

Notes of the First Meeting of the Advisory Committee

Time/ Date: 12.30-4.30pm, 12 May 2016

Location: Room 311, 26 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AP (within the UCL Division of Psychology and Language Sciences)

Apologies: Jonathan Gershuny, Teresa Tinsley, Maggie Snowling, Marianne Gullberg, Núria Sebastián Gallés, David Green, Charles Hulme, and Michael Worton

Present: Steven Fawkes, Tony McEnery, Pascale Vassie (PV), Nigel Vincent, Joseph Buckley (JB), Elizabeth Lanza (EL), and Richard Wiggins

Introductions:

- Overview of the work and aims of the British Academy – Joseph Buckley
- Introduction to the project – Bencie Woll
- Methodology – Li Wei

Panel Discussion – Research and Policy Questions

Research Areas

- Cognitive benefits vs. cognitive advantage
- What are the benefits of the focus on language learning?
- Socio-economic status
 - Language learning by children from monolingual backgrounds in relation to (the working) class and curriculum skills
 - Are there benefits across the population, or only among certain groups?
- Learning and language disabilities in relation to access to second language learning at home and at school
- Codeswitching; is this “bad”?
- Cultural significance of language → cultural awareness
 - Can cognitive and cultural benefits be separated?
- Community languages
 - Non-European languages
 - Compile list of UK community language schools
 - PV mentioned a study of 5000 children in community learning
 - The need to identify gaps and what further research is needed
 - MFL learning with second/ third languages in the background; look for literature on this and what impact there has been
- Relationship of language learning to achievement in other areas
 - I.e. language learning in context to other language learning, i.e. relational to music or mathematics – are there similar anxieties and cognitive effects?
- Orthography
 - Does learning a different script benefit cognition (compared to learning a different language with the same script)? Also look at sign language in this context
 - *Writing System Researcher* journal
 - Learning of different language systems
 - KS3 Japanese language learning
 - Sign language

- Focus
 - Research on this topic is largely English-language-based; European studies focus on English language learning rather than *other* language learning
 - Attitudes to language and language learning is different in the English-speaking world, and this will be a key focus
- Modes of language learning, including haptic and mobile technologies
 - Related to the process of learning
- Interviews:
 - Focus group interviews
 - Head teachers – query why they don't teach certain languages
- Questionnaire: perceived benefits vs. intended benefits?
- Case studies – particular areas/ schools

Methodologies

- Is there a publications or methodologies bias? Does the latter lead to a publications bias?
- EL paper: *Bilingualism is good for the resourceful*
 - “resourceful” – exclusion of those with SENs
 - “good language vs bad language”
 - Family language policy
- ONS – look at census data on language
- Reveal limitations of information stock and gathering
- Big Data datasets?
- Input on social media gathering/ information of Twitter feeds

Policy and Practice Areas

- Look at the reasons for *why* government has stopped some language programmes thus far
- How will this project impact academics and policy makers?
 - Why are some languages favoured over others?
 - Introduction of league tables? Disadvantages language learning
- Academisation impact on language teaching
- Exam boards (OCR, Edexcel, Signature, Institute of British Sign Language, Institute of Linguistics (community interpreting exams), Public Service, City & Guilds)
- Lifelong learning
- Policy related to children with learning disorders related to the lack of support
- Foreign language learning policies in other countries:
 - Australia and the ‘English +’ agenda (first/ second/ heritage languages)
 - [National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia](#)
 - [Multiculturalism: a review of Australian policy statements and recent debates in Australia and overseas](#)
 - [Word - Australian Human Rights Commission](#)
 - [ACARA - Languages](#)
 - [The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages – ACARA](#)
 - [The Current State of Japanese Language Education in Australian Schools](#)
 - [Languages 2025 - Department of Education and Training](#) (Government of Victoria)
 - Scandinavia – where English is a pillar of the curriculum
 - Predisposition and expectations
 - Can something similar be introduced in the UK, and how?
 - Norway

