

## **Developing young people's international communication skills through employer engagement in language learning**

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## Section 1 Introduction

In the most recent Eurobarometer study on 'Europeans and their languages' (2006)<sup>1</sup>, 62% of respondents from the UK admitted not knowing any language other than their mother tongue. This compared to an average of 44% across all EU countries, keeping the UK at the bottom of the European league table. Many argue that English is a major language and is 'the' global business language and therefore we should not be overly concerned about this trend.

However, English accounts for a declining share of internet traffic (from 51% in 2000 to 29% in 2009)<sup>2</sup> and the English-speaking population accounts for less than 30% of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It is expected to account for less in the future with the rapidly changing landscape of the global economy and the increasing dominance of the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) economies.<sup>3</sup> The world is changing fast and businesses in the UK increasingly recognise the need for language and intercultural skills to tap into and exploit these growing markets, build relationships and work effectively with people from different countries and diverse cultures.

The UK has witnessed a decline in language learning at all levels of education for many years and increasingly so since 2004 when languages became non-compulsory at Key Stage 4 in England.<sup>4</sup> In 2010, GCSE entries declined for the ninth year running and language A levels also witnessed a sharp decline. In all but two other European Union (EU) member countries (Italy and Ireland), students are obliged to learn a minimum of one foreign language at least up to the end of compulsory education. In the majority of EU countries students are required to learn a minimum of two foreign languages for at least one year of compulsory education. The latter requirement falls in line with EU language policy which aims for a situation in which every EU citizen can speak at least two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission. 2006. Special Eurobarometer: Europeans and their languages. [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_243\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_243_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> 2000 data from Global Reach, 2009 data from World Internet Stats

<sup>3</sup> Davis, M. 2003. Language by GDP. <http://unicode.org/notes/tn13/#Brics2050>

<sup>4</sup> See section 5.3 for further details

<sup>5</sup> Eurydice. 2008 Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe

In response to the fall in numbers of pupils taking a language at GCSE in England, the Government asked Lord Ron Dearing to carry out a review and make recommendations about how to increase the number of pupils opting to study languages courses post-14. The Languages Review final report was published in March 2007<sup>6</sup> and made a number of recommendations including engaging employers to support language learning.

Business plays a key role in inspiring and supporting young people to develop their language and intercultural skills through a variety of work-related activities such as mentoring, sharing authentic language material, giving careers presentations in schools and joint languages and enterprise projects. CILT, the National Centre for Languages has managed an employer engagement programme to support language learning since 2004, winning further funding in 2009 from the then-Department for Schools, Children and Families (DCSF)<sup>7</sup> to expand activity in this area given the positive impact of the programme on young people's motivation towards language learning.

Business support for language teaching and learning is however, not as high profile or as well developed as employer engagement activity in other areas of the curriculum, such as science, technology, engineering and maths (often referred to as STEM subjects). This is despite the fact that both STEM subjects and languages have been designated strategically important and vulnerable subjects.

What then, does this situation mean for young people in the UK and their future employability? Is the UK putting its young people at a disadvantage in a global marketplace and how can employers and schools work together to raise awareness of the value of language and intercultural skills amongst young people? What is the impact of employer engagement activity and are we doing enough to push languages further up the agenda and encourage more support and investment in this area?

## **Section 2    Background**

CILT, the National Centre for Languages is a not-for-profit charity working to promote the importance of languages. It brings together nearly 40 years of expertise of providing high-quality research, Continuous Professional Development (CPD), advice and training for language

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<sup>6</sup> Dearing, Lord. Languages Review. 2007.

<sup>7</sup> Now the Department for Education

professionals and employers. CILT is also the UK sector skills body for languages and intercultural skills.

CILT first launched the Business Language Champions programme in 2004 which aimed to raise awareness amongst young people, employers and the wider community about the importance and relevance of learning languages for economic and employability benefits. The programme was developed following the independent Nuffield Languages Inquiry (2000) which made clear recommendations for languages, including a call for languages to be designated as a key skill alongside numeracy, literacy and ICT and for a raised profile of languages. The Languages for All: Languages for Life Strategy (2002) took this forward and set out a clear strategy achieve a vision for languages as a lifelong skill, which included a key role for business.

The Business Language Champions (BLC) model sets up partnerships between schools and employers that use and value language and intercultural skills. Following a successful pilot in the South West region of England in 2004, the BLC programme was rolled out nationally. The programme was originally managed regionally by Regional Language Networks (RLNs) some of which continue to be involved and some Education Business Partners (EBPs). Between 2004 and March 2009 the programme had actively engaged 120 businesses.

In April 2009, CILT was successful in securing further funding (£1m over 22 months) from the DCSF to manage an employer engagement project to raise students' interest in and appreciation of languages and intercultural awareness through an improvement in the quality and quantity of employers' engagement with schools.

The main elements of the new programme are:

- Research & development to identify the extent of employer engagement in language learning and develop the business case
- A network of regional managers to offer advice and support to businesses and schools to develop partnerships through languages
- Awards in the form of bursaries available for schools and other organisations to develop employer engagement activity

- Marketing and communications activity through CILT and other partners communication channels as well as press<sup>8</sup>
- Recognition of examples of excellence through the BLC Awards programme

In order to achieve this, CILT works in partnership with expert national and regional partners including: Business in the Community<sup>9</sup>, the Institute for Education Excellence<sup>10</sup>, EdComs<sup>11</sup>, Links into Languages<sup>12</sup>, Regional Language Networks and Education Business Partnerships. As a result, approximately 300 businesses are currently supporting language learning, working directly with Key Stage 3 (KS3) and Key Stage 4 (KS4) students through the programme.

Drawing on case study examples from this programme over the last six years, as well as others that have been highlighted through research carried out by the Institute of Education Business Excellence and Business in the Community on behalf of CILT, this paper will discuss the point of partnership between employers and education in language learning. It should also be noted that an independent evaluation of CILT's employer engagement in language learning programme has been commissioned and is currently underway. The evaluation report will be available at the end of March 2011.

### **Section 3    Aims and objectives**

This paper seeks to:

- establish the current thinking on the significance of language and intercultural skills for the UK economy and highlight employer needs for language-related skills
- present the trends in language learning at all levels of education in order to highlight a widening skills gap in the UK
- examine current practice in employer engagement programmes and activities in language learning

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<sup>8</sup> Marketing and communications activities have ceased under the new government's marketing and communications freeze

<sup>9</sup> See [www.bitc.org.uk](http://www.bitc.org.uk)

<sup>10</sup> See [www.iebe.org.uk](http://www.iebe.org.uk)

<sup>11</sup> See [www.edcoms.co.uk](http://www.edcoms.co.uk)

<sup>12</sup> See [www.linksintolanguages.org](http://www.linksintolanguages.org)

- review the impact of these programmes and activities
- reflect on the challenges and needs for further development

## Section 4 Methodology

This paper draws on a number of sources including:

- previous quantitative research using econometric models to examine the linkage between language skills, cultural competence and exporting performance (Hagen 2007 and Formen-Peck, 2008);
- statistical evidence from longitudinal studies (Language Trends, CILT/Association for Language Learning and the Confederation of British Business' Education and Skills surveys);
- case studies and qualitative research with schools, employers and Education Business Partnerships (CILT, Labour Market Intelligence, Institute for Business Excellence, Business in the Community, EdComs);
- independent evaluations of CILT's Business Language Champions programme (2005, 2006, 2007 & 2008).

