

# Liaison

Magazine

Issue 7 : June 2012



**Feature** Valuing the Year Abroad

**Feature** Social media for language teachers

**Teaching** Recognition for hourly paid tutors

**Viewpoint** Speaking to the Future

**Students** Where are they now?

**A taste of** Chinese





CENTRE FOR  
LANGUAGES  
LINGUISTICS &  
AREA STUDIES



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As well as updates on LLAS work, *Liaison* features a wide range of articles on topics relating to languages, linguistics and area studies. If you would like to respond to an article published in *Liaison*, please contact Liz Hudswell ([e.j.hudswell@soton.ac.uk](mailto:e.j.hudswell@soton.ac.uk)).

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LLAS Centre for languages, linguistics and area studies  
School of Humanities  
University of Southampton  
Highfield  
Southampton  
SO17 1BJ

Phone: 023 8059 4814  
Fax: 023 8059 4815  
Email: [llas@soton.ac.uk](mailto:llas@soton.ac.uk)  
Web: [www.llas.ac.uk](http://www.llas.ac.uk)

**LLAS team:**

Dr Lisa Bernasek	Academic Coordinator (Islamic Studies Network)
Kate Borthwick	Academic Coordinator
Dr John Canning	Senior Academic Coordinator
Dr Erika Corradini	Academic Coordinator
Alison Dickens	Assistant Director
Dr Angela Gallagher-Brett	Senior Academic Coordinator
Laurence Georgin	Academic Coordinator
Zena Hilton	Senior Academic Coordinator
Liz Hudswell	Assistant Director
Professor Michael Kelly	Director
Sue Nash	Senior Administrator
Matt Reynolds	Web Developer
Marie Weaver	Administrator
Claire Wilkins	Administrator
Vicky Wright	Deputy Director

**Editors:** Alison Dickens, Laurence Georgin, Liz Hudswell

**Design:** Indigo Press Ltd

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**HEA team:**

Professor Grahame Bilbow	Head of Arts and Humanities
Dr Filippo Nereo	Discipline Lead for Languages

# Welcome

Issue 7 : June 2012

## Welcome to issue seven of *Liaison*, the magazine of the LLAS Centre for languages, linguistics and area studies.

**W**hen we published issue 6 in March 2011, we were unsure about the future of *Liaison*. We are therefore delighted to have been able to produce this issue with funding from the Higher Education Academy.

This has been a busy and exciting year as we continue to support language learning and teaching across all sectors of education. You can read more about our events programme this year and our plans for 2012-13 in the News section. Language teachers and linguists will be particularly interested in Jeanine Treffers-Daller's report on the workshop on vocabulary learning and teaching.

The Government has recently announced funding arrangements for the year abroad for students entering higher education in 2012. Protecting, promoting and valuing the year abroad is a concern for many of our readers and we have included a number of articles on this issue; Jim Coleman reports on a recent British Academy initiative to promote mobility; Robert Blackwood describes how students from Liverpool University are supported during their year abroad and Alison Dickens tells us about a Higher Education Academy funded project looking at residence abroad and employability.

Many of us probably feel that we need to make better use of social media for professional purposes. Teresa Mackinnon's article may help to get you started with some useful insights into how

social media helps her professionally. And there are more articles about e-learning including Caroline Moore's overview of language apps and Kate Borthwick's two reports on the current JISC projects (FAVOR and OpenLives) which LLAS is leading.

We are greatly encouraged that HEFCE is continuing to show strong support for the Routes into Languages programme. There are a number of reports on Routes activity in this issue including an update in English and Welsh on the Routes into Languages Cymru programme and information on a research report into public service interpreting funded by Routes.

Undergraduates and recent graduates have also been able to contribute to *Liaison* 7. Robert Arnold tells us about ULAB, a newly formed undergraduate society for linguistics; Lauren Mason tells us about being a student ambassador for the Routes into Languages consortium in the East and undergraduate contributors to previous editions of *Liaison* tell us what they are doing now.

*Liaison* would not be complete without 'Get a taste for Languages'. In this edition, Don Starr introduces us to Chinese. Jeremy Palmer has also written a contribution on how events in the Arab Spring can be used to teach some elementary Arabic.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition of *Liaison*. If you want to comment on any of the articles, do contact us. We look forward to hearing from you!

*Liaison* is printed on FSC Mixed Sources grade paper containing 50% recovered waste, and printed using vegetable inks.



Liz Hudswell  
Assistant Director of LLAS





# e-Learning symposium 2013

The LLAS Centre's 8th annual  
e-Learning symposium

24-25 January 2013  
University of Southampton  
[www.llas.ac.uk/elearning2013](http://www.llas.ac.uk/elearning2013)

This popular symposium combines practical activities and guidance with inspiring ideas to fuel the imagination.

- Attend workshops for discussion, guidance and tips on teaching and learning with technology
- Attend the main symposium event to hear about the latest research and developments in technology-enhanced learning
- Call for papers will be issued in June 2012

e-Learning symposium 2012

See videos and information about our last symposium at: [www.llas.ac.uk/events/archive/6395](http://www.llas.ac.uk/events/archive/6395)



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# Looking outward and forward with confidence



As the UK languishes in the throes of a double dip recession, we are constantly reminded that things would not be so bad if the Eurozone or the Far East were not also suffering economic woes. Our prospects are closely bound to those of so many other countries, and yet UK plc seems at times reluctant to accept the logical implication that we need to be better able to understand them and communicate with them. As we well know, the knowledge and skills embodied in languages, linguistics and area studies are of key strategic importance, and the long decline of public interest in these subjects is seriously damaging to our future. The worst we could do as a country is to hunker down behind our borders and wrap ourselves in our own language and culture. But perhaps we need to articulate a clearer vision of what an alternative future might look like.

Imagine a country that is confident and outward-facing, ready to engage productively with the rest of the world. Its citizens

are proud of all the languages they speak, and they comfortably acquire smatterings of other languages to smooth relationships and open doors. They travel a lot, enjoy encountering other cultures at home or abroad, and are curious about what makes people tick in other places. They are pleased that their world class universities keep them supplied with up-to-date understandings of what is happening in the world, and where it all came from. And they are glad that the next generation will include the kind of experts that can help the country thrive in the global environment.

This is not so utopian, because many readers of *Liaison* would already fit this description, and we know plenty of others who do also. The problem is that these values and aspirations are not spread widely enough. It seems like a big ask in a time of recession, and even in the good times it has been an uphill task to persuade the wider public.

However, there are signs of dawning recognition. Government ministers have frequently referred to the danger of losing influence in the world if we lack language capability. Business leaders have frequently emphasised the value of linguistic and intercultural skills for successful enterprise. Education policy has recognised that languages and related studies are of strategic importance and need to be supported. The next step is to turn this recognition into positive action.

Some positive steps are already in place. The inclusion of languages in the English baccalaureate has stimulated take up at GCSE.

The British Academy and the AHRC have been given significant additional funding to support languages. The Routes into Languages programme has received continued funding. The key associations in our subject area (UCML, UCGAL, UKCASA and others) are energetically lobbying, as is the national campaign for languages, Speak to the Future. And the newly established support structures in the Higher Education

Academy are providing opportunities for increased development of learning and teaching initiatives.

The challenge now is to build on this positive work, mobilising the academic community and taking our case to a much wider public. LLAS is committed to supporting that work, and through our many projects and our professional development programme we will work to help achieve the vision of an outward-facing country navigating the global flows with growing confidence.

Michael Kelly

Professor Michael Kelly is Director of LLAS and Professor of French at the University of Southampton



# news

## Alison Dickens reports on some of the events run by LLAS in 2011/12

Alison Dickens  
is Assistant  
Director of LLAS



Following our relaunch as LLAS Centre for languages, linguistics and area studies, we set about putting together a programme of activities with great energy and gusto despite knowing that the bar was already set rather high (we had 11 years of Subject Centre activity to live up to) and the environment somewhat hostile (political change, economic downturn and a new fees regime for higher education). Fortunately, we had retained most of our original team, were supported by our host university and had some of our key activities funded by the HEA. But most of all we had the continuing goodwill of our LLAS colleagues in the sector who have worked with us in some cases for all of the 11 years of our existence and without whom none of what I am about to report would have happened. So here are the highlights of our year.

## Thriving in the New World of Higher Education London 14 September 2011

Specifically tailored for senior managers, this workshop is part of a series which runs every September and provides a forum for networking and discussion of the impact of government policy and institutional strategy on languages, linguistics and area studies in higher education.

The 2011 event focused on the potential impact of the new government's

strategy for higher education, in particular the major changes to university funding from autumn 2012. The event is organised in collaboration with the University Council of Modern Languages (UCML) and was introduced by Jim Coleman, the current chair of UCML, who gave an overview of the opportunities and challenges facing leaders in languages, linguistics and area studies. Other

presentations were given by Pam Moores (Aston University) and Mike Kelly (LLAS) and covered resources (Shaping the Future for languages) and strategies for responding to change (marketing, outreach, fair access). Participants then worked through a set of

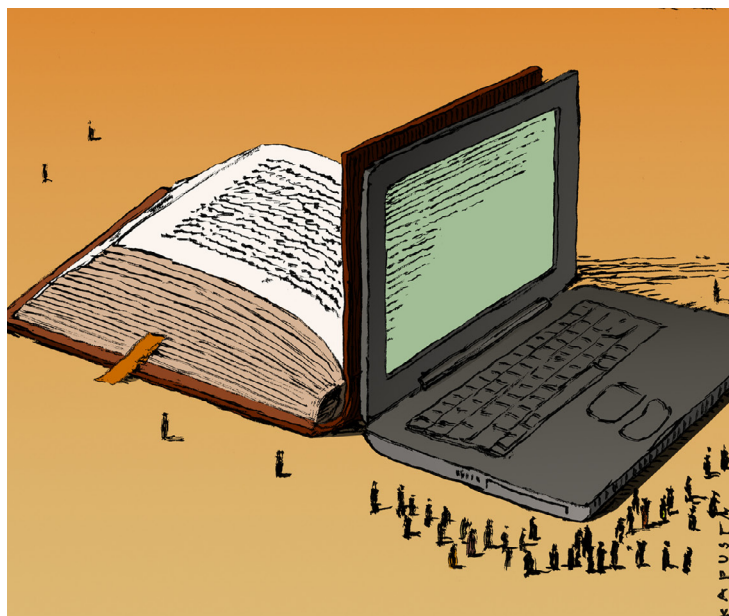
scenarios in which they were challenged to defend their position in the face of proposed changes which posed a potential

threat to their department and/or discipline. Making the case for languages effectively and in time is no easy feat, but these events offer a space to think and share ideas so that collectively as well as individually we can all do the best we can for languages. The 2012 Thriving event will take place in London in September 2012. To find out more or to register visit the LLAS website.

**"The role-play was interesting, gave me a bit of confidence actually."**



## E-learning symposium University of Southampton 26/27 January 2012



"Everything worked really well and the content of the events was really interesting"

In its 7th year, the e-learning symposium has gone from strength to strength and this year was its best yet with over 60 delegates attending and 21 presenters. This two-day event offered the opportunity to learn new skills, to hear inspiring speakers from the world of e-learning and to present and share ideas with colleagues. This year, the first day of the conference offered a tasty set of hors d'oeuvres in the form of workshop sessions on digital literacies, video creation techniques, interactive whiteboards and the Moodle VLE. On the second day we enjoyed stimulating presentations from Claire Warwick (Centre for the Digital Humanities) on the challenges of using social media for scholarly activity; Margaret Southgate (OU) on blended language learning and Mark Stansfield (University of the West of Scotland) on games based learning. We were also treated to a virtual cookery lesson in the actual French Digital Kitchen via a video link with Newcastle University.

The parallel presentations provided a valuable forum for practitioners to share their experiences (good and bad, high and low-tech) of implementing e-learning in practice. There was a wealth of excellent ideas showing how e-learning can be very successfully built into the curriculum as well as some insights into some of the newer new technologies, such as phone apps. This year we were also very pleased to welcome a number of sponsors and exhibitors to the event who showcased some of the tools and resources available for e-language learning and added considerable colour and interactivity to the event. As usual the sessions were live streamed and recorded so you can re-live the event or catch up if you missed it by visiting [www.llas.ac.uk/events/archive/6395](http://www.llas.ac.uk/events/archive/6395)

## Teach for Success Bath Spa University, 15 February 2012



"Interesting day, useful to meet others in similar roles, useful learning from others."