- English, Norwegian, Mathematics, and Second MFL (modern foreign language) as key subjects
 - Norwegian universities where exams can be written in Danish/ Swedish, and lectures are given in these languages in HE
 - Giving students the freedom to learn and study in different languages
 - Norwegian LL education/ learning plans regarding languages: impact work through “language exhibition”
 - Canada: Immersion school system/ immediate effect on short-term cognitive benefits
 - Gaelic programmes: [Scottish CILT/ NI CILT](#)
 - Look at language curricula in in different countries
- Community languages and community cohesion
 - [HoLA](#) – example of teaching Somali language
 - Benefit of community cohesion through teaching a language which is relevant to the children
 - Plumstead Tamil School (language and dance classes)
 - Sign language cooking clubs
- Advice and support in terms of access to policy makers and recommendations on who to contact
- Any research on why people (adults/ children) do not want to learn languages?
- Any research on efficacy of ‘nudge’ approaches to encourage interest in language learning

Publicity

- What motivates people?
- Communicative language policy
- [“Teach a friend a foreign language” \(European Commission’s European Language Label\)](#)
 - Holds database of UK and EU winners
- [Routes into Languages](#) programme
- How to ‘nudge’ people to be resilient

Journals/ Publications (to check out)

- Suggestions and advice:
 - Are there any existing systematic reviews or meta-analyses?
 - Big Data: What is there? / What corpora can be used?
 - Other related research initiatives?
 - Suggestions on finding and sifting through grey literature
- *Multilingual London* – London and Manchester
 - Looks at census data
- [Language Learning](#) journal/ [ECML](#)
- Check out the *Language Trends* report
- Policy-related:
 - [The impact of supplementary schools on pupils' attainment - CORE](#)
 - [Language provisions in Manchester supplementary schools \(2015\)](#)
 - [British Academy Language Mapping Project: Mapping language provision in the UK Higher Education sector](#)

Contacts/ Bodies

- Teresa Tinsley (CILT)
- Stephen Hawkes (ALL)
- Madeline Atkins (HEFCE)
- Chris Milwood (HEFCE)

- Universities
- UCML and the OWRI project
- Vivienne Hurley (DBIS)
- ICCL – Ramalingam and Griffith (2015)
- Guardian Education/ BBC Education
- JB's TES contact (journalist)
- Common function at the British Academy
- Press Office: ask how they choose to place certain articles in the news over others, i.e. news relating to language learning and dementia is very popular
- Pearson IoE [Language Learning](#) series (inquire into whether this has been taken over by UCL Press)
- Head of Childrens' Services in Brent → community and heritage language learning
- [Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists](#) (FE)
- [U3A](#) (University of the Third Age) – language learning in old age
- [Unlocking Language](#) – lobbies for SEN
- [Hilary McColl](#): Modern Language Speaking in Scotland
- CILT – [CILT Research Library \(online\)](#)
- [The Invisible Child: The Responses and Attitudes to the Learning of Modern Foreign Languages Shown by Year 9 Pupils of Average Ability](#) (1998)
- [MFL Twitterati](#) (Twitter)
- Schools Award
- Janice Carruthers (Queen's University Belfast) Head of the School of Modern Languages and Professor of French Linguistics

Other Resources

- SOAS conference 2015: [Post-Vernacular Languages](#)
 - International arena where people can learn non-European languages
- Copenhagen conference: National Language Issues in the Baltic Region
 - Centre for Internationalisation and Parallel Language Use
 - Inter-Scandinavian communication loss as English takes over?
- [Chinese International Language Learning Initiative](#)
 - Confucius Institute research?
- [Goethe-Institut](#)
- [Language Alliance](#) members
- British Council – any other research projects?
 - [Language Learning research](#) – BC
 - [Which languages the UK needs and why](#)
 - [Languages for the Future](#) report
 - [Conference on Creativity in Language Learning and Teaching Research](#)
 - [Identity in foreign language learning and teaching: why listening to our students' and teachers' voices really matters](#)
- International MFL teaching associations
- LSE Conference: [The Multilingual City](#) (check reports from December 2014)
- [Multilingualism and Creativity](#) project at the EU – also concerns cognition
- [Education in England: Annual Report 2016](#) (CentreForum) – N. Perera
- [Sheffield: The Home Language Accreditation Project \(HoLA\)](#)

Next meeting: TBC