## Section 5 Making the case for employer engagement in language learning

### 5.1 Languages and intercultural skills for economic growth

#### *Lost trade*

There is much evidence that recognises that English is not enough to succeed in a global economy.<sup>13</sup> The first attempt to put a monetary value on lost business due to shortages of foreign language skills in enterprise was commissioned by the European Commission in 2006 (ELAN study).<sup>14</sup> It involved a survey of nearly 2000 exporting Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and 30 large companies in 29 countries.

21 % of UK businesses in the ELAN study claimed to have encountered language or cultural barriers

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<sup>13</sup> CILT and Stratagia. 2007. Labour Market Intelligence for Foreign Languages and Intercultural Skills

<sup>14</sup> CILT and Interact International. 2006. Effects on the European Economy of Shortages of Foreign Language Skills in Enterprise.

[http://www.cilt.org.uk/home/research\\_and\\_statistics/research/cilt\\_activities/the\\_economic\\_case.aspx](http://www.cilt.org.uk/home/research_and_statistics/research/cilt_activities/the_economic_case.aspx)

and lost business as a result. This compares with businesses in Spain (19%), France (13%), Germany (10%) and Portugal 8%. In the UK, the recent CBI Education & Skills survey (2010) indicated that while only a small percentage (4%) of companies stated they had lost business due to inadequate foreign language skills, 17% said they did not know so the extent of this issue may well be considerable.

### ***Languages improve trade opportunities***

CILT worked with Professor Stephen Hagen (Director of the Centre of Research, Innovation and graduate studies at the University of the West of England, Bristol and Fellow of the Warwick Business School) and a specialist in econometrics from Cardiff University, Professor James Foreman-Peck, to carry out the ELAN study. In 2007, Foreman-Peck published further work on world trade figures and the role of a common language in determining patterns of economic activity.<sup>15</sup> This study considered previous research which has shown that lack of a common language depresses the volume of trade between countries - Anderson and van Wincoop (2004), for example, calculated that this acts as in effect a trade tariff equivalent to a 7% 'tax'.<sup>16</sup> He then identified that, whereas for the whole world, having a common language boosts trade by 57%, for the UK the advantage is 103%. In other words, the UK trades disproportionately with countries which share its language.

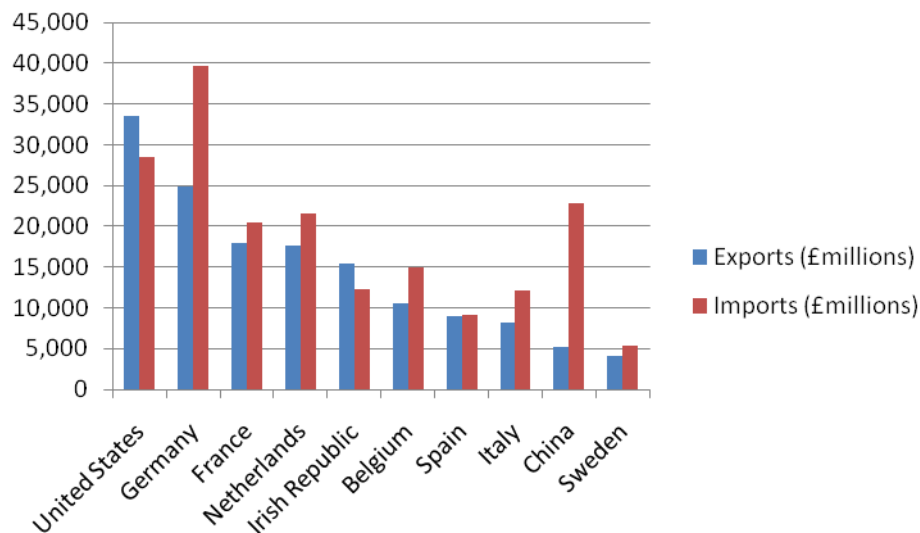
Trade figures from 2009 bear this out as shown in Fig. 1 below, which indicates that of the UK's Top 10 trading partners, our balance of trade is skewed towards countries which share our language – the USA and Ireland. According to Foreman-Peck's calculations, if we corrected this imbalance with better language skills we could add £21 billion per year to UK GDP.

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<sup>15</sup> Foreman-Peck, J. 2007. Costing Babel: the Contribution of Language Skills to Exporting and Productivity in the UK. [http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/carbs/research/centres\\_units/wired/babel3d.pdf](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/carbs/research/centres_units/wired/babel3d.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Anderson and Van Wincoop, 2004. Trade Costs, *Journal of Economic Literature* 43,3,

**Fig 1. International Trade Balances 2009<sup>17</sup>**



### ***Customers prefer to buy in their own language***

This represents a clear opportunity for the economy. Added to this, research indicates that customers are more likely to buy from companies that speak their language. Early work dating back to the 1970s surveyed local businesses, through British Embassies abroad. It asked them whether they would be willing to do business in English, or whether they would prefer British companies to approach them in their own language.<sup>18</sup> The research found that many of the UK's major customers gave preference to firms who took the trouble to approach them in their own language, and were critical of the inability of many UK firms to do so. Willi Brandt, the former Chancellor of Germany, famously said *'If I'm selling to you, I speak your language. If I'm buying, dan müssen Sie Deutsch sprechen'*.

Results from e-marketing research also support this argument.<sup>19</sup> In 2006, Common Sense Advisory surveyed 2,400 consumers across eight nations about their behaviour and preferences for website visits and purchases. It found that over half of the consumers surveyed (53.4%) prefer to buy in their own language – this figure rises to over two thirds for consumers in France and Japan.

<sup>17</sup> Data source: HMRC, overseas trade statistics, <https://www.uktradeinfo.com/index.cfm?task=summaryTrade>

<sup>18</sup> British Overseas Trade Board, 1979. Foreign languages for overseas trade.

<sup>19</sup> Common Sense Advisory, 2006. Can't read, won't buy: why language matters on global websites.



