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McPake, Joanna and Sachdev, Itesh (2008) Community languages in higher education: towards realising the potential. Project Report. Routes into Languages, University of Southampton, Southampton.

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Contents

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AHRB: Arts and Humanities Research Board

AULC: Association of University Language Centres

CETL: Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

DCSF: Department for Children, Schools and Families

DfES: Department for Education and Skills

DPSI: Diploma in Public Service Interpreting and Translation

ESRC: Economic and Social Research Council

GTTR: Graduate Teacher Training Register

HEFCE: Higher Education Funding Council for England

HEI: Higher Education Institution

HESA: Higher Education Statistics Agency

HMI: Her Majesty's Inspectorate

IoL: Institute of Linguistis

ITE: Initial Teacher Education

IWLP: Institution Wide Language Programme

LLAS: Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies

OFFA: Office for Fair Access

Ofsted: Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills

PGCE: Post Graduate Certificate of Education

RLN: Regional Language Network

Scottish CILT: Scottish Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research

SOAS: School of Oriental and African Studies

SSAT: Specialist Schools and Academies Trust

TDA: Training and Development Agency for Schools

UCAS: University and College Application Services

UCL: University College London

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

This study, *Community Languages in Higher Education: Towards Realising the Potential*, forms part of the Routes into Languages initiative funded by the Higher Education Funding Council in England (HEFCE) and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

It sets out to map provision for community languages, defined as 'all languages in use in a society, other than the dominant, official or national language'. In England, where the dominant language is English, some 300 community languages are in use, the most widespread being Urdu, Cantonese, Punjabi, Bengali, Arabic, Turkish, Russian, Spanish, Portuguese, Gujerati, Hindi and Polish.

The research was jointly conducted by the Scottish Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (Scottish CILT) at the University of Stirling, and the SOAS-UCL Centre for Excellence for Teaching and Learning 'Languages of the Wider World' (LWW CETL), between February 2007 and January 2008.

2. Aims

The overall aim of this study was to map provision for community languages in higher education in England and to consider how it can be developed to meet emerging demand for more extensive provision.

3. Background

The history of community languages in England since the 1960s, when policy-makers and education providers first began to address the implications of immigration from Asia and the Caribbean has been one of discrimination and assimilation. While considerable emphasis has been placed on ensuring that immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers living in the UK learn English, there has been less attention to maintenance and development of community languages. This is despite the fact that decades of research point to the benefits of plurilingualism (a person's ability to speak more than one language) for the individual concerned and for multilingual societies. Most recent work on community language learning has focused on provision aimed at children of school age. We believe that this is the first UK study of provision in higher education.

4. Focus

We distinguish community language learning from foreign language learning on the basis of the learner's opportunities to learn the language in question in informal circumstances (in the home, in the community, as a result of time spent living in another country) before beginning formal study, at school or subsequently. We also recognise that community language learners may have different goals – often a wider range of goals – from foreign language learners: in addition to using their community languages to enhance their prospects for careers with an international dimension, in support of further study, or for cultural engagement, community language learners may also be

concerned with developing identities or planning careers with communities who speak the same language, in the UK or elsewhere.

Thus this study does not focus on provision for specific languages in higher education – any language can be a community language if it is in use among people living in the UK – but rather on provision specifically targeting community language learners and geared to their linguistic needs and aspirations.

5. Methods

Methods used in the course of this study included:
- a review of the sources of national statistics to establish what is currently known about provision for community languages, and make recommendations for improved data collection;
- a desk-based survey of provision at each higher education institution (via websites, etc.), with a focus on provision for community languages as degree subjects, in Institution Wide Language Programmes (IWLPs) and any other modular formats;
- a series of interviews with representatives of selected HEI providers concerning the rationale, the nature of the provision, and future plans;
- questionnaires and focus group discussions on meeting stakeholder needs and aspirations.

These data were analysed to set out clearly the range of languages for which provision is made and to describe the nature of this provision: to produce an account of the key factors influencing the development of appropriate provision; and to generate recommendations for HEIs and policy-makers concerned with languages in higher education.

6. Main Findings

6.1 Current provision

Current provision for languages in higher education does not explicitly distinguish between foreign languages (i.e. for students who are either *ab initio* learners with little or no prior experience of the language, or who have studied the language formally at school or college, *ab initio*) and community languages (i.e. for students who have diverse language learning histories, often in informal contexts).

There is currently provision for 81 languages, as degree components or modular courses, in English universities, but most of this is organised for foreign language learners, and community language learners are often discouraged or barred from joining courses on the basis that provision is not suitable for them. There are a small number of modular courses specifically designed for community language learners.

There are no degree courses in the four most widely used community languages in England: Urdu, Cantonese, Punjabi and Bengali, although SOAS will offer a degree course in Bengali from autumn 2008. There are, however, professional and post-graduate courses which require advanced levels of competence in these and other

major community languages, for example in initial teacher education and translation and interpretation.

6.2 Meeting needs and aspirations

Community languages students and their teachers identify three key reasons for engaging in higher level study of community languages: enhanced career and business opportunities; furthering intellectual ambitions; and enabling learners who have had limited opportunities for academic success to gain recognition for an area in which they have achieved a high level of competence, as a way of opening doors to higher education more generally.

Not all providers are convinced that community languages should be accommodated in higher education, some arguing that demand is limited and at a low level, and better catered for in other sectors, or that making such provision could open their institutions to charges of social bias.

Other providers recognise the potential both for enhancing their institutions' international profile and for supporting the widening access and participation agenda.

6.3 Teaching and learning

Devising effective provision for community languages presents providers with significant challenges, as pedagogies specifically designed for the teaching of community languages are in their infancy.

Few providers have mechanisms to assess students' competence in their community languages when they start a course, or to investigate their goals; and therefore few have a comprehensive picture of the nature of the demand or how to meet it.

As a result, it is difficult to establish the qualities required in community languages teachers in higher education and to recruit suitable staff, or to identify effective teaching resources.

Actual and potential students are concerned about the quality of provision which does not always conform to their vision of university level teaching.

A small number of providers are actively addressing these issues and seek to develop distinctive provision which meets the needs and aspirations of community language learners.

6.4 Professional education

Two fields in which there is currently professional education specifically targeting community language learners are education and public service translation and interpreting.

Although demand for professionals in both fields is increasing and growing numbers of community language speakers express interest in qualifying to work as teachers or interpreters, many are discouraged by low pay and precarious work conditions.

Providers of initial teacher education courses for community languages teachers encounter a number of logistical barriers. Resolving these difficulties requires a very high level of commitment on the part of those responsible for these courses.

Very few higher education institutions offer sustained professional courses in public service interpreting and translation. There is considerable scope for more substantial contribution from academia to an area which requires high-level language proficiency, sophisticated communication and mediation skills and specialist applied linguistics input.

6.5 Policies and strategies

The principal policy arguments put forward to justify and expand provision for languages in higher education are:

- a multilingual workforce is needed for the UK to maintain and enhance its share in international business
- the study of other languages brings intellectual and cultural benefits and contributes to global citizenship
- skills in other languages are now, and will increasingly, be essential to participation in the information society

Strategic decisions and funding for course provision are based on these perceptions of the needs and aspirations of 21st century graduates. These apply equally to community as to foreign languages, and, in many contexts, community languages add value, by providing opportunities for greater diversification of languages in use and by ensuring that the UK profits from existing linguistic and cultural knowledge

Making provision for community languages can also contribute to universities' widening access and participation agendas, but should not be seen as valuable solely for this reason.

Advanced level competence in community languages is also valuable in the context of an increasingly multilingual UK, in support of businesses and services targeting minority ethnic communities and social and cultural initiatives within and beyond these communities – such as the 2012 Olympics. The support of higher education providers is needed to ensure that community languages skills are developed to a professional level.

7. Recommendations

We propose a broader vision of language learning which encompasses the interests of community and foreign language learners, breaking down artificial distinctions between the two areas and benefiting all learners, whatever their background and whatever their goals.

Our recommendations specifically concern improving provision for community language learning in higher education, but should also contribute to the development and embedding of this wider vision.

We recommend that a series of awareness raising activities be initiated, among providers, among policy-makers and politicians and among linguistic communities, to draw attention to the benefits accruing from investment in community languages.

We recommend extensive reform of current provision for community languages in higher education, in terms of degree level provision, modular provision and provision for professional education for teachers and public service interpreters.

We recommend that the main national policy-making bodies and decision-makers with responsibility for languages within HEIs adopt the broader vision for languages set out in this report and thus ensure that community languages are systematically included in the development of rationales for provision and in strategic decisions which ensue. Further research, both policy-related and academic, is required to support this work.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Summary

This chapter introduces the report of the project, *Community Languages in Higher Education: Towards Realising the Potential*, part of the Routes into Languages initiative funded by the Higher Education Funding Council in England (HEFCE) and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). The project sets out to map provision for community languages, defined as 'all languages in use in a society, other than the dominant, official or national language'. It was jointly conducted by the Scottish Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (Scottish CILT) at the University of Stirling, and the SOAS-UCL Centre for Excellence for Teaching and Learning 'Languages of the Wider World' (LWW CETL), between February 2007 and January 2008.

The overall aim of this study was to map provision for community languages in higher education in England and to consider how it can be developed to meet emerging demand for more extensive provision.

The history of community languages in England since the 1960s, when policy-makers and education providers first began to address the implications of immigration from Asia and the Caribbean has been one of discrimination and assimilation. While considerable emphasis has been placed on ensuring that immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers living in the UK learn English, there has been less attention to maintenance and development of community languages. This is despite the fact that decades of research point to the benefits of plurilingualism (a person's ability to speak more than one language) for the individual concerned and for multilingual societies. Most recent work on community language learning has focused on provision aimed at children of school age. We believe that this is the first UK study of provision in higher education.

This study focuses on current provision for community languages in higher education. We distinguish community language learning from foreign language learning on the basis of the learner's opportunities to learn the language in question in informal circumstances (in the home, in the community, as a result of time spent living in another country) before beginning formal study, at school or subsequently. We also recognise that community language learners may have different goals – often a wider range of goals – from foreign language learners: in addition to using their community languages to enhance their prospects for careers with an international dimension, in support of further study, or for cultural engagement, community language learners may also be concerned with developing identities or planning careers with communities who speak the same language, in the UK or elsewhere.

Thus this study does not focus on provision for specific languages in higher education – any language can be a community language if it is in use among people living in the UK – but rather on provision specifically targeting community language learners and geared to their linguistic needs and aspirations.

1.   Community Languages in Higher Education: background to the study

This study, *Community Languages in Higher Education: Towards Realising the Potential,* forms part of the Routes into Languages initiative funded by the Higher Education Funding Council in England (HEFCE) and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). The overall aim of the initiative is to increase and widen participation in language study in higher education, by fostering closer collaboration between the secondary, further and higher education sectors and developing languages curricula in the areas of community languages, enterprise, and engagement with major international events.

The study set out to map higher education provision for community languages, defined as 'all languages in use in a society, other than the dominant, official or national language' (McPake et al., 2007). In England, where the dominant language is English, some 300 community languages are in use (CILT, the National Centre for Languages, 2005), the most widespread being Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali, Cantonese, Arabic, Turkish, Russian, Spanish, Portuguese, Gujarati, Hindi and Polish. However, any language (including French or German) can be a community language. Provision for some of these languages is relatively well-established at secondary school level, where GCSE, A/S and A-Level examinations and qualifications through the Asset Languages scheme are currently available in 25 languages, and in further education. Complementary providers (out of school classes run by local groups) are known to cater for over 60 languages (CILT, the National Centre for Languages, 2005). This study investigates opportunities for those who have studied a community language during their school or college careers—whether formally, at school or college or in complementary classes, or informally, through family connections or periods of time spent in a country where the language is spoken—to continue this within higher education.

The research was jointly conducted by the Scottish Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (Scottish CILT) at the University of Stirling, and the SOAS-UCL Centre for Excellence for Teaching and Learning 'Languages of the Wider World' (LWW CETL). There were three phases to this research. Phase 1 mapped existing provision for community languages in English HEIs. In this phase, a literature review, a desk-based survey and provider interviews were conducted. Phase 2 built on these initial findings by conducting a workshop (Workshop A) where the needs of a variety of stakeholders locally, regionally and nationally were considered. In this phase, a survey was conducted at the first workshop and a series of interviews with teachers and others involved in community language teaching, students in higher education, other community language learners, employers and other stakeholders. Phase 3 involved analysis of the data collected in Phases 1 and 2, a workshop (Workshop B) where the preliminary recommendations were presented and the writing of this report.

2.   Community languages in England: a history of neglect

The coining of the term 'community languages' is generally attributed to Clyne (1991) who devised the term to refer to languages in use among people living in Australia, other than English (the dominant language) and the indigenous (aboriginal) languages. It is widely used in both Australia and the UK to refer to the languages of populations of immigrant origin; in North America, the term 'heritage languages' is often used for the same purpose.

In England, the term has traditionally been associated with communities of non-European origin in England. According to the 2001 Census (Census, 2003) such communities comprised about 7.1% of the overall population and in major urban centres like London may have reached as high as 30% of the population. These communities, a direct consequence of immigration in the 1960s and 1970s, significantly diversified the urban linguistic landscape of modern England (see Edwards & Alladina, 1991). The largest proportion of speakers of the 'other languages of England' (Linguistic Minorities Project, 1985) originated from countries in South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh), East and West Africa.

The government and many educational providers adopted a variety of measures that not only reinforced a long history of linguistic discrimination but also encouraged linguistic assimilation (Townsend, 1971; Edwards and Redfern, 1991). For instance, Asian and African bilingual parents were often told to use English with their children at home 'to improve school performance' (Edwards & Alladina, 1991), while children speaking their community languages at school were frequently asked to 'stop jabbering' (Mercer, 1981). Central government (with some exceptions) provided little encouragement to the vitality of community languages, and even important policy reports (e.g. Swann, 1985) recommended that the maintenance of these languages was the responsibility of the families and the communities themselves.

Some official recognition of the linguistic diversity of multicultural Britain began in the 1970s (e.g. Bullock, 1975). This was accompanied by a positive re-evaluation of community languages, and an espousal of the benefits of bilingualism on the part of some educators (Edwards & Redfern, 1991). The development of various 'Language Awareness' programmes in some state schools was an important initiative in the acknowledgment of linguistic diversity in Britain (Jones, 1989). These explored children's own language use and attitudes towards languages of the wider community. Advocates of these programmes argued that the valorisation of previously devalued languages (and dialects) helped raise the self-esteem of speakers and promoted greater inter-cultural understanding (Hawkins, 1984). Thus, integrative orientations were emphasized in Language Awareness programmes, but with surprisingly little emphasis on the instrumental benefits of learning community languages (Sachdev & Wright, 1996).

The teaching of community languages had generally been restricted to 'mother-tongue Saturday/Sunday classes' (Li Wei, 1993), referred to as 'complementary schools' by Martin, Bhatt, Bhojani and Creese (2003), generally organised and funded by members of the communities. Some local authorities supported the introduction of community languages as subjects in mainstream education, though on the whole, until recently, relatively little attention has been paid to educational provision to support the learning of these languages in the UK.

This lack of interest stands in stark contrast to the high level of academic, policy and professional concern with ensuring that immigrants and children of immigrant origin become sufficiently fluent in English to enable them to study and work to the best of their potential, and to communicate freely in Britain's predominantly Anglophone society. These remain important goals for all UK inhabitants for whom English is an additional language, but are not the concern of this report.

3. Plurilingualism and its benefits

Findings from several decades of research into plurilingualism (i.e. competence in several languages, rather than just one) show that there are considerable benefits both for the plurilingual individual and for a society which promotes plurilingualism among its members, if community languages as well as the dominant language are supported. For the individual, plurilingualism is known to produce cognitive advantage (Bialystok, 2001), to improve performance on a range of tasks related to educational attainment (Ricciardelli, 1992), including acquisition of literacy (Kenner, 2004), to facilitate the learning of additional languages (Cenoz & Valencia, 1994) and to delay the effects of ageing on the brain (Bialystok et al., 2006). There are economic advantages for societies in which adults can use more than one language in commercial contexts (CILT/ InterAct International, 2007) and social gains to be derived from ensuring that public services are linguistically accessible to all (Corsellis, 2001). People who grow up speaking more than one language in their daily lives therefore have the potential to gain personally but also to constitute a valuable resource for wider society.

Over the last decade, there has been growing recognition of the importance of enabling people to become plurilingual in the full range of languages available to them, not just in the major European languages which were traditionally the focus of most educational provision in England in the 20th century. Thus the *National Languages Strategy* (Department for Education and Skills, 2002), which sets out to transform England's capability in languages, refers to the need to expand the range of languages on offer in schools, mentioning community languages specifically. Footitt (2005), asked specifically to consider the likely impact of the *National Languages Strategy* on higher education, notes the importance of continued support for 'minority' languages, partly in response to increasing numbers of plurilingual people living in the UK. Similar shifts can be discerned internationally. The European Union's *Action Plan* (Commission of the European Communities, 2003) states that encouraging European citizens to learn only the national languages of other member states is no longer sufficient for communication or trade purposes and recommends greater diversity in the range of languages on offer, including 'regional/minority' and 'migrant' languages as well as the languages of major trading partners around the world. UNESCO's *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* (2001) includes an action plan which recommends the learning of several languages from an early age for purposes which range from safeguarding the world's linguistic heritage and ensuring that traditional knowledge is preserved, to ensuring that everyone can benefit from information and communication technologies and can participate in social, cultural and democratic activities.

It is often assumed that people can 'naturally' become plurilingual if they grow up in circumstances where more than one language is in use, and that no formal educational provision is therefore necessary in order to ensure high levels of proficiency. This is a misconception. People become plurilingual in very different contexts: some may grow up in families where each parent speaks a different language; some may move from one country to another in the course of their childhood and learn a second language at a later stage than the first; while others may speak one language at home with their family and another at school, among other possibilities. Such experiences typically lead to uneven levels of competence in each of the languages in question (Baker, 2006). Furthermore, the assumption that no formal language learning is required does not play a part in the very extensive educational provision made for children to develop their competence in the dominant language of a society. In the UK a minimum of ten years'

study of English is expected by the time a child reaches school-leaving age, in order to acquire a more sophisticated competence in both the spoken and the written language than could be achieved through 'casual' domestic and local experience alone. It seems highly unlikely that such intensive work is needed to ensure that monolingual English-speaking children become fully competent in English, but that this is not necessary to enable children with access to other languages in addition to English to achieve similar command of these languages.

Thus, if it is a desirable goal to enable as many people as possible to achieve high levels of competence in all the languages to which they have access, there is a pressing need to review formal opportunities to study community languages in all educational sectors and to identify ways in which these could be developed to meet the needs and realise the potential of the UK's increasingly multilingual population. Earlier work by Scottish CILT, CILT, the National Centre for Languages and CILT Cymru has mapped provision for community languages for the primary and secondary school sectors (CILT, the National Centre for Languages, 2005). This work raised the question of opportunities for those who have maintained and developed their community languages at school or college—particularly those who have gained A-level qualifications—to continue to do so when they move into higher education (McPake et al., 2007a), the issue which the current study sets out to address. We believe that this is the first UK study of provision for community languages in higher education

4.   Which languages?

Any language is potentially a community language—the term is not restricted to particular languages or categories of languages (e.g. 'non-European' languages or 'minority' languages). In England, any language in use, other than English, among families or other groups of people living here, can be defined as a community language. Languages such as French or German will be community languages for some, even though they are likely to be 'foreign' languages for most people in the UK who may use these languages abroad, or when communicating with foreigners visiting the UK. Conversely, some of the most widely used community languages in England, such as Arabic, Russian or Portuguese, are also foreign languages for some.

In this study, we are concerned with the distinction between foreign and community language learners. The defining characteristic of community language learners is that they have (or have had in the past) opportunities (which may be extensive or quite limited) to use the language in informal contexts, beyond the classroom, within their own 'communities', however defined (McPake, 2006). Thus typically community language learners have a degree of oral fluency when they first begin formal study of the language, but lack literacy skills; they may speak a non-standard variety of the language, or may have high levels of competence in certain, sometimes quite specialised domains (e.g. religion) but have limited ability in domains, such as those commonly taught in the early stages of foreign language learning, including transactional language, if their experience of shopping, travel, healthcare, etc. is wholly or largely through English.

In contrast, foreign language learners typically first encounter the language they wish to learn in a classroom, as *ab initio* learners. They usually develop spoken and written skills in tandem, although in recent decades, the emphasis, particularly in the early stages of foreign language learning, tends to be on the spoken language, as a result of the dominance of the communicative competence paradigm in second language acquisition

theory. Also, acquiring fluency in the spoken language is a significant challenge for those with limited opportunities to hear the language in use or to converse with fluent speakers. Foreign language learners, particularly those learning other European languages, typically progress in a predictable way, a pattern codified in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF), as well as in many examination syllabi, at different levels in the UK, and elsewhere in Europe. Thus the teacher of an 'intermediate' (CEF level B1 or B2) or an 'advanced' (CEF level C1 or C2) foreign language learner can be reasonably sure, for example, of the linguistic structures the student will have covered, or the range of vocabulary acquired. This is not necessarily the case for community language learners who may have very different levels of competence across the four skills (e.g. high levels of oral fluency, low levels of literacy) and within skills (e.g. extensive conversational vocabulary but limited understanding or competence in formal forms of the spoken language).

Community language learners and foreign language learners may also differ in terms of their goals. While foreign language learners may typically wish to learn the language in order to study, travel or work abroad, to communicate, for personal or business purposes, with foreigners, or because of an interest in other cultures and ways of thinking, community language learners may wish to strengthen their cultural identities, gain the skills to participate more actively in social or cultural processes relevant to their communities, or improve communication with relatives who do not speak English, in the UK, in other diasporic communities, or in countries where their languages are widely spoken. They may also wish to acquire the skills which would enable them to use the language for work purposes, in the UK with communities who speak the same language, or abroad, in similar ways to foreign language learners.

This study did not therefore set out to investigate higher education provision for specific languages, but rather provision—in any language—which targets community language learners and takes accounts of their particular needs and aspirations. It thus potentially includes provision for the main 'foreign' languages taught in UK higher education institutions—French, German and Spanish—if there is a recognition that these are community languages for some students. More importantly (given that in fact such provision for French, German and Spanish is likely to be very limited), it excludes provision for languages such as Chinese, Arabic or Polish where this is clearly framed as 'foreign' language learning and does not cater for community language learners. As will become clear in the report, this distinction is problematic, particularly for the purposes of mapping provision, because few providers explicitly address the goals of their provision or identify target student groups in this way; but it is important because implicit assumptions about goals and target students often create barriers for community language learners.

5. Aims

The aim of this study is to map provision for community languages in Higher Education, with the intention of:
- examining the extent to which current provision responds to the language needs and potential of England's increasingly multilingual population;
- considering how provision can be developed to meet emerging demand for greater diversity in language provision in the business, public sector and aid and development fields.

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Specifically, the study set out to:

- map current provision nationally, at degree and module level.
- analyse map data regionally and nationally:
- investigate the extent to which provision is responsive to local language communities, with a particular focus on enabling those who have studied community languages during their primary and secondary education (whether in mainstream or complementary classes) to continue their studies at a higher level;
- consider the extent to which it takes into account the language needs of local, regional, national and multinational employers and communities, in both the public and the private sectors
- make recommendations for the development of the interfaces between HE, FE and school provision of community languages.

6.   This report

After this introduction and the following chapter on research methods *(Chapter 2),* this report presents the key findings from the study. *Chapter 3,* drawing principally on statistical sources and desk review data, presents a map of current provision for community languages in higher education institutions in England. *Chapter 4* considers the ways in which higher education responds (or could respond) to the needs and aspirations of community language learners, and meets or could meet increasing demands from employers for competence in a growing range of languages. *Chapter 5* explores ways in which learning and teaching community languages resemble and differ from approaches to teaching 'foreign' languages and appropriate structures for provision and accreditation. *Chapter 6* looks at provision for professional education relevant to community languages: for community languages teachers in schools and for public service interpreters. In *Chapter 7,* we consider what support is needed at the level of national policy and local/regional education, training and business strategies. In *Chapter 8,* we make recommendations for action to be taken by the various bodies with responsibilities in this context.

