

countries; and the loss of large EU agencies could mean that jobs move there too in the long-term. Translations will then be required within the EU and could be outsourced to translators based in EU27 countries. Just-in-time manufacturing and shipping work is also expected to change considerably. Companies with UK-based manufacturing facilities are already moving their entire operations to EU27 countries. The demand for translations may remain the same, but regulatory difficulties could make it harder to place that work with translators in Britain.

Future-proofing your business

A number of colleagues are beginning to alter their balance of British and EU clients, while some are actively looking for new clients in the USA. Some are adding specialist subjects to their portfolio in the hope of shifting the focus of their work from perceived high-risk sectors, such as marketing, to lower risk ones. A few said they are learning another language. Many commented that the key to survival was to improve and maintain standards so that clients would continue to work with them even if red tape made this more difficult.

By and large, translators believe that Brexit could benefit colleagues working in non-EU languages, especially in countries where Britain is likely to sign trade agreements, such as China. UK-based translators working in predominantly EU languages, in particular between English and German, are far less sanguine about their future.

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What clients think

Opinions about the likely impact of Brexit vary widely among translators. The question is whether those who remain unconcerned are being complacent, or whether those who are worried are panicking unnecessarily. I asked five of my direct clients for their assessment of the impact of Brexit on their business. Only one reported no change: as a long-term intermediary between Russian and German companies, they do not expect any change and will remain loyal to their long-term translators. Only minimal change has been experienced by a client that sells British heritage memorabilia to museums. They have, however, curtailed their exploration of the EU market, focusing instead on the US, for which they do not require translation work.

One of my clients noted that the way the political negotiations are being conducted is putting pressure on his business. He is also seeing a move within Britain towards using British products and components, rather than

imported ones, and that is affecting his contact with his German partner company. The others, especially companies that import basic materials from abroad and then sell a value-added product on the international market, have put further expansion into the EU on hold, or scaled down their plans, and will focus on other countries until the regulatory framework is clear. This affects all translations, but especially translations into EU languages.

These companies are particularly worried about leaving the Single Market. Leaving the customs union, or incurring any additional tariffs and duties, would hugely affect their customer base. At present, all they can do is watch and hope. In the meantime, they are concentrating more on the UK market and, again, on the US market. They haven't forgotten about the EU, but they are ensuring that they have something to fall back on, should drastic changes occur within the EU.

It seems that translators are not panicking unnecessarily. We are responding to the signals our clients give us. And, like them, all we can do is prepare for difficult times ahead while hoping for the best.

Notes

1 This article uses 'the EU'/'EU27 countries' to refer to the states that will remain part of the EU post-Brexit

PLANNING AHEAD

Some translators are drawing up new business plans or considering new business models



Mentoring for change

Lucy Jenkins explores an innovative project in Wales that is changing young people's perceptions about language learning

The MFL (modern foreign languages) Student Mentoring Project is a flagship programme in Wales that has had a proven impact on pupils' perception of languages in Key Stage 3 (KS3; ages 11-14) and their uptake of languages into Key Stage 4 (KS4; ages 14-16). Funded by the Welsh Government under the Global Futures Strategy 2015-2020, it is a direct response to the steep decline in pupils studying languages from age 14, when they are no longer compulsory in England and Wales. Now in its third year, the project started with 21 participating schools in 2015-2016, increasing to 55 schools the following year. In 2017-18, it is working with 56 schools, from Welsh-medium schools to those with a high number of recipients of free school meals.

The project aims to influence attitudes towards language by having a sustained presence at the pre-GCSE stage and exposing pupils to a more holistic experience of language learning. Working in partnership with four Welsh universities (Bangor, Swansea, Aberystwyth and Cardiff), the four regional educational consortia, and secondary schools across Wales, we aim to help Year 9 students to appreciate the benefits of learning a language.

