dialogue about the challenges facing young people in the UK, as well as exploring ways in which they can still have opportunities and agency as local and global citizens.

The report is organised according to three key research themes around which we have explored youth attitudes and aspirations: the UK's place in the world, political and social engagement, and opportunities in education and work.

Collen, I., McKendry, E. and Henderson, L. (2017) [The Transition from Primary Languages Programme to Post-Primary Languages Provision](#). Belfast: NICILT

Key Findings:

- There is no evidence of successful transition arrangements from primary to post-primary education for modern languages in Northern Ireland;
- Year 8 pupils in the study start their language learning from scratch, even when they have been taught a language at primary level;
- There is great variety in who is delivering primary languages, and the teacher's competence, leading to wide spread variation in pupils' experiences;
- Children perceive languages to have low status at primary school compared to their first year of post-primary education;
- There is appetite amongst head teachers to co-operate within cross-phase Area Learning Communities (ALCs) to develop primary teacher capacity. However, all

principals state that conditions need to be right for this to happen; there needs to be adequate time allocation, quality of delivery and it is important that head teachers are afforded the autonomy to drive primary languages in their ALC in a way that they see fit.

CBI/Pearson (2017) [Helping the UK thrive: Education and Skills survey 2017](#)

The report finds that 47% of employers were dissatisfied with graduates' foreign language skills, a decrease on 2016 (48%), and 2015 (54%). In the same time, their dissatisfaction with the foreign language skills of school and college leavers has risen (in 2017 66% of employers were dissatisfied with these skills). As in 2014, 2015 and 2016, French, German and Spanish continue to be the European languages most in demand - rated as useful to their business by 51%, 47% and 45% of employers.

New American Economy (2017) [Not Lost in Translation: The Growing Importance of Foreign Language Skills in the U.S. Job Market](#)

In today's globalised world, businesses need employees who can serve customers not only in English, but in a wide range of other languages as well. [...] Given this, it is not surprising that by 2020, proficiency in more than one language will be among the most important skills a job seeker can have. [...] Previous attempts to understand the increasing demand for foreign language skills have been limited in scope. Many existing studies focus on demand for bilingual workers in fields like translation, interpretation, and language instruction—jobs in which language skills are clearly necessary. Other research has focused exclusively on Spanish-English bilinguals, or has relied on small-scale survey data. Such work does not accurately reflect the rich diversity of today's labour and consumer market. It also fails to provide meaningful insights into how immigrants or their children could help to fill the growing demand for foreign language employees. This study aims to overcome the limitations of past research, providing valuable insight into how the demand for bilingual workers has grown at both the state and national levels. We also explore demand for workers who speak specific languages including Arabic, Korean, or French.

Open University (2017) [Video Recordings of Conference](#)

Full recording of the OU digiLAL 2 Research Conference is available online with free access. You will find talks by:

- Dr. Felix Kronenberg (Rhodes College, Memphis, TN, USA), on games in language learning: Language Learning in Digital Gaming Spaces
- Professor Stephen Bax: Research in the School of Languages and Applied Linguistics: aspects of digital language use and language learning
- Dr. Ursula Stickler, Dr. Caroline Tagg, Dr. Nathaniel Owen: Language learning and ageing: cognitive and social benefits of online forum interactions for older learners

- Dr. Caroline Tagg and Dr. Philip Seargeant: Social media and the future of open debate: implications for critical digital literacies in education
- Dr. Tim Lewis: NOT the Interaction Hypothesis: How foreign language learning takes place in e-Tandem exchanges
- Dr. Qian Kan and Professor Stephen Bax: Researching an app for learning Chinese characters

To access the recording please copy and paste this link into your browser window:
stadium.open.ac.uk/2916

University of Manchester (2017) [Cross-Language Dynamics](#) Film Projects

Applications were invited from students and recent graduates of the Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology at the University of Manchester for the production of short films that connect to the research themes of the AHRC consortium 'Cross- language dynamics: re-shaping community.' The films were funded by the consortium's Translingual Strand led from the Institute of Modern Languages Research at the School of Advanced Study, London.

Welsh Government (2017) [Global futures: two years into our plan](#)

Strategic action 1: We committed to: "promote and raise the profile of modern foreign languages as an important subject not only at Level 2 (GCSE) but also as a longer term choice which can lead to exciting and valued career opportunities".