Chapter 2: Research Methods and Workshop A Questionnaire Analysis

Summary

This research was completed in three phases:
    Phase 1: Mapping Provision
    Phase 2: Stakeholder Needs
    Phase 3: Analysis and testing of findings

A variety of research methods was used in this study including a *review* of the sources of national statistics to establish what is currently known; a *desk-based survey* of provision at each HEI, with a focus on provision for community languages as degree subjects, in institution-wide language programmes (IWLPs) and in any other modular forms; a series of *interviews* with selected HEI providers concerning the rationale, the nature of the provision, and future plans; and *questionnaires and interviews* with stakeholders concerning their needs, at and around a workshop and a careers fair following the initial research on provision. Findings of the survey questionnaire are presented in this chapter.

1. Phase 1: Mapping provision

The first phase of the project aimed to produce a comprehensive picture of current provision for community languages in all 133 English HEIs.

Three methods of data collection were used in this phase:
- a *review* of the sources of national statistics to establish what is currently known;
- a *desk-based survey* of provision at each HEI (via websites, etc.), with a focus on provision for community languages as degree subjects, in institution-wide language programmes (IWLPs) and in any other modular forms;
- a series of *interviews* with selected HEI providers concerning the rationale, the nature of the provision, and future plans.

These data were analysed to construct national and regional maps of provision which set out clearly the range of languages for which provision is made and the nature of this provision.

1.1 National Statistics

Statistics and data on courses available were gathered from:
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)
- Universities and Colleges Admissions service (UCAS)
- Department for Education and Skills (DfES) Research and Statistics Gateway:
- CILT, the National Centre for Languages (CILT)
- Association of University Language Centres (AULC)
- Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies (LLAS)
- Graduate Teacher Training Registry (GTTR)

It is important to note that the national statistics, unfortunately, make no distinction between community languages and foreign languages. Therefore, the discussion of these statistics (in Chapter 3) cannot focus on community languages specifically; instead it concerns languages in general.

1.2 National and regional maps

The websites of all 133 English HEIs were surveyed for information about provision of languages in five different categories:

i. *Language degrees*: undergraduate degrees in which languages are a major component, i.e. single and joint honours degrees, plus as major and minor/subsidiary (one-third of degree) subjects, and in combined (usually three subjects) and integrated degrees (e.g. European Studies).

ii. *IWLP/Modular provision:* Institution-wide language programmes (IWLPs) allow all students in the higher education to study languages, either as credit-bearing units or on an extra-curricular basis (i.e. not counting towards their degree); modules in languages may be taken as obligatory or optional parts of specific degree programmes.

iii. *Professional courses:* languages may be incorporated in certain areas of professional courses, i.e. vocational training which may lead to a professional qualification, in fields such as teaching, translating and interpreting, medicine, social work, development studies, law and engineering; most such courses are at postgraduate level, but some, for example, teacher training, may be at undergraduate level; in this context, language courses are likely to be of the Languages for Special Purposes type.

iv. *Wider community:* language provision for the general public, including evening classes, individual tuition, courses for businesses etc.

v. *Community languages:* provision that is specifically intended for community language learners, e.g. literacy courses for speakers of Bengali; there may be some repetition here of information provided under other headings.

The full provision map, for all languages, in all HEIs, under the five headings above, is presented in Appendix A of this report.

In addition, information on provision in community languages was sought under the following two headings:

- *Mission:* mission statements from HEIs and relevant departments, highlighting any references to community languages or minority ethnic groups more generally.

- *Widening participation:* statements on policy on widening access and participation from HEIs and relevant departments, and from access agreements with the Office for Fair Access (OFFA), highlighting any references to community languages and minority communities.

Information on language degrees that have ceased to be offered since 1998 was taken from a survey published in the *Education Guardian* on 13 March, 2007 (Education Guardian, 2007). Confirmation or more detailed information was obtained from universities where possible.

Since the initial indications suggested that few HEIs had language provision explicitly aimed at community language learners, all language provision in HEIs was examined in the website survey. Such information was usually scattered throughout the HEIs' websites and was not always immediately obvious, particularly for IWLP provision. Although statements on institutional missions and widening participation were initially highlighted as a potential source of information on community language provision, they were found to refer only rarely to minority ethnic groups, and only one HEI— the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London (SOAS)—made specific reference to language provision for community language learners.

In addition to the website searches, a letter was also sent to all 133 English HEIs and to all heads of Language Centres belonging to the AULC asking for information about community languages provision. Responses were received from 31 HEIs to this letter or subsequent emails, and these responses provided a reasonable geographical spread (East: 3, East Midlands: 4, London: 5, North East: 1, North West: 4, South East: 2, South West: 3, West Midlands: 4, Yorkshire and Humber: 5). Some providers replied in brief, others at greater length. In most cases, representatives of HEIs were selected for interview from those that replied at length. Most of the responses outlined provision for languages in general, rather than specifically for community languages.

1.3 Interviews with providers

Candidates for interview were selected to provide as broad a geographical range as possible and also a wide range of languages offered and types of provision. Institutions offering courses specifically targeting community language learners (of which there are very few) were of greatest interest, and individuals who had responded to the request for information in detail, including information or comments on community language provision were thought to be most relevant to the study. There was an inevitable bias towards London in general and SOAS in particular, as London has the widest range of language provision and SOAS deals with several languages that can be considered community languages and has developed specific provision for community language learners.

In this initial phase of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 participants representing eight different HEIs (East Midlands: 1, London: 3, North West: 2, West Midlands: 1, Yorkshire & Humber: 1). All interviewees except one, who was a researcher on community language learners, were involved in the provision of community languages and included directors of IWLPs, PGCEs, and instructors or lecturers of specific languages including Arabic, Bengali, Chinese and Somali. Interviews were recorded whenever interviewees gave their permission. Although most of the interviews were conducted by telephone, five of the interviews were conducted face-to-face. Interviews lasted between 30 and 90 minutes, were summarised and draft versions sent to the interviewees for checking and clarification of any outstanding queries. Interviewees therefore had final approval of the text and appropriate permissions were obtained from them.

The aspects of provision covered during the interviews were: definition of a community language; how community languages related to courses offered; supply and demand for courses (reasons for providing community language courses, market research, future plans, relevance to needs of local/regional/national communities and employers);

languages, levels and types of courses; students (linguistic background, motivations, plans for future use of languages); tutors (recruitment, background, qualifications, basis of employment); teaching resources; and the role of the specific HEI and HEIs in general in community language provision.

Findings from the first phase of the study concerning provision were presented at the first workshop, Workshop A, attended by a variety of stakeholders. This workshop heralded the second phase of the research.

2.   Phase 2: Stakeholder Needs

The aim of the second phase was to see how the levels of provision identified regionally and nationally in the first phase related to local, regional and national needs in both the public and the private sectors, and to the linguistic communities themselves. For this purpose a multi-methodological approach was employed focusing around workshop A, and employing a survey questionnaire and interviews.

2.1 Workshop A

A workshop entitled 'Mapping Provision and Matching Needs' was held at SOAS, University of London (see http://www.lww-cetl.ac.uk/routes/workshops.htm) attracting over 70 participants from a variety of regions and institutions. Questionnaires and interview methods were used to obtain data in and around this workshop.

Overall, it was a very successful event, both in terms of the quality of contributions and discussion. The keynote presentations were by Professor Viv Edwards (University of Reading), and Professor Li Wei (Birkbeck College, University of London).

In her presentation entitled 'Is life really too short to learn German?', Professor Edwards made a number of key points:

   i.   knowledge of other languages was not a matter of rationing or prioritisation: multilingualism is an asset and resource, not a problem to be solved;
   ii. the efforts of minority communities to keep their languages alive gave the UK a competitive edge in international trade;
   iii. the co-existence of different languages and cultures leads to the cross-fertilisation of ideas in many areas of artistic expression;
   iv. bilingual, bicultural individuals are able to mediate between minority and majority communities, and are the potential cornerstone for a more harmonious society.

She concluded by saying that 'Life, it would seem, is quite long enough for us to acquire a collective knowledge of German, Chinese, Urdu and many other languages'.

Professor Li Wei's presentation was entitled 'When Community goes Global: the changing landscape of community languages in Britain and its impact'. He argued that the concept of 'community language ' and 'minority ' were social constructions and that many of the languages of the so-called 'minority ethnic communities' such as Chinese and Arabic, are in fact important world languages. In his presentation he

critically examined the tensions between community needs, national needs and global needs concerning such languages.

These presentations and our report of the interim findings from this project were very well received according to the evaluation forms that were returned. There was lively discussion at the group discussions after the presentations, and the majority of attendees who returned the evaluation forms reported being 'very satisfied' (64%). The remainder (36%) reported being 'satisfied' and no one reported being 'unsatisfied'. Overall, 50% of attendees felt that both the presentations and group discussions were the strongest aspect of the workshop, while 42% felt that the presentations were strongest. Strong points mentioned were quality of the group discussions, presentations. Weak points reported were the short length of the workshop, and the wish to have more employers and policy makers present. It was not possible to conduct any interviews on the day, but individuals were identified from amongst the participants to be interviewed at a later point.

At the first workshop, participants were surveyed about the following areas using a questionnaire methodology: participants' linguistic and professional backgrounds; the perceived importance of community languages to their group identities; their views on the advantages and drawbacks of community language provision and their perceptions about the challenges faced by HEIs, and the needs of teachers and learners in HEIs vis-à-vis community languages.

2.2 Interviews on needs of stakeholders

Candidates for interview were identified after Workshop A and were selected in terms of their abilities to cover as broad a range as possible in terms of region, language(s), and type of stakeholder. The semi-structured interviews focused on questions on community languages in the following areas: interviewees' background and involvement with community languages; definitional issues; qualifications and accreditation; materials availability and development; teacher training, pedagogies and methodologies; student profiles; employability; perceptions concerning provision in HEIs; views on government and institutional policies; and the status of community languages.

As in Phase 1, interviews were recorded with the permission of interviewees. Two researchers carried out 15 interviews in this phase. Although most of the interviews were conducted by telephone, some were conducted face-to-face. Interviews lasted between 30 and 90 minutes, were summarised and draft versions sent to the interviewees for checking and clarification of any outstanding queries. Interviewees therefore had final approval of the text and appropriate permissions were obtained from them.

The interviewees in this phase included: (i) community language learners and teachers in higher education, complementary and secondary schools teachers; (ii) individuals working in charity organisations dealing with refugees and immigrant communities; (iii) academics involved in other 'Routes into Languages' projects and teacher training; (iv) Business and community languages media representatives; and (v) individuals involved in the interface between schools and higher education (AimHigher), accreditation, national examinations of community languages, government schools inspectorate. Specific languages covered by the interviewees included Bengali, Chinese, Punjabi, Somali, Spanish, Tamil, Turkish and Urdu; other interviewees dealt with many languages. The majority of the interviewees were based in London, though there were

some also from South East, West Midlands and the North West while one had national responsibilities.

3.   Phase 3: Analysis and Testing of Findings

The aim of the third phase was analyse the data collected in phases 1 and 2, to identify preliminary findings and recommendations and to test these out on community languages experts at Workshop B. Following this, the final report was written.

3.1 Workshop B

The second multi-stakeholder conference (see http://www.lww-cetl.ac.uk/routes/workshops.htm) was held at Manchester Metropolitan University in collaboration with the North West 'Routes into Languages' Consortium (http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/northwest/index.html).

The keynote presentations by Professor Peter Martin (University of East London), and Dr Sharon Handley (Manchester Metropolitan University) & Jocelyn Wyburd (University of Manchester) presented the planned activities of their North West 'Routes into Languages' Consortium. Professor Martin's presentation entitled 'Lessons from Complementary Schools' outlined the findings of research that he and other colleagues had conducted on Complementary Schools in several ethnolinguistic communities including Bangladeshis (in Birmingham), Chinese (in Newcastle/Manchester), Gujaratis (in Leicester) and Turkish (in London). Their focus was on exploring how complementary schools extend or restrict the performance of young people's multilingual repertoires. Their initial findings showed the importance of complementary schools in countering monolingualism in English institutional life and how complementary schools offered a multilingual space for flexible or concurrent language use. Complementary schools were reported to constitute multilingual institutions where a range of languages and language varieties and literacies were used and heard. They also provided young people with an opportunity to resist ethnic categories and social stereotypes associated with static identity markers as well as supporting positive and successful student learner identities. Overall Professor Martin argued made a strong case for the importance of complementary schools in contributing strongly to the education system, and to the vitality and diversity of community life in the UK.

These presentations and our preliminary recommendations were very well received according to the evaluation forms returned. There was lively discussion at the mini-workshops. Nearly 40 people attended the workshop, and evaluations suggested that 76% were 'very satisfied' with the overall event, and 24% were 'satisfied'; 36% felt that both the presentations and group discussions were the strongest aspect of the workshop; 36% felt that the presentations were strongest; and 44% felt that the event was a good opportunity to network and make contacts. Several strong points were mentioned including the quality of the speakers and workshop facilitators; data and format for the day; and networking and sharing experiences. However participants also reported that they would have liked to see more employers and be given more time for networking opportunities and for the mini-workshops. Overall, most felt that the day was very informative and inspiring.

Given the desire for more input from employers to this project, brief interviews were additionally conducted with employers visiting SOAS at a Graduate Fair in October

2008. They were asked about their needs and values concerning community languages. The employers included those in law/legal services organisations (government and non-governmental), financial and insurance services and international welfare and development organisations.

3.2 Analyses

Analyses and findings of the statistics, desk-based surveys and interviews for provision and the interviews with stakeholders concerning needs are presented in the following chapters. Analyses and findings of the survey questionnaire conducted in Workshop A are presented in the following section.

4. Workshop A Questionnaire Survey

At the first workshop, 73 questionnaires were distributed and 37 (51%) were completed and returned. The questions covered the following areas: participants' linguistic and professional backgrounds; the importance of community languages to the groups they identified with; their views on the advantages and drawbacks of community language provision; and their perceptions about the challenges faced by HEIs, and needs of teachers and learners in HEIs vis-à-vis community languages. Analyses of responses to these questions are provided below, and were followed up in greater detail in the interviews following Workshop A.

4.1 General Background of Questionnaire participants

Approximately two thirds of participants were employed in teaching roles in education (from secondary to further and higher sectors). The remaining third were employed in a variety of institutional contexts including local government, the health services, and the private sector. The regional bias of this study has already been noted, but suffice to say that the majority of participants lived and worked in London, though there were also participants from the North West, East Midlands, Wales, Scotland, Yorkshire and Humber and the South East. The respondents listed 34 specific languages (Asian, African and European) with which they were involved: Mandarin was the most common (10), followed by Arabic (7), Cantonese, Portuguese, Punjabi, Tamil and Urdu (5), and Gujarati, Hindi and Turkish (4). In the case of the majority of respondents, their involvement with community languages was limited to one community language. Approximately, a third were involved with two to three community languages. As a whole, the group boasted many years' experience of involvement with community languages (that of approximately half of the participants spanned one or two decades).

4.2 Self-reported community language proficiency, use and identification

The vast majority of participants (26, 70%) who filled in the questionnaire felt that community languages were very important, and a further two (5%) felt that their community language was moderately important, to their group identities. Only one (about 3%) reported that community languages were not important to their group identity, while 8 did not answer the question. Clearly, community languages, at least amongst our participants are strongly related to group identification.

28 different community languages were listed as being spoken and understood by participants who filled in the questionnaire. The most commonly listed were Hindi (7), Gujarati (6), Mandarin and Tamil (5), Arabic, Cantonese, French, Swahili and Urdu (4 each). Languages less commonly identified as community languages were also

mentioned such as Norwegian and Scots. It is important to note that whereas 13 participants (35%) listed only one community language as being spoken and understood by them, 21 (57%) participants reported being able to understand one or more community languages.

27 different community languages were listed as being read and written by participants who filled in the questionnaire. The most common were Hindi (6), followed by Chinese (5) and Tamil (5) and Gujarati (4). Comparing these data with the oral proficiency data suggests a slight drop in literacy in some community languages (e.g. Gujarati, Hindi, Swahili) amongst our participants.

32 (86%) of our participants learnt their community languages as children, with 26 (70%) reporting having learnt them in their countries of origin. Interestingly, 7 (18%) reported having learnt community languages in higher education, though they did not specify whether this was in England or elsewhere. When asked where they currently used their community languages, the most common setting of use was the home/family (17, 46%), followed by work (10, 27%), school/teaching (9, 33%), the community (8, 21%), higher education (4, 11%), and with friends (3, 8%). Note that these figures add up to more than 100% as some participants used their community language in more than one setting.

4.3 Perceived advantages and drawbacks of community language provision

Table 2.1: Advantages and Drawbacks of Community Language Provision

Advantages (frequency, f = 69)		Drawbacks (frequency, f = 41)	
Category	Examples	Category	Examples
(i) Valuing and developing community ingroup identity (f = 25)	a. Promote and develop identity. b. Empowers a community who might not have felt valued.	(i) Resources and Quality assurance (f = 24)	a. Lack of resources. b. Academic and pedagogical standards are low.
(ii) Valuing diversity and social cohesion (f = 21)	a. Combats ignorance and stereotypical beliefs. b. Bringing Brits into the 'real world', not only 'out there' but also 'right here'.	(ii) Devaluation and separation (f = 11)	a. Failure to recognise value or potential of community languages. b. Encourages separation.
(iii) Socio-cognitive skills development (including employability in the context of globalisation, (f = 20)	a. Transferable skills. b. Miss opportunities in globalised world if you don't know about other languages.	(iii) Bad faith (f = 3)	a. Promoting certain community languages purely for economic and financial reasons. b. Mainstream schools: desire to benefit from good exam results without making provision.
(iv) Other (f = 3)	a. Better access to cooking ingredients. b. Improves the way individuals see life as a whole.	(iv) Other (f = 3)	a. Some children find it hard. b. Which languages need/should be chosen as focus and why?

Participants were asked to list the main advantages and drawbacks of current community language provision generally. The advantages were categorised under four main headings (by two independent judges): (i) Valuing and developing community ingroup identity; (ii) Valuing diversity and social cohesion; (iii) Socio-cognitive skills development (including employability in the context of globalisation); (iv) Other. The

drawbacks were also categorised under four headings: (i) Resources and quality assurance; (ii) Devaluation and separation; (iii) Bad faith; (iv) Other. Examples of the responses under each of these categories are provided in Table 2.1.

The frequencies for advantages and drawbacks for community language provision shown in Table 2.1 suggest that the participants who completed the questionnaire reported many more advantages than drawbacks to community language provision. The advantages were at a variety of levels and included those for the mainstream society, communities as a whole and the individuals within communities. Additionally, the advantages outlined were socio-cultural as well as cognitive. As shown in Table 2.1, by far the largest category of drawbacks concerned adequate resourcing and quality assurance. The issues raised by these perceptions of advantages and drawbacks are discussed further in the following chapters.

4.4 Perceived challenges for community languages in higher education

Participants were asked to list the main challenges concerning community languages in HEIs. These were categorised under five main headings (by two independent judges): (i) Provision; (ii) Needs and aspirations; (iii) Teaching and Learning; (iv) Employability; and (v) Policies and Strategies. Examples of the responses under each of these categories are provided in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Perceived challenges for community languages in higher education

Category	Frequency	Examples of responses
(i) Provision	20	a. Sustainability – ensuring adequate numbers to pay for provision b. Linkage between schools, FE & higher education
(ii) Needs and Aspirations	24	a. Awareness of importance of teaching community languages in higher education – making people understand the importance of knowing the language b. Higher education only pays lip-service to community languages
(iii) Teaching and Learning	24	a. Lack of materials b. Teacher training
(iv) Employability	2	a. Lack of Employment opportunities b. Getting community languages as worthwhile thing to do by students
(v) Policies & Strategies	13	a. Choosing 'correct' languages to teach b. Recognition and strategic action re community languages as a resource

The findings revealed that issues of 'Needs and Aspirations', 'Teaching and Learning' and 'Provision' were top three main challenges facing community languages in higher education. These are considered in further detail in the following chapters. Interestingly,

the group of participants who completed this questionnaire during Workshop A felt that issues of 'Policies and Strategies; and 'Employability' were challenges of lower salience than those associated with 'Needs and Aspirations', 'Teaching and Learning' and 'Provision'.

4.5 Perceived needs of teaching community languages in higher education

Participants were asked to list the main needs concerning the teaching of community languages in higher education. The needs reported by participants were categorised under 5 main headings (by 2 independent judges): (i) Provision; (ii) Aspirations; (iii) Teaching and Learning; (iv) Employability; & (v) Policies and Strategies. Examples of the responses under each of these categories are provided in Table 2.3.

Unsurprisingly, the findings to this question focusing on the needs associated with the teaching of community languages revealed that specific 'Teaching and Learning' needs were the most frequently cited by respondents, though the aspirations were also cited to a large degree by respondents. It is also noteworthy that unlike the general challenges mentioned above, employment needs were mentioned to a fairly high degree. In response to this question, issues of provision and policies and strategies were of lower salience. All these issues are discussed in more detail in the following chapters in the context of interview data.

Table 2.3: Perceived Teaching Needs for community languages in higher education

Category	Frequency	Examples of responses
(i) Provision	6	a. Links to professional studies (e.g. law, engineering, aid and development) b. Resources and funding
(ii) Needs and Aspirations	26	a. Cultural (e.g. traditions, identity, communications through events, cinema, gatherings) b. Increased awareness of uses of community languages
(iii) Teaching and Learning	45	a. Pedagogic method/lack of pedagogy/pedagogical development specifically for community language learning b. Materials
(iv) Employability	20	a. Translators b. Role models to show languages as useful for future employability
(v) Policies & Strategies	3	a. Persuading parents/students that it is a good and worthwhile thing to do b. Will on part of education establishments

4.6 Perceived needs of learners of community languages in higher education

Participants were asked to list the main needs of learners of community languages in higher education. Different needs were categorised under five main headings (by two independent judges): (i) Provision; (ii) Aspirations; (iii) Teaching and Learning; (iv) Employability; and (v) Policies and Strategies. Examples of the responses under each of these categories are provided in Table 2.4.

As with the questions concerning the teaching of community languages in higher education, analysis to the question focusing on the needs associated with the learners of community languages revealed that specific 'Teaching and Learning' needs were the most frequently cited by respondents. Additionally, provision issues and those concerning the aspirations of learners were also cited significantly. However, employability and policy and strategy issues were less salient to the respondents. These issues and others are discussed in further detail in the following chapters where the interview data are discussed.

Table 2.4: Perceived needs of community language learners in higher education

Category	Frequency*	Examples of responses
(i) Provision	13	a. Provision of courses b. Progression
(ii) Needs and Aspirations	13	a. Adaptation of teaching hours to make suitable for working parents b. Assessing need and relevance in local community
(iii) Teaching and Learning	30	a. Accreditation and recognition of community languages b. Use of modern techniques and exciting teaching methods
(iv) Employability	8	a. Practicality in terms of career development b. To share and teach in my community
(v) Policies & Strategies	7	a. Change in attitudes of those in power b. Change in attitudes of young learners

5.   Conclusions

This chapter outlined the overall plan of this research and the methods employed in this study. These methods included desk-based surveys of the literature and gathering appropriate statistical data as well as interviews with stakeholders complemented by questionnaire survey. Whereas the interview data are discussed in detail in the following chapters, this chapter also reported the main findings from the survey questionnaire given to participants at the first workshop on community languages organised under the aegis of this research project.