## 5.2 Languages and intercultural skills for employability

### ***Cross-sector skills***

There is evidence that *all* sectors and *all* skill levels need language and intercultural skills. Languages and intercultural skills as pan-sector skills are used by a range of employers, from micro businesses to multinational corporations, in both the private and the public sectors. Job roles requiring languages and intercultural skills occur in every sector and are required at elementary to management level. Furthermore, these skills are not just required to work or trade internationally but also for working within a diverse and multicultural workforce in the UK. <sup>20</sup>

The CBI Education and Skills surveys (2008, 2009 and 2010) tell us that most employers place a premium on staff who can communicate at least conversationally in a foreign language, as this helps to break the ice with potential business partners, customers and clients, and can open access to new markets. The majority of employers are looking for this conversational competence rather than full fluency. In particular, employers value language skills coupled with an understanding of the culture of overseas business environments.

### ***Employer dissatisfaction with language and intercultural skills***

At the same time, in all three surveys, employers have reported that they are most dissatisfied with the level of foreign language skills amongst graduates, school and college leavers, than any other employability skill. In the most recent (2010) survey, over two thirds of employers (71%) said they were not satisfied with the foreign language skills of school/college leavers and over half (55%) perceive shortfalls in their international cultural awareness.

The following tables from CILT's Occupational and Functional map<sup>21</sup> demonstrate the challenges faced by businesses due to the lack of foreign language skills by occupation.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> CILT and Stratagia. 2008. Labour Market Intelligence in Languages and Intercultural skills.  
[http://www.cilt.org.uk/home/standards\\_and\\_qualifications/qualifications\\_strategy.aspx](http://www.cilt.org.uk/home/standards_and_qualifications/qualifications_strategy.aspx)

<sup>21</sup> CILT, Occupational and Functional Map, 2009, p.44-45

[http://www.cilt.org.uk/home/standards\\_and\\_qualifications/occupational\\_map.aspx](http://www.cilt.org.uk/home/standards_and_qualifications/occupational_map.aspx)

<sup>22</sup> Taken from the National Employers Skills Survey 2007, LSC 2008

**Table 3 Recruitment difficulties due to lack of foreign language skills by occupation**

<i>occupation</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>base</i>
managers	15	407
professionals	10	748
associate professionals	9	863
administrative	12	469
skilled trades	13	947
personal service	13	394
sales	13	478
operatives	7	372
elementary	17	402
overall	12	4,588

source: LSC (2008)

**Table 4 Skills gaps due to lack of foreign language skills by occupation**

<i>occupation</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>base</i>
managers	7	124
professionals	9	108
associate professionals	6	672
administrative	6	141
skilled trades	7	886
personal service	12	746
sales	10	236
operatives	11	812
elementary	13	201
overall	9	1,121

source: LSC (2008)

As the research states, the extent to which a lack of foreign language skills is contributing to recruitment difficulties or skills gaps is relatively modest compared to other skills such as technical/practical skills and oral communication. However it is not insignificant and could potentially be greater. As evidenced in previous sections, there is a lack of knowledge amongst UK employers of the impact that language skills can have on their bottom line. Without the necessary language skills, it is impossible to access the information required to identify if languages would be useful, given that this information in itself is in a foreign language and so it becomes a vicious cycle.

### ***Young people at a disadvantage in a global recruitment market***

The CBI reports<sup>23</sup> that more than a third of employers specifically recruit people for their language skills, yet as with STEM skills, research indicates that they are increasingly look to recruit overseas to meet this need. Graduates Skills and Recruitment in the City (2006)<sup>24</sup> looked into the recruitment practices of Financial and Related Business Services (FRBS) employers operating from the City of London. It highlighted the concerns of City employers over UK graduates' lack of language and cultural awareness skills, and the increasing trend of recruitment of overseas graduates to meet this skills gap.

In a globalised economy, businesses are able to recruit from a global talent pool and set up operations overseas. There is therefore a real risk of UK workers becoming increasingly disadvantaged in the European and global job markets if they do not speak another language. As

<sup>23</sup> CBI, Education and Skills survey 2010

<sup>24</sup> [http://www.fssc.org.uk/graduate\\_skills\\_and\\_recruitment\\_in\\_the\\_city.pdf](http://www.fssc.org.uk/graduate_skills_and_recruitment_in_the_city.pdf)

highlighted in the CBI's 2009 Employment Trends Survey <sup>25</sup>, the availability of a well-educated, adaptable workforce is a key consideration in deciding on locations to set up business operations. If businesses are concerned about low employability skills in the UK, which they are, they will increasingly seek to set up or relocate operations overseas.

### ***Lack of awareness that languages develop other important employability skills***

Research conducted by educational consultancy EdComs, on behalf of CILT, amongst a sample of HR professionals indicated that many employers take a functional view of the value of languages, only valuing it as a skill that may be required if, for example, a job needs to be conducted in another language. If the job is conducted in English, the ability to speak or understand other languages is largely seen as irrelevant. Participants in this research struggled to see the connection between the skills that language learning gives young people and the skills they are looking to recruit (communication skills were top of the list for most employers). However, the research process made employers reassess their views of the value of language learning, enabling them to identify transferable skills developed through language learning such as communication skills, listening skills, greater cultural understanding and determination and discipline.

### ***Underrepresentation in the EU***

The challenges for the UK of poor language skills are also evident in its underrepresentation in the EU institutions. In order to sit the EU entry exams (open competitions) necessary to gain employment with the EU institutions, knowledge of at least two official EU languages is needed, of which one must be English, French or German. The number of UK applications for EU open competitions is the lowest of all EU members. Only 1.5% (755) of the applications were from the UK in the 2010 General Public Administration (GPA) compared to Germany (7.6%), France (8.3%) and Italy (16.4%). The large specialist competitions for Economists and Lawyers attracted 1.7% of applications from the UK. The UK should be producing between 11-13% of the applications in order to be proportionate with our population size. This means around 5,555 applications - seven times more than in 2010. As a result of the lack of entrants from the UK, the European Commission's language services are facing a potential succession crisis affecting native English-language linguists, as at least a third of interpreters and translators working into English are expected to have retired by 2015 and will need to be replaced.

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<sup>25</sup> CBI/Harvey Nash. 2009. Easing Up? Employment Trends Survey  
<http://www.bjgf.org.uk/uploads/CBIEmploymentTrendsSurvey2009.pdf>

## Section 6 The decline of language learning

### *Primary*

The most recent NFER survey<sup>26</sup> established that although in 2008, 92% of schools were providing primary languages within class time, there are issues still to be addressed in order to integrate languages into the primary curriculum, as has also been shown by a longitudinal qualitative study into language learning at Key Stage 2 (KS2).<sup>27</sup> The new coalition government announced the withdrawal of the recommendation in the Independent Review of the Primary curriculum led by Sir Jim Rose, which was to have given languages statutory status in English primary schools in 2011.<sup>28</sup> These plans are currently being reviewed as part of the new government's overall reform of the National Curriculum.<sup>29</sup>

### *Secondary and post-16*

Languages became optional in the last two years of mandatory education (Key Stage 4) in England in September 2004. In Northern Ireland, the requirement for all 14-16 year olds to study a language was lifted in September 2007. However, schools must offer all pupils the option of studying a language. Schools in Wales are not required to offer a language to pupils aged from 14-16, however, they generally do and in Scotland, the 2001 paper, *Citizens of a Multilingual World*, made languages an entitlement.<sup>30</sup> Under the new Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), introduced in August this year, there is no compulsory input in terms of time allocation for languages. However, pupils do have Modern Languages entitlements in terms of outcomes at the different stages, termed 'experiences and outcomes.'

