



Regular updates on the campaign for languages

Arguing the case

Tim Connell *on the challenge of securing highly qualified UK linguists*

There is a clear need for more people who are able to work with their languages at a high level in business and professional areas.¹ Yet the gap is being filled extensively by native speakers. The decline in entries at GCSE and A-level has had an impact on the number of undergraduates who take a language as their main component of study, leading to a fall in the number of UK-educated, highly qualified linguists. Concern is being expressed too about the lack of Russian tuition in Scotland.²

On the other hand, there are signs of celebrated green shoots. Positive steps include the advent of Master's degrees in Area Studies, linked to BRICK³ countries especially; the increase in the number of ERASMUS students; the recognition of languages as Strategically Important and Vulnerable Subjects; and the growth in Institution-Wide Language Programmes in UK universities (although these do not generally teach languages to advanced level). The reprieve of non-operational languages at the Defence School for Languages is also to be welcomed, even though the site at Beaconsfield is still due to close.

The UK now offers more than 70 MAs in translation, though this may have had an effect on enrolments for the CIOL's own Diploma in Translation. There has also been a clear increase in the number of MAs offered in audio-visual translation, meeting a growing need for voiceover, dubbing and subtitling.

Against that, there has been a decline in demand for the Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI), which remains the principal qualification at professional level in this area. PSI is in a critical situation with the changes in arrangements between interpreters and courts. A welcome development is the project, funded by Routes into Languages, to explore issues around teaching provision in translating and interpreting for the public services. The

FIND OUT MORE

For the latest about the campaign for languages, or to get involved, visit www.speaktothefuture.org. We're also on Twitter @speak2future, Facebook www.fb.com/speaktothefuture and LinkedIn – search in 'groups' for 'Speak to the future'.

Certificate in Bilingual Skills (CBS) was recently awarded government funding, which will allow the IoLET to offer it more widely, particularly to young bilingual people whose languages are not available at GCSE or A-level. It is already used by the police and there is an option designed for Sports and Leisure.

To 'increase the number of highly qualified linguists', which is the STF (Speak to the future) Objective 5 working group's aim, the campaign needs first to highlight the demand from business not just for translating and interpreting but for linguists in general, and to ensure that end-users make use of suitably qualified staff. The growing range of languages of strategic and commercial value needs to be highlighted, and there is a need to tackle the unconverted, half-hearted and frankly hostile. The case for languages in the workplace is overwhelming, but there is much work to be done in communicating this.

Notes

- 1 Education and Skills Survey 2011, CBI; International Trade Business Survey 2012, British Chambers of Commerce
- 2 www.scotlandrussiaforum.org
- 3 Brazil, Russia, India, China and (South) Korea



Professor Tim Connell is a CIOL Vice-President. He leads the STF Objective 5 working group.



BUSINESS SUPPORT: *The City of London*

On the campaign trail

Dominic Luddy *looks at recent developments*

In April, Speak to the future (STF) welcomed senior figures from the world of business to a breakfast meeting hosted by UBS, which aimed to rally support from employers for the campaign, including Citigroup, Bank of America Merrill Lynch and Herbert Smith. An action plan is being formed to communicate the critical importance of language learning to the economy and our future workforce.

Our online communities of supporters are growing fast. Within three months of launching, our Facebook fanpage had more than 450 'likes', with around 30 fans joining every week. We're also active on Twitter, and our LinkedIn group page is a great place to discuss the state of language learning in the UK and the ways we can make a change.

We hope to have launched a new website by the time you read this, which will make it even easier to get involved and spread the word. With high-profile ambassadors featured and dedicated pages for different audiences, including parents, media and policymakers, we will be getting the message out further and wider than ever.