The majority of the participants who completed the questionnaire worked in educational contexts (e.g. schools, further and higher education, AimHigher, Schools Inspectorate, etc), though participants from other institutional contexts including local government, the health services, and the private sector were also represented. Overall, participants represented a large number of community languages, with most having worked in the field of community languages for a considerable period of time (up to two decades for several). They also reported identifying strongly with, and being proficient in, and using, at least one, if not more, community languages. Participants outlined a series of advantages and drawbacks concerning community language provision. Advantages included valuing and developing community ingroup identity, valuing societal diversity and social cohesion and enhancing socio-cognitive skills development (including employability in the context of globalisation). The main drawback was perceived to be a serious lack of resources and quality, though others were also mentioned. The findings revealed that issues of the needs and aspirations of community language learners (e.g. status of community languages, identity-cultural needs), teaching and learning issues

(e.g. materials, teacher-training) and aspects of provision (resources, sustainability) were the main challenges facing community languages in higher education. When participants were specifically asked about the main challenges for teachers and learners of community languages, teaching and learning issues were key, though other aspects were also mentioned. These issues and others were followed up in interviews conducted with a variety of stakeholders and reported in the following chapters.

Chapter 3:   A map of provision for community languages

Summary

What opportunities are there for people to study their community languages in higher education? This chapter maps — or describes — current provision for all languages taught in English colleges and universities; and then focuses more closely on twelve languages most likely to be studied as community languages, rather than, or as well as, foreign languages.

It draws on three sets of data:
- a review, conducted for this study, of degree-level and other provision for all languages in each of the 133 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs);
- data collected by Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), and further analysed by CILT, the National Centre for Languages, concerning trends in the numbers of students accepted for (UCAS) and enrolled on (HESA) first degrees in languages (single or joint honours, or with languages as a major, minor or subsidiary component) over the last decade;
- the map of provision for community languages in English secondary schools compiled by Scottish CILT, CILT, the National Centre for Languages and CILT Cymru as part of an earlier study on school-based and complementary provision in Great Britain.

The map reveals that there is currently provision for 81 languages in English HEIs, as degree components, professional certificates or diplomas (usually postgraduate) or modular courses.

For the four most widely spoken community languages in England — Urdu, Cantonese, Punjabi, and Bengali — there are no degree courses available, despite the fact that these languages have been well-established in the UK since at least the 1960s, and that substantial numbers of secondary school children have studied these languages to A-level. There is, however, some modular provision for these languages, and they form components of certain professional qualifications, such as Post-Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) courses and diplomas in public service translation and interpretation. The latter courses require advanced level competence in these languages, begging the question of how this can be acquired when there are no degree programmes.

Except in the case of professional qualifications for teachers of community languages or public service translators and interpreters, very few providers distinguish between provision for foreign language learners (either ab initio learners or learners who have already acquired formal qualifications in the language, usually at A-Level or equivalent) and community language learners (learners with a degree of informal experience of learning the language who may or may not also have formal qualifications at various levels). Lack of awareness of community language learners' different backgrounds and goals may create barriers to access to provision.

More generally, discussions of provision for community languages need to take into account the broader changes in patterns of provision for languages in higher education.

There has been a fall in the numbers studying the major European languages (with the exception of Spanish) while the numbers studying the major world languages such as Mandarin, Japanese and Arabic have risen — although absolute numbers for the major European languages are still much greater. In addition, the overall number of students accepted for languages degrees has fallen over the last decade, while the numbers of students enrolled on credit bearing modules for language study has increased over the same period. Currently, there are around six times as many students on such courses as are taking language degrees. Although this could be interpreted as meaning that new provision for community languages is more likely to recruit students if offered through IWLP courses rather than as degrees, we argue that there is a need for degree level study of community languages in order to ensure that IWLP teachers, as well as teachers in other sectors, and other language professions, such as translators and interpreters have opportunities to reach advanced level competence.

1. Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 1, the terms foreign and community languages do not denote two exclusive categories of language. A specific language cannot be allocated to one or other list. The distinction, for our purposes, lies in the learners.

Foreign language learners approach the language they are studying with little or no prior knowledge before they begin formal studies, and in circumstances where they have had virtually no opportunities to use the language for communicative purposes with its speakers. Their early knowledge of the language comes from formal study (whether through classes or independently) although in time they may well develop communicative competence through visits to countries where the language is spoken or other interaction with speakers of the language.

Community language learners, in contrast, will have had some prior exposure — which could be extensive or quite limited — to the language, because the language is in use in their own family or in the wider social group with which they identify, and also, in some cases, because they previously lived somewhere where the language was in widespread use. They may or may not have had opportunities to study the language formally at school, in complementary classes or at college. As a result many community language learners are orally fluent, particularly when using the language for certain purposes (such as communicating with family members, or participating in certain religious or cultural activities), but may not be literate. In seeking formal instruction, they are likely to wish to improve their literacy skills and also, in many cases, to expand their oral repertoire. For some this may entail learning the standard form of the language because they come from a family or community in which a non-standard variety is in use. There is thus a continuum of linguistic competence for community language learners, stretching from those who can be considered 'native speakers', fully fluent and highly literate, who may be seeking formal qualifications which acknowledge existing high level skills, to those who have only a very basic oral competence and in fact start their studies in a position very similar to that of ab initio foreign language learners.

Thus, in our account of provision for community languages in this chapter, we cannot, a priori, focus on a specific set of languages. French and German are community languages for some learners, though undoubtedly foreign for most, while Arabic and Russian are foreign languages for many UK students, and community languages for others. It is likely that the majority of those studying Urdu, Bengali or Punjabi are

community language learners, but they may be foreign languages for some. In the next section, we start by looking at provision for all languages, in order to develop a picture of the range of languages on offer, the nature of provision, and trends in uptake over the past decade. We then focus more specifically on provision for twelve languages most likely to be studied as community languages.

2.   Provision for languages in Higher Education

In the course of this study, we reviewed all provision (degree-bearing and other types) for languages study in the 133 higher education institutions (HEIs) in England. This revealed that in 2007, 81 languages were on offer. This figure includes four varieties of Arabic (Egyptian, Gulf, Levantine and Moroccan) in addition to modern standard Arabic; if they are considered separate languages rather than varieties of one, the total number of languages is 85. The languages and the institutions where they are offered are listed as Appendix A.

Provision for language study within higher education is very diverse. While degree studies (single or joint honours courses, and degrees including 'major', 'subsidiary' and 'minor' elements) continue to be a key form, many HEIs have developed institution-wide language programmes (IWLPs) or other forms of modular provision which enable all students to study languages, either as credit-bearing units in a very wide range of degrees, or on an extra-curricular basis (i.e. they do not count towards degrees). Some university-based courses leading to professional qualifications (e.g. in teaching, translating and interpreting, medicine, social work, development studies, law and engineering) include a language element either as a compulsory or as an optional element of the course. In addition, many colleges and universities now make provision for the wider local community to study languages, through evening classes, provision tailored to business requirements, etc.

3.   Provision for community languages

Although any language is potentially a community language, it is helpful to consider provision specifically for those languages most likely to be studied as community languages. To determine which languages should be included in this category, we need to review a range of sources of information about the languages currently in use in the UK.

Unfortunately, there is, at present, no accurate way of establishing how many languages are currently spoken by people living in the UK, nor how many people speak each language. The UK Census collects information on ethnicity, but not on people's linguistic affiliations. The inadequacy of this data for our purposes can be illustrated by a glance at the data concerning respondents categorised as ethnically 'Indian' and 'Black African', who make up 1.8% and 0.8% of the UK population respectively. In India, it is estimated that over 400 languages are in use, of which 22 are classed as official (Gordon, 2005); and in Africa at least 2000 languages, of which 82 are regarded as significant for development purposes (Dwyer, 1997). So knowledge of the ethnic make-up of the UK population gives us little or no clue as to our linguistic make-up. Moreover, we cannot assume that people categorised as 'Indian' or 'Black African' are plurilingual at all, any more than we can assume that those categorised as 'White' (92.1% of the population) are monolingual English speakers.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) conducts a school census annually. This includes a question about children for whom English is an additional language. Figures for 2007 (DCSF, 2007) indicate that 13.5% of primary school pupils and 10.5% of secondary school pupils are thought to fall into this category, but no information about the other languages these children speak is collected; nor is it clear whether children who are fully fluent in English but also speak other languages are included in these figures. There has been some discussion about including a question to identify the other languages in use, but a decision has not yet been taken.

As a result, the data collected in 2003–4, in the course of a survey of provision for community languages for children of school age, conducted by Scottish CILT, CILT, the National Centre for Languages and CILT Cymru, remains the most accurate indicator of the range of languages in use by the school population in England. The extent to which the findings can be extrapolated to the whole population is difficult to determine, but these data are useful for the current study in that they describe the pre- higher education population and thus give some indication of the likely linguistic make-up of higher education students currently and over the next decade. A summary report of the findings from this research was published by CILT the National Centre for Languages in 2005, and in addition to this, regional reports were produced and circulated to Comenius Centres in the nine English regions, reporting on the range of languages in use and provision for community language study in mainstream schools and in complementary classes (i.e. classes arranged after school hours, usually by the local community).

However, the data from these studies need to be treated with some caution. They were acquired through an intensive email and telephone trawl for information about community languages in use and the nature of provision to support study of these languages at primary and secondary school level, from representatives of local authorities. Local authorities collect these data in different ways, with varying degrees of detail. Some authorities do not collect information on community languages at all, and some refused to provide this information for the project on the basis that it contravened the Data Protection Act. In total, we were able to gather information from 77 of the 150 local authorities in England (i.e. 51%). Thus we have an incomplete picture of provision — although it is the best available — and consequently we believe that the figures represent a considerable underestimate of the languages in use, and of the range of provision available. Furthermore, as the data collection took place in 2003–4, the full impact of the expansion of the European Union had not yet taken effect. There are likely to be many more speakers of eastern European languages, particularly Polish, than there were at the time the survey was carried out, and it is probable that other geo-political shifts in the intervening period have changed the balance in ways not easily identifiable.

3.1 Which languages are spoken by school children in England?

The CILTs' data show that 288 languages were in use by schoolchildren in England at the time the survey was conducted. Although we cannot say which languages have the greatest number of speakers (as few local authorities collect this information) we can say which are the most widely spoken (i.e. those recorded in the greatest number of local authorities). Chart 3.1 shows the twelve most widely spoken languages across England.

Chart 3.1: Most widely spoken community languages
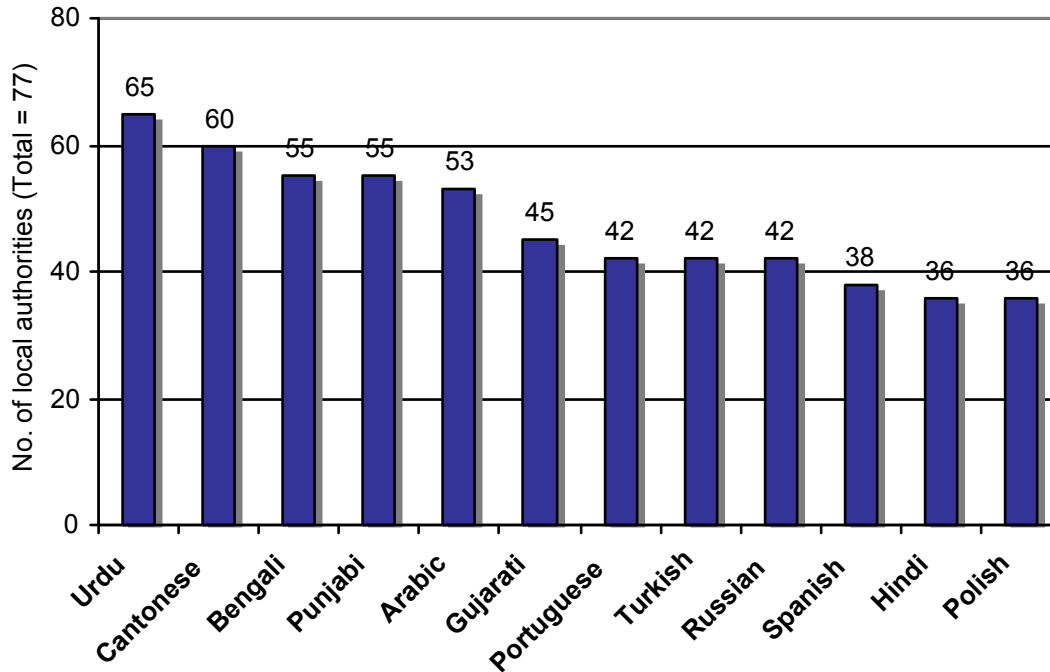
3.2 Which languages do schoolchildren study?

The survey also found that there is provision for children to study 61 community languages in complementary classes and that 35 community languages are taught in mainstream schools.

Mainstream schools principally teach the languages for which GCSE, AS and A-level examinations exist, Since the survey was conducted, it is likely that they also offer languages accredited by Asset Languages, which include some languages for which qualifications were not previously available, such as Hindi, Tamil, Somali or Yoruba. Chart 3.2 shows the numbers of presentations in the main community languages for GCSE and A-level examinations in 2007.

(The figures for Spanish have not been included in the chart because it seems likely that most pupils study this as a foreign language rather than a community language: in 2007, 63,978 candidates sat GCSE and 7,152 A-level Spanish. Hindi is not included in this chart as it is not available at GCSE or A-Level.)

Chart 3.2: GCSE and A-Level Entries 2007
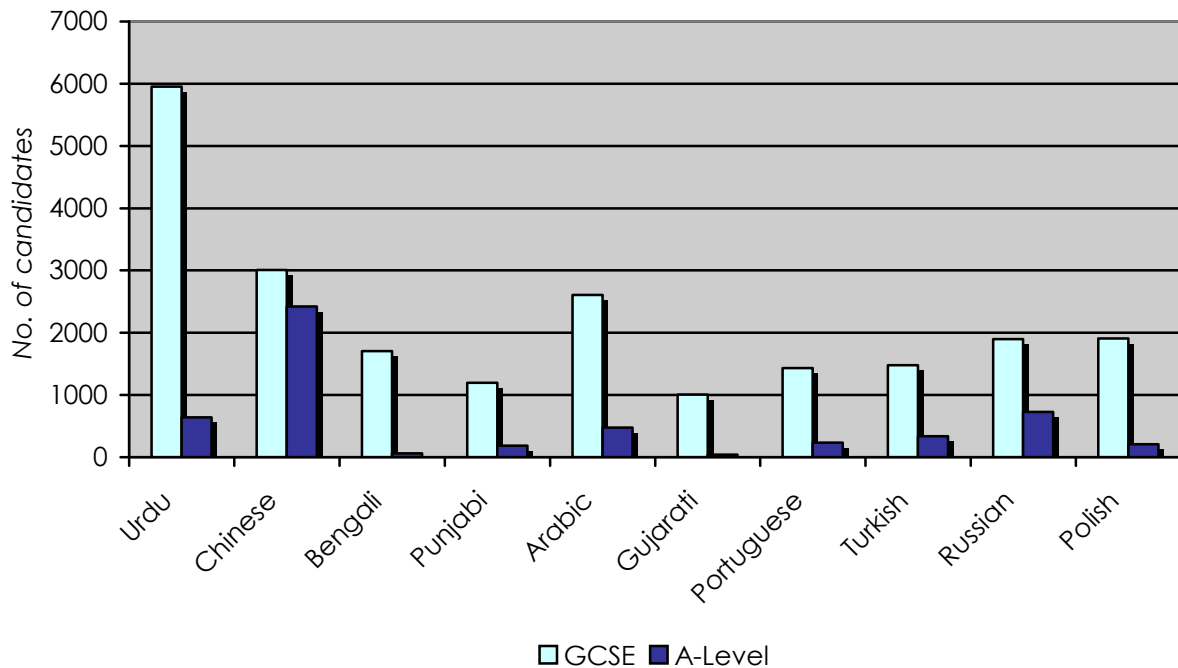
These data show that, excluding Spanish, Urdu, 'Chinese' (which includes Cantonese and Mandarin, with separate oral examinations) and Arabic have the highest number of presentations at GCSE, but that at A-Level, Chinese and Russian outstrip Urdu.

The total number of A-Level presentations in these languages in 2007 is 5347, indicating potential numbers in a good position to continue their studies in these languages in higher education.

The 'retention rate' for most of languages listed above is high. This is a percentage calculated by comparing the numbers sitting a GCSE examination in a given year compared with those sitting an A-level in the same language two years later. It has to be regarded as a proxy measure, however, as not all those sitting A-levels took the relevant examination two years earlier. The retention rate over all languages (i.e. including French, German and Spanish), between GCSEs sat in 2005 and A-levels in 2007, is 7.5%. Most of the languages likely to be studied as community languages have a retention rate considerably higher than those typically studied as 'foreign' languages. Chinese is the most spectacular, with a retention rate of 78%, followed by Polish (51%) and Russian (42%). Only Bengali (3%) and Punjabi (4%) have retention rates below the overall figure. The high retention rate for the majority indicates that community language learners can, generally speaking, be regarded as committed students, and potentially good candidates for continued study of these languages in higher education.

Chart 3.3 shows regional variations in presentations for different languages at GCSE.

Chart 3.3: GCSE Entries by Region
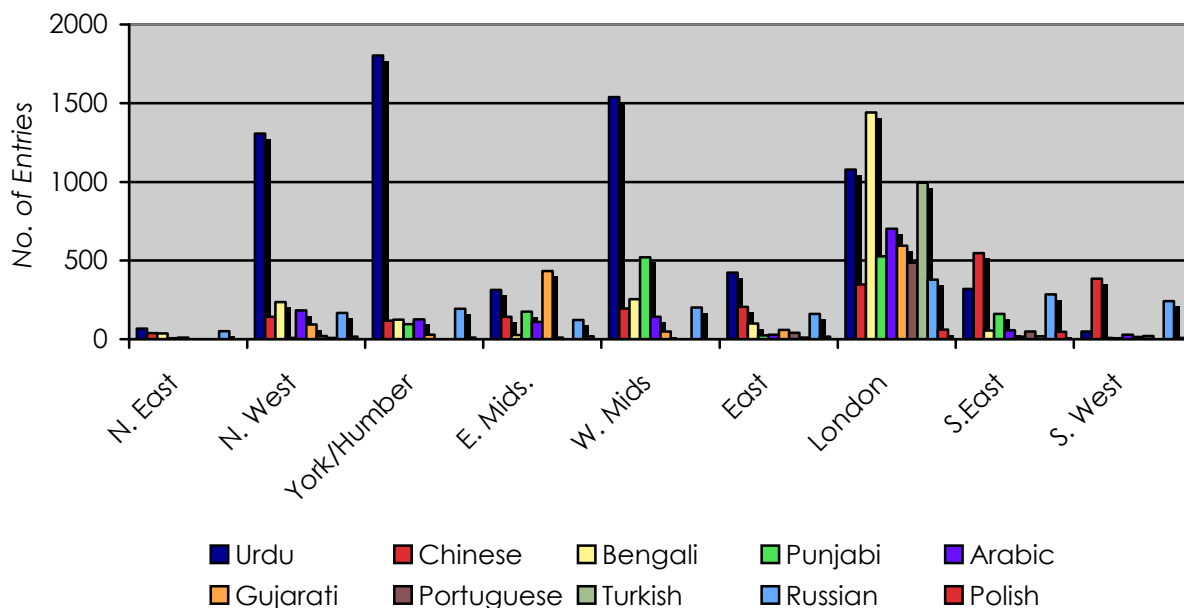
It reveals considerable diversity, both in the numbers of students presented and in the linguistic patterns. While the North East has few community languages entries, London has the highest number overall. However, there are more entries for Urdu in Yorkshire & the Humber, the West Midlands and the North West than in London; and although Urdu has the highest number of entries overall, it is not the dominant language in the East Midlands (where there are more entries for Gujarati), London (Bengali), the South East (Chinese) or the South West (Chinese). Almost all entries for Portuguese and Turkish come from the London area. These regional variations suggest that universities making provision for community languages should take into account the languages most likely to be in demand locally.

3.3 Community languages in higher education

With these points in mind, we now turn to the question of which languages can be studied in higher education, the types of course available and the target students.

If we focus on the twelve languages we have identified above as the most widely spoken and studied community languages in the UK, we can see that patterns of provision for these languages contrast quite markedly with patterns for the main languages likely to be studied as foreign languages, as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Provision for main 'community' and main 'foreign' languages, 2007

Language	No. of HEIs making provision	Degree level study	IWLP/ Modular Provision	Professional	Wider community
Urdu	16	0	8 (50%)	7 (44%)	5 (31%)
Cantonese	8	0	4 (50%)	1 (12.5%)	6 (75%)
Bengali	4	0	1 (25%)	2 (50%)	2 (50%)
Punjabi	4	0	4 (100%)	0	3 (75%)
Arabic	52	13 (25%)	37 (71%)	12 (23%)	36 (69%)
Gujarati	1	0	1 (100%)	0	1 (100%)
Portuguese	39	16 (41%)	23 (59%)	12 (31%)	24 (61.5%)
Turkish	17	5 (29%)	9 (53%)	4 (23.5%)	11 (65%)
Russian	50	16 (32%)	36 (72%)	15 (30%)	33 (66%)
Hindi	4	2 (50%)	3 (75%)	0	2 (50%)
Polish	24	3 (12.5%)	17 (71%)	6 (25%)	14 (58%)
Spanish	93	63 (68%)	76 (82%)	54 (58%)	56 (60%)
French	99	66 (67%)	80 (81%)	61 (62%)	59 (60%)
German	89	59 (66%)	78 (88%)	50 (56%)	58 (65%)

It is not surprising to find that languages such as French, German and Spanish are more widely taught than the main community languages: 99 universities offer courses in French, 93 in Spanish and 89 in German. In contrast, courses in Urdu, likely to be the most widely spoken language in the UK after English, is taught in 16 universities, while Punjabi, Hindi and Bengali are taught in 4, and Gujarati in 1.

Languages such as Arabic and Russian sit somewhere between the main 'foreign' languages and the main 'community' languages, no doubt because they are potentially attractive to both groups of learners.

It is striking that there are no degrees in the main Asian languages in use in the UK — Urdu, Punjabi, Gujarati, Cantonese or Bengali, although SOAS will offer a degree in Bengali from 2008. Despite the fact that a substantial number of students, over the years, have gained A-level qualifications in these languages, there are currently no opportunities for such students to continue these studies at higher level.

Although we conducted a very extensive desk review of universities' provision for languages (as set out in Chapter 2), we found that very few have specifically targeted community language learners or developed provision designed to meet their needs. Lack of awareness of the needs and aspirations of community language learners undoubtedly causes barriers for those who would like to study these languages at university level. As our interview data reveal, often those who have informal skills in the language but no qualifications are assigned to *ab initio* classes, which can be frustrating when learners already have a certain level of competence, and may lead to drop out.

Conversely, those who have GCSE or A-level qualifications may be refused entry to courses which assume an *ab initio* start, because they are 'too good' for the class. It seems that providers very rarely make provision to assess candidates' language skills at the outset and assign them to appropriate levels. Providers seem unwilling to allow learners with existing skills to go straight to an intermediate or advanced class, on the basis that classes composed of students from different year groups would be difficult to manage. These issues are discussed further in Chapters 4 and 5.

Where there is provision which specifically targets community language learners, most commonly, this takes the form of post-graduate professional courses for community languages teachers and public services translators and interpreters. The range of languages included in these qualifications is shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Professional qualifications in community languages

Language	PGCE Community Languages	Diploma Public Service Interpreting
Albanian		Middlesex
Arabic	Goldsmiths, London Metropolitan	Middlesex Salford
Bengali	Bath Spa, East London, London Metropolitan	
Bulgarian		Middlesex
Farsi		Middlesex, Salford
French		Middlesex, Salford
Kurmanji		Middlesex
Mandarin	Goldsmiths	Middlesex
Polish		Middlesex
Portuguese		Goldsmiths, Middlesex
Russian		Middlesex
Serbian		Middlesex
Sorani		Middlesex
Spanish	London Metropolitan	Goldsmiths, Middlesex, Salford
Turkish	London Metropolitan	Goldsmiths, Middlesex
Urdu	Edge Hill, Goldsmiths, Keele, Trinity & All Saints	De Montford, Salford

The existence of this type of provision presents a paradox. Language teaching, translation and interpretation are all jobs requiring advanced linguistic competence. But limited opportunities to study the most widely used and taught community languages to degree level means that it is difficult to identify and recruit students to these post-graduate courses, and thus students on these courses often need substantial additional

support to improve their language skills, making them labour intensive to run. Given that there is demand for teachers, translators and interpreters specialised in community languages, there is a clear need for degree level provision to prepare candidates for these roles.