The past decade has seen the decline of language take-up, especially at Key Stage 4 (KS4) and post 16. GCSE figures for England show that only 44% of all KS4 pupils were entered for a language GCSE in 2009, compared to 76% in 2000<sup>31</sup>. In Wales, 41% of KS4 pupils were entered for a GCSE in 1999

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<sup>26</sup> Wade, P. et al. 2009. Primary modern foreign languages: survey of national implementation of full entitlement to language learning at Key Stage 2. <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DCSF-RR127.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> Cable, C. et al. 2010. Primary modern languages: Language learning at Key Stage 2, a longitudinal study. <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DCSF-RB198.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> Rose, 2009. Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum [http://www.primarylanguages.org.uk/policy\\_\\_research/policy\\_and\\_reform/primary\\_education/curriculum.aspx](http://www.primarylanguages.org.uk/policy__research/policy_and_reform/primary_education/curriculum.aspx)

<sup>29</sup> [http://www.primarylanguages.org.uk/home/news/news\\_articles/dfe\\_statement.aspx](http://www.primarylanguages.org.uk/home/news/news_articles/dfe_statement.aspx)

<sup>30</sup> Eurydice. 2008. Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe

<sup>31</sup> CILT analysis of DfE data

and this dropped to 28% in 2007<sup>32</sup> and in Scotland, 89% of all Standard 4 (KS4 equivalent) pupils were entered for a modern language qualification in 2003. By 2009 this had declined to 69%.<sup>33</sup> (No data is available for Northern Ireland).

A-level and AS levels are also witnessing similar trends. Total A-level entries for all subjects increased by 22% from 1996 to 2009, whereas total entries for A-level languages for 16-18 year olds in schools and colleges across England, dropped by 25% over the same period.

### ***Disparity between maintained and independent sectors***

Behind this overall decline, there are further concerns over the disparities between schools with in terms of social background and educational achievement. The Dearing review refers to the challenges in delivering the 2002 '*Languages for all: Languages for Life*' strategy given that 'the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals gaining a languages qualification in KS4 is half that of pupils from better off homes'.<sup>34</sup> In summer 2009, 41% of comprehensive school pupils at KS4 were entered for a modern language whilst 91% of selective schools and 81% of independent schools' KS4 pupils were entered for a modern language.<sup>35</sup>

### ***Further Education***

The number of adults learning languages in local authority and Further Education (FE) college classes is also in decline. Added to this, there is a decrease in the provision of languages courses in colleges. A survey conducted by CILT in 2006 into vocational qualification provision in language learning shows that fewer than half (44%) of FE colleges offer opportunities to learn languages alongside vocational courses. More than a quarter (27%) of those offering vocationally related languages courses has reduced this provision and of the colleges that do not currently offer vocational language provision, just over a third (36%) did so in the past.<sup>36</sup>

### ***Higher Education***

The decline of language take-up at secondary and post-16 level inevitably affects the picture of higher education, together with other factors. The Higher Education Funding Council for England

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<sup>32</sup> <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/schools2008/hdw200808273/?lang=en>

<sup>33</sup> Data provided by Scottish CILT

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/doc/11124/LanguageReview.pdf>, pg 5.

<sup>35</sup> CILT. Language Trends. 2002-2009.

[http://www.cilt.org.uk/home/research\\_and\\_statistics/language\\_trends\\_surveys.aspx](http://www.cilt.org.uk/home/research_and_statistics/language_trends_surveys.aspx)

<sup>36</sup> [http://www.cilt.org.uk/home/research\\_and\\_statistics/language\\_trends\\_surveys/further\\_education.aspx](http://www.cilt.org.uk/home/research_and_statistics/language_trends_surveys/further_education.aspx)

(HEFCE)'s review of modern foreign languages in universities (also known as the Worton review, 2009)<sup>37</sup> found that as many as a third of university Language Departments had closed in seven years.

The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data, analysed by CILT annually<sup>38</sup>, recorded a decrease of 4% for first-degree language students in all the UK higher education institutions during the period from 2002-03 to 2007-08, despite the fact that modern foreign languages are treated as one of the strategically important subjects by HEFCE.<sup>39</sup> As for students who specialise in non-language disciplines and who choose to study languages as an accredited course alongside their degree programmes, the total number of such students with UK domicile decreased by 8% from 2002-03 to 2006-07. There has, however, been a steady increase in the number of overseas and other European students studying languages as an accredited part of their degree programmes.

Higher education has also seen less mobility among its students when compared to other European countries. In the academic year 2007-08, the outgoing Erasmus students as a share of student population in the UK was only 0.43% - this proportion was one of the lowest among all EU countries.<sup>40</sup>

### ***Barriers to increased take up***

Schools are involved in a wide range of activities to increase take-up and motivate young people to continue to study languages. The Languages Trends survey in 2009 records that schools have adopted new approaches to teaching, set up new courses, organised internal promotional activities and been involved in national programmes such as Business Language Champions and Routes into Languages<sup>41</sup> with a view to promoting language learning to 14-19 year olds. However the survey also shows that the impact of these actions can often be cancelled out by wider infrastructure challenges, such as the ever-widening choice of subjects available at options, pressure on schools and pupils to achieve higher grades and the perception that languages are a difficult subject. Lack of

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<sup>37</sup> Worton, M. 2009. Review of Modern Foreign Languages provision in higher education in England. [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2009/09\\_41/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2009/09_41/)

<sup>38</sup> CILT. 2009. [http://www.cilt.org.uk/home/research\\_and\\_statistics/statistics/higher\\_education/he\\_learning\\_trends\\_in\\_uk.aspx](http://www.cilt.org.uk/home/research_and_statistics/statistics/higher_education/he_learning_trends_in_uk.aspx)

<sup>39</sup> HEFCE. 2008. Strategically important and vulnerable subjects, final report of the 2008 advisory group. [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2008/08\\_38/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2008/08_38/)

<sup>40</sup> European Commission. 2010. Outgoing Erasmus students as a share of student population in 2007/2008 by country. <http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/table208.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> Routes into Languages is a consortium of universities working together with schools and colleges, to enthuse and encourage people to study languages

support for languages from senior management, reductions in lesson time and narrowly focussed advice from parents and tutors are also raised as barriers to increased take-up. A teacher quote below helps to illustrate some of these issues.