Teach for success is a workshop which builds on the work which LLAS and the HEA among many others have supported over recent years. It approaches internationalisation issues from both the teacher and the student (home and international) perspective. Drawing on resources created for LLAS by Dave Burnapp and data from the HEA-funded Education/LLAS Subject Centre report (A Changing World, 2008) participants explore internationalisation by reflecting on what it means in their own practice and listening to the reflections of colleagues and

students on their interpretation and experiences of teaching and learning in an international context. The day also includes an overview of the role of language in internationalisation, in particular the nature of the IELTS test, what it does and doesn't test and what its results can mean in terms of our expectations of the linguistic competence of international students. This workshop was run by Alison Dickens (LLAS) and Jill Doubleday (University of Southampton). To find out more visit [www.llas.ac.uk/events/archive/6522](http://www.llas.ac.uk/events/archive/6522)



## Practitioner Workshops 2011-2012



Over the last year, LLAS has developed a series of workshops created by and for languages, linguistics and area studies practitioners. These have covered a diverse range of topics including: blended learning, virtual learning environments, interpreting, independent language learning, assessment and using Facebook for language teaching. Here is a snapshot of some of them.

### Blended learning for languages

Kirsten Sontgens (Senior Teaching Fellow, University of Southampton)

*"I have found the whole seminar very useful"*

### Training teachers of interpreting

Svetlana Carsten (Deputy Director Centre for Translation Studies, University of Leeds)

*"It was a very helpful and enjoyable workshop"*

### Using Facebook for (language) teaching

Julien Hamilton-Hart (French Lector, University of Swansea)

*"Excellent & useful ideas shared and used in the training"*

### Maximising the use of your VLE for language learning and teaching

Marina Orsini-Jones

(Programme Manager, MA in ELT, University of Coventry)

*"Very helpful for language teaching"*

### Supporting language learning outside the classroom

Christine Bohlander (Teaching Fellow in German)

& David Tual (Teaching Fellow in French, University of Durham)

*"I learnt a lot to be implemented in my future teaching"*

### Foundations in Language Testing and Assessment:

Glen Fulcher (Professor of Education and Language Assessment, University of Leicester)

*"The whole day was thought-provoking and very pleasant with good lunch and good breaks"*

*"I like that we were given lots of information"*

Visit the LLAS website for more information on these events and for details of future practitioner events. If you would like to host or propose an event please contact [llas@soton.ac.uk](mailto:llas@soton.ac.uk)

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

AUTUMN 2012

### *Video-making for English Language learning and teaching*

Explore how to develop an idea into a film that can be exploited effectively in the classroom or in a self-access context. In small groups you will collaborate on conceiving and shooting a short film with the assistance of technical staff.

SPRING 2013

### *Language learning during residence abroad*

This conference will be for all those interested in residence/study abroad and its impact on language learning. The two-day conference will focus on both SLA research and programmatic/curricular issues and implications. It will culminate in a roundtable discussion with leading experts in areas related to residence/study abroad.

Find out more at [www.llas.ac.uk/events](http://www.llas.ac.uk/events)



# Valuing the Year Abroad



Jim Coleman outlines the unique benefits to students of a period of residence abroad.

**T**he changes to student funding across the four nations of the UK have provided the opportunity to revisit many curriculum issues, among them the 'year abroad' which is such a familiar, attractive and distinctive feature of degrees in or with a foreign language.

More than a decade ago, nationally funded projects explored and defined best practices surrounding the year abroad, addressing through the collaboration of language departments key issues such as curriculum integration, preparation, support while abroad, and debriefing and assessment on return. For convenience, learning outcomes were defined under six alphabetical categories:

- Academic – courses at a foreign university, project work, preparation for final year
- Cultural – insight into institutions and the local ways of life
- Intercultural – an amalgam of knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, skills and behaviours; awareness of the relativity of cultures, including one's own; ethnographic skills to observe without bias; inter-personal skills to adapt to multiple cultural milieux, respecting local values without abandoning one's own
- Linguistic – enhanced proficiency and appropriacy in target language use
- Personal – self-confidence, self-awareness, self-reliance
- Professional – transferable skills to enhance employability, the capacity to operate effectively in different linguistic and cultural contexts

Over recent years, similar lists have helped students to define their goals for the year abroad and their strategies for attaining them. Sometimes they have been embedded in individual learning contracts to form the basis of subsequent assessment. Social networking now allows much closer support and monitoring than was possible even a decade ago.

The University Council of Modern Languages, the overarching national organisation which represents the interests of modern languages, linguistics and cultural and area studies in

**"Thanks to the skills, knowledge and confidence gained through the year abroad, graduates are now following a huge range of satisfying international careers."**

higher education throughout the United Kingdom, and the British Academy wanted evidence that the year abroad is genuinely so important to individuals and to the skills of the British graduate workforce that it deserves targeted support. Through the [thirdyearabroad.com](http://thirdyearabroad.com) website, and with the active involvement of departments and associations, some 600 moving and persuasive testimonies were gathered in just three weeks. Thanks to the skills, knowledge and confidence gained through the year abroad, graduates are now following a huge range of satisfying international careers. Two-thirds of respondents believed the year abroad had been a significant factor in landing their first and subsequent jobs. The data, which will be analysed in detail, provided the basis for a published position statement and a major international event on 27 March 2012 promoting the value of the year abroad, and highlighting stories such as this:

*I now live and work in Brazil and speak fluent Portuguese. I've been here for almost two years and have also spent time living and working in Chile. Flights: £500. Accommodation: £2000. Tuition fees: £1500. Value of the third year abroad: Priceless.*

To encourage more outgoing UK academic mobility, the Government has subsequently announced funding arrangements for students entering from 2012: year abroad fees will be capped at 15% of the maximum (e.g. £1,350 of £9,000), while universities can reclaim a further 25% from HEFCE. The rules apply not only to Erasmus, but to all year abroad schemes except non-Erasmus work placements.

See [www.britac.ac.uk](http://www.britac.ac.uk) for the Valuing the Year Abroad event and statement.

**Professor Jim Coleman**

is Chair of the University Council of Modern Languages





# Supporting students during their year abroad

Robert Blackwood reports on the pursuit for the most effective way to supervise students during their period of residence abroad.



It was not a lifetime ago that the management of the year abroad from the perspective of academic staff more or less ended as the modern languages student disappeared after their second-year summer examinations. As an undergraduate in the mid-1990s, I dropped off the radar of my alma mater – and they from mine – until I had to produce a year abroad essay, a draft of which I posted back to the UK, to be commented upon by my tutor, and entrusted to the Royal Mail to return to me. Unsurprisingly, the potential offered by e-mail and the Internet dramatically changed the ways in which we communicate with students abroad, but it's not as easy as it initially seems, especially when a tutor is supervising half a dozen students in places as disparate as western Quebec, Guadeloupe, Ajaccio and Mayotte. Managing several folders of e-mail messages, retrieving correspondence from months ago because we were pretty sure we'd already answered that question (or was it the student in Rennes who had asked about referencing?), keeping on top of pastoral issues raised by different individuals... all these factors prompted a rethink in the way we supervise students on the year abroad, at a time when the context for students began to change fundamentally, and fees cast their shadow over this part of the degree programme.

**“There's a time and a place for Twitter, but nobody felt that they could offer constructive feedback on the first draft of a dissertation in 140 characters.”**

The rise and rise and rise of social networks and new media coincided with our rethink at Liverpool, and we spent time considering all the options. There's a time and a place for Twitter, but nobody felt that they could offer constructive feedback on the first draft of a dissertation in 140 characters. Facebook is the obvious platform, but this wasn't the panacea we thought it initially

might be – for a start, students (and staff) want to keep their private and their academic life separate. Moreover, Facebook does what Facebook wants to do, and providing a private space for two individuals to correspond is not on their agenda. Questions of privacy also loomed large. Even the VLE package Liverpool uses isn't flexible enough to do the kinds of things we want to do. Ning emerged as the answer to many (but not quite all) of our questions. It can be customised, it can be linked to numerous other platforms (and we were inspired by the work at Nottingham Trent with Google Maps to enhance our provision this year), and crucially, it provides the private space, recorded as one single thread, for the supervisor and student to discuss whatever they need to discuss. Ning allows the student or the supervisor to start several threads (a pastoral issues discussion, the academic supervision, planning for final year) which appears on screen as a prolonged discussion – gone is the hunting for e-mails, or the confession from students that they deleted that crucial message we sent them on their latest idea. We also use it as the repository for the British Council Personal Development Portfolio, which – with automated reminders – ensures that the student is responsible to a greater degree for their own learning.

This also spills out beyond the year abroad. Final-year students – the veterans of the year abroad and the greatest resource in preparing departing students – contribute to discussion boards, provide information to populate maps, offer e-mentoring for those starting out. This they do willingly, largely because they have profited beyond their expectations from a prolonged spell abroad.

We don't pretend to have found all the answers; there's much more that can be done to exploit the technology, and to ensure that the enthusiasm generated abroad is sustained back in Liverpool, but the support for students on the year abroad has been transformed, even from my own (relatively) recent experiences.

Dr Robert Blackwood is Head of French at the University of Liverpool and is a National Teaching Fellow

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# Residence and Employment Abroad Leading to International Employability (REALIE)

**Alison Dickens** reports on a recently funded project to help the employability benefits of the year abroad to be fully recognised

**A** Very rapid Google tour of university websites yields a wealth of statements on the employability benefits of work and study abroad for undergraduates. Students too report that their experiences abroad are frequently life-changing, opening them up to a world of possibilities for future life, work and travel abroad (see past issues of this magazine). Unsurprisingly global employers appear to favour graduates with international experience as they consider them to be more mobile and better equipped for working in multicultural teams ([www.cihe.co.uk/global-horizons-and-role-of-employers](http://www.cihe.co.uk/global-horizons-and-role-of-employers)). Translating the stated benefits into real-life ones, however, remains a real challenge for all concerned. With the increasing expectation that universities actively and demonstrably provide concrete employability benefits for students (four out of the sixteen items of information required for the new university Key Information Sets will relate to employability) and the ongoing pressure to justify the four-year modern languages degree, employability and the year abroad is an issue which needs to be addressed more strategically. It is in this context that the REALIE project has been funded to support a small-scale project to enhance the employability value of the year abroad by offering real opportunities to students to engage in and build on employment opportunities before, during and after their period of residence abroad.

**“global employers appear to favour graduates with international experience as they consider them to be more mobile and better equipped for working in multicultural teams”**

The project, led by Jaine Beswick, is funded by the Higher Education Academy and is a collaboration between Modern Languages at the University of Southampton and LLAS. It is working closely with students to collect detailed feedback on and develop resources to support the employability outcomes of the year abroad. There are three main strands of activity:

## Student experience

A group of 6 final year student interns are spending four months collecting feedback from their peers on employment experiences

gained during the year abroad using a set of questions which they have designed and administered themselves. This feedback includes details of strategies adopted to find work placements and other employment; feedback on these work experiences; self-evaluation of employability skills obtained; information on the local context and advice for future students. This information will contribute to a set of online wiki guides on employment and the year abroad as part of a planned e-guide to employability for outgoing students. This work will be carried out by a summer intern (a recently returned third year student) recruited under a University of Southampton intern programme run by the careers service.

## Employer engagement

A small group of academic staff representing the language areas which offer a year abroad will be using the data supplied by students to follow up on successful work placements (contacting the employers for feedback on the experience and exploring the possibility of future placements for students). They will also be collating the increasing number of direct requests by employers for student interns and ensuring that students are made aware of these as early as possible. In addition, they are working with partner HEIs to consider ways of adding employability elements (university internships) to study placements and strengthening the employability dimension of materials for preparation and follow-up for the year abroad.

## Careers guidance

In the context of an increasing requirement to support student employability, university careers services are very active in offering training, support and resources to students, including formal schemes in which students can gain additional credit for employability activities. This project is working alongside colleagues in the Careers Service to organise an employability forum for returning students in November 2012, which will help to highlight and contextualise some of the generic employability services/training offered to students.

The project is intended to be of relevance across the sector; its outcomes will be made freely available to the sector and disseminated both at the HEA and LLAS conferences in July 2012. The project is due to finish in April 2013.

**Alison Dickens**  
is Assistant Director of LLAS





# Statistics in humanities research

John Canning reports on a new online resource to help humanities students understand statistical concepts.



**D**aniel Everett's recent book *Language: the Cultural Tool* has been attracting attention far beyond the discipline of linguistics. Everett worked as a missionary to an Amazonian tribe who speaks the Pirahã language. Unusually, speakers of the language have no concept of numbers other than one and two and these two numbers are only approximations. Speakers of other languages with no number system have developed ways of expressing numerical concepts, but attempts to teach the concept of numbers to adult Pirahã speakers have demonstrated that they have no number sense beyond three. While not wishing to suggest that humanities students have no number sense, a lack of confidence with numerical skills has been identified as an issue for the humanities, especially when using and manipulating statistical data.

For this reason, the British Academy has funded LLAS to develop an online statistics resource for humanities students under its Languages and Quantitative Skills programme. The challenge is to develop a resource which is able to introduce statistics to humanities students in a way which develops understanding of

**"The consequences of shortcomings in quantitative skills are not dissimilar to the consequences of a lack of language skills."**

statistical concepts. A recent report, authored by Carol Vorderman, was one of a long line of reports expressing concern about the numerical skills of British adults. University students, most of whom have not studied mathematics since the age of 16, are not exempt from this.