Four universities offer other types of courses tailored for community language learners. SOAS offers courses in Arabic, Bengali, Kurmanji, Somali and Urdu literacy for speakers of these languages who have not had the opportunity to learn to read and write them. Kings College runs courses in basic literacy in Arabic for those who already speak the language, and a course on reading the Arabic press for those who speak varieties of Arabic and want to develop their competence in modern standard Arabic. Warwick puts on summer courses in conversational Arabic for those who have studied Qur'anic Arabic. Imperial College, Kings College and SOAS all offer courses in Mandarin language and literacy for speakers of Cantonese.

4.   Implications of wider trends in language provision

Consideration of how best to improve provision for community languages needs to take into account more general trends in provision for languages in higher education. Two factors are potentially significant: rising numbers of students studying Spanish and some of the major world languages such as Arabic and Chinese, accompanied by a fall in the numbers studying French and German; and a shift away from languages degrees to IWLP enrolments.

4.1 Student numbers

National statistics on student numbers are mainly concerned with those on degree courses. The principal sources of data are the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA): UCAS data relate to the numbers of students accepted onto degree courses each year, while HESA data represent actual enrolments for the year in question. The statistics relating specifically to languages are collated by CILT, the National Centre for Languages, which conducts more detailed analyses of trends and also requests certain unpublished data sets. The following account of student numbers is based largely on CILT's analysis and we are very grateful to Sarah Joy, CILT's statistician, who provided considerable support for the project.

A key problem with these data, for the purposes of this study, is that, apart from the major European languages (French, German, Spanish and Italian), and Chinese and Japanese, both HESA and UCAS group languages together in categories such as 'Russian and Eastern European', 'Modern Middle Eastern', 'Other Asian', 'African', 'Other European' and 'Other Non-European' languages. (There are minor variations between the HESA and UCAS groupings.) This makes it difficult to identify issues for the languages in which we are particularly interested, particularly as the 'Other European' and 'Other Non-European' categories contain very large number of students.

Analyses of trends in student numbers from 1996 to 2005 show a decline in the number of students accepted on languages degree courses generally. There is a steep decline in the first half of the decade: in 2001 there were 20% fewer language students than there had been in 1996. There are signs of levelling out by 2005, when there are only 3% fewer students than there had been in 2001. Although the numbers of students of

French and German continued to fall, this loss was almost compensated by a rise in the numbers studying Spanish and 'Other European' languages in particular, as well as smaller increases in most of the other categories (apart from 'Other Asian' and 'Other Non-European). Table 3.3 summarises UCAS data for this period, and includes data for 2007 which recently became available.

Table 3.3: Students accepted on language degree courses 1996-2005

Languages Acceptances	1996	2001	% change 1996–2001	2005	% change 2001–5	2006
French	5655	4077	-28%	3964	-3%	3700
Spanish	2155	2331	10%	2547	9%	2461
German	2288	1736	-24%	1503	-13%	1401
Italian	837	786	-6%	639	-19%	610
Russian and Eastern European	418	380	-9%	425	12%	409
Modern Middle Eastern studies	214	260	21%	362	39%	378
Chinese	165	165	0	352	113%	392
Japanese	272	249	-8%	331	33%	306
Other Asian Studies	161	171	6%	142	-17%	118
Portuguese	128	117	-9%	118	1%	141
Scandinavian Studies	65	36	-45%	57	58%	19
African Studies	54	57	6%	57	0	67
Other European	2200	1507	-32%	1667	11%	1647
Other non-European	2514	1900	-24%	1248	-34%	1185
ALL	17126	13772	-20%	13412	-3%	12834

Source UCAS analysed by CILT.
UCAS figures give potential first year students only and should not be compared with HESA figures, which count all students across all years of study

Although the overall fall in student numbers over this period gives cause for considerable concern, these data suggest a tentative interest in a wider range of languages than was the case ten years ago, perhaps reflecting globalisation and greater awareness of the value of learning languages which give access to areas of emerging economic and political importance, such as China, Russia and the Middle East. As many of these languages are community languages in the UK, they suggest that the time is ripe for the development of courses which allow community language speakers to take advantage of a new interest and new opportunities in these parts of the world.

4.2 Shift from languages degrees to IWLP enrolments

While numbers of students taking degree level language courses have declined over the last decade, the numbers taking credit bearing modules currently stand at some 83000 students, six times as many as are taking language degrees, Commenting on these figures, CILT notes that it is difficult to be sure exactly how many students fall into this category:

> Many students of other disciplines are taking language modules at universities in the UK. A host of different study routes are provided through language, certificates, diplomas, modular credits and extra-curricular learning opportunities. National research and data on the students following such courses is scarce, although the HESA student record data does capture some of these students. In some cases, they are recorded as language units alongside and accredited to the undergraduate's first degree of another discipline, in other cases, they are separately recorded as other undergraduates (these are full qualification aims below degree level including evening language classes, business language courses, translation courses amongst others).[1]

This phenomenon is currently the subject of research by the Association of University Language Centres in the UK and Ireland (AULC). The Association has carried out research among its members on the numbers of students taking courses in IWLPs. It ran its own institutional survey in 2003/04 and 2004/05 on the numbers of students taking languages as a) part of their degree or b) an extra-curricular activity and found that the demand for extra-curricular language courses was outstripping the demand for courses assessed as credit-bearing modules by more than 25% (Byrne and Abbot 2007: 2). The authors conclude that this showed that there was a clear need for such courses to be offered by all HEIs to fulfil the needs of students who:
- want to learn a language for both professional and personal reasons;
- want to learn a language outside of their main studies whilst recognising the importance of language learning as both a means to an end (professional development), and an end in itself (personal development);
- are willing to pay for this activity.

The AULC has been funded by the DCSF to run a combined quantitative institutional survey and a qualitative student survey across its member institutions in the UK over three years, from 2005/06 to 2007/08. The second (2006/07) survey had responses from 76 institutions in the UK, showing that 40,255 students were taking languages in degree modules and 33,144 on an extra-curricular basis.

These developments suggest that languages in higher education are shifting from degree study for students wholly or partly dedicated to this subject area, to modular study for students from a wide range of subject disciplines. This may reflect wider policy-related discourse which has sought, particularly since the Nuffield Inquiry (2000) into the future of languages education in the UK, to make more explicit the advantages of developing languages skills for a very wide range of careers.

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[1] These data were collated from HESA statistics by CILT, in June 2007 (see http://www.cilt.org.uk/research/statistics/education/higher.htm, accessed 17 January 2008). They relate to 2005-6. Subsequently, HESA ceased collection of these data as they felt that they were not sufficiently reliable, for a variety of reasons. Nevertheless, it still seems likely that there are many more students studying languages on certificated courses than as degrees.

These findings raise the question of the best way forward for community languages. Although there are no degree courses in the main languages in use in the UK, there is a range of IWLP and professional courses, and courses targeting the wider community. Such provision goes some way to ensuring that community language learners who wish to graduate in other subjects also have the opportunity to formalise their language skills and gain accreditation of potential use for future careers, Nevertheless, it is still important, for the reasons set out in Section 3, to encourage providers to set up degree courses too. Without such courses, it will be difficult to find teachers with sufficiently advanced level skills to teach community languages on IWLPs.

5. Conclusions

Our aim, in mapping provision for community languages in higher education, was to identify provision which specifically targeted community language learners, and to consider the extent to which current provision maps onto demand, nationally and regionally. From our earlier work on provision for community languages in schools, we have data which allows us to identify, with some degree of accuracy, likely regional variations in demand for particular languages.

However, our desk review has shown that very little provision specifically targets community language learners; and thus there is no need for regional mapping. We were particularly struck by the lack of opportunities for pupils with A-levels in the most widely taught languages to progress to higher level study of these languages in higher education. For some of these languages, there are no degree level courses at all. In other cases, most notably Chinese, there are degree courses, but these are aimed at *ab initio* students and those who already have A-levels are therefore not eligible.

Existing statistics collected by UCAS and HESA did not allow us to explore in detail the uptake of courses in the main community languages in use in England, as these are represented in large blocs, such as 'Russian and Eastern European' (which does not allow us to distinguish between uptake for Russian and Polish) or 'Other Asian' (which does not allow us to separate the main languages of the Indian subcontinent). Furthermore, many institutions appear to be using the catch-all 'Other European' and 'Other non-European' categories rather than choosing more specific labels for the languages their students offer. This makes it difficult or impossible to review student uptake for languages likely to be studied as community languages. Further research on this matter would require language specific data to be collected.

Chapter 4:   Meeting needs and achieving potential

Summary

There are compelling reasons for investing in high quality provision for community languages. Studies have shown that the UK needs to become more multilingual in order to compete effectively in local and international markets; and a very wide range of employers now seek to recruit staff fluent in at least two languages, both because they require competence in specific languages — not only European but also 'world' languages such as Arabic and Chinese — and because plurilingual staff are more aware of the need for intercultural communication competence and more prepared for learning additional languages, as required. Capitalising on our increasingly multilingual population is one way of achieving this goal, particularly as community language learners are, typically, committed and highly competent linguists.

This chapter looks at the needs and aspirations of actual and potential students of community languages in higher education, and at providers' perceptions of demand and their responses. Students identify two key reasons for higher level study of community languages: enhanced career and business opportunities; and support for their intellectual ambitions. Experienced community languages teachers identify a third rationale: enabling learners who have had limited opportunities for academic success to gain recognition for an area in which they have achieved a high level of competence, as a way of opening doors to higher education more generally. Students and their mentors alike are, however, frustrated by very limited opportunities, and are concerned about the quality of provision which does not always conform to their vision of higher education provision for community languages, dependent as it is on hourly paid tutors and the vagaries of recruitment policy from one year to the next.

Providers' perceptions of demand vary considerably. Some see this as very limited, and for provision at a low level of study, better catered for in other sectors. These assumptions do not appear to be based on any market research. In addition, some providers are concerned that offering community languages courses could open their institutions to charges of social bias (favouring some sectors of the local population over others, and appearing to support anti-liberal agendas), and that such provision would not further their institutions' international policies. Other providers, however, have recognised the potential that community languages offer both for enhancing their institutions' international profile and for supporting the widening access and participation agenda, and are developing provision which responds to the distinctive needs and aspirations of community language learners.

1.   Investing in community languages

Linguistically, the UK and Ireland occupy a unique position in Europe. With English increasingly recognised as a 'global language', our European neighbours need to invest substantial amounts of curriculum time — at all levels of education — in ensuring that their inhabitants become highly proficient in the international language of communication, commerce, science and political discourse. But countries where English is the dominant language can, many believe, dispense with a comprehensive second language education policy because their inhabitants are at a natural advantage. This widely-held view has been challenged, however, by a number of studies which argue

that other factors need to be taken in to account. Graddol (1997; 2006), for example, has pointed to the fact that there are more speakers of Chinese than any other language around the world, and that as the Chinese economy expands, the dominance of English around the world may be threatened. Furthermore other languages, notably Arabic, Hindi/Urdu and Spanish, closely followed by Russian and Portuguese, are strong competitors. In a world where 'everyone' (in reality, probably around 25% of the world's population) speaks English as a first or additional language, competence in these other languages is likely to constitute a competitive 'edge'.

Less heralded but equally significant, however, is the fact that the UK and Ireland are among the most multilingual countries in Europe: some 300 languages are in use in the UK and over 150 in Ireland (McPake et al. 2007b). This means that we have the potential to develop high levels of proficiency, both in the range of 'world' languages listed above and in many other languages with local significance within the UK and potentially also niche markets elsewhere. Community language speakers, in many cases, already invest considerable time in developing their competence in these languages, through complementary provision for children of school age and other community-based or local authority-run classes for adults. A relatively small investment in provision at higher education level could reap substantial rewards, given that community language learners are already proficient to some degree — while other students need to begin their study of 'world' languages *ab initio*, requiring considerably more time and institutional resourcing to reach comparable levels. It can be argued that community language learners have typically demonstrated long-standing commitment to the language in question, and are likely to have 'insider knowledge' of the social and cultural practices associated with the language, potentially a major asset for employers.

UK policy has already recognised the changing context for language learning. The *Nuffield Languages Inquiry* (2000) argued persuasively that in the 21st century, English will not be enough for individuals setting out in their careers and for businesses seeking global success. The *Inquiry* noted that many different languages are needed — not only French — and that these will include both the major 'world' languages of Asia and Latin America, and languages of local significance. As the UK becomes increasingly multilingual, the other languages of new and well-established communities will play an important role in local business, public services and tourism and have the potential to expand the scope of international trade into developing markets. The *Inquiry* expressed concern that the range available in educational institutions was narrowing at precisely the time it should be expanding.

The *National Languages Strategy* (DfES, 2002) established a very broad rationale for supporting language learning, arguing that languages are increasingly important not only for economic reasons but also because they contribute to the cultural richness of society, to personal fulfilment, to mutual understanding and global citizenship. The *Strategy* argues that to realise England's languages potential, there is a need to draw on the language skills and experiences of families and communities and to develop mechanisms which formally recognise competence in community languages as well as the languages typically studied at school. There is a clear expectation that school provision for language learning should expand to include the major community languages in use in the UK, and that this will require the identification and training of a new generation of teachers with skills in these languages.

Given that the *National Languages Strategy* makes specific demands on higher education, a study of the implications was commissioned by the DfES. The report (Footitt, 2005) established that there had been a decline in the numbers of students taking languages degrees (single or joint honours or combined degrees), both in the major European languages and in languages regarded as strategically important (Chinese, Japanese and Arabic). This work contributed to the designation of languages in higher education as 'strategic and vulnerable' subjects by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE, 2005), with a particular emphasis on what are termed 'minority' languages: Arabic, Turkish language studies and other Middle Eastern languages; former Soviet Union Caucasus and central Asian languages; Japanese, Chinese, Mandarin and other far eastern languages; and the languages of recent EU accession countries, especially those in Eastern Europe and the Baltic.

2.   Meeting employer needs

There is considerable current interest in the employability of languages graduates, reflected in extensive work by CILT, the National Centre for Languages and the Regional Language Networks (RLNs) in England both to investigate supply and demand factors, and also to measure the value added to businesses which employ linguists. Key findings to emerge from this work are:

- executive recruiters see competence in at least one other language in addition to English as 'critical' for business success in Europe, Asia and Latin America, and that plurilingual executives have 'significant competitive advantage';
- language skills are required at every level of business, not just in the professional and managerial echelons;
- there is a clear correlation between good business practice in relation to languages and increased turnover;
- a lack of language skills prevents UK businesses from tapping into developing markets (where English is less likely to be used), despite the fact that these have greater potential than mature markets for economic growth.

(CILT, 2005c)

CILT's survey of providers of language services to business (2005b) found demand for a wide range of languages, with the major European languages in the lead, but Chinese, Japanese, Arabic and Russian and eastern European languages on the increase.

In the course of the present study, the views of a number of graduate employers were sought on the importance of languages generally and more specifically of languages more likely to be studied as community languages. Responses confirmed the CILT survey findings. Employers ranging from law firms to multinational banks to major aid and development organisations confirmed that applicants with languages were, at the very least, viewed more favourably than those without; while some stated categorically that they would not employ people who spoke only English. For some companies, the specific languages were immaterial: they saw students with languages as more flexible and adaptable, more likely to appreciate the need for intercultural communication skills and more able to build relationships with counterparts or clients in other countries. A recruiter for an international financial services company commented:

For our global scheme we need language capabilities and recruit graduates accordingly — the more languages the better. It is good to have teams with a variety of different language skills, but whether a language has been learnt as a community or a foreign language it makes no

difference. Languages are seen as very impressive and an indication of inter-cultural communication. In fact, even if a job doesn't require a language, we prefer candidates with language skills.

Some recognised also that those who had demonstrated the ability to learn other languages in the past would be better placed to learn new languages as the need arose. Other employers were looking for specific languages of relevance to their international operations: these included Mandarin, Arabic, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Korean, Farsi, Japanese, Hungarian, Polish, Swahili, Hindi and Urdu, as well as the major European languages.

Strong cases can thus be made for making provision for these 'world languages', particularly Mandarin and Arabic. Some providers of degree courses in these languages noted high levels of take-up among students for whom these are not community languages for precisely this reason. However, achieving high levels of competence in such languages from an *ab initio* start, even for those who study these languages to degree level, is a major challenge for learners. One of our respondents commented that students who start to study Chinese as undergraduates will not, at the time of graduation, have acquired sufficient competence in the language to teach A-Level Chinese (for which, currently, almost all candidates are community language learners). This observation provides some indication of the much greater difficulty such languages present for students without prior experience, compared with other European languages such as Spanish or Italian, which undergraduates might also start to study from scratch but in which they would expect to have achieved a higher than A-Level competence by the end of a degree; and demonstrates that by supporting community language learners, the UK has the potential to produce graduates with a very high level of competence in languages for which there will be increasing demand.

In addition to work for companies or organisations with a high international profile, there is a wide range of local opportunities for community languages speakers, including teaching (both teaching the languages themselves and community liaison work), public service translation and interpreting and other public service work where plurilingual staff are sought to work with a multilingual client base. There has been a very marked rise in community-based journalism (particularly radio) in a range of languages in recent years. Businesses catering for the needs of communities living in the UK also seek employees who can speak the language well: to give just one example provided in the course of this research, UK-based halal butchers need staff who can speak both Turkish and German fluently to deal with the Turkish-run, German-based meat exporters who dominate the market for halal meat in Europe. According to CILT (2005b), two thirds of independently owned shops in the UK belong to people from ethnic minorities.

However, employers involved in all of these areas report a very substantial skills gap. Plurilingual public service workers (including translators and interpreters) need to have a sophisticated command of community language(s) and English. They have to be aware of, and sensitive to, dialectal and, more broadly, cultural differences among groups with the same language affiliation, and to be able to engage in problem solving and critical thinking in specialised linguistic domains (such as law, public policy, health matters, counselling, etc.) Journalists need well developed communication and literacy skills and the ability to handle sensitive issues for the communities they serve, balancing different perspectives. Some employers in this field pointed out that the value of community journalism goes beyond what might be seen by outsiders as parochial issues. In many

cases, the communities served are the product of complex political situations in the countries of origin, involved in conflicts or disputes which sometimes spill over into the wider world. Respondents involved in both Punjabi and Turkish local radio stations commented on the role which these services have played in addressing community relations after the World Trade Centre attacks in New York and the London Underground bombings, stressing the importance of this work for social cohesion in the UK, while noting that their role has been widely ignored by the mainstream, monolingual English speaking population. These are not, therefore, jobs which community language speakers can take up simply by virtue of the language skills they have acquired informally: like others in jobs which require highly developed communication skills, they need opportunities to develop their community languages for professional use.

3.   Student perspectives: rationales for studying community languages

Many actual or potential students of community languages were aware of the value of higher level study of their languages, and listed a variety of reasons for wishing to study them. These included awareness of the economic worth of their languages for careers purposes, and intellectual interests. In addition some teachers and employers of community languages speakers recognised that opportunities to develop community language skills to a high level could act as a trigger for academic achievement more generally, particularly for those lacking in confidence or those who had limited family or community experience of higher education.

Some students wished to realise the economic potential of their languages, particularly those such as Mandarin and Arabic for which, as noted above, there is growing employer demand. Both Arabic and Mandarin present some problems in this regard, however, as many of those who have learned these languages during their school careers speak and have studied varieties which are significantly different from the standard or elite form. In the case of Mandarin, there is a significant number of Cantonese speaking students with a relatively high level of literacy in Chinese but little knowledge of the spoken language. Their literacy skills put them at a distinct advantage, compared with *ab initio* learners. However, as Mandarin and Cantonese are not mutually intelligible, they still have to learn the spoken language from scratch. Similarly, students with existing skills in Arabic may be fluent in one of the many local varieties of the language, stretching from Saudi Arabia to Morocco, but their literacy studies may have concentrated principally on classical Arabic for the purposes of reading the Qur'an. They would therefore need to acquire literacy in the modern language and also, depending on the variety they already speak, to acquire modern standard Arabic plus one of the major varieties, for the purposes of wider communication. As with the Cantonese students, their existing skills put them at an advantage, compared to *ab initio* learners, but the courses they attend need to take into account the particular needs of these potentially high achieving students. A number of providers recognised retrospectively that 'beginners' courses in these languages which assume no knowledge at all are off-putting for these students — or indeed they may be barred from taking part because of their existing competence — and thus fail to engage them or retain them. However, there appear to be few courses specifically designed for such students and opportunities to capitalise on their existing commitment and expertise are therefore very limited.

Some of those who have taken the opportunity to continue to develop their community language competence while in higher education did so for intellectual rather than purely economic reasons. They were interested in studying cultural or social aspects of the

countries associated with their languages and argued that to do so requires them to be highly fluent and fully literate in these languages. A post-graduate student of economics described his reasons for wanting to develop his skills in Bengali:

> *Various reasons — mainly intellectual. I wanted to do further research at MPhil and mainly focus on a particular thinker in Bangladesh, and obviously if I'm going to do research I need a full command of the language itself and that will be an advantage. So there is that motivation. [Since I started studying here] I have developed more awareness and fascination for languages, particularly Bengali as it is such a rich language.*

These views are in tune with arguments recently put forward by the British Academy to the effect that a lack of language skills adversely affects the quality of British scholarship:

> We are deeply concerned about the effect that a decline in language learning is having upon UK scholarship — and not just in language based subjects. It is already possible to see the negative consequences of this trend at doctoral level, and above. Increasingly research projects undertaken by UK PhD students in the humanities and social sciences do not have an international dimension, because students do not have the language skills, or the time to acquire them, with the risk that UK research will be increasingly insular in outlook.
>
> (British Academy, 2006.)

Such students were critical of much current provision, arguing that courses of community language study should be as intellectually demanding and stimulating as any other higher education course. They felt that providers often had low expectations, given that many offer only basic level courses which fail to recognise existing competence or the students' aspirations to use their languages for academic purposes. The precarious nature of much provision, and low rates of pay for tutors, were understood to impede the engagement of the best qualified teachers, raising concerns about quality of provision and the commitment of higher education institutions to developing expertise in these languages.

Some teachers of community languages (in various sectors) and some employers of community language speakers put forward a third rationale for making provision: as a trigger to engagement with academic study in other fields for those lacking in confidence or with very limited family or community experience of higher education. They described students and colleagues who had struggled with academic work in the past, perhaps because their schooling had been disrupted or because limited competence in English in their first years of living in the UK had prevented them from acquiring the qualifications that would allow them to go on to further study. In addition, the low status accorded by mainstream British society to their community languages and cultural background more generally may have contributed to crises of confidence and low levels of self-esteem adversely affecting their perception of themselves as competent learners. Where such people had had opportunities to develop their community language skills and gain formal recognition for these, this could challenge such negative views and widen academic horizons. However, these teachers also felt that opportunities available at present were very limited, and that providers might not recognise or value these broader reasons for making provision.

4.   Provider perspectives: identifying and responding to demand

As we have seen in Chapter 3, the numbers of universities offering community languages at degree level are small, and those wishing to study their community language may not find that it is on offer in the area where they live, or that the courses available are not at an appropriate level. A key question is why provision is so limited, when policy thrust, employer demand and the existence of potential students are clearly identifiable. Three factors appear to be influential: firstly, few providers have done market research in this area and are therefore largely unaware of the issues set out earlier in this section, or, more specifically of local needs and demand; secondly, there are perceptions of tensions between what providers perceive to be very local concerns and the espoused goals of their institutions to become 'world class' universities; and thirdly, for those providers who do seek to make provision, there are a number of challenges both in rethinking models of language provision to match the needs and aspirations of community language learners and in resourcing such provision.