*‘Something needs to be done to stop schools depriving pupils of the chance to study languages by offering them easy options instead of languages and failing to encourage them to keep their languages going even when they have shown ability in the early years - too much revolves around league tables!’* Head of MFL, Sports College

## **Section 7    Bridging the gap - employer engagement in language learning**

### **7.1 The extent of employer engagement in language learning**

As we have seen, there is much to gain in raising the aspirations of young people through language learning. There is a range of employer supported education programmes and activities in languages which aim to tackle the challenges and opportunities for an improved status for language learning.

#### ***CILT’s Employer Engagement in Language Learning programme: Business Language Champions***

As detailed in Section 2 of this report, CILT’s Business Language Champions programme supports employers and schools to actively work together to raise awareness of the relevance of languages and intercultural skills. Over the course of the programme, 350 businesses have been involved in supporting language learning in around 400 schools.<sup>42</sup> Partnerships support Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) such as French, Spanish and German and lesser widely taught languages such as Mandarin, Turkish, Japanese and Russian.

The programme aims to:

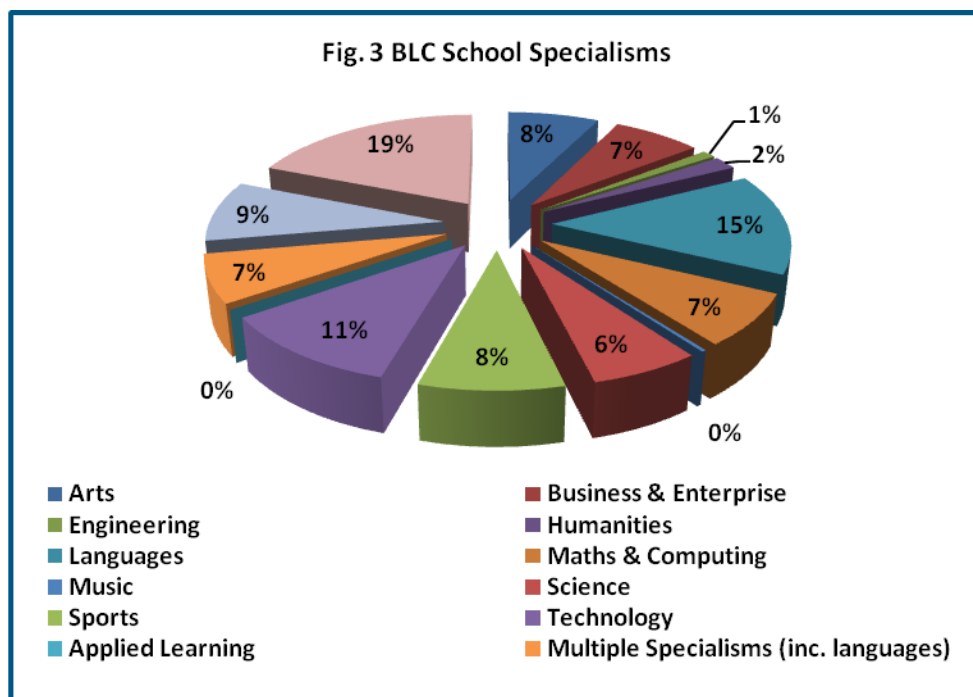
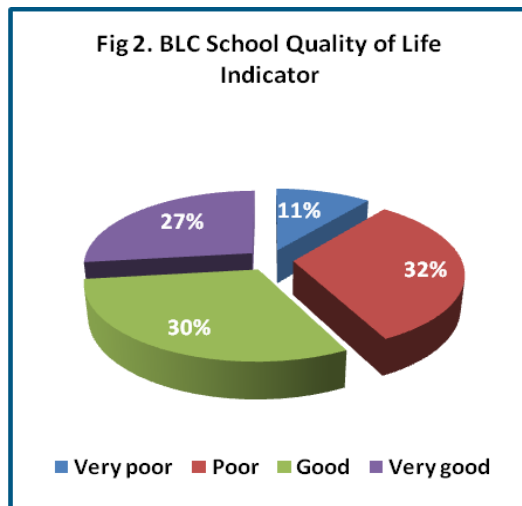
- raise pupils’ interest in languages, intercultural awareness and appreciation that languages can be valuable and relevant to themselves, both now and in the future;
- improve schools’ ability to access support from employers for languages and intercultural awareness, by improving the accessibility and coherence of the offer;
- increase the amount and effectiveness of employers’ support for languages in schools.

The current programme focuses on 11-16 year olds and seeks to tackle the disparities in language learning in schools with different specialisms and social characteristics. It therefore aims to engage a

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<sup>42</sup> See [www.cilt.org.uk/blc](http://www.cilt.org.uk/blc)

majority of non-language specialist schools and schools in areas of greatest need which are classified as those with the lowest rates of take-up for languages - often those with a high proportion of free school meals and in areas of deprivation. The charts below (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3) indicate the profile of the schools engaged in the programme.





The Business Language Champions programme provides a flexible model of employer engagement to allow for differences in regional and local need. However, common activities that employers get involved in include:<sup>43</sup>

- Work placements and visits to businesses for languages teachers and pupils
- Presentations and workshops in school on the value and relevance of languages by businesses
- Enterprise Challenges with languages such as developing and marketing a product for sale overseas, building a business plan and integrating languages into other curriculum subjects
- CV writing skills and mock interviews with a languages focus
- Mentoring
- International visits/conferencing

The employers involved represent a broad range of sectors (engineering, manufacturing, sport, professional services, creative & media as well as travel and tourism, public sector employers and language specialists for example). While research states that 39% of companies with 50-199 employees currently have no links with schools<sup>44</sup>, approximately 80% of those involved in BLC come from the SME sector. A likely explanation for this is a need for SMEs to develop the skills of their local, future workforce as SMEs often do not have the resources to recruit language skills from overseas. The programme has also been successful in engaging multinationals such as HSBC, Novotel, Bouygues, Wragge & Co, PriceWaterhouseCoopers and British Airways.

### ***Collaborative project based activities***

From June 2009-March 2011, CILT will have supported 18 projects through the LinkedUp Awards<sup>45</sup> programme. These projects support schools to develop partnerships with employers through languages. They provide a mentor to schools and business partners to help design and develop innovative work-related projects and produce a bank of resources to share with other teachers. Example current projects include a research project into corporate social responsibility activities of overseas football clubs (led by Sheffield United), an international fashion project with a leading fashion expert and a Russian language project with the professional Hermitage Ensemble from St Petersburg.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> See [www.cilt.org.uk/blc](http://www.cilt.org.uk/blc) and [http://www.cilt.org.uk/keep\\_in\\_touch/blogs/blc\\_blog.aspx](http://www.cilt.org.uk/keep_in_touch/blogs/blc_blog.aspx) for case study examples

<sup>44</sup> Employer Education Taskforce, 2010, What is to be gained through partnership?

<sup>45</sup> The LinkedUp Awards support teachers to work together to develop their ideas for language learning. The employer engagement projects support teachers to focus on developing links with businesses.