Working on the premise that young people are inspired by other young people, we train undergraduate linguists from our four partner universities to work with Year 9 students who are not planning to take a language GCSE, or are undecided. We aim to dispel myths around language learning by debunking notions that everyone speaks English and that the only careers languages lead to are teaching and translating. Working through a 12-week cycle, mentors introduce students to other cultures, and outline the opportunities that speaking languages has afforded them. They mentor groups of 5-8 students for up to an hour a week in two six-week blocks (phases 1 and 2). The number of groups each mentor works with depends on the amount of time they can commit to the project; some take on one group, others have four or five.

A report released by the British Academy in November 2017 stressed that an awareness of other cultures and languages is essential in securing the future of the UK economy, society, security and diplomacy in the context of the global labour market.¹ Our project aim is to equip young learners with the skills to move freely between languages and cultures, and to develop a keen



SPREADING ENTHUSIASM
A mentoring session for school students (top); and mentor training (above)



curiosity about the experiences of other people. It asks them to question their identity in relation to languages: Who am I? What do languages mean to me?

Mentors are trained to listen to their mentees and encourage discussion. A typical session would involve activities that subtly draw on the existing multicultural experiences of the students, such as talking about food likes and dislikes, travel and film. Discussing these common interests helps students realise that they are already participating in a multilingual and global society. One mentor commented on this unique aspect of the project: "It is different, getting pupils to work out examples rather than giving them the answers – it certainly had an effect on the way the mentees thought about things." This self-reflexive approach encourages pupils to consider their relationship with their national identity and to connect with wider global communities.

The Welsh linguascape

Wales finds itself in a challenging situation where languages are concerned. Languages are marginalised by an overloaded secondary school timetable, often competing in GCSE option blocks that limit student choices. In many schools, languages have seen a significant reduction in teaching hours, and the subject is under threat of closure in some schools. The effects of these systemic challenges are reflected in the findings of the latest Language Trends Wales Report:²

- In more than a third of Welsh schools, less than 10% of Year 10 (ages 14-15) are studying an MFL.

- 44% of schools have fewer than five pupils studying a foreign language at AS level and 61% have fewer than five foreign language pupils at A level.

- 64% of MFL departments have just one or two full-time teachers, with one third depending on non-British EU nationals.
- Take up of MFLs is continuing to fall in Years 10 and 11, indicating that the numbers taking GCSE languages will decrease again in 2017 and 2018.

As a bilingual nation, Wales should be at an advantage, striding ahead in terms of language acquisition and pedagogy. The reality is quite different. The MFL Student Mentoring Project aims to nurture and sustain a culture where languages enjoy a more prominent position within school culture. The new curriculum, which will be rolled out from 2022, features international languages as one of six core Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE), providing some hope that language will enjoy a more privileged position in new national teaching strategies.

What are the benefits?

Asking teachers of other subjects to give up teaching time to support a mentoring project for MFL can be daunting when they are already under pressure to cover an extensive syllabus in a set time. The mentoring project does not target syllabus content because it aims to take languages beyond the school walls. Mentoring differs from the formality of the student-teacher relationship, allowing mentees to ask different questions and to make mistakes in a non-assessed environment. They have the

JUST REWARDS
(Clockwise from top left) members of CIOL staff; CIOL Royal Patron Prince Michael of Kent talks with CIOL CEO Ann Carlisle and IoLET Chair Chris Pountain; Threlford Cup winners Lucy Jenkins (l) and Claire Gorrara (r); Prince Michael presents the awards; and Ann Carlisle introduces the event

opportunity to try new languages, such as Mandarin, Japanese or Spanish, and to get a taste of life abroad.

Students look to their mentors as figures to aspire to, not only in terms of language learning but also in terms of outlook. For many, meeting their mentor is their first exposure to higher education. The Award and Recognition event, held at the end of the mentoring cycle at the hub university, is often their first contact with university life. It shows them the opportunities that are out there. This is about raising pupil aspirations both around language and global mobility, and around further study. Teachers commented that one of the great successes of the project was in building ambition and broadening horizons, and that the link with higher education was key to this.