The consequences of shortcomings in quantitative skills are not dissimilar to the consequences of a lack of language skills. Firstly employment prospects can be affected if graduates lack numerical skills—some humanities graduates who talked to Allan (2006) cited numerical skills as a particular area of concern. Secondly, students who lack skills in quantitative analysis may not be able to go on to do masters and PhD research in certain areas of study such as economic history or quantitative linguistics. The book will use examples from humanities subjects and will include questions which students can work through on their own or which can be set by lecturers as homework. The book will use a verbal reasoning approach throughout.

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**Dr John Canning**  
is Senior Academic Coordinator at LLAS







# Speaking to the future – the next chapter

Lid King provides an update on the Speak to the Future campaign.



**S**peak to the Future – the campaign for languages - is now in its second year. It began as no more than a conversation over lunch, so that in itself is an achievement. The campaign now has funding (mostly thanks to the British Academy), an office (donated by the Chartered Institute of Linguists) and a project manager. Soon it will launch a new website.

It seems therefore a good moment to take stock – both to recognize what has been achieved and to agree on the next part of the journey.

### Uniting our friends

What then has been done? Well to paraphrase either a French General or an American singer – “We survived”. The initial idea was a simple one – to identify the key issues which would embody a coherent languages programme, both to unite the rather ineffective and sometimes fractious languages community and to take our messages to a wider public. We were provoked into doing this not least by the rather critical comments of sympathetic government officials who compared our lack of influence with the powerful impact of the Science lobby. There are of course other reasons for this difference – the industrial muscle of science and technology in particular. Nevertheless we thought that the point was a good one.

That is why the early meetings of STF were mainly concerned with agreeing some apparently simple propositions – the 5 Objectives – around which nearly all of the languages world could unite. The fact that this has been achieved is in itself a unique success.

### THE FIVE OBJECTIVES

- Every language valued as an asset
- A coherent experience of languages for all children in primary school
- A basic working knowledge of at least two languages including English for every child leaving secondary school
- Every graduate qualified in a second language
- An increase in the number of highly qualified linguists

Unique perhaps, but not enough, it is now time to do something which we have often discussed, but rarely achieved. We need to move out of the corral and start making new friends among the many groups who are sympathetic to the languages argument, but who rarely support our cause in an active way. We have made a start, among politicians, committed business people and educationalists from other fields, but we need to do much more.

If we are to be successful we will need to overcome some major challenges. There are ideological ones – the pessimism

**“We need to move out of the corral and start making new friends among the many groups who are sympathetic to the languages argument, but who rarely support our cause in an active way.”**

of “we have been here before and nothing changed” or the confusion caused by the still unclear political and educational landscape. Others relate to the objective situation – the increasing fragmentation and privatisation of the system and the general context of shrinking resources.

Such challenges only underline the need for greater collaboration, greater clarity, greater passion about what we know to be so vital for individuals and for society. To succeed, we need to address new audiences and to find new sources of support and new ways of promoting our message. These, therefore, will be the main targets of the next phase of “speaking to the future”. In a period of uncertainty and retrenchment there really is nothing else to say.

Find out more at: [www.speaktothefuture.org](http://www.speaktothefuture.org)



THE CAMPAIGN  
FOR LANGUAGES

Dr Lid King is Director of the Languages Company and Chair of the Speak to the Future Steering Group



# Open history, open teaching and OpenLIVES

Kate Borthwick introduces an exciting collaborative project, which is openly publishing research data and using it to create and share open education resources.



**T**he LLAS-led OpenLIVES project has been funded by JISC to explore how one core set of research data can be exploited in different ways by teachers working in varying institutional contexts to make open educational resources (OERs) for sharing and use by the education community.

OpenLIVES (Learning Insights from the Voices of Emigrés) is an exciting 15-month project which will see the digitisation and open publication of primary research data documenting the experiences of Spanish migrants to different countries around the globe and returning migrants to Spain. In the 20th century, Spain experienced tremendous economic and political upheaval and there was a high level of emigration. Following subsequent political changes, many emigrants returned to Spain, and their experiences have rarely been studied until recent work was undertaken by researchers at Southampton who have collected oral testimony, images and other ephemera from émigrés.

The project brings together three universities: Southampton, Leeds and Portsmouth. Each institution will integrate the primary source material into their teaching by creating OERs for a range of teaching and learning contexts in humanities and social sciences. Students will be involved at all stages of resource development: using the original data, evaluating the teaching resources and creating/peer-reviewing their own learning resources. All OpenLIVES data and resources will be available through the HumBox ([www.humbox.ac.uk](http://www.humbox.ac.uk)).

## Germinal's story: "At least we will remove him from this Hell."

Germinal Luis's story was recorded by researchers in an interview in 2008. He was born in Barcelona in July 1930. His father was a political activist for the Republicans during the Spanish Civil War and spent most of the war fighting on the frontlines. When Franco's forces intensified the bombing of Barcelona towards the end of the civil war, Germinal's mother decided to send him, aged 8, to France for his own safety where he lived with acquaintances until his parents could follow him, some months later.

Germinal and his parents lived peaceably until the fall of France during the Second World War. At this point, the documents of all foreigners living in France became invalid, and could only be reinstated by application to national embassies or consulates. As Spain was now ruled by Franco's fascist regime, Republican families were no longer acknowledged as Spanish which rendered them 'stateless,' and their presence in France illegal. Poor and hungry, the family survived by a mixture of charity and luck. In 1942 the American Friends Service Committee of Philadelphia offered to send Germinal to the USA. After long deliberation his parents agreed he should go: '*por lo menos lo sacaremos a él de este infierno*' (at least we will remove him from this Hell). As he set sail, full of excitement, Germinal did not realise how long he would be parted from his family. He remembers it being the first time that he had ever seen his father cry.

In the USA, Germinal was placed in a foster home with a family he remembers with enduring affection for their kindness to him. He was finally reunited with his family in August 1947, in Venezuela, where his parents had been offered a home and work. When he met his parents again, he said the whole family were 'wild with joy.' Germinal has lived most of his life in Caracas but has now, after many years of exile, returned to Barcelona.



## How OpenLIVES data will be used by project partners:

### University of Portsmouth: transferable skills for life and work



**Miguel Arrebola**

I intend to show how open educational resources can be effectively integrated into my current work at Portsmouth, by using OpenLIVES data in an existing module: 'Languages for Professional Communication'.

Students on this course are already required to produce a magazine or video documentary, and in this semester, we will focus on one of the oral testimonies published as part of OpenLIVES (Germinal's story) as the core of their work. As students work to produce their magazine/video, they develop a series of valuable transferable skills in addition to language as well as learning new skills about ethical practice in research, effective interviewing and also good practice in producing open educational content.

### University of Southampton: focus on research



**Alicia Pozo-Gutierrez  
and Irina Nelson**

We plan to use the primary research data in two ways: firstly, to produce a series of online open resources around the topic of research skills, for example: conducting interviews for recording life histories; designing and conducting ethnographic research; understanding the value of contextualisation in order to ensure a critical approach, and engaging in discourse analysis to explore language and meaning.

Secondly, students will create their own open educational resources in response to the OpenLIVES testimonies. Activities will include: close textual analysis; critical consideration of the nature of the source as primary or secondary or both; the discussion of contexts of production and consumption and critical examination of emerging themes. These tasks will form part of students' assessed work and student work will be published as OERs.

### University of Leeds: innovative new final year module



**Antonio Martínez-Arboleda**

As part of my contribution to the OpenLIVES project, I have proposed a new Spanish BA Final Year module at the University of Leeds called "Discovering Spanish Voices Abroad in a Digital World", which is intended to run from September 2012. The module will integrate knowledge of language, culture and society with technical and digital awareness in an innovative way.

Students will work towards producing their own audio documentaries in Spanish using the OpenLIVES interviews as well as their own interviews with other Spanish migrants. Students will learn about:

- Spanish society and economy as the OpenLIVES interviews need to be contextualised;
- how to deal with linguistically complex oral texts in informal/familiar registers in Spanish;
- how to present and discuss their research in Spanish; learn
- how to critically process primary and secondary sources and incorporate them into their own research;
- how to design, produce and publish their own audio documentaries
- editorial, ethical and legal issues surrounding research and documentary production and publication.

Find out more at <http://openlives.wordpress.com>

**Kate Borthwick**

is Academic Coordinator for e-learning  
at LLAS





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# Working with employers:

## A case study of a Knowledge Transfer Partnership project involving languages

Graham Webb describes the process of obtaining Knowledge Transfer Project (KTP) funding and the value gained to the School of Languages, academics and language students from working closely with a major professional language service provider.

In September 2010 the School of Languages at Leeds Metropolitan University began a KTP project with thebigword, a Leeds based global supplier of translating and interpreting services.

### The Knowledge Transfer Partnership framework

The KTP scheme was established in 1975 to offer a mechanism for knowledge transfer; which enables university academic departments to apply their research and knowledge to authentic projects which meet the needs of a business or sector.

Typically, an individual academic or a university department will identify with a business, a product or service that can be enhanced by collaboration between them. They then prepare a joint proposal to seek funding for between 10 weeks and three years to complete the project.

The funding covers part of the time of a named academic (the Academic Supervisor) and a full time KTP Associate (usually a recent graduate) who leads the project. A Manager from within the partner company (the Company Supervisor) also supports the project although this is not funded by the KTP.

### Key benefits for all parties

The essence of the KTP scheme is that all parties gain clear benefit from their involvement.

#### Academics and university departments can

- identify trends and needs within their sector and consider appropriate curriculum developments
- apply their knowledge, expertise and research to authentic business issues
- establish relationships with practising professionals
- identify new research areas and/or identify opportunities for undergraduate or postgraduate projects

#### Companies can

- improve their products or services through knowledge and research
- observe the value of a graduate to their business and possibly recruit them
- establish relationships with practising academics
- benchmark their existing training and development processes against academic standards
- identify training and development needs which might be met by the university
- contribute to the up-skilling of their industry

#### The Associate can

- gain authentic experience whilst being paid
- increase their academic knowledge and develop their project management and other practical skills
- enhance their employability and/or research potential

### The Knowledge Transfer Partnership project between Leeds Met and thebigword

The School of Languages at Leeds Met has an objective to increase income from non HEFCE sources.

When the KTP scheme was identified as a potential source of income it was not immediately apparent what type of business we could collaborate with or what kind of project we could make a contribution to.

**"One of the attractions for the School of Languages in undertaking the KTP was that we wanted to be able to demonstrate how 'employable' language graduates are."**



We undertook an audit of our knowledge and skills, which forced us to consider the key attributes of our staff, our knowledge base and our research focus. It was this creative but objective evaluation of our unique and inherent knowledge that enabled us to articulate what we could offer to add value to a professional organisation.

We determined that our unique proposition was our ability to

- determine standards in language use
- identify and articulate the criteria by which to determine if standards are met
- articulate relevant learning outcomes
- decide the methodology and develop the materials needed for students to achieve the learning outcomes
- devise an assessment strategy to support learning and demonstrate when students have met the learning outcomes
- configure education, training and assessment into an accredited university course leading to a formal award

In discussion with thebigword it quickly became apparent that the company had an extensive learning and development focus. They told us how demand for interpreters across the UK has increased significantly in recent years, as organisations adopt a multilingual model and Governments need to communicate with communities for whom English is not their first language. Government departments contract language service providers (LSP) such as thebigword to deliver services nationally either through face-to-face consecutive interpreting or by the increasingly popular telephone interpreting.

We believe we were awarded project funding because we were able to articulate Leeds Met's contribution as follows:

*"The partnership with Leeds Met will enable thebigword to define the key characteristics and behaviours required of a professional interpreter in these environments and articulate the necessary level of attainment with academic rigour and credibility whilst providing an online training course with feedback and guidance to help applicants meet the standards."*

## Running the project

One of the attractions for the School of Languages in undertaking the KTP was that we wanted to be able to demonstrate how "employable" language graduates are and we were keen that the Associate should be a languages graduate. The candidate we appointed had a languages degree plus an MA in Translation and good IT and time/project management skills.

## Outcomes and benefits to all partners

### Key benefits to thebigword

- Courses developed through the partnership between thebigword and Leeds Met have been formally accredited by the university.
- thebigword has expanded its pool of people with training skills and expertise in identifying the wider training needs of staff and has developed thebigword's work on establishing learning outcomes, learning materials and assessment strategies throughout the organisation.

- Department managers now have an academic basis to assist in determining the training needs of their staff and deciding whether external courses can meet them or if specific training should be developed "in-house".

### Key benefits to Leeds Metropolitan University

#### Research

- The courses we have developed under the KTP have been accredited by the university and are already enrolling students.
- Our research into the Public Service Interpreting (PSI) sector and, in particular, into what Public Service Interpreters, Language Service Providers (LSPs), training organisations and PSI end-users feel are the key training needs of interpreters has not only contributed to being able to develop our new courses but has given us a much wider appreciation of the "languages" market.
- The project has led us to re-evaluate our relationship with external bodies and, in particular, the balance we need to strike between competition and collaboration.