<sup>46</sup> For further details see <http://www.linksintolanguages.ac.uk/linkedup/projects.html#yorkshire>

### ***Education Business Partnerships and languages related provision***

Education Business Partnerships (EBPs) operate at local level managing, delivering and brokering a wide range of work-related activity in schools and colleges within their own areas. Some of this work has been subsidised through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), some directly from service level agreements with the schools and some through sponsorship or other funding arrangements. Supporting languages in schools is not, in most cases, a core funded activity and therefore is not undertaken by all EBPs. This was confirmed by a survey carried out by the Institute for Education Business Excellence in 2009 on behalf of CILT, which indicated that 34 out of the 106 EBPs survey ran employer engagement activities in language learning and/or intercultural skills.

The EBPs were also asked what barriers exist to involvement in languages. The main challenges reported were lack of funding, lack of linguistic skills within the EBP and lack of time to research businesses that used language skills as well as low demand from schools. CILT is currently working to encourage more EBPs to embed languages into their activities.

There are a range of activities to support language learning across the network of 34 EBPs such as enterprise challenges, language taster days, European exchange programmes and teacher placements. One of the longest running programmes identified in this research is the Tower Hamlets' Language Liaison initiative which engages city companies in a language mentoring programme to improve students' linguistic ability. In 2000, law-firm Herbert Smith helped to develop the project which has also engaged large corporates such as Goldman Sachs, BP, Citi, Nomura, Royal Bank of Scotland and Barclays Capital. Typically business volunteers meet with a small group of students of up to six pupils in Years 9-11 for approximately one hour every two weeks to improve vocabulary, confidence and awareness of the value of languages in the workplace.

### ***Company-led languages programmes***

There are also some well-established company-led programmes supporting language learning. The British Airways Languages Project, for example, has been running for 10 years and has engaged over 10,000 students. The three strands of the project, which aim to tackle the shortage of language skills in the workplace and motivate students to continue studying languages are:

- Teacher training to test students in the BA Language Flag Award, which is based on the BA language test for employees. 59 schools across the country are currently involved
- Language presentations in schools

- Language immersion courses at the BA Learning Centre reached over 2000 students

Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer has a long standing partnership with Haggerston Girls School in Hackney. One of the aspects of the partnership is a Language Partners programme. Employees who speak French and Spanish volunteer once a fortnight to support students to improve their speaking skills in modern foreign languages and improve students' confidence and vocabulary. The mentoring culminates just before students' GCSE exams in 'Virtual Paris' and 'Virtual Madrid' events, which have been held at Freshfields' London offices since 2004.

### ***Sports clubs support for languages***

There are also examples of programmes to inspire young language learners from sports' clubs. Arsenal's Languages Double Club engages players and football coaches to support primary and secondary students in languages. Blackburn Rovers, Bradford City and rugby clubs including the Widnes Vikings (BLC Award winner 2009 for Innovation) and Bath Rugby Club provide further examples.

## **7.2 What is the impact of this activity?**

Due to funding constraints, a longitudinal qualitative impact measurement of the Business Language Champions programme has not been possible. However a small-scale independent evaluation has been carried out following each academic year of activity which gives us qualitative examples of the impact of the programme. One of these reports is currently available in the public domain<sup>47</sup>. Monitoring and evaluation reports from the Tower Hamlets Languages Mentoring programme provide us with some qualitative and quantitative impact measures and evidence in support of companies' applications to the BLC Awards have been used to demonstrate how companies' languages projects have had a positive impact on the business, schools and young people.

### ***Benefits for schools and young people***

An independent evaluation of the BLC pilot programme in 2004<sup>48</sup> which engaged 13 companies, seven schools and six colleges/6<sup>th</sup> forms found that all schools felt the programme to be beneficial to both students and the school. Some of the reported benefits by schools in the pilot were:

- Increasing student motivation and interest in languages

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<sup>47</sup> [www.arts.ulster.ac.uk/nils/admin/documents/docs/BLC%20Report.doc](http://www.arts.ulster.ac.uk/nils/admin/documents/docs/BLC%20Report.doc)

<sup>48</sup> EKOS Consulting, 2005. Evaluation of the Business Language Champions Pilot

- Increasing awareness of the importance and relevance of languages in employment which could then be linked back to curriculum areas
- Hearing positive messages from credible witnesses (other than teachers)
- Better understanding of the world of work
- Work experience opportunities
- Widening teachers' experience
- Raising the status of MFL within the school
- Seeing languages 'in action'

Teacher quotes helps to demonstrate some of these benefits:

*'The project has helped me in the long process of raising the profile of the MFL faculty at my school. Historically, there has been a striking insularity and poor take-up when it comes to language learning...Teachers and students are being introduced to new practices and this project is a valuable symbol for this'.*

*'All involvement with local businesses is useful as it helps to give relevance to the curriculum and links education with the world of work. Projects like this help to give the link a particular focus and enables education and business to work together'.*

The pilot evaluation found to have a positive impact on the businesses, schools and young people involved and led to the national roll out of the BLC programme.

Subsequent evaluations, focusing predominately on the educational impact, were carried out for academic years 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08 with some cross over into 2009. These evaluations surveyed a growing number of schools involved in the BLC programme to reflect its development. The table below shows the number of schools involved in evaluation projects.

**Fig. 4 Number of schools involved in BLC independent evaluations**

Year	Schools (no.)
2005/06	12
2006/07	25
2007/08	52

Six schools have been involved in all three evaluations and nine schools were involved in the 2006/07 and 2007/08.

The benefits established in the pilot were also evident in these subsequent evaluations. In addition schools have reported that they have benefited from **increased profile from their business partnership(s) through press coverage and awards** and in some cases being **recognised by Ofsted** for their work. Another reported benefit has been the **development of new courses and projects** with other curriculum areas.

When drawing some conclusions from all three evaluations, we can say that all of the schools involved in the evaluation projects said that employer engagement had a **positive effect on student perceptions and attitudes to languages**. Student and teacher quotes below help to illustrate this point.

*'I have learned that languages can really open up your opportunities in the world of work and listening to others' experiences have been interesting and informative'. Yr 9 student*

*'Our experience is that teaching real-life examples of the language as they apply to business is not only more effective when it comes to exam time, but also manages to engage pupils' interest in class'. Teacher*

There is evidence from the majority of schools participating in the evaluations that students become more **aware of the importance of languages in business and the relevance of them in the real world**. Teachers report that participating in the programme has helped students to view languages as a *'tool for life'*. Student comments following BLC activity demonstrates this:

*'I had no idea that companies needed languages – I'm changing my options as a result'.*

*'This project [BLC] has shown me that when it comes to getting a job, languages definitely tip the scale in your favour. Businesses can help make languages mean something to us in real life. So we're not just learning them to get good grades, we're learning them to get a good future'.*

*'It puts languages in a scenario and you've got to think about it more'*

*'I want to travel and earn money to wear the designer clothes that Ms Maxwell was wearing. If that means I need a language then I'll get one'.*

There are also many examples of business-related projects using languages that have been set up through the BLC programme that help to develop other employability skills such as **business awareness, problem solving and team work**. Example projects include designing and developing products for sale in an overseas market, preparing and presenting sales pitches and company presentations in a target languages as well as producing audio guides and adverts in the target language.