Through the Global Futures partnership of schools and colleges, regional education consortia, Higher Education Institutions, and language institutes, there has been increased support for languages and the promotion of languages as an opportunity for young people to progress and open up career opportunities.

Strategic action 2: We committed to: "build capacity and support the professional development of the education workforce to deliver modern foreign languages effectively from Year 5 onwards, enabling all learners to benefit from the bilingual plus 1 strategy via: Professional Development for the education workforce, review of the Initial Teacher Education or training (ITET) and pioneer schools network".

We have developed school-to-school support for the provision of languages and provided a range of professional learning opportunities for teachers of modern foreign languages.

Strategic action 3: We committed to: "providing enhanced learning opportunities to engage and excite learners".

We have developed new approaches to improve engagement with learners, which will enable them to experience different ways of studying languages and therefore providing a more exciting learning path. By offering a range of languages and learning via different methods and in different environments, we have promoted language learning as a viable and exciting option to study. Through our Global Futures partners, including the language institutes, the British Council and Confucius Institutes, we have provided

opportunities for languages which aim to increase uptake, improve engagement, and raise attainment

White, L. T (2018) [Explaining the Moral Foreign-Language Effect](#)

In 2014, University of Chicago psychologists Sayuri Hayakawa, Boaz Keysar, and their colleagues reported a fascinating finding: When confronted with the “footbridge” version of the well-known trolley problem, bilingual participants were much more likely to choose the utilitarian option—push the man off the bridge to save the lives of five other people—when they considered the problem in their second, non-native language.

The researchers offered a clever explanation for the finding: Pushing a man to his death is emotionally distasteful, even when five lives are saved. But an idea expressed in a foreign language has less emotional impact than the same idea expressed in one’s native language. [...]

But researchers identified an equally plausible explanation: Using a foreign language requires more cognitive effort, which causes the “chooser” to slow down and think more deliberately, more rationally. In the trolley problem, the utilitarian option—pushing the man off the bridge to save five lives—is the more rational option.

Three months ago, Hayakawa, Keysar, and their colleagues reported the results of six experiments involving more than 1,300 bilingual participants. The experiments were designed to identify which explanation for the MFLE—feeling less or thinking more—is the more plausible account [...]

Downloadable Articles from Other Academic Journals

Last updated: 5 January 2018

[Foreign Language Annals](#)

Journal published by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Inc. NB: **ACTFL** is a professional organisation, i.e. funded by subscription of its members, encompassing all 50 US states. The FLA journal is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. You can read the Editor's message of the March 2017 edition [here](#), which also gives you an overview of the articles, which are all **FREE to view and download**.

The Top 5 most cited articles are also free to download

- The Homestay in Intensive Language Study Abroad: Social Networks, Language Socialization, and Developing Intercultural Competence
- Listening and Reading Proficiency Levels of College Students
- The Implementation of High-Leverage Teaching Practices: From the University Classroom to the Field Site
- Measuring the Impact of Instruction in Intercultural Communication on Secondary Spanish Learners' Attitudes and Motivation
- Supporting Student Learning Outcomes Through Service Learning

ACTFL also publish a language magazine, the *Language Educator*, and you can access some interesting sample articles from each edition [here](#).

[IRIS \(Repository of\) Instruments for Research Into Second Languages](#)

[Language Learning & Technology \(LLT\)](#)

Open and free-access journal. Selected titles from [Volume 21 Issue 2 October 2017](#):

- Teaching Google Search Techniques in an L2 Academic Writing Context
- Enhancing Extensive Reading with Data-Driven Learning
- Data-Informed Language Learning
- Task-Based Language Teaching Online: A Guide for Teachers
- Making It Personal: Performance-Based Assessments, Ubiquitous Technology, and Advanced Learners

[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 most recent issue at time of going was a special issue on *Internationalisation policies and practices in European universities: Case Studies from Catalonia*.

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.

[List.ly of online journals for language learning](#)

Compiled by Teresa Mackinnon (University of Warwick) – some journals are available without subscription.

[Languages, Society and Policy \(LSP\)](#)

The Modern Languages Department of the University of Cambridge is leading on a large research project entitled 'Multilingualism: Empowering Individuals, Transforming Societies' ([MEITS](#)). They recently launched their own open-access, online journal, which aims to publish "*high-quality peer-reviewed language research in accessible and non-technical language to promote policy engagement and provide expertise to policy makers, journalists and stakeholders in education, health, business and elsewhere.*"

Have a look at the [policy papers](#) section.