#### Student opportunities

- thebigword has offered four student placements at Easter and a further four in the summer to our current language undergraduates.
- Key individuals from thebigword have given presentations to undergraduates about job opportunities within the company and the wider languages sector.
- thebigword has also provided two authentic European market research projects for our undergraduates to undertake as part of a final year module.

#### Staff opportunities

- The Academic Supervisor has learned a great deal about the languages industry which is being disseminated via articles, research seminars and presentations.
- Staff have an opportunity to understand the expectations of LSPs and others within the language sector and the additional skills offered by language graduates.
- Language tutors have been involved in the development and testing of the interpreting course materials.
- thebigword has offered a two-week academic staff placement in the summer of 2012.

### Key benefits to the Associate

- The Associate gains valuable practical experience of project management in academic and commercial environments.
- The KTP scheme encourages Associates to undertake project management and other forms of training.
- Often the Associate will be offered a position within the project company or they may decide to apply for a role within the university.

**Graham Webb**  
is Principal Lecturer at Leeds  
Metropolitan University



# Translating and interpreting for public services in England

Routes into Languages has commissioned an important piece of research that aims to identify and address issues around the provision of public service interpreting and translation training in higher education. **Anne Marie Graham**, who is leading the project, tells us more.

**T**he project will establish a picture of provision of translating and interpreting for public services in England. It will also review provision in the wider UK, where it has an impact on England. In order to build a complete picture of training and how it links to the labour market for public service interpreting and translation, the research is contacting various stakeholder groups. Research subjects include trainers in higher education, trainers in further and adult education and employers of interpreters and translators, as

well as practitioners who have trained in higher education and are now working in the field. There is also an online survey open to those involved in, or with a professional interest in, the training of public service interpreters and translators.

In the wake of department and course closures, the research aims to provide a comprehensive review of provision in all languages and identify any gaps in knowledge or issues to be addressed. It will also review the policy context for public service interpreting and translation. The research report will provide



**Coming soon!**  
**National Network for Translation website**

A key resource for all those involved in teaching translation or promoting translation as a career

Visit [www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/translation](http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/translation) for updates.



**"The work is particularly timely, given the current profile that the public service interpreting profession is receiving as a result of the publicity surrounding the new Ministry of Justice framework agreement to supply linguists to the criminal justice service."**

recommendations for enhanced collaboration in the teaching and training of public service interpreters and translators, to uphold professional standards.

The work is particularly timely, given the current profile that the public service interpreting profession is receiving as a result of the publicity surrounding the new Ministry of Justice framework agreement to supply linguists to the criminal justice service.

In addition to a comprehensive 'state of the nation' report, the project aims to develop a virtual community of practice for public service interpreting and translation. This online community will bring together a variety of resources for teaching and learning specific to public service provision. The resources will support the teaching and learning of a wide range of languages, and provide a repository of useful materials and guidance to help providers and students. The online tool will also provide a facility to help trainers and students discuss and debate a range of topics and issues that may occur during training.

The online tool will be piloted during early summer and the findings of the research and its recommendations will be reported in August. In the meantime, if you are interested in the progress of the project, interim findings on the research and the online tool will be presented at the Languages in Higher Education conference in Edinburgh in July.

If you work in the field of interpreter or translator training, and you wish to discuss the research or contribute to the online tool, please contact Anne Marie Graham via email at [annemariegraham@arqueros.co.uk](mailto:annemariegraham@arqueros.co.uk).

**Anne Marie Graham**  
is Director of Arqueros UK Consulting



## Forthcoming events

### Autumn 2012

#### Interpreting and translating for public services

This workshop will present findings from new research commissioned by Routes into Languages and will be an opportunity for practitioners to come together and discuss issues in the provision of public services interpreting and translating.



Find out more at  
[www.llas.ac.uk/events](http://www.llas.ac.uk/events)



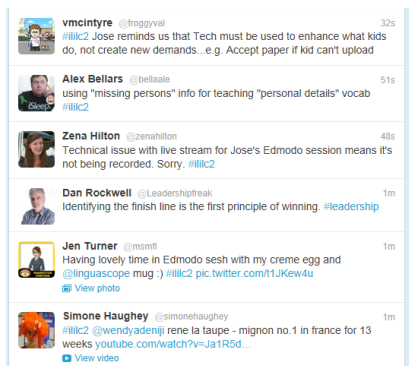
# Social Media for language teachers

**Teresa Mackinnon**  
describes how social media tools have helped her as a language teacher.

**W**orking over the weekend again! Isn't that just the reality of life in education? Marking, preparation and reading vie with household chores and family matters. Multi-tasking is the norm. On this particular Sunday morning I'm working my way through a pile of ironing at home in Warwickshire whilst at the same time spending time with colleagues involved at a conference in Southampton. Isn't that taking multi-tasking to another level?



When I started my teaching career back in the 1980's I enjoyed opportunities to listen to invited speakers who would travel to tell us of research findings that would influence our practice. These events also brought the chance to exchange ideas and chat with colleagues from across the county, conversations which were often immediately helpful in solving our own classroom needs. Such sessions provided inspiration and lifelong friendships. 30 years later I see the same vibrant language teaching communities interacting online and in so doing, crossing county and even national borders and extending the conversations to a global audience.



I started experimenting with social media some years ago now but I had no idea how immensely useful the resultant network of connected educators would be. I have been able to engage in professional conversations with American and Australian language and technology educators as well as those nearer to home. My PLN (personal learning network) is now extensive and through it I have been able to meet up with those who are at the very forefront of computer assisted language learning (CALL) such as Graham Davies, now retired professor emeritus of CALL whose work I had always admired as a young teacher, and thought leaders in HE such as Professor Mike Kelly. I use these tools to help keep abreast of the rapidly changing developments in my professional communities of e-learning, m-learning and language teaching. As an active supporter of the importance of language skills to the UK and the Speak to the Future campaign, I curate and amplify news and information using a tool called scoop.it ([www.scoop.it](http://www.scoop.it)) and organise the

**"If language teachers are going to be able to support young people as they develop their communication skills in online networks, clearly we need to experience the challenges for ourselves."**

useful links in pearltrees ([www.pearltrees.com](http://www.pearltrees.com)) for easy retrieval. My research work into computer mediated communication also means I need to experience the effects of the technologies on the discourses they mediate.

Many feel that engagement with online communities would be yet another addition to an already overfull "to-do" list. Of course you need to know what the networks can do for you and decide the purpose of your

engagement. The #mfltwitterati constantly share resources and support each other; they are clearly an open, friendly bunch who find connecting useful. Each person connects at their own level to find relative advantage.

Clearly they have thought a great deal about how they present themselves online. This is valuable knowledge when one considers the nature of communication in the future:

*"In a statistical sense, we may one day communicate with each other far more via computer mediation than in direct interaction."*

-Crystal, D. Language and the Internet (2001 p.241)

If language teachers are going to be able to support young people as they develop their communication skills in online networks, clearly we need to experience the challenges for ourselves. I appreciate that it may seem like another hill to climb but in fact the return on your time investment can be surprising. Last summer, a brief online conversation as a result of reading a blog post by Steve Wheeler (Associate Professor of Learning Technology, Plymouth University) led to a connection between our French students and students of English at Université Blaise Pascal in Clermont-Ferrand. We now have a "virtual exchange" with more than 500 students connecting to debate issues of mutual interest, challenge each other to online games and continue their conversations in their own networks of choice including Facebook and Google+. I have run many physical exchanges in the past but none has had such a vastly improved return on investment ratio! Educators from all sectors can connect their students virtually through networks such as:

the British Council's portal:  
[www.britishcouncil.org/learning-connecting-classrooms.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/learning-connecting-classrooms.htm)





the global education conference site:

<http://gloaleducation.ning.com/>

the global classroom project:

<http://theglobalclassroomproject.wordpress.com/>

<http://globalclassroom2011-12.wikispaces.com/>

classroom 2.0: [www.classroom20.com](http://www.classroom20.com)

These are a way of bringing real international interactions into your classroom and providing a myriad of opportunities to open eyes to intercultural communication.

Inevitably there will be technical challenges, learning curves to overcome as you find your way around new technologies but

there are also many practitioners who are very willing to share their insights. I can highly recommend Wheeler's presentation "All I need to know about using Twitter I learned at Kindergarten" ([www.slideshare.net/timbuckteeth/all-i-need-to-know-about-twitter-i-learned-at-kindergarten](http://www.slideshare.net/timbuckteeth/all-i-need-to-know-about-twitter-i-learned-at-kindergarten)).

As you find your PLN, you will get plenty of support and advice to increase your confidence.

I believe that Crystal's words are more significant than ever now, faced with economic challenges and ever increasing workloads. We can work smarter if we adopt some of these social networking tools. Smart phones, apps and screens are just the means of access to online

spaces where ideas and communities are forged, just as the Café de Flore was the focal point for intellectual debate in the 1950's. To remain on the side-lines of a cultural revolution will leave us unable to understand and inform the future of communication for the next generation.

You can connect with me through <http://myfav.es/warwicklanguage>

**Teresa Mackinnon** is Senior tutor: business and e-learning at the University of Warwick



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# Profile: Routes into Languages East Student Language Ambassador



**Lauren Mason**, an undergraduate at the University of Cambridge, describes her role as a student ambassador for the Routes into Languages regional consortium in the East.

**R**outes into Languages is a programme funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England to promote the study of languages in school and at university. Under the programme, nine regional consortia have been established where groups of universities work together with schools and colleges to enthuse and encourage people to study languages.

The role of the student ambassador is to support these events, from helping students with questions about the language and running activities, to explaining what studying languages at university is like. We aim to be friendly and approachable, and the great thing about involving university students is that pupils are often able to relate to us more easily.

Routes into Languages designs events that not only inspire pupils and show them how advantageous language learning can be, but also incorporate a wide range of skills from other areas, therefore giving pupils the chance to use their language skills in a practical context.

The East Consortium, with which I have been involved this year, has put on a huge range of events for schools and Sixth Form colleges in the local area over the past few years. Anglia Ruskin University is the lead institution, working with Cambridge University, the Open University, the University of East Anglia and Hertfordshire University. Their events include a foreign language spelling bee, film competitions, Sing to the Future, and language taster days for Sixth Form students, as well as visits to schools, competitions, Language and Sport events towards the Olympics and 'Why Study Languages?' talks.

Two of my most recent events were held in Cambridge. The first was a 'Languages at Work' day, where three schools from Huntingdonshire were invited



**"We aim to be friendly and approachable"**



French Winners Spelling Bee 2010



Dressing-up game, Hills Road Sixth Form College



German fairy tales, Hills Road Sixth Form College

to Anglia Ruskin University for a morning of activities organised in partnership with the Huntingdonshire Secondary Education Partnership. Year 9 students of French and German found themselves in a mock business environment. Researching their products involved training their listening, reading and writing skills. At the end of the session, they gave a sales pitch to the Ambassadors which provided them with a good opportunity to speak. It was great to see the students enjoying the fun side of languages as well as learning important skills for the workplace. They were also very excited to sit in the lecture rooms and have a tour of the university – getting a taste of university life is really important for developing their educational aspirations, whether in languages or in another field.

**Lauren Mason** is a second year French and German student at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.





# Reaching out in languages:

Angela Gallagher-Brett reports on first-year students' engagement with outreach activities



It is always difficult to ascertain what kinds of experiences first-year undergraduates are bringing with them from their schools and colleges as they embark on their degree programmes.

This applies as much to outreach activities as to anything else. Individual universities may collect information on the previous involvement of first-year language students in their own outreach programmes but this data is not necessarily available nationally. Now through the collaboration of the Routes into Languages programme, we are beginning to be able to find out whether students nationally have had prior access to languages outreach and support initiatives.

Routes conducted a survey of first-year languages undergraduates between October and December 2011. It set out to discover the extent to which an opportunity sample of students in England and Wales had engaged with a range of activities while they were at school or college and to elicit their views on the impact of those activities on their attitudes to languages and their decisions to study them. The survey was adapted from an earlier questionnaire piloted by the Routes into Languages consortium in Yorkshire and the Humber and was intended as a brief snapshot.

## Returns from universities in England and Wales

Around 1300 first-year surveys were returned by 34 universities in England and Wales, approximately 2/3 of which came from English universities and 1/3 from Wales. A good range of universities participated, of which 23 were pre-1992 and 11 were post-1992 institutions. Fourteen of the universities are on the Sutton Trust's list of 30 academically most selective universities (Sutton Trust, 2011).

Most of our respondents had attended schools or colleges in the UK although a significant number came from European Union countries and a few were from outside the EU.

Countries of school /college attendance	Approx. % of total
England	75%
Wales	7%
Scotland	1%
Northern Ireland	1%
Outside UK	8%
Unknown (no information given)	8%

We are interested in the responses of the 84% of students who had been to school or college in the UK as our focus in Routes was on the languages interventions that they had experienced.