*‘The students, who have varying backgrounds and abilities, are more motivated, enthusiastic and confident about both languages and business and their ability to communicate with adults has improved immeasurably’.* Language College Manager

All three reports state that it is difficult to draw any consistent links between employer engagement activities and take-up of languages given the difficulty in isolating the impact of the BLC programme from other measures taken to improve take-up. However, almost half of the schools taking part in the 2007/08 evaluation said they had seen an **increase in the take-up of languages at GCSE** which they believed was related to BLC activity. Almost 100% of participating students from a school taking part in HSBC’s BLC programme said that they were now considering taking a language at GCSE. St Marylebone Church of England School reports a 70% increase in take-up of languages following a partnership activities with SME Hotel la Place. The Head of French at The Compton School, another school working with Hotel la Place, reported that *‘on average students achieved almost a grade above their predicted grades’*. Since the partnership between Bradford City and St Bede’s School began in August 2008, 51 out of 150 Year 9 students have opted to continue Spanish into Year 10, making Spanish the school’s top GCSE ‘options’ subject. The Head of Languages at St Bede’s reported in 2009:

*‘At a time when many language departments are finding that they have no GCSE classes at all, we now have three languages GCSE groups this year – the first time since languages became optional’.*

The evaluation of the Tower Hamlets Language Mentoring programme<sup>49</sup> gives us some quantitative evidence of the impact of the programme on **students’ language skills development** as well as **changes in perceptions** towards languages.

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<sup>49</sup> Tower Hamlets EBP, Languages Mentoring Programme evaluation 2008-9

Headline information from the 2008-9 programme which surveyed 35 students in six participating schools and includes:

- 86% of students agreed that their vocabulary range had good improvement or some improvement.
- 94% of students said they are able to understand spoken language more; of which 69% said the improvement was good or significant.
- 89% of students agreed that they had improved their speaking of a foreign language, with 52% reporting a good or significant improvement.
- 94% of students reported that they were more confident speaking a foreign language, of which 69% of students said the improvement was good or significant.
- 94% of students mostly or completely agreed that speaking a foreign language gave them access to more interesting jobs. 72% also mostly or completely agreed that learning a language helps them learn about other ways of life.
- 77% of students said that they now had greater ambitions for their future.

There is also evidence that participating in the BLC programme has had an impact on **staff attitudes towards language learning**. Teachers have reported that senior management team members and staff from other curriculum subjects have been impressed by the results of the BLC partnerships which have helped to increase numbers of students taking languages, improved results and engaged other curriculum areas.

### **Benefits to businesses**

Businesses involved in supporting languages in schools through the BLC programme and in other activities are committed to improving the status of languages in the UK and want to encourage young people to continue to study languages.

Reported benefits for businesses involved the programme include those relating to **developing the skills of their future workforce, public relations, developing community links** and an **opportunity to promote their sector** to a potential future workforce, amongst others.

*'It is my conviction – gained over the last 20 years hands-on experience – that even a rudimentary knowledge of a foreign language helps provide a confidence and enables better working relationships with customers ... This leads to greater export success. [We] got involved in this initiative in order to communicate this belief to tomorrow's managers and exporters'. Overseas Marketing Manager, Marshalls plc*

*'The project has benefited the business in a number of ways by enabling us to understand and contribute to the communities in which we are working. It also gives our staff an opportunity to have a change from their office jobs and get into schools to see the atmosphere in schools as we are building a number of schools across London'. HR and CSR Adviser, Bouygues*

*'By introducing students to various officers and staff from different roles within the service, we hope to dispel some of the myths and overcome some of the barriers that may exist in people's minds about working for the police'. Community Engagement, Metropolitan Police*

In terms of skills and knowledge development of employees involved in supporting language learning, there is evidence that engaging with schools helps **businesses to better understand the education system** and can contribute to an improvement in **interpersonal and communication skills**. Evidence from the evaluation of 17 business mentors involved in the Tower Hamlets mentoring programme indicates that:

- 100% of mentors say they feel good about doing something worthwhile with young people.
- 88% think they have contributed to the local community.
- 82% think they have gained insights into how young people think, and 76% of mentors say they have gained insights into how schools function.
- 65% of mentors said that they had improved their interpersonal skills, and the same percentage thought that they were more able to communicate with different audiences.

### **7.3 Barriers to further employer engagement in language learning**

#### ***a) Challenges in engaging multinationals***

Research carried out by Business in the Community (BITC) in 2009 as part of CILT's employer engagement project aimed to look at how multinationals are investing in business education language programmes. It aimed to establish the following:

- How do languages fit into broader UK and international education and corporate responsibility programmes?
- What are the business benefits?
- What are the barriers and enablers to further involvement or investment in language learning by businesses?



The first challenge in this research was persuading a critical mass of BITC members to take part in the research. Reasons companies gave for choosing not to take part were the lack of priority given to languages programmes, differing priorities for overseas' offices community activities and that of the UK office as well as a lack awareness of the business benefits of existing programmes. The research highlighted that those companies delivering language and intercultural related activities appear to be doing so as part of corporate philanthropy programmes or because such programmes are good for employee engagement and morale. Only a few the 12 businesses participating in the research could evidence clear improvements in skills' development or the return on investment for their business resulting from this engagement.

### ***b) Finding employers with the right skills***

One of the main challenges quoted by schools and EBPs in setting up partnerships through languages is finding employers that use and value languages. In addition to the challenges to participation raised in the previous section, research carried out into language skills management in companies across Europe indicated that UK companies are less likely to include international communication in their strategic planning process and were less responsive in their use of language management tools.<sup>50</sup> This highlights the problems in researching businesses that use languages skills without the expert knowledge of how languages are used within companies.

### ***c) Low priority of languages in the education system***

While all of the businesses involved in the BITC research indicated there was a will within the UK to support young people to reach their aspirations and to be able to compete in the global jobs market, they felt that barriers within the education system needed to be addressed. The status of languages as optional in secondary schools and the current view that languages are a subject for high performing students were reported as barriers. Participants felt that even if companies increased their activity to support languages, the impact of their activity would only ever be limited whilst these barriers exist.