Although all of the providers whose representatives were approached to participate in this study were identified as having some interest in or commitment to community language learning, strikingly, many of the respondents held that there was little or no demand. In some cases, they argued that this was because there was already extensive provision elsewhere (in schools and in adult education), or else that low demand reflected low status of the languages in question among the communities themselves. A university language centre director commented:

> There is a great deal of provision for community languages in [this area], in supplementary schools, further education colleges, language colleges and evening classes, and the LEA is very active in supporting supplementary schools. These institutions have an extremely important role in the integration of these communities as well as in the maintenance of linguistic and cultural heritage, and that these linguistic skills need to be valued, but a balance needs to be maintained so that identities are not preserved to the detriment of integration.

It was, however, clear, that few respondents had conducted systematic market research to establish demand (or the lack of it). In some cases they based their assessment on their own experiences of working with potentially relevant communities; in others they argued that market research among community language groups was irrelevant because the target groups for the languages they offered, even when these were likely to be community languages in the local area, were those seeking to develop skills in particular languages for professional or business purposes. For example, one IWLP director, who had recently expanded the languages on offer in the programme to include Mandarin and Arabic, made clear that this was because these are important 'world' languages:

> The two new languages were chosen because of their importance in the world and rapidly growing demand. [… The University] considers itself a "real-world" university, and people in business, engineering and life and health sciences may need Arabic when travelling in their future careers.

The target market for these courses was seen as beginners, people with no knowledge of the language who have nevertheless identified a need to learn them. Students for whom these are community languages are not targeted because they are thought not to have the business or professional interests for which the courses are designed. This is a problematic position because, as we have seen, this assumption conflicts with what actual and potential students have told us.

Footitt (2005) has already drawn attention to the fact that university languages departments have long nurtured international links by virtue of the subject area with which they are concerned, but that these links are often overlooked by senior management. There appears to be a parallel in the case of community languages. Certainly, those with an interest in these languages may have local and community specific reasons for doing so, not least the realisation that there are local jobs for which highly developed skills in the languages in question would be valuable. But by default, all community languages have links to the wider world, not only the countries from which the languages originate but, in many cases, diasporas around the world. Supporting the learning of these languages, helping students make and develop these connections, could in fact support universities' ambitions to become key players in the fast developing higher education markets of the Far East, the Indian sub-continent, the countries of the former Soviet Union, the Middle East and Latin America, all areas with which the UK's community language speakers have links.

These differences between learner and provider perspectives suggest an urgent need for market research investigating potential interest, particularly among school or college students of community languages seeking to continue their studies in higher education, as this group constitutes a major source of students already committed to formal study of the languages in question. Clearly, the existence of provision for the major European languages at school and in adult education does not preclude their being taught in higher education, so this rationale for failing to make provision for community languages in higher education seems somewhat specious. If, however, it emerges that secondary school students of community languages are unconvinced of their value beyond this stage, school-focused initiatives similar to those promoting higher study of the major European languages (or an expansion of these) should be considered.

5, Provider perspectives: meeting needs and aspirations

Language politics also present a significant challenge for those wishing to offer community languages. Providers with extensive expertise in community languages draw attention to the need to understand the ways in which social power imbalances affect community language learning. English sits at the top of the linguistic hierarchy, affecting community languages in ways which have some parallel with the experiences of foreign language providers. It is well-established that interest in learning languages such as French and German is waning not only in the UK where there is a widespread view (despite the best efforts of the Nuffield Inquiry) that 'English is enough'; but also internationally, where the ascendancy of English language learning is accompanied by a decline in interest in studying other languages. The effects of this worldwide phenomenon are exacerbated for community language learners in the UK by a politically-motivated insistence on the importance of speaking English as the key to integration in British society, often accompanied, explicitly or implicitly, by negative views concerning the value or usefulness of the other languages in use. There are many well-known examples of this phenomenon, perhaps most notoriously David Blunkett's comment, when Home Secretary, that Asians should speak English at home:

> [Speaking English] helps overcome the schizophrenia which bedevils generational relationships. (Blunkett, 2002)

Some community languages teachers and providers noted that these kinds of views, which are frequently reiterated by politicians and the media, have had a negative impact on provision, both in terms of devaluing the achievements of those who have studied community languages at school, and of discouraging people from continuing to study them. A respondent with long involvement in the teaching of Turkish commented:

> *Recently within the last 4–5 years and since 9/11 etc we've had those people who have been lying under stones coming out […] and they are now challenging the value of community languages and the value of learning and speaking them. There is almost a kind of going back to trying to justify that these languages are good for the kids and that we should educate our children in them. […] I was told that the kids are in England now and so we have to teach English — so we are going right back to the 1960s.*

It is not surprising that some community language speakers internalise these perspectives and come to believe that their languages are of little worth. Even when opportunities to study them are available, they may choose not to take these up, as a result (Mehmedbegovic, 2004); and over time, attrition of the community language can occur (Waas, 1996). Providers need to be aware that learners — or potential learners — may have received few positive messages about the value of their languages in the past; and also that they may be embarrassed or dismayed about language loss, particularly when in the presence of 'native speaker' teachers who may only recently have arrived in the UK from the country of origin.

Other linguistic hierarchies are also significant. Urdu, for example, is the national language of Pakistan, and for this reason, the language of media and of education in that country, although many other languages are spoken there: *Ethnologue*[2] lists 12 other languages with over a million speakers, and many other smaller languages. Urdu is closely related to Hindi — despite different scripts they are mutually intelligible in the spoken form — meaning that the two languages act as a *lingua franca* for much of the Indian subcontinent. For families of Pakistani descent living in the UK, competence in Urdu enables them to keep in touch with developments in Pakistan and to communicate with others with links to the Indian subcontinent. The language also plays an important role in religious activities. However, most UK families of Pakistani origin do not speak Urdu at home: they are predominantly Punjabi or Mirpuri speakers. Few choose to study these languages formally, however, because Urdu has higher status in the community and is considered the mark of an educated person. This situation again has implications for providers. While students of Pakistani origin may (legitimately) assert that Urdu is their community language, they may not use it at home, and their experiences of learning it and the skills acquired as a result may vary very considerably. Similar situations apply to many other linguistic communities living in the UK, where the language of prestige may not be that used in the home, and it is important that providers are aware of the complexities and the sensitivities of those concerned.

These issues present a number of challenges to those proposing to make provision for community language studies in higher education, and indicate a need for collaboration with existing providers in other sectors, to understand learner needs and aspirations in the context of what may already have been achieved, and what is looked for by their immediate communities, potential employers, and wider society. However, we found examples of successful provision based on a detailed understanding of the local context,

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[2] The *Ethnologue* website aims to list all the languages in use around the world, classified by linguistic type and by the geographical areas in which they are found. See www.ethnologue.com.

the learners' needs and the potential for outcomes valued by the students themselves and potential employers.

Case study:
Community Languages at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)

Our desk review of HEIs found that SOAS was the only HEI making explicit reference to provision for community language learners, both in its Language Centre courses and its degree courses. The kind of provision available differs from language to language. This case study focuses on provision for Somali, Bengali and Chinese, to illustrate the ways in which courses have developed to suit the needs of learners of different languages.

Somali
In addition to offering *ab initio* courses in Somali for students without prior experience, classes in Somali literacy are run for those who speak the language fluently but have not had the opportunity to learn to read or write. Many people of Somali origin came to the UK as refugees from unrest and civil war in the country, from the 1970s onwards. Few are literate in Somali because opportunities to study the language in the UK have been very limited until recently; furthermore, although a large-scale literacy campaign was initiated in Somalia in the 1970s, few people have been able to benefit because of internal disruption to education. Precisely because of these problems, many Somalis are committed to becoming literate in the language and to gain access to the culture of a country some of them have never had the chance to visit, knowing that this may enable them to contribute to the education of future generations, if the political situation stabilises.

The success of basic literacy classes in Somali has led to the establishing of advanced classes in formal usage (which includes grammar and vocabulary expansion and the development of translation skills) and literature and culture. Although these classes are open to those not from the community, who began as *ab initio* students, only a few are able to reach this level, as the community language learners, once they have acquired basic literacy, progress much more rapidly.

Bengali
As with Somali, literacy classes in Bengali are offered via the SOAS Language Centre to community language learners living in London. The success of these classes has led to the decision to offer a degree in Bengali, from autumn 2008, with multiple entry points, so that *ab initio* students, those with GCSE Bengali and those with A-level Bengali can start the course at appropriate levels. This will be one of the very few degrees to be offered in one of the UK's main community languages to caters for students who have already reached A-Level standard. Community language learners without formal qualifications will be placed in the beginners' class because the tutors feel strongly that they need a good grounding in formal aspects of the language, but they expect the course to benefit from the mix of foreign and community language learners.

Chinese
The Chinese courses offered at SOAS include classes in Mandarin and Cantonese, with opportunities also to study Hokkien, Hakka and Shangainese when there are sufficient numbers of students. Around a fifth of the students (20%) have cultural links with China: they may be of Chinese origin or have a Chinese partner. Their competence in the language is assessed when they register, and a wide range of courses is available at different levels, to cater for different needs. However, the co-ordinators deliberately avoid creating separate classes for students who speak fluently but are not fully literate, because this would isolate them; rather, they seek to integrate them with other students. There are courses in Mandarin for Cantonese speakers,

where a very different teaching approach is needed; cultural courses taught in Chinese are available for students defined as 'native speakers'; and specialist courses in Mandarin for lawyers and for business which require a very high level of competence, and are thus aimed either at who already have a degree or have acquired high levels of competence as community language speakers.

There are similar plans for a course in Urdu as part of the IWLP offered at the University of Sheffield. In contrast to the other courses which could be defined as 'foreign' language studies, Urdu has been chosen as a language of relevance both to the local community, where there is a need for qualified teachers of Urdu and translators and interpreters, and as an important world language. Recognising that potential students will already have expertise in the language, the course will not be aimed at 'beginners', and there is a commitment to identifying teaching methods and materials appropriate to learners' needs and interests.

6. Conclusions

In this chapter, we have established that there is growing recognition among policy-makers and employers of the potential benefits of investment in provision for community languages. Community language learners currently in higher education are aware that their language skills are potentially an asset in the careers they hope to pursue, or to support their studies. Because they are ambitious, and because they have high expectations of higher education, some are disappointed to find that the courses available often fail to recognise these aspirations.

Providers face a number of challenges in developing provision to meet needs and aspirations. They need market research to gauge local demand and identify potential; and they need to address institutional misconceptions about the nature and focus of community language provision. They may need to become advocates, making the case for community languages as contributing to their institution's internationalisation agenda. When these hurdles have been overcome, they need to address more specifically the different approaches to teaching and learning which community languages require. These issues form the focus of Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Learning and teaching

Summary

This chapter examines issues affecting the learning and teaching of community languages in higher education. This area presents providers with significant challenges, as pedagogies specifically designed for the teaching of community languages are in their infancy. Respondents identified factors which make community languages different from foreign language learning: for example, the likelihood that students will have diverse language learning histories and have acquired their community languages in very different contexts; and also that they will have a wide range of purposes for wishing to develop their community language skills. However, making appropriate provision is difficult, in part because few providers have mechanisms to assess students' competence in their community languages when they start a course, or to investigate their goals; and therefore few have a comprehensive picture of the nature of demand or how to meet it.

As a result, it is difficult to establish the qualities required in community languages teachers in higher education and to recruit suitable staff, or to identify suitable teaching resources. Certification of student achievement is also problematic, because models which measure outcomes are seen to be inappropriate, when some students may achieve high grades with little effort while others will struggle to reach the lower levels; and there is some discussion among providers of measuring progression rather than outcomes. Students and employers appear more likely to seek certification which gives a clear indication of the skills they possess, however achieved, particularly in the case of jobs which require particular types of competence, at specific levels.

1. Pedagogical approaches

The teaching of community languages requires pedagogical approaches which differ, in some important ways, from those used to teach foreign languages. In particular, they need to recognise and respond to pre-existing cultural, educational and linguistic differences among the learners, differences which will, in most cases, be greater than those found in the typical foreign language class.

1.1 Prior experience and the need for differentiation

Community language learners will, by definition, have had some prior experience of the language, informally and, in some cases, through formal provision in mainstream schools or complementary classes. They may also have had the opportunity to study in a country where the language is used as the medium of instruction. Many students will have reached a high level of oral competence, and some may have developed literacy skills. Any given intake is therefore likely to contain students with very different linguistic skills. In some cases, it may be possible to run separate classes which focus on different skills, at different levels of ability: some students who are orally fluent may need to acquire basic literacy, while others may be interested in developing more specific areas of competence, such as academic literacy, or the professional language relevant to future careers, e.g. legal terminology, an understanding of business language practices or journalistic writing. Community languages students themselves are aware of the need for differentiation, and suggested pre-course assessment leading to appropriate placement.

I think there should be assessments. People should be interviewed to test their level before they join a class. This year in the Swahili class there are people who have studied things that we haven't studied, […] it embarrasses some people because they are more advanced and it puts some people off and holds some people back. They should be in [a higher level class].
(Student)

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They were critical of what they perceived to be standard practice in IWLPs: that the first course to be offered should always be at beginners' level, with others to follow if demand is generated.

Intermediate learners are often dissuaded in HE because only beginners' courses are available in many languages. (Student)

Some course providers recognise that this is a problem, but seem not to feel that it can be resolved:

Staff on the IWLP try to be flexible with native speakers or speakers of different varieties of the language, but point out that they may find the level too low and special classes cannot be created. (IWLP Director)

Other have taken action, aware that they risk losing students if provision does not meet their needs:

Community language speakers often try to join beginners' courses because they do not have reading and writing skills and so would be behind at lower intermediate level. Potential students are assessed in the four language skills through a needs analysis form, and those who speak fluently but are not literate are offered a more suitable course if available. Any such students who slip through tend to give up after about three lessons because the classes are not suitable. (Language Centre Co-ordinator)

SOAS offers literacy classes in Bengali, Gujarati, Urdu and Somali, aimed at such students. Most are young professionals who want to become literate in their community language both to explore further their cultural identity and because they see the career value of developing literacy skills.

Students and teachers of community languages in mainstream schools, complementary classes and colleges are concerned that, in the case of languages where it is possible to sit GCSEs and A-levels, there are few opportunities to pursue their interest in these languages beyond this point.

There is definitely a dire need for those who do A levels to be able to pursue their studies further. (Examiner)

It is all well and good to have GCSE and A level but there needs to be something beyond that so that people can take it further and take it to another level and I'm sure there would be plenty of people who would be interested in doing that. (Student)

A solution put forward by one respondent is to make links with universities in countries where the languages are widely spoken, to enable students who have already reached A-level standard to progress in the language through distance learning, with accreditation from the overseas university. Another respondent reported that this is already happening with some of the languages of the Indian subcontinent.

SOAS will, from 2008, run a degree course in Bengali which will have three different entry points: ab initio, post GCSE and post A-level, recognising that there is a need, and demand, from school students who have reached A-level standard by the time they leave school. (It may be recalled from Chapter 3 that Bengali is the community language with the greatest number of GCSE entries in London — see Chart 3c.)

> *The intention is to widen the appeal of the course and encourage speakers taking GCSE or A level to continue their studies at university level. However, it is also important to ensure intellectual content from the start, so that the course appeals to everyone rather than ghettoising those with mother-tongue knowledge: complete beginners will get intellectual stimulation and those with some knowledge hoping for a soft option will have to work. This multi-level entry scheme is essential, so that students who already have qualifications in the language are not turned away.* (Lecturer)

Such provision also needs to demonstrate sensitivity to imbalances of power and prestige amongst speakers of the language offered. For example, as one student of Bengali pointed out, most Bengali speakers in the UK are of Bangladeshi origin and therefore likely to wish to acquire the standard form used in that country. This in itself represents a challenge, as many UK Bangladeshis trace their families back to the rural region of Sylhet where a variety markedly different from the standard form is in use. They are unlikely, however, to wish to learn the Bengali of West Bengal, in India, despite the fact that this has traditionally been regarded as the most prestigious form. Provision which fails to recognise such issues is likely to alienate community language students:

> *There is a bias towards Bengali of West Bengal […] and you have these strong Hindu-oriented traditions of Bengali literature and language […] which for someone like me who comes from the other tradition I can feel that sometimes it doesn't relate to my experience where I come from or what represents Bangladeshi culture […] This is something that should change and should reflect a broader Bengali which would certainly make my experience much more fulfilling and not just alienated and just studying because I have to study because I have taken the course and I have no choice. It doesn't give one a comfortable feel. Really it's not a community language option. Most Bengali speakers are going to feel the same way and that might put people off as well.* (Student)

1.2 Diverse purposes for community language study

Providers recognise that community language learners have not only a wide range of prior learning experiences, but also that the purposes for which they wish to study a community language vary very considerably. For some, the decision to return to studying their community language can come when they start a family of their own and realise that they wish their children to learn the language, even though they themselves may not be fluent:

> *I'm a heritage language learner. I was born and brought up in the UK in a Gujarati family. My parents spoke Gujarati to each other but not to me. I spoke it quite well when I was little but forgot it as English took over. Then I re-learnt again as an adult, although I'm not completely fluent. People of my generation are mainly receptive bilinguals, but we want our own children to learn the language, even though we don't speak it well ourselves.* (Student)

> *They can perhaps speak and listen reasonably well in the family/community context, but realise that their knowledge and expertise is insufficient for them to be able to pass the language on to their children* (Language Centre Co-ordinator)

Depending on the language concerned, a more formal knowledge of the language may entail learning standard varieties, becoming literate in the standard or dominant form.

Increasingly, students are identifying wider purposes for developing their language skills. To some extent, their goals could be seen to overlap with those on foreign language courses, in that they see a role for their community languages in the careers they wish to pursue. But the emphasis can be different: a greater interest in aid and development work abroad, or social services in the UK than might be the case with traditional foreign language students:

> *[Some students are very] committed, including highly motivated MA and PhD students needing the language for their research, and they can have a positive effect on the other students. Some study it for their future careers: working with Bengali-speaking communities in the UK, e.g. in social services, or working abroad in aid and development and international agencies. The language has the sixth-largest number of speakers in the world and has a growing international profile through the Bengali-speaking diaspora.* (Lecturer)

In this context, they may be joined by *ab initio* learners who have identified a need for skills in community languages because of the work they already do, or plan to do in future: in the UK, such as teachers, doctors, police, social work, health professionals, ethnic minority achievement teams, lawyers; or abroad, such as journalists, business people, development workers, diplomats, or health workers. Such interests imply that the kind of language they seek to acquire might differ from that typically offered on foreign language courses.

In the case of specific languages, particular political contexts mean that demand can fluctuate over time:

> *When I began teaching Somali as a foreign language in the mid 1990s, there was little demand, largely because of the political situation in Somalia. However, the population of Somalis in the UK has expanded greatly since the late 1980s because of the turmoil, resulting in a younger generation brought up and educated (and increasingly born) in the UK who speak Somali with the family but do not have competence in formal usage and cannot read and write fluently in the language. An increasing number of these students study at SOAS and are keen to study Somali, but the standard courses, aimed at complete beginners, were often not appropriate. I began to develop additional courses to cater for the needs of this particular group of community language speakers, who now form the majority of the students taking courses in Somali.* (Lecturer)

But precisely because of these histories, students can be particularly committed to retaining or developing skills in a language which circumstance have prevented them from acquiring in the country of origin:

> *The courses have the practical benefit of enabling the students to read and write Somali well, as well as being important for their personal development. They want to broaden their understanding of their culture and formal language varieties. Some go back to Somalia, particularly to the north (Somaliland), and do not want to stand out because of their language usage. […] Since there is very little higher education provision in the Somali territories (Somalia, Somaliland, Djibouti and the areas in Ethiopia and Kenya where Somalis live) and the opportunities to return to the region are very limited (and almost non-existent in the south), these courses provide a rare chance for these students to study their own language and culture to higher levels.* (Lecturer)

1.3 Developing suitable pedagogical approaches

Thus the pedagogical approaches adopted for the teaching of community languages need to reflect both the learners' different prior language histories and the range of goals. This is a challenge for all providers, as there is as yet no shared view on ways of catering effectively for such diversity. For some of those offering community languages via IWLPs, the key seems simply to be flexible:

> *Teachers in community languages need to be very well prepared — as well as the usual clear lesson plans, they need the ability to be flexible and to respond to what is coming from the class.* (Language Centre Co-ordinator)

Others place the emphasis on the acquisition of formal language skills, rather than communicative competence which many students will already possess:

> *Two-thirds to three-quarters of the first-year students usually have family/community/heritage links with the language. In most cases, even those with some mother-tongue knowledge need to start at beginners' level, since they have no analytical understanding of the grammar, may be shaky on the script, and, despite having quite authentic pronunciation, have no conscious knowledge of where the sounds are and how they are made. If they are to develop their understanding of the language, its literature and heritage, they need that conscious analytical understanding.* (Lecturer)

When these formal skills are acquired, community language learners can pull away quite rapidly from ab initio learners who may initially have joined them in the beginners' classes:

> *Complete beginners could also go on to take these [advanced] courses in theory, but the pace is fast, so only the best would be able to cope.* (Lecturer)

One experienced provider summed up what was needed as a 'modified second language approach' and argued that developments in second language acquisition theory and its implementation in foreign language classrooms are, in fact, bringing foreign language learning and community language learning closer together.

> *The growing emphasis on intercultural competence and integrated language and content learning coming into foreign teaching is far more applicable [than models which focus on tourism and transactional language] to community language teaching. […] A modified second language approach is most appropriate for CL teaching, taking account prior knowledge and experience.* (Course co-ordinator)

But there is still considerable work to be done both in developing pedagogical models and in applying them, particularly given the fact that numbers alone will require most providers to run mixed ability classes combining community language learners with a wide mix of skills and aspirations, and *ab initio* learners.

2. Staffing

Bearing in mind the pedagogical factors described above, finding suitable staff to teach community languages in higher education is a major challenge for providers. The ideal teacher should be highly qualified in terms of formal knowledge of the language and highly experienced in teaching it, familiar both with the language teaching approaches favoured in the UK and with the cultural context in which the language is used, in the UK

and in the countries where the language is widely spoken. Some providers had recruitment policies defining the qualities looked for in community language teachers:

Staffing is becoming more professionalised. Current recruitment policy looks for people with a good educational background: the majority who have joined in the last six to seven years have Master's degrees (many in subjects related to language teaching or applied linguistics) and most have some teaching experience. More important than teaching experience is a willingness to adapt, and an understanding of the English language, culture, educational system and teaching methodology. (Course Director)

All the staff are required to have a good language degree and a teaching qualification. All the full-time tutors/coordinators are required to have a postgraduate qualification, and many of the hourly paid tutors also have such qualifications. (Language Centre Director)

Tutors should preferably have experience of teaching adults and non-native speakers; TEFL qualifications and experience also help. (Language Centre Co-ordinator)

However, these requirements present barriers for many of those who seek community language teaching posts. Those who have been educated in the UK, and who are therefore familiar with UK teaching approaches and with the contexts in which the language is used here are not themselves always able to develop their linguistic proficiency to a suitably high level, because of the lack of such courses in the UK: as one respondent involved in Chinese community language education pointed out, it is not possible for Chinese teachers based in the UK to go beyond A-level themselves, as virtually all university Chinese courses are aimed at *ab initio* learners. In contrast, potential teachers who have come relatively recently from a country where their language is widely spoken, and who may have high level language and teaching qualifications, may have been trained according to quite different pedagogical principles. If appointed, they may need support to adjust to learning and teaching expectations in the UK.

Providers have found a range of solutions to the dilemmas this situation presents. In some cases, in the absence of formal qualifications, providers ask potential tutors to undergo a practical teaching assessment as part of the recruitment procedures. In others, policy has been to identify good teachers, whether or not they possess formal qualifications, and to ensure that they receive appropriate support and training once they have started work.