We found that around 19% of the UK students had been to independent schools/colleges before university. According to the Sutton Trust (2010), independent school students make up approximately 13% of the intake of UK universities. This means that our figure is rather high although it is not necessarily unrepresentative of language students (e.g. Hudswell, 2006).

There were significantly fewer numbers of schools and colleges represented in the data than numbers of students because some institutions recur. One college in the North of England was attended by nine students in our survey!

## Engagement with languages support and outreach activities

We found that more than two thirds of respondents had experienced at least one intervention. Of those who had participated, two thirds had been involved in two or more activities. This would seem to suggest a significant increase in activity since Davis mapped the provision of outreach a few years ago (Davis, 2006). AS/A2 study/revision days were by far the most frequently reported interventions and were attended by just under half of respondents. These were followed in frequency by GCSE revision days, language and film activities, why study languages presentations, language tasters, language clubs, sixth form days and visits from student language ambassadors. Interestingly, students who had been to independent schools were slightly less likely to have been involved in activity than those in the maintained sector.

Students' perceptions of the impact of activities were also really encouraging. Around 70% suggested that involvement had positively improved their attitudes to language learning. This fits in with other evidence indicating that activities carried out under the Routes umbrella have a significant influence on attitudes to language learning (e.g. Canning et al, 2010; Handley, 2011). Many students also felt that their decision to study languages had been influenced by engagement with activities and events. Particularly noteworthy were indications from independent school students that outreach and other support activities were less positive experiences for them than for students from maintained sector schools and colleges. The full report of the survey is available on the Routes into Languages website at [www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/impact](http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/impact) and is a good example of how collaboration and partnership in the Routes programme can facilitate information gathering on a national basis.

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Angela Gallagher-Brett is Senior Academic Coordinator at LLAS

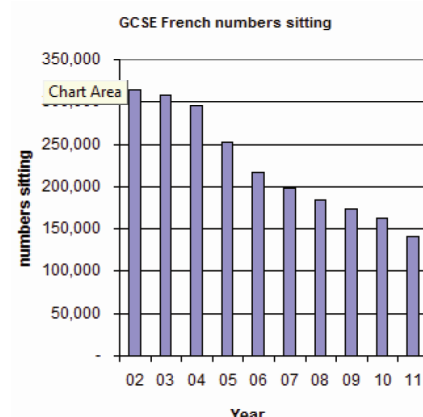


# Languages in secondary schools

Helen Myers reports on key issues for languages at GCSE and A level

Language teachers in secondary schools have responded to the challenge and opportunity given by the new GCSE specifications with their customary energy and commitment. The changes to the speaking exams in ML GCSE recommended by the Dearing Review after much consultation with teachers coincided with the change from coursework to controlled assessment in all GCSEs. The hope had been that candidates would be better able to demonstrate what they know and can do with teacher-controlled content and more flexibility over the exam conditions.

After many years of decline, surveys indicate a significant rise in the numbers of pupils in current Year 10 studying a course leading to GCSE in Languages (mainly those likely to get A\*-C grade, and thus in a position to consider studying the subject for A-level) as a result of the introduction of the English Baccalaureate in January 2011.



**“This working together of independent and state, teachers and headteachers and so on, has been effective because it has shown that these are issues which affect everyone.”**

These changes have further highlighted two key issues at both GCSE and A-level:

- severe grading
- unpredictable grading

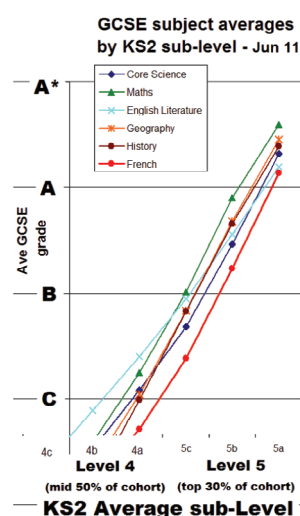
ASCL (Association of School and College Leaders), ALL (Association for Language Learning) and ISMLA (Independent Schools Modern Language Association) have been working together on investigating and sharing these issues since the Dearing Review in 2006. This working together of independent and state, teachers and Headteachers and so on, has been effective because it has shown that these are issues which affect everyone. As a result of this sustained work, the positive aspect is that the reality of the issues is now clearly established (thus greatly supporting and sustaining teachers in schools who have been coming under unfair criticism), and so we have now moved to the next step of “what can be done?”

Following a presentation by Nick Mair (ISMLA), the author and David Blow (ASCL) to the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Modern Languages in the House of Lords on 19th March 2012, the Chair, Baroness Coussins, is writing to the Chair of Ofqual urging that specific steps be taken to address each of the issues.

## GCSE Modern Languages

### Severe grading

Because of a historical anomaly, “the playing field has never been level”, and there needs to be a tiny one-off adjustment to bring ML in line with the other traditional academic subjects / EBacc subjects so that pupils of the same prior attainment (e.g. KS2 level) gain, on average, a similar GCSE grade in their EBacc subjects.



### Unpredictable grading

The new speaking exams have enabled candidates to show more, but this has led to real confusion and inconsistency as to how this should be reflected in grading. There needs to be greater transparency from Ofqual and the exam boards in how actual performances are marked, and the raw marks converted to grades.



## A Level Modern Languages

### Severe grading

Subjects such as Maths, Physics, French, etc will have a higher ability profile and so expect to get a higher percentage of both A grades and the new A\* grades, but you would expect the proportion of A\* to A grades to be reasonably similar – and it is generally at around one-third. But it is not the same for ML – only a fifth, with a consequent knock-on effect for students (especially very able ones) who are considering which A-levels to study, leading to a Daily Telegraph article “Want an A\* grade: Do Art not French” with an interview with Ken Durham, Chair of the Headmasters and Headmistresses Conference of private schools.

### Unpredictable grading

The unpredictable grading in the ML speaking exam has been a concern in recent years. Specific information should be made available about how boards differentiate between pre-learned material and genuine fluency identified and in what way this affects grading. In a letter to Ofqual, ISMLA warned that senior teachers were steering sixth formers away from modern languages towards subjects offering a “more predictable and reliable grade outcome.”

### Conclusion

Resolving these issues will not in itself be a magic wand to remove all the challenges facing language teachers in schools, but it will be a major step forward to giving teachers a level playing field to inspire their students with a love of languages and to promote take-up of language courses and qualifications.

ISMLA: [www.ismla.co.uk](http://www.ismla.co.uk) (especially the Autumn 2011 Newsletter)

ALL London website: [www.all-london.org.uk/severe\\_grading.htm](http://www.all-london.org.uk/severe_grading.htm) has full documentation



Helen Myers is Senior Curriculum Manager at the Ashcombe School, Dorking, Surrey



# Routes into Languages

Routes into Languages is a consortium of universities working together with schools and colleges to enthuse and encourage young people to study languages. We have also published a series of classroom resources which are being used in schools all over the UK.

If you would like to discover more about the project and these resources please visit our website [www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk](http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk)



**Practical resources  
for use in the classroom**





# Collaborative working in languages at Routes into Languages Cymru

Ellie Jones reports on the Routes into Languages programme in Wales

**T**he Cymru consortium joined the Routes into Languages family in 2009 when the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) agreed to commit funding for three years in order to support MFL as a Subject of Broader Importance to Wales<sup>1</sup>. Different to the set-up in the English consortia, Routes Cymru is led by CILT Cymru which works in partnership with 11 partner HEIs (Bangor University, Glyndwr University, Aberystwyth University, University of Wales, Trinity Saint David, Swansea University, Swansea Metropolitan University, Cardiff University, Cardiff Metropolitan University, The Open University, University of Glamorgan and University of Wales, Newport). Through these collaborations, Routes Cymru encourages young people to have a positive attitude towards their language learning and promotes languages as an essential skill.

Promoting the opportunities to study and travel abroad is something that Routes Cymru has prioritised since the beginning of the project. Using Student Language Ambassadors (SLAs) to tell their stories has proved just as successful in Wales as in England and pupils relish any opportunity to interact with our SLAs. A DVD capturing their stories has also been produced. Working with Media Production students at the University of Glamorgan, our Student Language Ambassadors shared their experiences about having studied or worked abroad with the Erasmus and Leonardo student mobility schemes. The DVD has been sent to all secondary schools in Wales and the clips can also be

watched on the Routes Cymru YouTube channel<sup>2</sup>.

It has been important for Routes Cymru to reach further than school pupils. In order to attempt to change attitudes towards foreign languages and to highlight them as a key skill for employability, we have held Saturday events for parents, community family fun days and we have also attended a number of national and international festivals. Our annual Languages:Your passport to success event, hosted by Cardiff University, gives parents/guardians, teachers, careers advisers and pupils the opportunity to hear from a number of key speakers. These include university staff representing the languages and careers departments, Student Language Ambassadors and local business speakers. Together their presentations show the importance of foreign language skills for the workplace and also the wider benefits on a personal level.

We feel that it is important to show young people the relevance of their foreign language skills. This is why we have put a strong focus on careers with languages. As a team we deliver careers talks in schools and endeavour to invite a business speaker to all of our conferences. Our 2012 Wales, Europe & the World conference followed the theme of 'languages and the world of work'. On the day, 300 young people from across South Wales attended sessions which linked their language skills to the workplace.

In order to reinforce our messages and to support teachers and careers advisers, we have produced a number of free

resources<sup>3</sup>. Our useful phrases postcards are popular at careers fairs, as are the I love languages...do you? characters. Our Languages:Your passport to success flyer that is aimed at year 9 pupils, and the Opportunities for language learning – a guide for students and parents booklet also provide important information. Our most recent resource is Go Global. This is a board game in which players must collect reasons to learn a foreign language. As players travel around the board, they also learn about how their foreign language skills might be useful in various real-life situations such as travelling abroad with work or helping with other school subjects. A free copy of the game has been given to all secondary schools across the country and will be used as another tool to promote language learning.

Routes Cymru has strengthened the language network between HEIs in Wales. It has helped HEIs connect with secondary school teachers and pupils and has created brand new links with Welsh businesses. The response to our events and resources shows us that even in this short time, Routes Cymru has already begun to make an impact.

[www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/cymru](http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/cymru)  
[routescymru@ciltcymru.org.uk](mailto:routescymru@ciltcymru.org.uk)

<sup>1</sup> Phase 1 funding started in August 2009 and is due to end in July 2012  
<sup>2</sup> [www.youtube.com/user/RoutesCymru](http://www.youtube.com/user/RoutesCymru)  
<sup>3</sup> All resources produced by Routes Cymru are available in Welsh and English

Ellie Jones is Project Manager at Routes Cymru







## Llwybrau at Ieithoedd Cymru

**F**e wnaeth consortiwm Cymru ymuno â theulu Llwybrau at Ieithoedd Cymru yn 2009, pan gytunodd Cyngor Cyllido Addysg Uwch Cymru (CCAUC) i roi cyllid am dair blynedd er mwyn cefnogi Ieithoedd Tramor Modern fel Pwnc o Bwysigrwydd Ehangach i Gymru<sup>4</sup>. Mae Llwybrau Cymru yn wahanol i gonsortia Lloegr; gan ei fod yn cael ei arwain gan CILT Cymru, sy'n cydweithio ag 11 Sefydliad Addysg Uwch sy'n bartneriaid iddyn nhw (Prifysgol Bangor, Prifysgol Glyndwr, Prifysgol Aberystwyth, Prifysgol Cymru, y Drindod Dewi Sant, Prifysgol Abertawe, Prifysgol Fetropolitan Abertawe, Prifysgol Caerdydd, Prifysgol Fetropolitan Caerdydd, y Brifysgol Agored, Prifysgol Morgannwg a Phrifysgol Cymru, Casnewydd). Drwy'r cydweithio hwn, mae Llwybrau Cymru yn annog pobl ifanc i gael agwedd gadarnhaol tuag at ddysgu ieithoedd, ac mae'n hyrwyddo ieithoedd fel sgil hanfodol.

Mae hyrwyddo cyfleoedd i astudio a theithio dramor yn rhywbeth sydd wedi cael blaenoriaeth gan Llwybrau Cymru ers dechrau'r prosiect. Mae defnyddio Llysgenhadon iaith i adrodd eu storiâu wedi bod yr un mor llwyddiannus yng Nghymru ag y bu yn Lloegr; ac mae disgyblion yn gwerthfawrogi unrhyw gyfle i ryngweithio gyda'n Llysgenhadon. Yn ogystal, mae DVD wedi cael ei gynhyrchu i ddangos eu storiâu. Drwy weithio gyda myfyrwyr Cynhyrchu'r Cyfryngau ym Mhrifysgol Morgannwg, mae ein Llysgenhadon iaith wedi rhannu eu profiadau o astudio neu weithio dramor drwy Erasmus a Leonardo, y cynlluniau symudedd myfyrwyr. Mae'r DVD wedi cael ei anfon i bob ysgol uwchradd yng Nghymru, a gellir gwyllo'r clipiau ar sianel YouTube Llwybrau Cymru<sup>5</sup>.