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<sup>50</sup> Talking Sense, 2004. CILT for the Learning and Skills Council as part of its support for implementation of the Government's national strategy for languages for England.  
[http://www.cilt.org.uk/home/research\\_and\\_statistics/research/cilt\\_activities/the\\_economic\\_case.aspx](http://www.cilt.org.uk/home/research_and_statistics/research/cilt_activities/the_economic_case.aspx)

#### ***d) Lack of awareness amongst employers of the opportunities available to support languages***

Languages are often not included in important policy documents that could help raise awareness of the need and the opportunities for further employer engagement to support language learning. The National Council for Education Excellence<sup>51</sup> recommendations set out The National Framework which defines where business can contribute most to raising the aspirations and achievements of young people. It covers:

- School leadership, including governance and teacher professional development
- Basic literacy, numeracy and life skills including
- Knowledge of the world of work
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths
- Enterprise education and employability skills

Languages are therefore not identified as a priority area. This framework has been highlighted by the CBI in the recent report on employers' role in education<sup>52</sup> as key areas for business engagement. Whilst both reports clearly indicate the commitment of businesses to supporting education, it is concerning that there is no reference to languages or intercultural skills.

Employers taking part in both research projects by BITC and EdComs, as part of CILT's employer engagement project, have reported that more needs to be done to raise awareness of the value of languages for all and for the importance of languages for the UK economy and employability.

#### ***e) Sustainability***

Brilliant brokerage is key to the effectiveness of any business education partnership. While some schools, businesses and EBPs are confident in setting up languages related programmes, many report that it is essential to have access to expert brokers who have an understanding of which businesses need and use language and intercultural skills, as well as the linguistic skills to support the development of relevant activities.

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<http://publications.education.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00803-2008>

<sup>52</sup> CBI, September 2010. Fulfilling potential.

Funding issues will always play a key role in influencing the extent of employer education partnership activity. The funding for CILT's current employer engagement programme is due to end in March 2011. In these times of severe constraint for public funding, it will be important to continue to make the economic case for investing in languages. The challenges for languages in the UK are deep-rooted and long standing and there is a risk that the situation will not improve if left to market forces.

## Section 8 Conclusions and recommendations

UK policy has consistently set out to improve its world trade. Vince Cable, Secretary of State for Skills for Business, Innovation and Skills states in the foreword of the Department's draft structural reform plan (July 2010) that *'Britain cannot be left behind following the rapid emergence of the large developing economies that have radically reshaped global patterns of production and commerce. We [the government] will stimulate exports and keep down trade barriers, helping British business take advantage of the trade opportunities.'*<sup>53</sup>

Many argue that the UK is already being *'left behind'* due to its monolingual nature and the continued decline in take up of languages at all levels of education. This presents serious problems for young people and their future employment as employers increasingly seek applicants with language and intercultural skills to help them break into new markets, compete with multilingual competitors and build effective working relationships.

Employers, working with schools and young people can help dispel perceptions that 'English is enough' and change attitudes to language learning. Messages to young people about the value of languages are more credible coming from businesses that have experience of using these skills in their careers. Students and teachers report increased enthusiasm and motivation for language learning as a result of partnerships with businesses and that working on real life business projects with languages not only helps to improve confidence in the target language but also helps to develop broader employability skills.

There are clear benefits for businesses, schools and young people in working together through languages and the opportunities for the UK economy and employability of the UK workforce of

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<sup>53</sup> <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/corporate/docs/b/10-1086-bis-draft-structural-reform-plan>

improved language and intercultural skills are evident. However, challenges still remain. If we are to compete successfully with the large developing economies, wider issues surrounding languages and intercultural skills issues need to be addressed by government, business and education. A long term perspective is needed with a much more strategic view on how languages contribute to business performance as well as how investing in education through languages can benefit businesses and the economy.

### **Recommendations**

#### **1) The importance of languages recognised across government policy areas**

Businesses taking part in the BITC research made the point that if the Government is serious about ensuring the UK remains competitive on a global stage, then it needs to *'look at the skills we are providing our young people with and review the role of languages in the secondary curriculum'*.

As highlighted by Baroness Jean Coussins, chair of the APPG on Modern Foreign Languages, the National Skills Strategy: Skills for Growth (November 2009) does not include a reference to language skills despite stating its objectives to stimulate economic growth.<sup>54</sup>

#### **2) Raised status for language learning in schools**

Internal challenges within secondary schools owing to timetabling pressures and lack of senior level support have been provided as examples of barriers to set up more business education partnerships in languages. Schools that have successful partnership with employers have said this has helped to raise awareness of the important role of languages amongst schools' senior management teams and other members of staff. Employers however warn of the limitations of the impact of their activity if languages remain the preserve of an elite few.

#### **3) More evidence from employers of the business case for supporting languages through volunteering programmes**

While businesses see clear benefits for investing in STEM subjects, supported by the Leitch Review of Skills<sup>55</sup> for example which helped to establish a clear business case, employers involved in the BITC research felt that a similar case needed to be clearly articulated at policy level for supporting investment in languages.

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<sup>54</sup><http://www.lordtobyharris.org.uk/as-an-american-once-said-if-the-english-language-was-good-enough-for-jesus-christ-the-house-of-lords-debates-modern-language-skills/>

<sup>55</sup> [http://www.cilt.org.uk/home/policy/policy\\_articles\\_listing/world\\_class\\_skills.aspx](http://www.cilt.org.uk/home/policy/policy_articles_listing/world_class_skills.aspx)

#### **4) More businesses valuing languages and committing to share language and intercultural skills with young people**

A focus on the economic value of language learning has stimulated interest and awareness amongst business leaders and public commentators on the importance of investing in languages. Over the past few years we have seen an increase in statements from business leaders and a growth of public debate on the importance of improving the UK's competence in languages.

CILT's Languages Work Pledge, developed following recommendations from businesses to develop a national campaign to focus attention on languages provides a platform for businesses and individuals to report on the value of languages to their business.<sup>56</sup> However, more support from leading employers and senior business leaders is needed to raise awareness of the value of language skills.

#### **5) Raise awareness of the opportunities for businesses to engage with schools through languages**

Whilst there is compelling evidence of the need and the opportunity for further investment in this area, research indicates that some employers feel there is a lack of awareness of the opportunities available to support language learning. More opportunities for businesses and schools to engage with languages need to be provided through other brokers working in the field of employer education partnerships. An opportunity to embed languages into the National Framework for employer education partnerships and subsequent publications would also be welcome.

#### **6) More robust evidence of the impact of employer education partnerships through language learning**

This research has identified some important evidence that demonstrates the impact of employer engagement in language learning on schools, young people and business. This is essential information to help inspire others to get involved.

CILT's employer engagement programme is currently undergoing an independent evaluation which is due to end in March 2011. This research will be used to inform the development of the programme and encourage further partnerships in this area.

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<sup>56</sup> <http://pledge.languageswork.org.uk/?q=oursupporters&page=7>

## **7) Embed languages more uniformly into other employer engagement activities such as STEM and Enterprise**

Employers say that they want language and intercultural skills alongside other important skills such as STEM, economics, business and enterprise and law. By embedding languages across the range of work-related learning activities, we can help young people develop confidence in applying languages to business contexts.