Some tutors for Mandarin and Urdu who had experience of teaching elsewhere and were highly recommended, despite not having much formal training, have been supported and given training when employed. There is a lot of CPD for all staff, with peer observation, formal observation by course directors and annual reviews. (IWLP Course Director)

There is widespread recognition of the need for professional development for new and experienced teachers alike, and some providers identified the need for a shared cross-sectoral approach, particularly as many tutors work in mainstream and complementary school as well as in higher education.

There is a need for shared training. Teaching in supplementary schools is very different from mainstream schools and universities, and more shared training, values and pedagogies are needed. […] Links need to be established between the different educational sectors — mainstream and supplementary schools, universities, etc. […] and [links] with the local community languages adviser could also be useful. (Language Centre Director)

However, the fact that most community languages tutors (along with many foreign language tutors employed on IWLP courses) are paid hourly makes it difficult to introduce or sustain professional development. Firstly, staff may quickly find better paid work elsewhere, and turnover can therefore be high. Hourly paid staff cannot be asked to take part in professional development courses unless they are paid to do so; in fact, some programme directors pay a fee to tutors for participation in such courses. One university had a policy of starting courses on a sessional basis, but moving staff on to full-time employment when course numbers had built up. In another, fractional contracts were offered to all IWLP tutors. In both cases, programme directors noted that that the shift had improved recruitment and retention.

> *Over 90% of the tutors in the IWLP are now native speakers, and only people with native/near-native competence are appointed. Most of the staff are on full-time or fractional tutor/senior tutor contracts, and they all need to have some kind of accredited qualification to teach languages. Changing employment legislation means that only a few tutors are still paid on an hourly basis, with fractional contracts taking over, which has reduced turnover.*
>
> (IWLP Course Director)

Using graduate students who are native speakers of the community languages sought is another option, although they too are likely to require training and support.

> *Our strategy for recruiting PhD students includes offering a package so that they can work as graduate teaching fellows for a limited number of hours; they need to have experience of language teaching and, if possible, some kind of qualifications, and they need monitoring more closely than the other tutors. All new graduate teaching fellows must take a week-long intensive course, which includes a general university induction.* (IWLP Course Director)

3.   Resources

Finding suitable resources for teaching community languages in a higher education context is also a major concern for most providers. Most reported very considerable difficulty in this regard, as few UK publishers address the needs of this group of learners.

In the absence of other sources, teachers find themselves using materials devised for younger learners, those for adult *ab initio* learners (typically self-study textbooks such as *Teach Yourself),* or materials published in the country where the language is spoken. Few of these types of resources are regarded as adequate. The Director of a Languages Centre described the difficulties they had had with Arabic in the past, and with Urdu currently:

> *The lack of suitable materials for Arabic was a big problem at first. Almost nothing was available apart from some very old-fashioned materials in the University library. Children's books were used initially, but more materials are coming on to the market now, and many are very good. The tutor has also developed her own materials. […] Suitable materials for the planned Urdu courses are a big concern.*

The Head of another university's IWLP explained that progress in setting up courses for the less widely taught languages is hampered by the lack of suitable materials:

> *The main need is for appropriate materials […] — accessible textbooks, DVDs, etc, with instructions in English and modern methodology. This is likely to be particularly a problem with*

Urdu, where there is a shortage of materials with good methodology. This is why it has only been introduced on a pilot basis so far.

Some providers had identified solutions. One Language Centre Director had encouraged staff to use the web and satellite TV as sources for the kinds of texts learners would be interested in studying:

Good materials for most languages have become much more widely available in the last few years, largely thanks to the internet. Arabic and Portuguese are now well-served, which was not the case until recently. Hebrew is improving because of links with Hebrew universities. Satellite TV is available for most languages taught, except for Hebrew. However, it is still very difficult to find computer-aided materials for less widely taught languages, since these demand a lot of investment from companies. Tutors also produce a lot of their own materials.

But there is a fundamental need for the basic tools which are well developed for languages which have a long history of being taught in higher education in the UK, but are lacking for more recent arrivals:

It is only in the last ten years or so that Bengali speakers have recognised that foreigners might take an interest in the language, and this means there is a lack of materials for foreigners. Grammar books in Bengali, as used by schoolchildren in India and Bangladesh, are of limited use to non-native speakers who want to learn the language, since they focus on how the language developed from Sanskrit. I produced a colloquial Bengali dictionary for foreigners living in Bangladesh in 1999 and am currently working on a new grammar, due to be published in 2009, the first substantial one in English in many years. It will provide a descriptive analysis of the modern language, in contrast to traditional Bengali grammar books which deal with the origins and morphological development of the language. […] Few places in the world teach Bengali as a foreign language and [we are] in the forefront of developments. I'm in touch with colleagues in the USA, India and Europe and am keen to build up a community of Bengali teachers throughout the world. (Lecturer)

There have also been some preliminary moves to set up a network of providers offering the same languages, within the UK, and sharing of materials might be a possibility, one head of a modern languages department reported:

I think some kind of forum/ network for developing and exchanging materials would be good for staff and HEIs. The department has been in touch with other universities teaching these languages and they have been very helpful in suggesting potential staff, examiners etc., but materials have not yet been discussed.

Universities offering courses in British Sign Language are already collaborating on curriculum design, with funding from the Higher Education Academy, with the aim of making this available online; this may be a model which other languages could adopt.

4. Certification

Both students and providers identified a need to review certification in community languages. From the point of view of students, particularly those studying on IWLP courses, failure to offer certification on completion of courses is a disincentive, particularly when students are aware of the difficulties of persuading employers to recognise community language competence as an achievement rather than something acquired 'naturally'.

From the employer's perspective they would prefer to see a qualification and if they just see on a CV someone can speak another language because that's where they come from, they would see it had value but not as much value as if they had an actual qualification because they would have taken a certain learning route to get to that stage. From an employer's point of view then a qualification counts as a bit more than just saying you can speak it. […] I wonder if we can do Asset, or use the Languages Portfolio that CILT does. There is the Institute of Linguists but it is very expensive and they are tough. In a way with the class I've just started I asked about accreditation and he said he would mark my homework but that's not good enough. (Student)

Providers reflected on the difficulty of offering appropriate certification when students start courses with different levels of competence, meaning that some students could easily meet assessment requirements while others might require years of work to achieve the same level. One respondent suggested that certification should reflect progression rather than pre-determined outcomes, and that flexible degree courses should be able to incorporate such an approach.

Employers, however, are looking for detailed evidence of the linguistic competence of their potential employees, particularly where the job relies on high-level language skills, as is the case with interpreting and translation.

There is a need to have levels of competence acknowledged, e.g. through the Languages Ladder, and to look at different kinds of competence — spoken, written, formal etc. It is important that qualifications such as the Languages Ladder and the European Language Portfolio are used and recognised by employers. Interpreting needs higher level skills that can be developed by people with community language skills with less effort and investment than by those starting from scratch. (Interpreting agency employer)

They may therefore be less interested in certification which measures progression rather than level of competence achieved; and students looking to enhance their CVs are also likely to prefer this.

5. Conclusions

In order to develop provision for community languages which matches needs and aspirations to career opportunities, providers need to address four key issues:

- the development of sophisticated pedagogical approaches which reflect diverse language histories, enable all learners to progress towards their goals, and mark achievements in ways which have external validity for postgraduate study and employment;
- the recruitment, retention and professional development of community languages teachers who can develop resources, plan and deliver the kinds of course students are looking for, and support long-term, strategic planning for this provision;
- the production of resources suitable for community language learners in the UK, in higher education (i.e. not for 'native speakers' in other countries, or for school level study), drawing on expertise involving new technologies, distance learning approaches, etc., as appropriate;
- certification of student achievement.

Some providers have identified ways of meeting these challenges, but more needs to be done to ensure that pedagogical models, resources and other solutions are shared and

developed coherently. Networking among UK providers of community languages generally, and of specific languages, would be one way of taking these issues forward; and there may also be scope to work with those addressing these issues in other parts of the world.

Chapter 6: Professional education

Summary

Although high-level competence in a community language is valuable for many different careers, the two fields in which there is currently professional education specifically targeting community language learners are education and public service translation and interpreting. In this chapter, we look more specifically at this provision and at the challenges facing providers who seek to recruit and support community language specialists on these courses. Although demand for professionals in both fields is increasing and growing numbers of community language speakers express interest in qualifying to work as teachers or interpreters, many are discouraged by low pay and precarious work conditions.

Providers of initial teacher education courses for community languages teachers encounter a number of logistical barriers, such as the need for more flexible provision than is typically required because many potential applicants are mature students who have work and other commitments, and difficulties in securing practice placements in languages which are taught in only a small number of schools. Resolving these difficulties requires a very high level of commitment on the part of those responsible for these courses.

Very few higher education institutions offer professional courses in public service interpreting and translation. In most of these cases, they run short or part-time preparation courses for the Institute of Linguists' Diploma in Public Service Interpreting, rather than full postgraduate courses offering a thorough academic grounding for those new to the field. There is considerable scope for more substantial contribution from academia to an area which requires high-level language proficiency, sophisticated communication and mediation skills, and specialist applied linguistics input.

1. Community languages professions: demand and obstacles to supply

Professional courses enabling community language speakers to use their skills, either as teachers of their languages or as translators and interpreters, are the most developed sector of provision for community languages, as these are fields in which there is a high level of demand. Both seek to recruit people who are not only highly competent in specific community languages but also familiar with the UK contexts for communities speaking these languages. This entails sensitivity to different language varieties and cultural differences, as well as a commitment to public service.

Despite periodic government announcements that community translation and interpretation services are to be curtailed (in order to encourage non-English speakers to learn English), it appears that demand is increasing, sometimes to levels where public services cannot cope.

> In 2004, the local general hospital ran a small-scale project looking at the problems faced by the NHS, social services, police etc. in interpreting, which only scratched the surface; three years on, the needs are even greater, and these public services are flooded. The Centre does provide some support through training but does not have the resources to provide all the support needed; nor do the public services have the money to pay for all the support they need. Universities could do more in this area if funding was available.

This is not surprising as the numbers of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers coming to the UK have increased significantly in the last decade (Eurostat, 2005; Vertovec, 2006). However convinced of the importance of English, newcomers cannot learn the language instantly, and it is not surprising that as they settle into a new home, they require social service support of various kinds, or that this is likely to entail translation and interpretation, at least at first. Moreover, even those who have a degree of fluency in English, and who are able to use the language for social encounters and in the specific context of the work they do, may find themselves struggling when required to use the language in unfamiliar situations (such as coping with serious illness, involvement in legal proceedings or discussions about their children's educational progress). In such contexts, it can be important to understand exactly what is said, including nuances of expression or implicit meanings. Thus skilled interpreters who can convey these both in English and in the community language in question are essential.

Similarly, it appears that there is growing demand for community language teachers: in part as a result of the National Languages Strategy (DfES, 2002) which makes specific mention of the need to recruit and train more community languages teachers; and subsequently as a result of the relaxation, in 2007, of legislation concerning the range of languages which schools could offer. In addition, there is greater awareness in schools that teachers who speak community languages can play an important role in liaising with the different communities that they serve:

> *It was quite interesting to see that within inner city schools this whole issue of community language is big. They do need support and if they can get a teacher who has those languages it is a huge help. The need is there.* (Aim Higher Co-ordinator)

There is considerable interest in teaching careers among community language speakers too:

> *The interest in becoming a teacher within the Turkish community is enormous — 250 to 300 people attended meetings we held to provide information about teaching so they are very keen. We need to encourage HEIs, schools and employers to look at this quite seriously.*
> (Community language teacher)

For refugees who were teachers in the countries they left, the possibility of teaching their language, of maintaining their cultural heritage, and of passing it on to the next generation, can be particularly attractive:

> *I'm interested in following up the PGCE in community languages and how it fits in with teachers we have. Teachers coming to us are not always sure what subjects they would like to do. Their main concern is getting a job and it may be that those who have taught another subject in their own country haven't even thought about teaching their own language and that would be something if we could find out more about. Strategically I think that would be very good and I think a lot of teachers would be interested because they see themselves as mentors and role models in their community and they are keen to mark their heritage.*
> (Project Manager, Refugee Council)

However, among those involved in encouraging community languages speakers to take up these opportunities, there is considerable concern about the low levels of pay for teaching and translating/interpreting work, and the precarious nature of such jobs. One

experienced community languages teacher commented that he actively discourages his students from specialist study of the language because of the risk of ghettoisation:

> *I have had students study through SOAS but what do they do after that — where do they go? Do they go and become a low paid translator at court which is what happened to some of my students?*

Several respondents were also critical of schools for exploiting community language speakers' skills but refusing to reward this financially, particularly when the teacher offers two quite different specialisms, such as maths plus a community language:

> *The language is not valued even though it might […] help them get the job but they won't get paid any more for having the language as an additional subject. So they will be useful to the school because they have the language but the school doesn't recognise it by paying more.*
> (Community Language Teacher)

> *I know of schools that are looking for a maths teacher who speaks Somali. […] What often happens, […] is that you may get a maths teacher with a community language and it is added value yes, as it helps them get a job but the teacher doesn't necessarily get paid any more, particularly if it is a community language they have — whereas if they had French maybe that would be valued monetary-wise more than a community language. […] It is very difficult to use it [your languages] and or get it recognised, or you get a job with it but it's not acknowledged and you get paid the same as someone who is monolingual and I found that very demotivating*
> (Project Manager, Refugee Council)

> *Younger people do not necessarily see community languages as a good career move. If they have a good degree in another subject, particularly a shortage subject such as maths or IT, their career prospects [as teachers] in that field are far better.* (Ofsted Inspector)

It is, of course, also the case that many complementary school teachers, fundamental to the survival of community languages, are volunteers, and thus unpaid. There is therefore little incentive for these teachers to gain qualifications (and many have full-time jobs in other sectors) and it is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit new teachers.

> *It is a lot of time and effort and it's unpaid — you spend Saturday having meetings and your own time developing resources. We are not all teachers by profession. To have the capacity to take on more is difficult because most people have full time work. Younger people are too busy and they don't feel so confident about their Chinese now. We are all people of a certain age — it's very difficult to get new people on board, and so there is nobody coming up to continue doing the work.* (Community languages teacher)

Undergraduates studying community languages are well aware that these careers may lack status as well as being badly paid:

> *It is worrying if it [community language competence] isn't valued or recognised and of course this will influence your motivation in terms of what courses you choose. So it must be recognised and valued.* (Student)

> *Whether it's valued in England, I don't know. Other than to become an interpreter for someone, that's the only value I see in England. I have been asked to interpret — I don't really don't want to do that.* (Student)

Education specialists were somewhat sceptical about the depth of government commitment to community languages, suggesting that recent publicised expansion of

the range of languages which schools can offer is more about the introduction of certain major world languages, particularly Mandarin, as foreign languages:

> *Community languages still have low status. The government is making noises about community languages but there is a difference between valuing them (as mentioned in the Dearing report) and promoting and investing in them. The government (particularly Lord Adonis) is saying positive things about complementary schools and promoting Mandarin, but as a foreign language. While Dearing recommended promoting Mandarin and Urdu and schools teaching Mandarin appear frequently in the media, there has been no media coverage of Urdu. No one is talking about Hindi, the national language of India, the other economy often quoted as likely to dominate the 21st century. […] There is also an argument for promoting community languages for community cohesion and breaking down barriers, but there is no big push on this.* (Ofsted Inspector)

These concerns about the viability of careers as community languages teachers (or teachers with community languages) and public service translators and interpreters constitute a significant obstacle for those offering professional education in these fields. In the following sections, we look more at these and other challenges facing providers, and at some of the solutions identified.

2.   Initial teacher education in community languages

The publication of the *National Languages Strategy* (DfES, 2002) and the introduction of flexible PGCE courses by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) in the same year were key factors in encouraging teacher education providers to set up Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) and the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) courses in community languages. Because political commitment to this field waxes and wanes, provision before this period had been sporadically available: for example, in the 1980s, the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) actively promoted community language learning, and 12 languages were taught in ILEA schools, supported by an inspectorate and advisory service. Much of this provision was lost when ILEA was abolished in 1990.

In 2007, Ofsted conducted a review of provision for community languages in schools and of initial teacher education for those wishing to become community languages teachers. The report of this review is due to be published in February 2008. The authors investigated current take-up for PGCE and GTP courses in community languages (Bengali, Chinese, Gujarati, Japanese, Punjabi, Turkish and Urdu). A number of difficulties were encountered: several advertised courses were not running, and the available information changed frequently and seemed unreliable. These factors were thought likely to discourage potential candidates from pursuing careers in this field. The authors also found that many of the PGCE courses were 'fragile', dependent on the dedication of particular individuals; if they were to leave, the course was likely to close. Thus they found several examples of courses which had run for a couple of years and then been discontinued, or courses which were theoretically available but did not run every year. In 2006–7, there were 35 trainee teachers on five community language PGCE courses.

The authors also identified a number of logistical challenges. First among them was the question of students' linguistic competence. Given the lack of degree level study in community languages in the UK, course providers needed to find other ways to

determine the competence of potential candidates in the languages they sought to teach. Because many would not have had extensive opportunities to study these languages formally, providers were likely to have to invest more time in supporting students' linguistic development than would be expected of providers of PGCE modern languages courses. This was a hidden cost which was often borne by course tutors and lecturers in terms of unpaid additional input.

Secondly, the authors of the report noted that most courses were full time, and this posed problems for many potential students, who tended to be mature entrants to the profession, and often hoped to qualify as teachers part-time whilst in employment. Thirdly, because of the difficulty of finding full-time posts teaching solely community languages, several courses encouraged or required students to train to teach a major European language as well, but this also operated as a disincentive as relatively few community language speakers had studied European languages to a suitably high level. Some providers had sent community languages students on extension courses to learn French or German, so that they could offer a second language.

Ofsted recommended more flexible provision in which students could train to teach a community language and another curriculum subject (not necessarily another language) such as maths or ICT, where there were currently teacher shortages. This would improve the employability of community languages teachers and would have cross-curricular potential. However, they noted that the TDA was currently moving away from flexible PGCE courses of this type because they were more time-consuming and expensive to run.

Other respondents confirmed that many of the issues raised by Ofsted created barriers to recruiting and supporting students on these courses, and identified some additional problems. For example, placements are extremely difficult to set up, partly as a result of the 'chicken and egg' situation facing community languages in schools: despite growing demand, few schools currently offer community languages, and they may not be able to provide placements that enable students to experience the full range of teaching situations; but unless more community languages teachers can be trained and appointed, there will be no way of expanding provision. Moreover, community languages are affected in the same way as foreign languages by the general decline in uptake for languages in schools; in particular, this can make it very difficult for student teachers to gain opportunities to teach beyond Key Stage 3.[3]

A case study of the PGCE course at Goldsmiths College, London, illustrates how one institution has sought to overcome these obstacles.

Case study **Community Languages PGCE Course, Goldsmith's College, London**
A range of social, cultural, economic and intellectual factors underlie the development of the Flexible Secondary PGCE in Community Languages at Goldsmiths. The institution aims to support inner city London schools and communities and the Educational Studies department has had a long-standing research focus on bilingualism and a commitment to supporting bilingual learners. There is a desire to support the development of community languages teaching in the

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[3] CILT's 2007 Language Trends survey reported that fewer than 50% of English secondary schools now offer languages for all students in Key Stage 4.

UK and a recognition that community languages teachers need appropriate training and qualifications, to improve both standards of teaching and the status of the languages and of the teachers.

The lack of trained teachers has been a major issue, discouraging schools from offering community languages as part of the mainstream timetable. More generally, the impact of trained, fully professional community languages teachers would be a step towards all forms of language learning — and all languages — being seen as important and valuable.

The PGCE in community languages was set up in 2002. Before that, staff on the PGCE modern foreign lanuages programme had been keen to support students who could combine French with a community language, particularly Arabic or Turkish, by giving them at least some experience of teaching the community language as well. 2002 was pivotal: firstly, the *National Languages Strategy* was published; and secondly, there was a change in government standards for initial teacher education, which became more inclusive. Feedback from colleagues in the field of community languages as well as discussion at conferences and professional development meetings indicated a demand for pre- and in-service professional development opportunities for teachers of community languages.

Initially the course offered Arabic, Mandarin and Punjabi. Urdu was introduced in 2004 in response to demand from some already teaching the language who wanted a formal qualification. There is demand for speakers of all four languages locally, nationally and internationally, with particularly rapid growth in demand for teachers of Mandarin. The choice of languages initially offered was determined largely because of the availability of specialist expertise, resources, mentors and placements. The TDA has suggested including Bengali in future, and Turkish and Gujarati are also being considered; all these plans depend on the availability of specialist expertise, school placements, etc.

The *flexible* aspect of the PGCE in Community Languages is crucial. The course consists of supported self-study modules, school-based experiences, and a small number of compulsory college-based workshops and individual or small group tutorials. Students can take up to two years to complete the course. Such flexible courses were introduced by the TDA in 2002 to cater for mature students with work and childcare commitments. The students on the Goldsmiths course are mainly native speakers of the languages they plan to teach, and were typically educated overseas, but are now resident in the UK. They are mainly female, and with an average age of 37 (compared to 27 on the one-year intensive Standard PGCE Secondary MFL). They often have existing family commitments, and they may already be teaching their community language in a complementary school. The flexible course allows them to study around their other responsibilities.

Previous teaching experience in the UK or overseas can be taken into account in terms of teaching practice requirements, although time is needed to adapt to the British context. Another important factor is that students do not have to offer a second (European) language, as is the case with some other HEIs offering PGCEs in community languages. Some students take extension courses in other languages for this purpose, and this is also an option at Goldsmiths. However, students are also encouraged to combine their main language with training to teach English as an Additional Language (EAL). There is considerable overlap in terms of theoretical underpinning in a more content-based approach to language teaching, and graduates from the course are ideally placed to offer EAL support in future posts. The emphasis in all the courses is on pedagogy, but the students' language skills are also audited: their degrees may not be in language and culture, and if so they are asked to complete assignments in these areas. They are also encouraged to take part in events organised by CILT, the National Centre for Languages and other national networks, to build up their professional confidence. Most graduates go on to teach in state-maintained or independent secondary schools, while some also teach in complementary schools. Some graduates from the course are now acting as school mentors and running professional development training.

Although the College does not especially seek to attract students who have some knowledge of the language as a community/family/heritage language, all the students accepted so far do have this background. This may change in the next five to ten years, as more non-native speaker students graduate with UK degrees in Mandarin, and some may wish to go on to teach it. However, this will only take place if there is good progression in the language from school to university level so that graduates can reach a high enough level in the language to teach up to A level. Currently, this is not the case, and those who have applied so far do not have this level of expertise.

The course currently caters only for secondary teaching, but the College is considering expansion into primary teaching, as it already offers a successful PGCE in Primary modern foreign languages and the TDA has suggested offering this in Arabic and Mandarin. However, a feasibility study is needed.

Apart from the course co-ordinator, all the tutors are native speakers of the relevant community language. They are specialist link tutors, all experienced in teaching to secondary level, and specialist school mentors. They have full-time jobs elsewhere and are released to work for Goldsmiths through voluntary tutor hours. Their work includes contributing to the self-study modules (materials, marking etc.). As well as generic skills of language teaching, the contributions of specialist link tutors are also essential for language-specific aspects such as grammar and literacy. While some pupils are effectively learning the language as a 'foreign' language — this is particularly the case for Arabic and Mandarin — others are bilingual to a greater or lesser extent. The forces of language shift mean that many children, especially from the older established Punjabi and Urdu communities, are in effect studying their community language as a second language, since English has become the dominant language at home, particularly among siblings. But there will also be pupils who have recently arrived in the UK from countries where the language in question is studied, who are highly fluent and often also literate. Thus, teachers have to cope with widely differing levels of literacy in the same class. This represents a major challenge.

Goldsmiths is now the largest provider of community languages in a PGCE, but there are concerns, despite recent positive developments. The long-term sustainability of community language teaching depends on what happens in schools and in government policy as much as on what happens at Goldsmiths. Currently much depends on the commitment of individuals, particularly headteachers' awareness and support for languages. The patchiness of provision in schools is worrying. Although there are some outstanding schools, it remains vitally important that provision in mainstream schools is extended and links with community schools are built up.