Roedd yn bwysig fod Llwybrau Cymru yn ymestyn ymhellach na disgyblion ysgol. Er mwyn ceisio newid agweddau tuag at Ieithoedd tramor; a'u hamlygu fel sgil allweddol o ran cyflogadwydd, rydym wedi cynnal digwyddiadau ar ddydd Sadwrn i rieni, diwrnodau hwyl teuluol i gymunedau, ac rydym hefyd wedi bod yn bresennol mewn nifer o wyliau cenedlaethol a rhyngwladol. Mae ein digwyddiad blynyddol, Ieithoedd: Eich Llwybr at Lwyddiant, sy'n cael ei gynnal ym Mhrifysgol Caerdydd, yn rhoi cyfle i rieni/gofalwyr, athrawon, ymgynghorwyr gyrfaoedd a disgyblion glywed gan nifer o siaradwyr allweddol. Mae'r rhain yn cynnwys staff y brifysgol sy'n cynrychioli'r adrannau iaith a gyrfaoedd, Llysgenhadon iaith a siaradwyr o fusnesau lleol. Gyda'i gilydd, mae eu cyflwyniadau yn dangos pwysigrwydd sgiliau iaith dramor yn y gweithle, ynghyd â'r buddiannau ehangach ar lefel bersonol.

Rydym yn teimlo ei bod yn bwysig dangos i bobl ifanc pa mor berthnasol yw eu sgiliau ieithoedd tramor. Dyna pam ein bod ni wedi rhoi llawer o sylw ar yrfaoedd gydag ieithoedd. Fel tîm, rydym yn cyflwyno sgwrsiau gyrfa mewn ysgolion, ac yn ceisio ein gorau i wahodd siaradwr o fyd busnes i'n holl gynadleddau. Roedd ein cynhadledd Cymru, Ewrop a'r Byd yn 2012 wedi ei seilio ar thema 'ieithoedd a byd gwaith'. Ar y diwrnod, bu 300 o bobl ifanc o bob rhan o dde Cymru mewn sesiynau a oedd yn cysylltu eu sgiliau iaith gyda'r gweithle.

Er mwyn atgyfnerthu ein negeseuon, ac er mwyn cefnogi athrawon ac ymgynghorwyr gyrfa, rydym wedi llunio nifer o adnoddau am ddim<sup>6</sup>. Mae ein cardiau post ymadroddion defnyddiol yn boblogaidd mewn ffefuriau gyrfaoedd, yn yr un modd â'r cymeriadau Rydw i'n

hoffi ieithoedd... wyt ti? Mae ein taflen Ieithoedd: Eich Llwybr at Lwyddiant, sydd wedi ei hanelu at ddisgyblion blwyddyn 9, a llyfryn Cyfleoedd i ddysgu ieithoedd - canllaw i fyfyrwyr a rhieni hefyd yn darparu gwybodaeth bwysig. Ein hadnodd diweddaraf yw Taith Iaith. Gêm fwrdd yw hon, lle mae'n rhaid i chwaraewyr gasglu rhesymau dros ddysgu iaith dramor. Wrth i chwaraewyr deithio o amgylch y bwrdd, maen nhw hefyd yn dysgu sut y gallai sgiliau ieithoedd tramor fod yn ddefnyddiol mewn sefyllfaoedd amrywiol yn y byd go iawn, fel teithio dramor gyda'r gwaith neu helpu gyda phynciau eraill yn yr ysgol. Mae copi wedi cael ei roi am ddim i bob ysgol uwchradd ledled y wlad, a bydd yn cael ei ddefnyddio fel arf arall i hyrwyddo dysgu ieithoedd.

Mae Llwybrau Cymru wedi cryfhau'r rhwydwaith ieithoedd rhwng Sefydliadau Addysg Uwch yng Nghymru. Y mae wedi helpu Sefydliadau Addysg Uwch i gysylltu ag athrawon ysgol uwchradd ac wedi creu cysylltiadau newydd sbon gyda busnesau o Gymru. Mae'r ymateb i'n digwyddiadau a'n hadnoddau wedi dangos fod Llwybrau Cymru wedi dechrau cael effaith yn barod, hyd yn oed yn ystod y cyfnod byr hwn.

[www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/cymru](http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/cymru)  
[routescymru@ciltcymru.org.uk](mailto:routescymru@ciltcymru.org.uk)

<sup>4</sup> Dechreuodd cyllid Cam 1 ym mis Awst 2009, a disgwyliar iddo ddod i ben ym mis Gorffennaf 2012.  
<sup>5</sup> [www.youtube.com/user/RoutesCymru](http://www.youtube.com/user/RoutesCymru)  
<sup>6</sup> Mae'r holl adnoddau sy'n cael eu cynhyrchu gan Llwybrau Cymru ar gael yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg

**Ellie Jones** Rheolwr Prosiect, Llwybrau Cymru





# Theory and practice in vocabulary learning and teaching



Jeanine Treffers-Daller reports on a recent LLAS workshop

In recent years, many specialists in language learning and teaching have rediscovered how important vocabulary is, not only as one of the key drivers of language learning but also for students' academic achievement across a range of subjects. Our understanding of

important in a climate where researchers are keen to ensure their research has impact beyond academic research, for example in classroom practice. The benefits for practitioners are clear: if we want to improve teaching and learning, universities and schools need to work together to

in second language acquisition (SLA) as well as innovative practice in teaching and learning vocabulary. The workshop was attended by 47 specialists of SLA and ELT as well as teachers of MFL in secondary and higher education.

In the first presentation of the day,

**"If we want to improve teaching and learning, universities and schools need to work together to find out what works in the classroom and ensure that interventions in the learning process are evidence-based."**

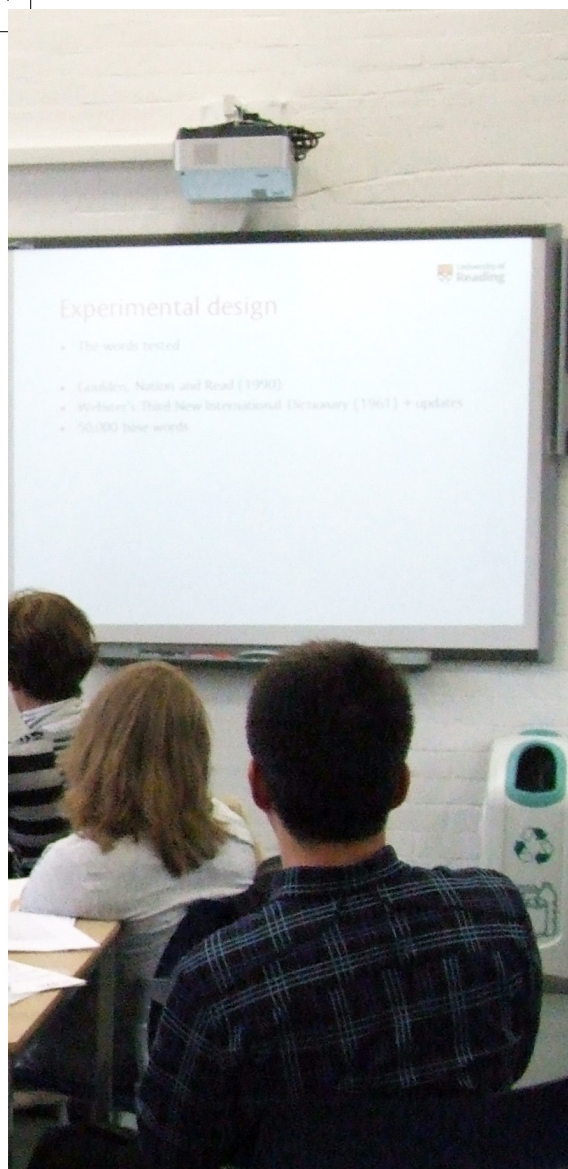
the ways in which we learn words, what kinds of information learners possess about these words and how teachers can help students to learn words has improved enormously over the past 30 years. At the same time, in English Language Teaching (ELT) and Modern Foreign Language (MFL) classrooms, much more attention is being paid to vocabulary teaching and learning. There is, however, a need for more connectivity between those who investigate vocabulary learning and those who teach vocabulary in classrooms. This is particularly

find out what works in the classroom and ensure that interventions in the learning process are evidence-based.

For this reason, the members of the Subject Centre (now LLAS Centre for languages, linguistics and area studies) Specialist Advisory Group for Linguistics organised a workshop: *theory and practice in vocabulary learning and teaching* at the Institute of Education in January 2012. At the meeting, which was sponsored by the Higher Education Academy, researchers and teachers discussed recent findings

Jeanine Treffers-Daller (University of Reading) talked about vocabulary size of native speakers. It is generally assumed that native speakers of English know around 20,000 words (Nation, 2001), where a word is defined as a word family, which means that inflected forms of verbs (work, works, working, worked) and nouns (book, books) as well as derived forms (rework, unworkable etc.) are not considered to be different words, but counted as belonging to one root form. In a recent study, Jim Milton and Jeanine Treffers-Daller (in





prep.) found that undergraduates at three different universities in the UK know far fewer words, namely around 10,000 words only. This has important implications for our understanding of the process of word learning in first and second languages: first of all, the differences in vocabulary size between native speakers and advanced second language learners may not be that large, because highly educated second language learners have been found to know around 8,000-9,000 words (Nation 2006). If this is indeed the case, it is perhaps no longer necessary to assume that the large majority of words are acquired incidentally, i.e. whilst reading or listening; instead, learners may well rely mainly on explicit vocabulary learning.

Ana Pelicer-Sanchez (University of Nottingham) demonstrated in her presentation how we can obtain new insights into the differences between explicit and incidental acquisition of vocabulary from an experimental design using psycholinguistic measures. She

compared the automaticity and speed of lexical access in explicit and implicit learning approaches using e-prime to measure reaction times. While students learnt words under both conditions, clear evidence for the advantages of explicit vocabulary teaching were found. Ana also provided exciting new evidence regarding the number of times learners need to see unknown words before they can read these as fast as words they know already: she used eye-tracking to show that it is only after having seen a new word eight times that learners read new words as fast as known words.

Suzanne Graham (University of Reading) concurred that students need to be taught vocabulary explicitly, but emphasised that learners often do not know how to learn effectively. Therefore many learners continue to rely mainly on one strategy: 'look, cover, write/say, check'. Without explicit instruction in vocabulary learning strategies, learners do not develop a wider range of strategies, but there is not a lot of guidance for tutors regarding the best ways to teach strategy use. Suzanne provided examples of a range of effective vocabulary learning strategies that are being used in the classroom and concluded that practice, evaluation and action planning as well as feedback from the teacher on strategy use are key to learners' success. Increased use of effective learner strategies may also have positive effects on students' motivation to learn foreign languages.

Finally, two MFL teachers showed how they teach vocabulary in the classroom. Margarita Edney (Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre, Reading) illustrated how explicit teaching and modelling of language learner strategies to memorise vocabulary in French improved performance in vocabulary tests. Students were not always aware that learning strategies had been instrumental in their progress although it was clear they had enjoyed trying out a range of strategies.

Sarah Rae from the Willink School in Reading reported on her use of a Content-Language-Integrated-Language Learning (CLIL) approach to teach French to a year seven group, and showed a lively video clip of the learners to the audience. She noted that the advantage of this immersion approach is that students learn to talk about "meanings that matter", which helps to motivate students to learn foreign languages.

In the final discussion, the participants reflected on how researchers and teachers can work together to develop a common research agenda in vocabulary learning and teaching. One of the points raised was the need to develop longitudinal studies of vocabulary learning. We know very little about the long term effects of interventions in this area. In this context, the issue of vocabulary attrition also seemed important to the participants: a study of what learners forget is of course key to developing an understanding of the best ways to further vocabulary retention. With respect to research methodologies, we discussed the need to carefully select the vocabulary under study, for example by focusing on either nouns or verbs and controlling for the frequency of the items. Otherwise it remains unclear to which of the myriad of factors that could potentially have influenced the learning process the results should be attributed. The participants also felt that it was important for researchers and teachers to develop ways of working together and that workshops such as these were very useful in furthering such connectivity.

For more information on the event see: [www.llas.ac.uk/events/archive/6416](http://www.llas.ac.uk/events/archive/6416)

**Jeanine Treffers-Daller** is Professor of Second Language Education at the Institute of Education University of Reading



# Attitudes to use of L1 and translation in second language teaching and learning

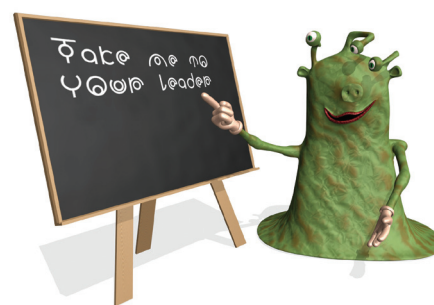
Can translation play a useful role in learning and teaching a second language?  
**Michael Druce** reports on the findings of recent research.