[Language Learning Research](#)

Language Learning Research (formerly YazikOpen) is an online directory linking to over 4000 items of FREE open access research into the teaching and learning of modern languages.

[General Teaching Council for Scotland](#)

You can access a range of educational journals via your MyGTCS login <http://www.gtcs.org.uk/research-engagement/education-journals.aspx>

Other

Li Wei (2017) [Translanguaging as a Practical Theory of Language](#) in *Applied Linguistics* October 2017

This article seeks to develop Translanguaging as a theory of language and discuss the theoretical motivations behind and the added values of the concept. I contextualize Translanguaging in the linguistic realities of the 21st century, especially the fluid and dynamic practices that transcend the boundaries between named languages, language varieties, and language and other semiotic systems. I highlight the contributions Translanguaging as a theoretical concept can make to the debates over the Language and Thought and the Modularity of Mind hypotheses. One particular aspect of multilingual language users' social interaction that I want to emphasize is its multimodal and multisensory nature. I elaborate on two related concepts: Translanguaging Space and Translanguaging Instinct, to underscore the necessity to bridge the artificial and ideological divides between the so-called sociocultural and the cognitive approaches to Translanguaging practices. In doing so, I respond to some of the criticisms and confusions about the notion of Translanguaging.

Dina Mehmedbegovic and Thomas Bak (2017) [Towards an interdisciplinary lifetime approach to multilingualism: From implicit assumptions to current evidence](#) in *European Journal of Language Policy*

Abstract: Many types of human behaviour, from scientific research to political decision-making, are based on implicit assumptions, considered to be so self-evident that they do not need any further justification. Such assumptions are particularly powerful in topics related to language: one of the most universal and fundamental human abilities and a prerequisite for social life, civilisation and culture. They become a driving force in the current debates about multilingualism.

We identify three central assumptions underlying key controversies related to language: (a) the "limited resources model" assuming that learning languages has a detrimental effect on learning other subjects, (b) the notion that the "normal" state of human brain, mind and society is either monolingualism, or a strong dominance of a "mother tongue", accompanied by less relevant "additional" languages, (c) the belief that the aim of language learning is a "native-like" proficiency and anything that fails to reach it has only limited value.

Combining radically different academic backgrounds (education and cognitive neuroscience) and methodologies (qualitative and quantitative) we examine how these assumptions influence attitudes towards multilingualism. We evaluate the available empirical evidence and explore conceptual common ground, from the design of school curricula to the promotion of healthy ageing. We conclude that our perspectives complement each other, providing a valuable tool to inform language policy.

Emma Marsden and Rowena Kasprowicz (2017) [Foreign Language Educators' Exposure to Research: Reported Experiences, Exposure Via Citations, and a Proposal for Action](#) in *Modern Language Journal*, July 2017

This article reports on 2 connected studies that provide data about the flow of research to foreign language (FL) educators in majority Anglophone contexts. The first study investigated exposure to research among FL educators in the United Kingdom using two surveys (n = 391; n = 183). The data showed (a) some limited exposure to research via professional association publications and events, (b) negligible direct exposure to publications in the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI), (c) barriers to exposure caused by poor physical and conceptual access, despite generally positive perceptions of research, and (d) the importance of university-based teacher educators for research–practice interfaces. The second study investigated the potential for indirect exposure to research from 7 professional publications over 5 years in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. We systematically reviewed the extent to which these professional publications referenced 29 SSCI journals that aim to publish pedagogy-relevant research. In our corpus of 8,516 references in 284 articles in professional journals, the mean proportion of references to all 29 SSCI journals, combined, was 12.43% per professional article. The overall mean number of references to each SSCI journal was 0.17 per professional article. The emerging picture is rather bleak, and we propose action from academic journals and researchers to promote a more international, systematic, and sustainable flow of research [...]

We first present key arguments for practitioner engagement with research put forward by the research community and policy makers. We then provide a short narrative review of the limited number of investigations into the extent and nature of practitioners' exposure to published research.