3. Professional education for public service interpreters

For those working with community languages and English there are two professional routes into careers in public service interpreting and translation: university accredited courses (most of which are for postgraduate students); or the Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI), offered by the Chartered Institute of Linguists (IoL) at first degree level. The IoL sets and administers the examinations but does not itself run courses to prepare candidates for them. These are offered by a range of further, higher and adult education institutions which also enter candidates for the examinations. Numbers seeking the DSPI qualification have increased threefold over the last ten years: there were 1091 candidates in 2007, compared with 356 in 1997, an indication of the growing demand in this field, and 53 languages are currently offered (IoL Educational Trust, 2007). Candidates choose to specialise in health, law or local government fields. Those who are successful can apply to be included on the IoL's National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI).

Our review of provision for community languages in higher education found five universities offering courses leading to the DPSI — De Montfort University, Goldsmiths College, London Metropolitan University, Middlesex University, the University of Bedford and the University of Salford — covering 15 languages in total. These are all part-time courses, varying in length from two–three day intensive courses to year-long courses, usually one day or one evening a week. Some specifically target those with existing professional experience seeking to gain formal qualifications and thus potential inclusion in the NRPSI; whilst others recruit students hoping to start a career in this field.

Two of these universities — London Metropolitan and Salford — offer other translation and interpreting courses potentially of relevance to community language speakers, although they are not specifically identified as target students.

London Metropolitan University offers a postgraduate certificate, diploma, and MA in interpreting, including public service interpreting, along with conference interpreting and remote interpreting. The range of languages available includes Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Russian and Spanish. Other languages are sometimes offered, depending on demand. Candidates for these courses normally need to have a good first degree in the language in question, but those without such qualifications, but with extensive professional interpretation experience, are also considered. 'Non-native' speakers of English need to have good command of English, and usually a high level qualification in English as a second or foreign language.

The University of Salford offers a number of undergraduate and post-graduate courses in interpreting and translating, principally in the major European languages. There is also a BA in Arabic/English translation and interpreting, and postgraduate diplomas and MAs in Arabic and Chinese translating with interpreting. Target students for the Arabic BA are 'native speakers', but it seems possible that those for whom Arabic is a community language could apply for the course, as it is open to those with A-Level Arabic. Graduates from the course go on to careers in international or public service interpreting. The postgraduate courses target both 'native speakers' of Chinese or Arabic, respectively, and 'native speakers' of English. In the case of Arabic, 'non-Arabic' applicants with an undergraduate degree in Arabic are accepted on the course, and applications from students with non-traditional qualifications and/or significant relevant

experience in Arabic/English translation or interpreting are welcomed. Entry requirements for the Chinese courses are less detailed. These courses are regarded as preparation for professional translation or academic careers. There is no mention of public service work.

For those working in the field of public service interpreting and translation, there is frustration at the lack of interest shown in this area by higher education institutions. While the DPSI is seen as valuable, it is more suitable as a formalisation of the skills of practicing interpreters than as a training course for those new to the profession. Our case study, of Praxis, an organisation supporting immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers, provides a stakeholder perspective on what is needed.

Case Study:
Praxis — supporting the integration of new UK residents

Praxis is a community-based charity in East London providing advice, support, education and training to refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. Its work is rooted in concepts of human rights and community development. It has about 18 full-time staff plus various part-time workers. Almost all the staff are bi- or multilingual in a range of languages, including Somali, Amharic, Bulgarian, Spanish, Bengali, Italian, Kinyarwanda, Swahili, Afrikaans, Kurdish and French.

A key area of the organisation's work is support for public service interpreters. This takes the form of providing training for those who wish to work in this field, and support and training for the trainers and assessors of the courses they run. They currently offer courses in Somali, Spanish, Portuguese, Bengali/Sylheti, Polish, Latvian, Lithuanian, Russian, French (Central African), Kinyarwanda and Lingala. They have offered Kurdish in the past.

The three central elements of their courses are
- *mother tongue development for native speaker interpreters,* including literacy development, awareness of different registers and language domains, developing terminology (which can be difficult for some community languages, where authoritative up-to-date sources may not be available), becoming familiar with other/standard dialects, and overcoming a history of language oppression;
- *glossary development* for specialised fields;
- *intensive courses/tuition for those with fairly advanced skills in other languages* to reach native-like levels of competence, as three languages makes an interpreter much more employable than two.

Many of those who take the courses already have relevant overseas qualifications, including degrees in their own languages or other languages (including English) or in linguistics and other related fields.

There is considerable scope for Praxis and similar organisations to work with HEIs in joint delivery of courses of this kind. With funding from the European Social Fund, they developed a training package for public service interpreters which could be offered as part of a foundation degree, but they do not have the funding or vehicle to run this themselves. However, it has the potential to be offered at several centres across the country and as a distance-learning course. There is a need for training which is more robust, in-depth and fit for purpose than the DPSI which was designed as a qualification for practising, experienced interpreters, rather than for those new to the profession; however, in the absence of other provision, it is now used in this way.

Current HEI provision to support public service interpreting or other professional use of community languages is described by the Praxis Education and Enterprise Programme Manager

as 'dismal'. There is a pressing need for universities to open up progression routes, so that people can continue to study their community languages in higher education, even if only at a subsidiary level. If HEIs were to enter into greater dialogue with employers who need community languages and potential employees, who already have the basic skills, they could identify gaps and develop provision to meet demand. Universities need to come out into the community and sell what they can do for the community. It is about knowing the market and placing the product (course) appropriately so that the people who need particular courses can attend them. Praxis and similar organisations could act as brokers between universities and communities.

Opening up HE resources — libraries, language labs etc. — to the voluntary sector, FE colleges etc. would also be helpful, and encourage people who perceive universities to be 'ivory towers' to consider degree level studies.

Interpreting is a very competitive field with many divergent attitudes and perceptions, particularly between conference interpreters and public service interpreters. Conference interpreters on the international circuit have higher levels of qualifications and maintain higher levels of CPD because they are sent on courses by their employers or can afford to pay for training for themselves since they are much better paid than public service interpreters. For this reason, there is a particular need for HEIs to support professional development for public service interpreters, to campaign for higher standards, and to challenge the persistent view that unqualified interpreters are acceptable. Many public service interpreters are highly qualified people, extremely conscientious about maintaining and improving their language and interpreting skills. However, in the absence of institutionally-backed standards, it is difficult to argue for higher status and value for those who have made such commitments than for someone off the street who claims to speak a particular language and to be able to interpret.

There is some very good and very poor practice in public services. Tower Hamlets has some excellent practice in employing bilingual staff, e.g. training Bengali-speaking social workers, so as to avoid the need for interpreters; some London Transport workers now wear badges saying "I speak X". But there are also hospitals where porters who speak community languages are still being drafted in to interpret for patients, whether or not they are capable of the task — and they are being paid as porters, not interpreters.

There is a need for government recognition of the importance of public service interpreting, not only in legal contexts, which tend to have the highest profile, but also in all other areas of public services: health, education, housing, immigration, environmental disputes, child protection, and mediation. There will always be a need for interpreting given the ongoing immigration into the UK. Although new residents also need to learn English — and most will do so in time — even if they become quite proficient, they are still likely to switch to their first language in stressful situations. Although the use of public service interpreters is usually presented as yet another call on taxpayers' money, trained interpreters have valuable skills in mediating across communities and ensuring that public services meet their obligations to the public. Cutting back on professional (suitably qualified and experienced) interpreters is a false economy — while using untrained interpreters is really a waste of public money.

4. Conclusions

This chapter has focused on the two professional careers which specifically target community language speakers — teaching and public service interpreting — and for which higher education institutions offer courses. Despite growing demand in both fields, those offering professional courses have to deal with significant logistical hurdles and, it seems likely, lack of adequate funding to enable them to overcome these. Moreover,

work in these fields is often badly paid, of low status, and difficult to sustain. Students with community language skills are therefore increasingly unwilling to invest in provision which leads to these kinds of careers.

Two types of action are required on the part of those seeking to promote community language learning in higher education. Firstly, they need to draw attention to the wide range of (potentially better paid and more prestigious) careers in which skills in community languages are considered to be an asset: these range from international finance, media, law, aid and development, trade, diplomacy and defence, in addition to public service careers. The 'employability' characteristics of graduates with foreign languages apply equally to those with community languages: for example, all language learners can be expected to be sophisticated communicators, to be aware of the need for cultural sensitivity, and to have effective problem-solving and critical thinking skills. These are core competences which all employers seek and are typical of all graduates with advanced skills in other languages.

Secondly, it is important to change the realities of careers in teaching community languages and public service translation and interpreting, given that there are currently severe shortages of qualified and committed professionals. This entails ensuring that professional education is — and is seen to be — as challenging and as rigorous as similar education for foreign language teachers or conference interpreters; and further entails a drive to establish the professional status of qualified practitioners and the advantages — in terms of quality and therefore, ultimately, of value for money — of employing them.

Chapter 7:   Policies and strategies

Summary

The current decade has seen extensive policy activity to promote the learning of foreign languages, in all educational sectors. In this chapter we first look at the principal policy arguments put forward to justify and expand provision for languages in higher education, namely that:

- a multilingual workforce is needed for the UK to maintain and enhance its share in international business;
- the study of other languages brings intellectual and cultural benefits and contributes to global citizenship;
- skills in other languages are now, and will increasingly, be essential to participation in the information society.

Strategic decisions and funding for course provision are based on these perceptions of the needs and aspirations of 21st century graduates. We argue that they apply equally to community as to foreign languages, and that, in many contexts, community languages add value, by providing opportunities for greater diversification of languages in use and by ensuring that the UK profits from existing linguistic and cultural knowledge.

Policy positions promoting the study of foreign languages in higher education often seek to connect this to university's internationalisation agenda, where there are obvious synergies. Community languages, however, tend to be linked to the widening access and participation agenda, on the basis that making provision for these languages could attract students from groups which do not traditionally participate in higher education. We look critically at the implications of this association. While widening access and participation is a commendable initiative, implementation is problematic, both in terms of institutional interpretations of its scope, and of sufficient funding to ensure that goals are met. It can be seen as conflicting with universities' internationalisation strategies, particularly if the latter is seen to depend on promoting a 'traditional' academic programme while the former is understood to be about radical change (or, from a derogatory standpoint, about 'dumbing down'.) Typically, internationalisation is expected to increase revenue while widening access and participation is thought to be expensive. Linking community languages to these initiatives can thus have positive and negative consequences, and we suggest that the justification for community languages should not be based solely on the potential for widening access and participation. As we have already argued, community languages have much to contribute to internationalisation as well as to widening access and participation, and indeed some institutions see these initiatives as complementary rather than in conflict.

Thirdly, we look at the recent emergence of policy concerning the use of community languages within the UK. Recognising that the UK is an increasingly multilingual society in which languages other than English play an important role in a variety of contexts, from businesses and services targeting minority ethnic communities to cultural experiences within and beyond these communities — such as the 2012 Olympics — employers and government agencies are beginning to value employees' skills in community languages, and are looking to education providers to ensure that these are developed to a professional level. This presents opportunities which higher education needs to recognise and grasp, developing provision to meet new needs and possibilities.

1. **Making the connections: foreign and community languages policy in higher education**

In Chapters 4 and 5 of this report, we focused on what is and should be distinctive about community language provision: recognition of the diverse backgrounds of community language learners and the need for pedagogical responses which reflect both different past learning experiences and the range of goals of higher education students who wish to develop their community language skills for a variety of purposes. In this chapter, we focus on some areas of common ground, in the context of policy for languages in higher education and strategies for achieving policy goals.

As we saw in Chapter 4, since the publication of the *Nuffield Inquiry* in 2000, considerable attention has been paid to the UK's language needs in the 21st century, and to the role which higher education should play in ensuring that today's graduates are equipped with the linguistic knowledge and skills they will need both for career purposes and for other aspects of their adult lives, such as travel, cultural activity, or active citizenship in European and international contexts. Indeed, such arguments underpin the rationale for the *Routes into Languages* initiative: on the basis that 'languages are of crucial strategic importance to the UK', its goal is to 'raise awareness of the role of languages in HE as a driver of national economic and civic regeneration' (HEFCE, 2006).

Three lines of thinking in this policy debate can be discerned, each of which is significant in terms of the development of higher education policy:
- the role which languages play in business and other economic activity;
- the intellectual and cultural benefits of language study, including their contribution to citizenship;
- the importance of language skills in the development of the information society.

1.1 Languages and business

A key policy focus, not only for languages but for higher education more generally is the increasing internationalisation of business and the need to recruit graduates competent to operate in an international context.

> The world of business is internationalising at an ever increasing rate. Employers are increasingly looking for employees who can deal with international markets and the impact of global forces on domestic markets. Recently a group of European employers said that the ability to deal with internationalisation was the single most important factor in the employability of graduates. (Gillingham 2006)

Markets where there is potential for growth will benefit from development of the UK's capacity not only in the major European languages — French, German and Spanish — which have traditionally been the principal focus of provision for languages in higher education in the UK, but, critically, in some of the less widely taught languages, ranging from Polish and Portuguese, in the European context, to Chinese, Arabic, Hindi/Urdu and Russian, internationally. All of these languages are widely used as community languages in the UK, and there is thus potential to reach high levels of competence very quickly, giving UK businesses the chance to be at the forefront of commercial development in parts of the world where these languages are spoken.

In addition to business, skills in different languages are required in careers ranging from diplomacy, defence and development, to media, education and public services. In all of these fields, the extent to which higher education can make provision for a diverse range of languages will enhance opportunities. As Footitt (2005) has pointed out, these arguments apply not only to languages graduates but also graduates in other disciplines who can also offer language skills, acquired among other routes via IWLP provision:

> The evidence […] suggests that students learning languages in this mode [non-specialist routes] are motivated less by specific career intentions, and more by a belief that languages are part of a broader demonstration of 'graduateness' in an international setting: ' an accepted view...that languages are an essential and invaluable part of the make up of a high profile graduate'.

While French, German and Spanish will remain important in all of these contexts, the ability of diplomats, aid workers, journalists or the police to draw on a much wider range of languages in the different contexts in which they work is now and is likely to remain critical to their success. These arguments are already well-established in higher education policy statements, and hold equally for foreign language learners as for community language learners; but community language learners 'add value' in this context. The wide range of languages in use in the UK means that sectors of the population already have pre-existing interests and competence in many of the less widely-taught languages. It provides us with a head-start, particularly in relation to languages such as Chinese, Hindi/Urdu or Arabic which require many years of dedicated study from *ab initio* learners before high levels of competence can be achieved. We need to make use of all the resources we have, given the low level of linguistic competence currently, as the *National Languages Strategy* makes clear:

> Too few employees have the necessary language skills to be able to engage fully in international business and too few employers support their employees in gaining additional language skills as part of their job. Employers and employees with language skills improve employability and economic competitiveness, enabling the country to prosper in the global economy. (DfES, 2002)

Studies of graduate employability have established that, apart from competence in specific languages, the kinds of skills which languages students develop in the course of their degrees — problem solving, critical thinking, communication, team work, interaction — are all highly desirable attributes. The British Academy (2004) has argued that modern linguists, along with other humanities graduates, are at an advantage compared to graduates from more directly professional or vocational degrees in that they are more flexible, able to consider employment in a number of fields, and to move within these in the course of their working lives. Research by Allan (2006) into the experiences of linguists and other humanities graduates after graduation confirms that these are key factors in the career development of such graduates, but also that their motivation for choosing such disciplines stemmed from a wider interest and enjoyment of the intellectual stimulation and cultural insights students associated with these subjects, and that these factors have been important in determining career and life paths. These advantages are not associated with specific languages, and therefore apply equally to languages studied as foreign languages as to those studied as community languages.

1.2 Cultural and intellectual benefits

The argument that cultural and intellectual benefits accrue from language study has traditionally been well-rehearsed, and is present also in the *National Languages Strategy.*

> Learning other languages gives us insight into the people, culture and traditions of other countries and helps us to understand our own language and culture. (DfES, 2002)

As we have seen in earlier chapters, higher education students expect not only to gain knowledge and experience of professional value to them, in the course of their studies, but also to engage in work which is intellectually challenging and which broadens their cultural horizons. Students who choose to study languages to degree level may have a particular commitment to the intellectual and cultural focus, and this is as true of those studying languages as community language learners as it is of foreign language learners.

Despite the current emphasis on employability in higher education policy debate, it would be a mistake to believe that intellectual and cultural activities are a luxury we can no longer afford. As we saw in Chapter 4, the British Academy is concerned that the lack of language skills among post-graduate students, in any given discipline, puts UK research and scholarship at risk: students who can study and communicate their ideas only through English are likely to have a narrow, Anglo-centric view of their field and may not be able to identify or engage with leading or challenging work in other languages. While the major European languages will remain valuable, it seems likely that many community languages will grow in importance as the countries with which they are associated become more powerful economically. As the 21st century progresses, we will need academics competent in Chinese, Arabic, Russian, Hindi/Urdu and some of the major African languages to understand and engage with the economic, political, environmental and developmental shifts already predicted for this century, and the academic and intellectual shifts that will accompany them; and it is likely that other languages will emerge as significant for as yet unrecognised reasons. Support for the learning of these languages now is thus likely to be a good investment.

There is also the potential to link the new cultural perspectives acquired through language study to growing policy interest in ensuring that students develop a sense of themselves as global citizens, as set out in the DfES's policy document, *Putting the World into World-Class Education:*

> Developing and maintaining a world-class [education] system begins with understanding the world in which we live: the values and cultures of different societies; the ways in which we are increasingly dependent on one another; and the ways in which we all, as global citizens, can influence and shape the changes in the global economy, environment and society of which we are part. (DfES, 2004).

The *National Languages Strategy* makes clear that languages are essential to this project:

> In the Knowledge Society of the 21st century, language competence and intercultural understanding are not optional extras, they are an essential part of being a citizen.
>
> (DfES, 2002)

Universities have an important role to play in ensuring that the next generation of graduates are equipped to respond in an informed and positive way to this role:

> Our students are global citizens — whether good citizens or bad, they cannot continue to live as little islanders, they cannot but play a global role — in their employment, their leisure, their consumerism, and in their social impact. Whether they are equipped to play a positive role or left subject to the consequences of globalisation depends largely on the education we are able to provide. The key issues of our time, from climate change to human migration and the continuing injustice of North/South inequalities, require researchers and professionals capable of and inclined towards finding global solutions – and so our graduates must be able to contribute to such solutions, through their professional activities, their political lobbying and their personal actions. Such solutions require the tools of effective intercultural communication, and a curiosity, openness and willingness to engage with others. In short, the art of communicating across boundaries — whether those boundaries are with other disciplines, other professions, other nationalities, or other local and regional cultures.
>
> (Killick, 2006a)

In fact, business schools are already aware of the importance of intercultural communication skills for those working in the growing range of fields in which such knowledge can make the difference between the success or failure of a deal, an assignment or a project. Although business schools do not always require their students to learn a language as a consequence, but rather, in many cases, to study the principles of intercultural communication, linguists who understand these issues 'from the inside' as a result of years of study of a language, of the people who speak it and of the cultural contexts in which it is spoken, are needed to inform this work. Community language learners, often well used to the role of cultural intermediaries between the people and culture associated with their community language and Anglophone society, can provide valuable 'insider' insights:

> *People with cultural knowledge are essential to facilitate communication and community languages speakers can act as a bridge between different cultures and languages. Migrant communities in the UK have knowledge of their home cultures that is untapped, a huge potential.* (Business language expert)

1.3 Languages and the information society

Terms such as information society, knowledge economy, or network society have all been used to describe the shift in the late 20th century from economies, and societies, based on the production and exchange of material goods and resources to a world in which knowledge and information play an increasingly important role economically and more widely in society. In particular, the work of Castells (2000) and Barney (2003) has drawn attention to the growing importance of communication via digital networks as a transforming factor for the 21st century.

The implications for language learning are only beginning to be identified. In the 1990s as use of the worldwide web gathered momentum, virtually all content was in English, supporting the global reach of the language and encouraging for a while the belief that English would become essential for everyone who wished to make use of this new technology. However, over the present decade, this situation has changed significantly. In 2001, it was estimated that approximately 80% of the web's content was in English. The most recent figures (November 2007) show that English now accounts for only 30%. This puts English still well ahead of its closest rival, Chinese (15%); but the balance of linguistic power has clearly shifted and is likely to continue to do so, given that the 2006-

7 growth rates on the web for languages such as Chinese (470%), Spanish (332%), French (410%), Portuguese (571%) and Arabic (1576%) outstrip that of English (165%).[4] This shift makes clear that English alone is no longer sufficient for web-based networking purposes — those seeking to gather or disseminate information, for myriad purposes for which the web is now used, are increasingly likely to need to be able to operate multilingually.

In addition, the move to web-based communication, including email and instant messaging, has brought about a change in the relationship between the spoken and the written language. Technological advances in the early 20th century — the invention of the telephone, the radio and the television — meant that the spoken language rose in prominence after centuries in which the written word had been the principal means of recording and disseminating information and ideas. Language teaching methods (eventually) followed suit, moving away from teaching methods which focused principally on formal literacy (the 'grammar and translation' approach) to those which gave at least as much attention to communicative competence in the spoken language. But the most recent developments suggest that the balance needs to be re-evaluated. Although the web operates as a multimedia domain, there is no doubt that the written word has primacy, and those who need to communicate via the web must be able to read and write fast. This indicates that the focus of language learning and teaching may need to be reviewed, and literacy skills, in the context of web-based communication, may need greater attention. This is as true for foreign language learning as for community language learning, although community languages may present greater challenges, given that literacy skills among community language learners are often weak, and that where other scripts are involved, software interfaces may still be in the process of development. However, recent research into the technologically based communicative practices of plurilingual teenagers indicates a rise in instant messaging and other web-based forms of communication, with friends, relatives and online contacts in the local area, in the country of origin and across the diaspora (Lam, 2006). The next generation of community language learners may have considerably higher levels of technologically based literacy than their predecessors, and with a wider range of contacts, across languages and extensive geographical areas, than their monolingual peers.

2.   Community languages and the widening access and participation agenda

In this section we consider policy issues around widening access and participation initiatives, which aim to enable people from families or communities without a history of involvement in higher education to consider university study. It is often argued that making provision for community languages can contribute to such initiatives, in that course participants may come from groups which traditionally have had little involvement in higher education. We recognise that community language provision may indeed pave the way for some students who might otherwise not have considered higher education– and indeed, in the course of the research, we came across some examples of this phenomenon. However, where widening access and participation is seen as the sole rationale for making provision for community languages, problems ensue, particularly when these kinds of initiatives are seen as conflicting with a university's internationalisation agenda.

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[4] Data from Internet World Stats: http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats7.htm (accessed 30 December 2007).

Universities' remit to widen access and participation has been HEFCE policy for at least a decade (HEFCE, 1996); and currently forms the backdrop to initiatives, such as *AimHigher,* to increase participation in higher education to 50% of young people (aged 18–30) by 2010, from a figure of 34% in 2001. Early analysis of the effectiveness of this initiative indicates that 'new' universities have been more proactive in terms of developing strategies to increase access by under-represented groups, while 'old' universities, concerned about the possible impact on their teaching and research reputations, have made fewer changes to their marketing and course offers (Tonks & Farr, 2003).

A recent study (Shaw et al., 2007), conducted on behalf of the Higher Education Academy, refines this picture somewhat. It identified three paradigms of widening participation, reflecting different institutional positions:

> *Academic:* which represents a model of assimilation — finding the 'brightest and best', and supporting potential entrants to acquire the characteristics (especially academic preparedness and entry qualifications) of the existing student body.

> *Differential provision:* which is broadly based on putting on alternative types or modes of provision for under-represented groups, sometimes in different locations. This may increase the overall diversity of the student body, but some parts of the institution will remain unaffected.