**M**any second language teaching theories have, over the last several decades, largely ignored the function of translation, as a reaction against the grammar-translation method and the prevalence of the 'communicative approach'. This has been particularly apparent in the academic and professional literature pertaining to applied linguistics. The reasons appear to have been principally (i) pedagogic (dull and demotivating), (ii) cognitive (prevents successful language acquisition and processing), (iii) practical (not relevant to the real world).

More recently, several authors, whilst reviewing the pros and cons, have argued cogently for a reevaluation of the use of the L1 and translation in language teaching, particularly in the context of bilingualism

circumstances. In brief:

- almost all (87%) of respondents claim to be aware of the debate
- fully 69% disagree that the Direct Method is the most appropriate technique, and 86% agree that carefully planned translation activities can play a useful role in the L2 communicative classroom
- the issue of re-introducing translation topics into language teaching textbooks produced evenly divided opinion
- even though 61% do try to minimise use of the L1 as a matter of principle, 85% believe that learners mentally translate, and 83% agree to using an 'eclectic' approach to language teaching, preferably taught by bilingual teachers
- 73% agree that translation encourages



restricting free mode of expression, building learner self-confidence and personality type.

Over half of respondents rejected the concept of translation as a 'fifth skill', with only a tentative majority for its role in complementing the four skills, but a clear majority seeing it as amenable to oral discussion. Similarly, while broadly rejected on a semantic level, 82% approved of translation as a contrastive analysis tool. Free comments on many issues including that of 'cultural mediation', and personal interviews, provided a rich source of opinions and viewpoints, for subsequent reporting. The results firmly suggest the time is ripe to put use of L1 and translation back onto the language teaching agenda.

## "More recently, several authors...have argued cogently for a re-evaluation of the use of the L1 and translation in language teaching"

and 'interculturality'. In view of the paucity of empirical data, a questionnaire survey based on five-point agree/disagree Likert scales was distributed online to language practitioners in the UK, Europe, and beyond, in order to probe many of the contentious issues. Additionally, a number of personal interviews were conducted. Completed questionnaires were received from 126 respondents (50 UK, 76 outside the UK), having an average of 22 years' teaching experience (two thirds more than 20 years), and many occupying senior positions across a wide range of public/private organisations and institutions.

The findings, whilst highlighting the wide diversity of individual opinions, nevertheless indicate, perhaps surprisingly, a considerable degree of overall support for judicious use of L1 and translation in appropriate

L1/L2 code switching

- those expressing a view indicated a clear pro-translation majority for issues relating to collaborative learning, developing mental/verbal agility, acquiring transferable skills, not wasting class time, helping discover expressive powers of the L1, helping build reflective language consciousness, providing insights into the structural specificity of language, precision and accuracy
- the notion of translation as being too academic, boring, only suitable for literary/scientific texts or only for training professional translators was firmly rebutted, whilst opinions were divided regarding management/organisational constraints, preventing learners from thinking in the L2,

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**Dr Michael Druce** is an MA TESOL student at the University of Westminster





# ULAB: The Undergraduate Linguistics Society of Britain

David Arnold writes about this newly formed undergraduate society.



Last January, Edinburgh University's Linguistics & English Language Society wanted to develop links with linguistics students in other universities. We searched for a national undergraduate linguistics group but soon realised there was a gap to fill: ULAB was born.

ULAB is entirely student run and aims to:

- hold annual conferences showcasing undergraduate research in language science
- be a network hub for undergraduates and societies
- bridge gaps between students and professional institutions/organisations.

Last March we hosted our first conference with 50 delegates representing several UK universities with presentations covering a range of sub-disciplines.

Feedback was positive. Students were glad to be given opportunities to develop public speaking, event management and peer review skills, which they feel are rare for undergraduates.

We are pleased that the conference has continued this year at

the University of the West of England at Bristol, on 14/15 April.

David Crystal, our patron, gave the opening presentation. We are grateful to LAGB for providing funding to support the event.

Another major project for ULAB is to help promote linguistic enquiry to young people by developing presentations and activities; for this we are liaising with the UK Linguistics Olympiad (see Liaison March 2011).

We would love to hear from students who would like to get involved in ULAB or would like help starting a linguistics society at their university.

ULAB contact: [linguistic.students@gmail.com](mailto:linguistic.students@gmail.com)

2012 conference enquiries: [ulabbristol@gmail.com](mailto:ulabbristol@gmail.com)

Website: [lingstudents.co.uk](http://lingstudents.co.uk)

David Arnold is Chair of ULAB and is currently studying for an MA (Hons) in Linguistics at the University of Edinburgh



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**"The pedagogy behind the LOC helps to ensure best practice in materials design...Using the LOC has...increased my understanding of effective online learning material."**

Carole MacDiarmid, University of Glasgow

# Integrating current events into language learning and teaching: examples from elementary Arabic

Jeremy Palmer describes how the events of the Arab Spring can be used to teach Arabic language.

**T**he ongoing events of the Arab Spring provide a myriad of opportunities to breathe life into Arabic language learning and teaching, even at the elementary level.

Experienced language teachers know the appeal and motivational potential of authentic examples (realia) that explore contemporary life in the Arab street. The challenges these teachers face consist of locating level-appropriate material and considerations about how to integrate them into a sometimes rigid curriculum.

The events commonly referred to as the Arab Spring have been written about and discussed at length. The many placards, songs, sayings, video clips and more seen in the written and visual media provide abundant language learning opportunities for learners of Arabic. In addition to linguistic features, cultural learning prospects via this same media coverage are boundless.

This article presents information about authentic media realia related to the events of the Arab Spring. Such realia could supplement textbook chapters that contain matching vocabulary items and grammatical principles. Of course this takes time for teachers, but the reward may be more motivated students. Another idea would be to assign students to find examples of such realia that complement what they are learning. There is no systematic or empirical approach to how the few examples were collected, for that is not the point. The purpose is to discuss how vocabulary, grammatical structures, and cultural content seen in the media can be incorporated into existing elementary Arabic curricula.

Vocabulary building is essential in learning foreign languages. Elementary Arabic textbooks generally have chapters in which there is a list of vocabulary words to be memorized. Although this approach seems natural and appears to be accepted as a norm, students may have an immediate need to know more vocabulary than is listed in the current chapter of study. Certainly students at the elementary level will not understand much of what they come across. There are, however, some slogans, videos, and other potential language learning materials that are widespread and frequently heard. Understanding these linguistic and cultural insights may be very rewarding to students learning Arabic at a time of rapid social and political change. See Photo 1 for example.



Photo 1: Dr Muhammad Eissa

In Photo 1 from the revolution in Egypt, there are many lexical items that could be included in Elementary Arabic. For example, the popular textbook *Al-Kitaab Part 1* (3rd edition) shares the following words (or roots) and phrases with this photo: *miSrii* (Egyptian), *ana kunt hunaa* (I was here), *miSr awalan* (Egypt first), along with the Hindu-Arabic numerals for the number 25 in the date (January 25, 2011).

Photo 1 also includes numerous grammatical principles found in *Al-Kitaab Part 1* (hereafter AKI). For example, the possessive *iDaafa* construct is represented in the phrase *miidaan al-shuhidaa* (Martyr's square). It is true that these words may not usually be introduced in Elementary Arabic, but due to the media coverage and events in the Middle East, teachers may find it a relevant example.

Another example is the *nisba* adjective in the phrase *irfa'a raasak, anta miSrii* (raise your head, you are Egyptian). One of the aspects of the *nisba* adjective is to show affiliation to country. Students in Elementary Arabic learn about this adjective in the first few chapters of AKI. This phrase also contains an imperative (raise). The imperative is not introduced formally in AKI, though



“The images and other media from the Arab Spring revolutions can teach learners more about the language and cultures of the Middle East in a timely and interesting manner.”

many teachers use it to give orders to students (stand up, sit down, speak, open, close, write etc.) thus it could be a useful example, especially for young learners and teachers using teaching methodologies that employ physical movement.

Aside from grammar and vocabulary many teachers these days feel that

‘to want.’ In AKI students learn the verb patterns and forms. Students also learn the past and present tense of the hollow verb ‘to want,’ thus this slogan is well suited for their level of proficiency and learning.

In addition to images, many slogans were used among demonstrators throughout the Arab world. The blog [www.Angryarab.com](http://www.Angryarab.com)

the Middle East in a timely and interesting manner:

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Yemenis hold loaves of bread reading 'Leave' in Arabic during a protest against the regime of President Saleh in Sanaa on March 6, a day president vowed to stay on until 2013.



Photo 2

language and culture are inseparable. Photo 1 could be used to discuss the issue of renewed pride among Egyptians for their country and their aspirations for freedom

### Photo 2: [www.foreignpolicy.com](http://www.foreignpolicy.com)

In this example, Photo 2, Yemeni men are holding baked bread with the slogans: *irHal* (get out) and *al-sha'b yuriid isqaaT al-niTHaam* (the people want the downfall of the government). The latter slogan has spread like wild fire across the Arab world and is important for students to know. It comes from a poem by the Tunisian *Al-Shaabii*. Interestingly, this sentence contains the important word mentioned above, 'people', as well as the *iDaafa* construct 'the downfall of the regime' as well as a Form IV hollow verb in the present tense

[blogspot.com](http://blogspot.com) has numerous such slogans. Here are three:

“Leave, leave, leave, for good, let our country see the light”

ارحل ارحل ارحل غور خلي بلدنا تشوف النور

“Change, change, leave, leave, you contemptible (person)”

التغيير التغيير ارحل ارحل يا حقير

“Liberation, liberation, from rule by the gang of fraud”

التحرير التحرير من حكم عصابة التزوير

There are a great many such images, slogans, and more available around the Internet. Such realia has the potential to breathe life into the curriculum, even at the elementary Arabic level. In conclusion the images and other media from the Arab Spring revolutions can teach learners more about the language and cultures of

Dr Jeremy Palmer is Assistant Professor at the Department of Arabic and Translation Studies at the American University of Sharjah



# Do me a **FAVOR!** Recognition and reward for hourly paid language tutors in a new JISC project

Kate Borthwick explores the work of the FAVOR project in a series of interviews.

**L**AS has long been aware that much of the work of teaching languages in universities is increasingly done by part-time or hourly-paid tutors. Due to intensive teaching schedules, such tutors often find it difficult to engage in the academic life of their institutions, pursue professional development or raise their professional profiles. The JISC-funded FAVOR (Find a Voice through Open Resources) project is addressing this issue through engagement with open practice by encouraging part-time/hourly-paid tutors to publish both existing teaching resources as open content as well as designing new resources to assist prospective students in understanding the

## “Tutors appreciate the benefits of sharing their work.”

nature of language study at HE level. All resources will be available for download and re-use by others and will be disseminated to schools to be evaluated by prospective and existing students.

The project is a collaboration between five institutions: the Universities of Aston, Newcastle and Southampton, UCL SSEES and SOAS. I caught up with some of the project partners to find out more about why they became involved in the project.



**Julie Watson**, Principal Teaching Fellow in eLearning, Modern Languages, University of Southampton:

### What motivated tutors to take part?

Tutors appreciate the benefits of sharing their work. They report that being able to access and use the work of others has helped in their own teaching and motivated them to try out new approaches in their classes. The idea of finding and exchanging ideas in a neutral space, beyond the boundaries of one institution or department has been appealing. Also, the act of preparing materials for sharing has encouraged them to reflect on their own practice and how they can improve their teaching and improve technical skills. They feel proud of working on materials to be shared openly with others and feel that this material is really ‘theirs’.



**Angela Morris**, Schools Liaison Officer, Aston University:

### How will tutors at Aston be involved in the project?

The team at Aston University is developing a series of online, ‘bite-sized’ ‘transition resources’ to support language students in the move from school to university. Working with undergraduate students and language staff, we have identified six key areas where we felt students would benefit from support, advice and guidance, and worked to develop resources for each area, in French, Spanish and German as follows: dictionary skills, research skills, reading skills, note-taking skills, academic writing and referencing. Our students are creating voice-over recordings for each resource to widen their appeal to Sixth Form students. The voice-overs are recorded as informal chats between students as they talk through each stage of the resource, bringing in their personal experiences of language learning and using these key skills.



**Marta Jenkala**, Senior Teaching Fellow in Ukrainian, UCL School of Slavonic & East European Studies:

### Did tutors have concerns about becoming involved in an open content project?

After initial doubts as to the open sharing of resources were discussed (and dispelled), all embraced the opportunity to create and publish resources in a new way. Perhaps the most important argument in setting minds at rest regarding the open nature of the resources was that, if they were created, right from the start, with the intention that they would be shared and re-purposed as necessary (in accordance with the appropriate licence), their creators would not feel that their work was being exploited in an unfamiliar way.