Selected Events from January 2018

Check our Events pages: http://tiny.cc/SCILT_Events for details of these and other, more local events and recent updates. If you come across an important language-education related event we have missed please inform us by emailing scilt@strath.ac.uk.

| Date | Details |
|-----------------|---|
| 17 January | <u>Why language teachers need to care: making sense of a pluriliteracies approach to deeper learning from a transdisciplinary and translinguistic perspective.</u> Talk by Professor Do Coyle, LG34, Paterson's Land, Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh. 5-6.30pm |
| 29 January | <u>Multilingual practices and attitudes among university students: implications for the teaching of languages.</u> Talk organised by the Education Strand of the AHRC-funded project ' <u>Multilingualism: Empowering Individuals, Transforming Societies</u> '. Faculty of Education, 184 Hills Road, Cambridge, (Room 1S3), 5-6.30 pm |
| 1-3 February | <u>Language, Identity and Education in Multilingual Contexts</u> , Trinity College. Dublin, Republic of Ireland |
| 2 February | <u>Language, social media and migration: the role of mobile communication technologies in migrants' everyday lives.</u> Research Seminar. University of Birmingham |
| 2-3 February | <u>Creative Multilingual Identities</u> , University of Reading, Institute of Education |
| 5-9 February | <u>MultiLing Winter School 2018: Language Policy in Multilingual Contexts – Methodological Approaches.</u> University of Oslo, Norway |
| 23-24 March | <u>Language World 2018.</u> Jury's Inn Hinckley Island, Burbage, Hinckley |
| 27 April | <u>Changing language and communication practices in contemporary networked societies.</u> Research Seminar. Open University, Milton Keynes |
| 3-4 May | <u>Translanguaging: Opportunities and Challenges in a Global World.</u> Canadian Centre for Studies and Research on Bilingualism and Language Planning (CCERBAL). Ottawa, Canada. |
| 7-9 May | <u>Autonomy in language learning and teaching: The case of target language skills and subsystems.</u> State University of Applied Sciences. Konin, Poland. |
| 17-18 May | <u>New Trends in Language Teaching International Conference</u> , University of Granada, Spain |
| 18-19 May | <u>(dis)Covering Discourses.</u> Cork, Republic of Ireland. |
| 23-24 May | 3 rd <u>Languages in the Globalised World Conference.</u> Leeds Beckett University |
| 31 May – 1 June | <u>Language Policy Forum 2018.</u> Sheffield Hallam University. |

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| 31 May – 1 June | Conference for early career researchers: From Data to Theory in Linguistics . Open to post-graduate and post-doctoral researchers. University Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris, France. |
| 31 May – 2 June | 2nd International Conference on Multilingualism and Multilingual Education (ICMME18) . Douglas College, New Westminster (Metro Vancouver) British Columbia, Canada |
| 1-3 June | Crossroads of Languages and Cultures: Languages and Cultures at Home and at School . 5 th International Conference. University of Crete, Rethymno, Greece |
| 7 June | SSTI Research Conference 2018: Judiciary Interpreting: moving forward with standards for training and education . San Francisco, California, USA. |
| 13-15 June | Early Language Learning: Multiple perspectives – Diverse voices University of Iceland. Reykjavik, Iceland |
| 13-15 June | IVACS International Biennial Conference: Corpus Linguistics: languages, communities, mobility . University of Malta, Valletta, Malta. |
| 28-29 June | Teaching and learning L2 pragmatics: 2nd language pragmatic development in the home and study abroad contexts . International Conference. University of Central Lancashire, Preston |
| 29 June | Google Translate and Modern Language Education . University of Nottingham |
| 23-27 July | Language Policy and Language Planning: education, languages and migrations . Università per stranieri di Siena. Siena, Italy. |
| 23-25 August | Multidisciplinary Approaches in Language Policy and Planning Conference . OISE/University of Toronto, Canada |
| 5-8 September | EuroSLA 2018 . University of Münster, Germany |
| 10-11 September | 10th AILA-Europe Junior Researcher Meeting in Applied Linguistics: “Research(ing) Cultures in Applied Linguistics” University of Duisburg-Essen, Campus Essen, Germany. |
| 17-19 September | 8th International Conference on Applied Linguistics and Professional Practice . University of Cardiff |
| 22-24 November | Multilingual Awareness and Multilingual Practices . Tallinn, Estonia. |
| Various | Talks (Language and Education Network) at the University of Exeter. |