External evaluation of the first two years highlighted the following achievements:

- In phase 1, 57% of mentored pupils chose to take MFL in KS4; in Phase 2, 50% did so. This compares to 20% take up nationally.
- At the start of phase 2, 29% of mentees said they would take an MFL. An additional 187 pupils decided to do so after the intervention, representing an added value of 75%.
- In three consortia, the number of pupils choosing MFL more than doubled, and in one case nearly tripled.
- Four schools had had no GCSE group for several years, but were able to run one after taking part in the project.

The mentors also benefit, gaining professional training and developing skills that are required in the working world, such as resilience, time-management, organisational skills and professionalism. One mentor commented that the project had helped her to learn how to communicate positively, and that she now had an increased awareness of the impact of "how you say things" and how they

might be misconstrued. All these skills were felt to be extremely useful for future employability. For many, working with pupils has bolstered their confidence and helped them to develop a deeper connection with their own language experience.

A recent focus has been extending our geographical reach so that we can work with schools that are distant from their hub university. To do this, the project team is developing an online platform, Digi-Languages, with specialists at Cardiff University. This e-mentoring route will be evaluated with the support of a small Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Open World Research Initiative grant.³

In a recent Radio Wales interview, I was asked, "Isn't it all too little – learning languages has gone out of fashion?". As far as I am concerned, the MFL Student Mentoring Project has an ethical mission to challenge such assumptions. Languages are alive, and are our key tool for communicating with one another. In a post-Brexit society, where language deficits may become more apparent, the need to spread an understanding of other languages is more important than ever. I, for one, support a multicultural, multilingual Wales and Britain as our future.

Notes

- 1 British Academy (2017) 'The Right Skills: Celebrating skills in the arts, humanities and social sciences (AHSS)', London: The British Academy; bit.ly/2AdIPID
- 2 Tinsley, T & Board, K (2017) 'Language Trends Wales 2016/17: The state of language learning in secondary schools in Wales', Cardiff: British Council Wales
- 3 Arts and Humanities Research Council (2017) 'New Research Projects will Demonstrate the Value of Language Led Research', London: AHRC; bit.ly/2jBW13A [websites accessed 17/1/18]

The MFL Student Mentoring Project was awarded the Threlford Memorial Cup 2017 at the awards event on 7 November at the Law Society, London

WINE RECEPTION Guests network



Awards winners 2017

Middleton Cup	Best candidate, Certificate in Languages for Business (CLB)	Eleanor King-Turner
Pilley Cup	Best group entry, CLB	King's High Warwick
Susan Tolman CPD Prize	Best candidate, Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI)	Eleanor Crossley
Susan Tolman Award	Best law candidate, DPSI	Lukasz Ciolek
Corsellis Cup	Best health candidate, DPSI	Eleanor Crossley
Nuffield Trophy	Best group entry, DPSI	Bridge Interpreting Translating and Training Services CIC
NRPSI Award	Best candidate, Diploma in Police Interpreting	Patricia Cassares
Schlapps Oliver Shield	Best Group Entry, Diploma in Translation (DipTrans)	Glossologia Professional Linguistic Studies
Fred Brandeis Trophy	Best English to German candidate, DipTrans	Ute Boronowsky
Peter Newmark Award	Best candidate literature, DipTrans	Ceyda Aldemir-Down
Richard Lewis Trophy	Best Overall Candidate, DipTrans	Vjosa Kalaveshi Shala
Language Achievement Award	MoD examinations	WO1 David Bagnall RN
Language Achievement Award	MoD examinations	Sapper Alexander Bosco RE
David Crystal Trophy	Outstanding contribution to the field of languages	Susie Dent
Threlford Memorial Cup	Significant contribution to fostering the study of languages	MFL Student Mentoring Project
Special commendation	Significant contribution to fostering the study of languages	Multilingual Debate