**Kate Borthwick** is Academic Coordinator for e-learning at LLAS





# What are the best mobile apps for language learning?

**T**he creation of mobile apps for language learning is a fast-growing and fast-changing area. This article is informed by a review of language learning apps carried out with Paul Sweeney of Eduworlds <http://eduworlids.co.uk>. We reviewed over 100 of the 1000+ language learning apps available via Apple's App Store and the Android Marketplace. Most of these apps are poor, often crude flashcardbased routines designed by developers with little knowledge of language teaching; however, more useful material is gradually being created by publishers.

## Productivity and reference apps

The most useful category for language learners is the "productivity" app including reference tools such as dictionaries, word processors, presentation tools, mind mapping tools and eReaders available on the main smartphone platforms. Apps such as Kindle allow readers to use a foreign language dictionary and annotate the text. Buying both monolingual and bilingual dictionary apps published by mainstream publishers is preferable to the many free or low cost but inferior dictionary apps. A personal favourite is Dixel's *Le Robert* (£3.99).

## Learning apps

Two of the most popular apps are published by Busuu.com and Mind Snacks. These are attractive apps in a wide range of languages and offer free sample content and then cost around £2.50 for a full version. But both rely excessively on translation; Busuu comes with a fairly limited range of activities, while *Mindsnacks* is a vocab learning app with a gaming approach that can get in the way of effective language learning.

Another source of useful apps for language learners are educational apps intended for native speakers, e.g. apps to help French schoolchildren practise grammar/spelling ([www.iTooch.com](http://www.iTooch.com)).

## Some tips on finding good apps for language learning

- A good way to find foreign language apps is to visit the various national Apple App stores on iTunes and then search the 'Education and Reference' categories.
- (Latin American) Spanish is well served, with many apps published in the USA for English speakers, e.g. Red River Press's *Spanish Conversation* ([www.redriverpress.com](http://www.redriverpress.com)).
- For German, upper elementary and upwards, Cornelsen's Lextra Vocab Trainer helps students learn the most frequent 4000 words in German, see [www.cornelsen.de/mobile/I.c.2266167.de](http://www.cornelsen.de/mobile/I.c.2266167.de). This is also available in other languages.
- ESOL: The British Council publishes free apps for both Apple and Android devices: <http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/mobile-learning>. Advanced learners should consider UCL's *iGrammar of English* [www.ucl.ac.uk/internet-grammar](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/internet-grammar).
- *Pronunciation Tutor* (USA) uses the iPhone's camera to help learners film themselves pronouncing a word in comparison to a model (<http://pronunciationtutor.me>).
- There are many exam practice apps, particularly for IELTS, and publishers to look out for are Red River Press and Knowledge Transmission ([www.knowledgetransmission.com](http://www.knowledgetransmission.com)).

## The future

Mobile app publishing is challenging both technically and commercially, and this has deterred publishers from investing in app development. We can expect to see much more from both established educational publishers and from the "edutainment" sector. Mobile language games have great potential to motivate students to persist in language learning, but language teaching professionals have an important role in helping their students identify resources with real educational value.



**Caroline Moore** is Director of the technology consultancy company Constellata Ltd [www.constellata.com](http://www.constellata.com), and Co-Founder of LearnAhead, which recently published its first iPhone App "Word Carrot".

## Where are they now?

We invited a number of languages graduates who have contributed to previous editions of **Liaison** to tell us what they are doing now.

*Siobhan Mills*

### Where my languages degree has taken me...



I graduated from the University of Southampton in July 2011 with a BA Honours Degree in French Linguistic Studies. I thoroughly enjoyed every aspect of my degree with my year abroad probably being the highlight (although I can't actually pick just one moment!). With the end in sight, I decided to start exploring my options for after graduation.

I had always toyed with the idea of a career in law, but wanted to pursue my love of languages for my degree. In my final year, I undertook some legal work experience and really enjoyed it, especially considering how international a legal career could be. I looked into doing the Graduate Diploma Law (GDL), which is the one-year law conversion course if you have already completed your undergraduate degree, and applied to the College of Law in Birmingham.

I got a place on the course starting in September 2011. I was really delighted and it felt great to have a post-university plan in place. It was tempting to take a year and go travelling, however, I felt that I wanted to finish all my studies first – especially with the rising tuition fees amongst everything else. As my year abroad had given me a great experience of meeting new people and discovering the culture of a foreign country, I thought it was time I focused on my career. I spent the summer researching more about a legal career and it soon became apparent that foreign languages were a much sought after skill in graduates, and something which really makes you

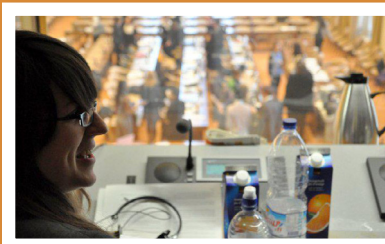
stand out from others.

I moved up to Birmingham in September and I had to take a suitcase to College on my first day to fit all my books in! It was really easy to meet people and make friends with others on the course and it is very diverse in terms of universities people attended and undergraduate degrees they studied.

My languages degree has really helped me to get to where I am now. The College of Law takes part in a French exchange programme to Lyon, and in July each year four students are selected to work in a law firm and experience the working culture and environment and communicate in French. I was fortunate enough to be chosen and without a doubt my French degree and year abroad stood out on my CV. I have also started Mandarin classes this year as a new challenge and just knowing another language (even though there's nothing similar between French and Mandarin), has really helped me get to grips with learning Mandarin.

My French degree has also played a role in securing a legal career. I will join an international law firm upon completion of my current studies and my fluency in French, adaptability and the interpersonal skills I gained from my degree were important skills which enabled me to secure and start my legal career.

My languages degree has opened a lot of doors and I have chosen just one of them, but there are many more that having a languages degree may take you through.



*Gemma Brown*

After graduating from my languages and European Studies degree in 2010, I took a Masters in Interpreting and Translation at the University of Bath. My year abroad was in Italy but I'm now living in Belgium, working as a conference interpreter in Brussels, the heart of the European Union. I interpret from French and Italian into English and hope to start learning Dutch soon. Interpreting is high-pressure but exhilarating, tough but rewarding. It must be one of the most exciting ways to use languages. I'm surrounded by other nationalities and languages every day in this international city. It's wonderful!







### Adam Lenton

This year I've made some decisions to change my degree, and I've started another language – Japanese – since I found it rewarding after having studied Russian from scratch. I've also taken up some International Relations modules in order to be better placed for postgraduate study since I'm interested in Russian area studies. Travelling in Ukraine earlier this year was a fantastic learning experience since I had previously never been to Eastern Europe. I am now looking into options for studying Ukrainian at a summer school. In September I will be studying for one year at Kazan State University in Russia.

“Not only am I now working to inspire chatty teenagers to love languages, but the confidence that I gained from my year abroad and my open mindedness has also helped me to create happy working relationships and gain jobs that the 18-year-old shy me would never have dared to apply for!”



### Rosie Shimmin

After having written about the stereotypes of language graduates, guess what...I am learning to be a German and French teacher! So far Year 10 have done a German fitness video, whilst Year 8 have discussed the West Country's answer to Justin Bieber. Having only done French to GCSE I could only get a place on the PGCE if I did a French Extension course. I spent the summer in London, learning French from scratch with 19 other hopeful teacher wannabes. Not only were we given an allowance, but the course also included a two week French trip where we lived, breathed and ate French. What an opportunity! And now I can teach French to year 9!

Although I am now surrounded by marking, assignments and lesson planning, I did have a life before starting the PGCE. After finishing my degree I went to Switzerland and worked on a Summer Camp teaching German and leading outdoor activities. From there I moved to Berlin and did a 3 month internship funded by the Leonardo Da Vinci Scheme. Anyone can apply to do one of these internships and a language course is provided, but my language skills definitely helped. I then moved back up to Carlisle and worked in a café. Even in Carlisle I used my German to chat to customers, and it paid off when I looked in the tip dish at the end of my shift. Languages have clearly had a huge

influence on my choices since graduating. Not only am I now working to inspire chatty teenagers to love languages, but the confidence that I gained from my year abroad and my open mindedness has also helped me to create happy working relationships and gain jobs that the 18-year-old shy me would never have dared to apply for!

get a taste for languages

# A Taste of Chinese

Chinese is one of the world's oldest extant languages. Perhaps its most distinctive feature is the non-alphabetic script: Chinese characters. There are plentiful oracle bone texts with identifiable Chinese characters dating back to 1200 BCE, and there are tantalising pottery marks, which could be proto-characters, dating back much earlier, to 2500 BCE and beyond.



**W**e should first distinguish between the written and spoken languages. There are numerous dialects of Chinese, many mutually incomprehensible, but the written language, which is essentially the same regardless of dialect, has been a unifying force throughout Chinese history. Koreans and Japanese adopted the Chinese script and could communicate in writing with Chinese people in spite of their very different spoken languages. Chinese government policy, modern communications and labour mobility are all promoting the development of a single standard spoken language based on the dialect of Beijing. In mainland China this is called *putonghua* (common language), in Taiwan *guoyu* (national language), and in

Britain Mandarin (because it was used by officials in traditional China), though now increasingly it is just called 'Chinese'.

Chinese has been described in UK government publications as 'a minority language', 'a hard language' and 'a strategically important and vulnerable subject'. Only the last of these is objectively true. Far from being a minority language, Chinese has more native speakers than any other. Also, it is more accurate to call Chinese a 'distant' language in relation to English than a 'hard' language. When we learn 'near' European languages we rely on the fact that up to 70% of vocabulary is shared with English to ease the burden of vocabulary learning. For native English speakers Chinese has virtually no shared vocabulary, unlike the situation for native Korean or Japanese speakers, for whom

Chinese is a 'near' language with a large shared vocabulary.

The grammar of Chinese is straightforward: think of a language like German or French, then think of English, and then go a stage further. There are neither declensions nor genders for nouns, no conjugations and tenses for verbs, no plural forms, no adjectival agreement, just a basic subject-verb-object order and the rule that modifier precedes modified. Hence adjectives come before nouns, adverbs and adverbial phrases before verbs, and relative clauses do not exist. Nouns are basically uncountable, like 'milk' or 'luggage' in English and so require measure words when used with numbers or 'this' and 'that'. Particles, called 'empty words' in Chinese, fulfil some of the functions of inflection in other languages.





get a taste for languages

我 买 书。  
Wǒ mǎi shū  
I buy book.

我 昨天 在 书店 里 买到 了老师 上 个 星期 推荐 的 那  
Wǒ zuótiān zài shūdiàn lǐ mǎidào le lǎoshī shàng ge xīngqī tuījiàn de nà  
I yesterday at bookshop inside buy arrive P teacher last M week recommend P that  
I managed to buy yesterday in the bookshop the book that the teacher recommended

本 书。  
**běn shū.**  
M book.  
last week.

Here 了 'le' is a particle denoting completed action, 的 'de' is subordinating particle, and 个 'ge' and 本 'běn' are measure words for 'week' and 'book' respectively.

**"The computer has transformed the handling of the Chinese script, which is now almost as easy as typing in English."**

Phonetically Chinese is not difficult for a native English speaker, apart from the issue of tones. This is the second distinctive feature of Chinese. Each sound can be pronounced in four different tones, plus neutral, in Standard Modern Chinese. These are conventionally indicated in romanised Chinese as: mā má mǎ mà. The tone concept is not totally alien to English: we might say 'Who?' with a rising inflection, similar to a second tone in Chinese, or a firm 'No!' similar to a fourth tone in Chinese. However, in Chinese this applies to all words, and many Westerners find it difficult to hear the tones and reproduce them. In context the meaning is often clear, in spite of tonal errors, but such errors certainly can affect understanding. A friend's landlady asked her what she wanted to eat. 'Mián' (cotton) she replied,







# studying languages at university

New website

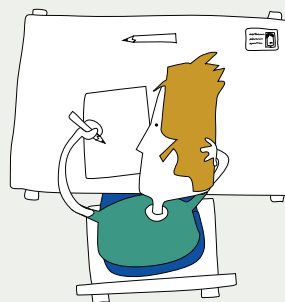
5 reasons to visit: [www.studyinglanguages.ac.uk](http://www.studyinglanguages.ac.uk)



1. The site has been **written by students** for students

Find top tips on  
language **study skills**

2.



3. Get advice on your **year abroad** so you're ready to explore the world



Employability  
**after your degree**,  
discover the possibilities

4.



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**LLAS Centre for languages, linguistics and area studies**

School of Humanities  
University of Southampton  
Highfield  
Southampton  
SO17 1BJ

Phone: 023 8059 4814

Fax: 023 8059 4815

Email: [llas@soton.ac.uk](mailto:llas@soton.ac.uk)

Web: [www.llas.ac.uk](http://www.llas.ac.uk)



**Contact us**

**The Higher Education Academy**

Innovation Way  
York Science Park  
Heslington  
York  
YO10 5BR

+44 (0)1904 717500

[enquiries@heacademy.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@heacademy.ac.uk)

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