> *Transformative:* in which mainstream provision and services is examined and changed where necessary in order to support the success of a diverse range of students. Diversity and difference are viewed positively as assets. (p4)

Findings from our study indicate that universities' rationales for introducing community languages as a way of supporting widening access and participation can be mapped on to these three paradigms:

- Universities operating within the *academic paradigm* aim to identify good students with community language competence in major world languages such as Chinese or Arabic, and fit them into their existing provision already on offer to *ab initio* learners. One university takes this approach further by targeting students who speak community languages and encouraging them to take degrees in the major European languages (rather than their community languages), on the basis that they are experienced language learners and therefore likely to be successful in studying additional languages to a high level.

- Those within the *differential provision paradigm* set up provision for community languages which was not previously on offer, with the intention of stimulating local demand and bringing into the university students who might not otherwise have considered higher education. But the extent to which links are made between this type of provision and the more established degree courses is likely to vary, and the students recruited in this way may still encounter barriers, in terms of the value placed on the community language skills they have acquired or the fit with other aspects of the course.

- Universities operating within the *transformative paradigm* are likely to be rare, because clearly this requires a radical review of existing provision and a new approach to recruitment and to models of learning and teaching. It is also likely to take time for such shifts to occur. But there are some examples of institutions in which such changes may be underway. In such cases, languages departments review both the range of languages on offer and models of teaching and learning, in order both to offer languages likely to be of interest to local populations and to teach these in ways which reflect prior experiences and diverse goals. Market research is conducted in order to establish demand for particular languages, existing levels of competence within the communities to be targeted, and purposes for language learning. Links with other degree courses are reviewed or initiated to develop IWLP modules, joint degrees etc. likely to be attractive to the target group.

Respondents in our study identified tensions between the widening access and participation agenda on the one hand and the internationalisation agenda on the other, and typically felt that their institutions saw internationalisation as higher priority. As one concrete example of the kinds of dichotomies presented, several respondents in the course of their interviews commented that their institutions were more likely to be interested in investing in English languages courses for international students than in community language provision for students from the local area. More generally, it seems likely that universities expect internationalisation — a strategy in which the recruitment of large numbers of students from beyond the EU to play a major role — to bring substantial financial rewards. In fees alone, non-EU students contributed £1.5 billion in 2004–5 (Vickers & Bekhradnia, 2007).

In contrast, it has been established that the costs of widening access and participation are considerably higher than the premium which universities receive for recruiting students from non-traditional backgrounds, and that this translates into unpaid work by academics and other university staff (Universities UK/ HEFCE, 2002). None of our respondents overtly referred to costs in their discussion of community languages in the context of widening access and participation, but these concerns may well underlie comments such as the following, from the director of a language centre:

> *The university has been positioning itself as a world-class institution, defined primarily by its research. It supports engaging with the local community by making its expertise and research excellence more accessible rather than by providing courses better provided by further education, such as community languages courses. This is not something the university would encourage strategically.*

Other institutions, however, have made explicit links between widening access and internationalisation policies, on the basis that cultural (and implicitly linguistic) diversity is an asset. For example, the Leeds Metropolitan's Curriculum Review document makes these connections in listing the benefits for students of the cross-cultural curriculum:

As a graduate attribute for effective and responsible engagement with a globalising world, cross-cultural capability can be seen as comprising three major elements:

- *Intercultural awareness and the associated communication skills*

  Culture is interpreted here in its broadest sense, and from the standpoint that to be human is to be within and outside of a complex of cultures. The University itself is a

multicultural environment, comprising individuals from over 100 national cultures, all world religions, a large number of ethnicities, all sexualities, several socio-economic groups, students with disabilities, speakers of at least 20 different first languages, and a wide range of ages (to name only a few). The world which our graduates come into direct contact with through their personal and professional lives is increasingly even more culturally diverse.

The awareness of self in relation to the "other", the ability to communicate effectively across cultures, and the confidence to challenge one's own values and those of others responsibly and ethically are all aspects of what is meant by intercultural awareness and communication skills in a cross-cultural capability context. The focus on responsible and ethical responses is what may be seen to differentiate a cross-cultural capability approach.

- *International and multicultural perspectives on one's discipline area*

  Here we are concerned to ensure a student's understanding of their subject area is representative of perspectives which derive from other cultures, philosophies, religions, or nations. Graduates whose terms of reference are purely "western" or secular, for example, are not being well prepared to work with or to respond critically to others in their field.

  As professionals in education, it is similarly incumbent upon us to understand the differing perspectives, needs, values and aspirations of our students as part of our own cross-cultural capability.

- *Application in practice*

  The ability to apply the awareness, skills and perspectives outlined above to our personal lives and professional practice.

(Killick, 2006b)

Such examples indicate that widening participation and internationalisation policies need not be seen as in conflict with each other. Community languages can contribute to both agendas, although it would seem that more work is needed to make the links and identify the benefits.

3. Demand for community languages in a multilingual UK

Although much of the focus of discussion about employability of languages graduates, or graduates in other disciplines with languages as an additional skill, has been around international business, language skills are needed within the UK too, given increasing linguistic diversity internally. Some of this work, as we have seen, involves the provision of translation and interpretation services, and, where appropriate, the employment of bilingual public services workers, for those whose English is not sufficiently well developed to enable them to cope in specialist or stressful situations (such as medical discussions, social service hearings or legal matters). In addition, there are also business and cultural services targeting minority ethnic groups — ranging from community journalism, music and theatre to food outlets and financial services — where knowledge of the community language in question and of the cultural context in which it is used are indispensable.

Few studies of the role of languages in UK business have explored the importance of languages in the local context. For example Hagen's collation and analysis of surveys of business language and culture in UK trade and commerce (2005) focuses almost exclusively on languages for export, and largely on business competence in the major European languages. Competence in non-European languages is reported in these surveys to be very low, which may indicate either that the participating companies do not employ many community language speakers, or that they did not consider competence in community languages because the focus was on 'foreign' languages. Whichever is the correct explanation, it seems clear that many UK businesses fail to recognise the potential of community languages to grow their business, at home or abroad.

One business language expert interviewed in the course of the study argued that there is an urgent need for business training and support agencies to work with education providers to raise awareness of the potential of community languages, and to develop strategies to work towards realisation of this potential:

> *Regional organisations, such as the Regional Development Agencies, Learning and Skills Councils and Sector Skills Councils, and UK Trade and Investment need to show leadership and vision and work with the educational sector to encourage businesses to help raise awareness among employees of the need to maximise linguistic potential. So far there is little activity on the part of these organisations.*

Regional Language Network (RLN) London has recently set out to address this situation, in an overview of London's language needs and linguistic resources (RLN London, 2006). This document draws attention to the fact that London is one of the most multilingual cities in the world, but that a failure to recognise or value the language skills of the local population has led to the development of agencies specialising in the identification of suitable foreign 'native speakers' for the many jobs in which plurilingual staff are required. Moves to redress the balance have included the development of the London Language Plan, to ensure that public service workers in the capital have the language skills to deal with a multilingual user population, while the Department for Trade and Industry is also investigating the language skills needed by front-line staff. RLN London notes that:

> Stakeholders must work with the education sector to ensure languages are learned for the benefit of public and private sector industry and that migrant workers, as well as UK-born individuals with language skills, develop the job skills needed to progress their career and in turn benefit the economy.

Other Regional Language Networks have similarly begun to recognise that competence in community languages can be an asset for employees in businesses whose clientele consists of local people who, in some cases, speak little or no English and therefore can only access services through other languages; and in others simply prefer to do business in their community language, even if they also speak English, much as French customers prefer to do business in French, even when they speak English well. For example, RLN West Midlands includes — in a set of case studies illustrating the value of languages for business — examples of the West Bromwich Building Society which matches staff language skills (and encourages staff to learn community languages) to their customer base so that staff can communicate in languages which customers prefer; and Smartlyte, a training company which offers first aid courses in community languages, following the realisation that few people from local minority ethnic

communities were enrolling in such courses because of the language barrier, and that this was putting lives at risk.[5]

RLN London also point to the multilingual communication demands which the 2012 Olympic Games will make in an enormous and diverse range of contexts — not simply in terms of the event itself, but for all the related hotel, catering, transport and media business which will be generated — and the need to capitalise on the city's existing linguistic resources to meet this. Education providers are seen as having a key role to play in realising this potential:

> We can build further on our joint working with schools, FE and HE networks. Simple access to interpreters, translators, multilingual staff, training providers and language technology and media support will be essential for a successful event.

RLN London's Language and Cultural Skills Strategy for London (2007) elaborates:

> Vocational language programmes need to be expanded across all sectors of education. Further availability of work-related language programmes is needed in further and higher education. There is growth in demand for language units and modules to complement professionally-orientated undergraduate programmes, though the combinations on offer need to reflect more closely the demands of business in London.
>
> What's needed :
> * Better links are needed between business and education, especially for the FE and HE sectors.
> * Research and needs analysis amongst employers will strengthen this activity.
> * Funding support to allow the development and provision of vocational language programmes.
> * Monitoring of the impact of the funding changes on Further and Adult Education language course enrolments.
> * Increased provision and opportunities to gain qualifications.
> * Improved co-ordination, networking and sharing of resources.

Implementation of the strategy will begin in 2008, and will include mapping of language and cultural skills provision in FE and HE and among private sector providers.

As yet, only a few higher education providers seem to have recognised local demand for community languages, and even where this has been the case, clashes between local and national policy have created problems. One university had hoped to encourage students on pharmacy and health studies courses to study Urdu through the IWLP, but a series of government announcements indicating that community language translation and interpretation services should cease to be provided, in order to encourage immigrants to learn English seems to have dissuaded students from taking up this option. Another provider noted that community language speakers themselves are confused by mixed messages, often concluding that their skills in community languages have little or no career value:

> *Students often do not value their community languages themselves: they may not think [qualifications] are worth mentioning on CVs.* (HM Inspector, Ofsted)

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[5] http://www.rln-westmidlands.com/case_studies/WM/default.aspx

Nevertheless, growing demand for competence in community languages in many different contexts in the UK means that providers should consider how best to respond to strategies such as that of RLN London.

4. Conclusions

In this chapter we have argued that the kinds of policy statements used to promote the learning of languages generally apply equally to community languages. Furthermore, community languages add value to these arguments because they increase the range of languages on offer, and because community language learners have the potential to acquire advanced skills in language more quickly than ab initio learners. In view of increasing linguistic diversity within the UK, the need for people who can use these languages for professional purposes is also growing, along with the potential economic, social and cultural benefits to be gained from supporting community language learning.

To realise this potential, strategic thinking is required, within HEIs and among employers and local, regional and national bodies with responsibility for promoting language learning. Some have already started to address these issues. In Chapter 8, our recommendations indicate ways in which the various organisations could make further progress.

Chapter 8: Recommendations

Summary

In this final chapter, we describe a broader vision of language learning which encompasses the interests of community and foreign language learners, breaking down artificial distinctions between the two areas and benefiting all learners, whatever their background and whatever their goals.

Our recommendations specifically concern improving provision for community language learning in higher education, but should also contribute to the development and embedding of this wider vision.

We recommend that a series of awareness raising activities be initiated, among providers, among policy-makers and politicians and among linguistic communities, to draw attention to the benefits accruing from investment in community languages.

We recommend extensive reform of current provision for community languages in higher education, in terms of degree level provision, modular provision and provision for professional education for teachers and public service interpreters.

We recommend that the main national policy-making bodies and decision-makers with responsibility for languages within HEIs adopt the broader vision for languages set out in this report and thus ensure that community languages are systematically included in the development of rationales for provision and in strategic decisions which ensue. Further research, both policy-related and academic, is required to support this work.

1.   Introduction: a broader vision of language learning

In the course of this research, we engaged in many discussions with respondents and workshop participants about the use of the term 'community languages'. While many recognised the importance of marking what is distinctive about community language and their learners, they were also concerned about potential ghettoisation. Many believed that the day when all languages are simply considered to be languages, without the need for categorisation, would mark a more egalitarian approach to provision and to learners' linguistic achievements.

We share the view that policy and practice concerned with languages education, at all levels, should aim to be as comprehensive as possible, including as wide a range of languages as can feasibly be taught, on the basis of demand rather than status. But we are concerned that community languages should not simply be subsumed into the existing foreign language project, given the limitations of current approaches from the perspective of community language learners.

We argue for a broader vision of language learning which encompasses a wide range of learner histories and goals. In this report we have characterised community language learners as having more varied backgrounds and interests than foreign language learners are typically considered to have. But in fact, foreign language learners may sometimes have comparable learner histories to those of community language learners: children whose parents speak French and spend every summer holiday in France, for

example, may acquire quite an extensive informal knowledge of French before they start to study the language at school, and may find themselves equally ill at ease in a class which assumes no knowledge of the language, or where the teacher is critical of colloquialisms or of fluent but 'ungrammatical' speech. Similarly, students who spend a gap year in another country and then decide to study the language formally through an IWLP or to degree level when they enter higher education, may find beginners' classes too basic for their needs, but that if they join more advanced classes they lack the formal underpinning required. In the course of this study we have come across a number of examples in which students who 'knew too much' of the language they hoped to study or 'knew the wrong kind of language' were discouraged or excluded from classes and we suggest that this indicates a narrow conceptualisation of the language learner on the part of the provider.

We have also argued that community language learners have a wider range of goals than are typically assumed for foreign language learners, but again suggest that such assumptions represent a failure on the part of providers to appreciate and cater for the full range of purposes for which people may wish to learn languages. If we consider the history of provision for foreign language learning over the latter part of the 20th century and the early years of the 21st, we can discern a shift in policy discourse concerning purposes for language learning, from an assumption that language learning was an intellectual end in itself (1950s and 1960s), through a period in which transactional skills for tourists were seen as the key focus of provision (1970s-1990s) to an emphasis on the importance of languages for international business communication (1990s and 2000s). None of these shifts are uncontested, and learners and their teachers now may express preferences for one or other of these goals, or more than one. They may also promote other rationales which become more salient at higher levels of study, such as engagement with 'high' culture or with certain social sciences, such as linguistics or anthropology, where knowledge of other languages is required. If we add to this list some of the reasons which community language learners typically put forward for wishing to study their languages, which include strengthening of cultural identities or a desire to engage in public service work in the UK or aid and development overseas, none of these purposes need specifically exclude foreign language learners. They may be interested, for example in exploring a wider 'European' identity than is encompassed in English alone, or participating in cultural activities (ranging from culinary experiences to dance, drama or religious study) available in the area where they live even if not historically associated with the learners' own family backgrounds. Anyone preparing to teach or to enter social work, or to work in aid and development projects may wish to study the languages of the people they plan to work with: they do not have to come from a family or community with links to the language in question.

We commend, therefore, to all concerned with languages education at all levels – but particularly, in this context, within higher education – a broader vision of language learning based on diverse learner histories and learner goals as beneficial to all learners, not only community language learners. At the same time we urge that the interests of community language learners should no longer be neglected in discussions of future educational provision for languages.

We recognise that this entails many changes to existing models of provision and presents a range of resource and logistical challenges. In this final chapter, we make recommendations concerning the kinds of changes to be made, and the people or bodies responsible for making them — with this broader vision in mind, but with the more

specific intention of ensuring that community languages and their learners are more effectively catered for than has been the case up till now.

2. Awareness raising

In this report and elsewhere, we and many others have argued that the community languages in use in the UK constitute a valuable resource which would contribute very substantially to achievement of key linguistic goals (ranging from progress towards the Barcelona 1+2 agenda, to improving the capacity of British business to expand its share of international trade). However, this message is not yet widely understood or accepted.

We recommend a series of awareness raising actions to promote community language learning:

- *among providers*, drawing attention to the potential contributions community languages can make to universities' internationalisation agenda and in terms of a developing academic field; in view of globalisation and superdiversity, academic investment in community languages and the cultural and political contexts to which they relate could put the UK in the forefront of developments in language policy and planning in the 21st century;

- *among local and national policy-makers and politicians*, promoting a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between English and the UK's community languages which sees these languages not in competition with each other but as contributing in different ways to an individual's overall ability to communicate in different ways in different contexts – and thus contributing to, rather than threatening, community cohesion;

- *among linguistic communities* themselves, so that learners place greater value on their existing expertise and on the socio-cognitive benefits to be gained from maintaining and developing their languages, become more aware of the potential uses to which their languages could be put and more committed to enhancing their language skills, through the various higher education opportunities available to them.

A number of national bodies have initiated activities likely to contribute to such awareness raising. The *Routes into Languages* initiative commissioned this study, which we hope will be widely publicised; and funds the North West Consortium whose goal is

> to raise the status of languages spoken within the diverse communities of Greater Manchester and their learning, as well as to promote the continuation of language learning at university. The initial focus will be on the teaching and learning of community and 'lesser-taught' languages in Greater Manchester, and the project will work closely with mainstream schools to support the widening of choice and opportunities for their pupils.[6]

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[6] See the *Routes into Languages* website: http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/northwest (accessed 21 January 2008)

CILT's *Languages Work* campaign,[7] which has created a range of resources to promote language learning for workplace use, has consistently adopted an inclusive approach, drawing attention to the value of community languages as well as foreign languages in its posters and case studies. This work could be built on by LLAS targeting higher education students, lecturers and careers advisers more specifically.

There is a need for similar initiatives at local level and within HEIs, and for good examples of such work (which we did not encounter in this study but which may exist) to be collated and shared – a task which may also fall within the remit of LLAS.

High profile debates on the topic of community languages and social cohesion, engaging policy-makers and politicians, could be initiated by LLAS, CILT and/ or the LWW CETL, with the aim of taking forward and shaping further work in this area.

3. Provision

Currently, provision for learning community languages in higher education has to be described as limited and unsatisfactory – despite a small number of examples of innovative work in certain institutions. There is a need for new pedagogies, developed and delivered by teachers with access to the professional development which will enable them to take on such tasks, and supported by resources which reflect the new conceptualisation. Fundamental questions of progression and accreditation need to be addressed.

3.1 Degree study in community languages

We recommend the establishment of at least one degree course in each of the main community languages in use in the UK as an essential prerequisite for the development of the field. Taking community languages seriously entails opportunities for high level, academic study of the languages – just as there are for the major European languages. This would ensure a supply of competent graduates qualified to teach in schools, colleges and on IWLPs, as well as to go on to the other careers that require high level language skills listed in this report; and also to provide academic leadership alongside the knowledge and skills required to develop pedagogical approaches and teaching resources. Without degree courses, there will always be a shortage of community languages teachers, in all sectors, or an over-reliance on recruiting teachers from overseas; and the field will continue to lack direction or to suffer from attrition as highly committed individuals eventually abandon positions condemned to low status because they are not seen as having academic credibility.

The decision to designate languages in higher education as 'strategic and vulnerable' makes specific mention of 'minority' languages which include many of the main community languages in use in the UK. The report of the advisory group on strategic and vulnerable subjects indicates that HEFCE should take action when there is a problem with supply in higher education, and we therefore recommend that HEFCE address this issue. The regional breakdown of GCSE candidates in community languages (Chart 3c) provides an initial indication of where it might be most appropriate to locate provision for different languages – for example, this would suggest that an East Midlands HEI should offer a degree in Gujarati, as, in this region, this is the language with the greatest

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[7] See the *Languages Work* website: http://www.languageswork.org.uk/ (accessed 21 January 2008)

number of GCSE candidates — but further analysis of linguistic diversity within the regions is needed.

3.2 Provision for community languages in Language Centres and IWLPs

We recommend that directors of Language Centres and IWLPs consider the development of more flexible and more targeted provision, taking into account both the diversity of community language learners' prior learning experiences and their more specific or specialised needs and goals. This entails good market research to identify community needs and aspirations and to make links with existing providers so that progression routes can be devised. Similarly, within HEIs, there is a need for more systematic liaison with the range of degree course providers to which modules in community languages could be linked. Effective assessment of competence prior to placement and formative and summative assessment, with appropriate accreditation are also needed.

Provision for community languages within Language Centres or IWLPs raises different issues from foreign language provision and requires dedicated support for teachers' professional development and the sourcing or creation of suitable resources. We recommend that bodies such as AULC and the LLAS investigate ways of supporting innovation and development in this field, particularly through the establishment of networks for community languages teachers. CILT has been proactive in setting up a national advisory group for community languages and organising events where teachers – mainly from the school sector – can meet. The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) has set up email interest groups for teachers of specific languages. LLAS has established a specialist interest group for teachers of less widely taught languages and HEFCE the SOAS-UCL CETL for 'Languages of the Wider World'. These bodies could include a more specific focus on community languages in higher education, and investigate the possibility of setting up interest groups for specific languages, similar to those established by the SSAT for schools.

3.3 Professional education for community languages specialists

Professional education for community languages specialists currently focuses on the formation of community languages teachers and public service interpreters. Both fields suffer from low status, low pay and precarious work conditions. Therefore the logistical difficulties encountered by teacher educators who wish to train community language teachers and the limited interest among HEIs in providing high level education in public service interpreting and translation comes as no surprise, despite growing demand for qualified professionals in both fields.

In the case of initial teacher education, we recommend that the TDA review its position on flexible PGCEs and considers how additional support might be allocated to ITE providers who undertake to train community language teachers, given the extensive demands that this makes on time and resources. Further recommendations in this are likely to emerge from the Ofsted review of provision for community languages in mainstream schools, due to be published shortly.

In the case of public service interpreters, we recognise that the IoL has played an important role in professionalising the work of public service interpreters, but there is a need for academic input into the training to support diploma candidates, and for higher level courses (e.g. MAs) similar to those available for conference interpreters, in order to

enable the field to develop, and to secure higher professional status for practitioners. We recommend that the IoL work with selected HEIs to identify the best ways of achieving this.

4. Policy and strategy

At present policy discussion of the place of languages in higher education and the contribution which a national capacity in languages other than English makes to the economic, cultural and social dimensions of our lives only sporadically refers to community languages. Consequently strategic decisions relevant to recruitment and provision for languages in higher education rarely take into account community language issues.

We recommend that the main national policy-making bodies and decision-makers with responsibility for languages within HEIs adopt the broader vision for languages set out at the start of this chapter and thus ensure that community languages are systematically included in the development of rationales for provision. Inasmuch as these rationales are linked to wider initiatives within higher education, such as the internationalisation agenda, they should make explicit the contribution that community languages, as well as foreign languages can make. They need also to explore new territory for languages, such as the implications of multilingualism within the UK, which rationales focused on foreign languages traditionally have not addressed. One consequence of this broader vision would be that HESA and UCAS would collect language-specific data to enable progress in making provision for England's major community languages to be tracked, rather than aggregated blocs, as at present.

Policy needs to be backed by research, but there is currently little research in the UK which looks at the uses of community languages, outside of education. Some work in this area has been initiated in the US (see Brinton et al., 2007), while Pauwels et al. (2007) provide a set of articles constituting a comparative review of developments relevant to language policy and planning in this context around the world. We recommend that LLAS and HEFCE consider commissioning research of direct relevance to policy development, and that they support more academic research in this field through the Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

5. Summary list of recommendations

In the context of our broader vision of language learning, which links foreign and community language learning and promotes an even-handed approach to each, we make the following recommendations:

1. National, regional and local bodies with responsibility for languages should devise awareness raising activities for providers, local and national policy-makers and among linguistic communities themselves.

2. HEFCE should take action to ensure that at least one degree course in each of the main community languages in use in the UK is established.

3. Directors of Language Centres and IWLPs need to develop more flexible and more targeted provision for community language learners.

4. Bodies such as the AULC and the LLAS should investigate ways of supporting innovation and development in this field, particularly through the establishment of networks for community languages teachers.

5. The TDA should review its position on flexible PGCEs and considers how additional support might be allocated to ITE providers who undertake to train community language teachers, given the extensive demands that this makes on time and resources.

6. The IoL should work with selected HEIs to develop academically based professional education for prospective public service interpreters.

7. National policy-making bodies and decision-makers with responsibility for languages within HEIs should adopt the broader vision for languages described here and ensure that community languages are systematically included in the development of rationales for provision and strategies deriving from these rationales.

8. LLAS and HEFCE should support – directly and indirectly – further policy-related and academic research into provision for community languages and into the benefits to wider British society from investment in this field.

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APPENDIX A