

# *America's Languages: Challenges and Promise<sup>i</sup>*

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## *Executive Summary*

### *Acceptance.*

Many policy makers, educators and parents agree that there are societal and individual reasons to increase emphasis on language proficiency and language education.

### *Challenges.*

There are historical and cultural barriers that have limited the will to provide the resources required to increase language education in the U.S. This failure to commit has resulted in a poor national language capacity, leading to the inability to meet the societal imperatives identified by the stakeholders.

These barriers apparently result less from a disagreement about societal and individual needs as much as assignment of a relatively low priority for language education when benchmarked against other needs.

### *Optimism.*

Support for language education in the U.S. depends on both an accurate assessment of its value to society and to its members and on the clear specification of the investments required. Evidence on the 'return' on a bilingual community is accumulating on an unprecedented basis. A clear specification of the required 'investment' must take into account the fact that language learning like math education requires significant investment of time and effort supported by an adequately resourced education system. However, advancements in language education abetted by scientific breakthroughs and technology advancements indicate that the ROI on language education is more favorable than ever before, as likelihood of success can be significantly increased and costs can be driven down.

Add to this the fact that recent research has identified cognitive enhancements associated with

language ability that influence improved educational and employment outcomes. This extension of the language brand can lead to an broader set of stakeholders and even more likelihood of capturing the required political will for more investment in language education.

*Moving Forward*

The stakeholders generally know why they want more language proficiency. Arguments for responsive policy, programming and funding are strengthened through feasible action plans based on classroom and extramural delivery vehicles, the effectiveness and efficiency of which are underpinned by research and documented results.

Given the lessons of history, the likelihood for success of any national language effort in the U.S. is uncertain. Nevertheless, the odds for marked improvement over past efforts seem to be increasing, given domestic and global developments and the emergence of a broad range of stakeholders with common language interests. The ROI seems to be favorable, and the opportunity costs of not acting appear higher than ever?

## ***Foreword***

The AAAS has commissioned a set of briefing papers in order to provide the members of the Commission on Language Education with an overview of the issues currently confronting language education in the United States. The present document is one of these and is intended to provide an overview of language education in the United States, including relevant issues and trends, with illustrative examples.

## ***Acknowledgements***

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## Why Raise the Language Question, Again, at This Time?

Evidence of the social and economic benefits of a multilingual population and society is emerging across disciplines and in many different nations and regions of the world. Yet, despite the rising chorus of public testimonials on behalf of language, particularly now from the business sector, language enrollments in the U.S. education system remain weak. Clearly, educators and policy makers have generally failed to make the case for foreign language education in the United States as an essential part of preparing our youth for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This inconsistency is reflected in recent, major reform plans that acknowledge the need for language but have not brought forth a concrete policy and/or plan on how to advance national capacity in language through the education system.<sup>ii</sup> More disturbingly, language is either omitted entirely from a number of the newest national education policies and programs (e.g. National Education Technology Plan, ConnectED.) or has been merged into a general catchall providing a “well-rounded education” (Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)). This situation raises questions like the following:

- Is the neglect of language education due to a perception that language is just not that beneficial to our nation and our youth? After all, English is spoken around the world, so why bother, especially when we have other serious challenges in math, science and language arts to address?
- Or is it that our language education system leaves students, parents and policy makers with the perception that learning a second language is just too hard, takes too long, and is just too expensive, so that only the smartest or most persistent among us master this skill and only elite institutions provide the instruction?
- Or is it a combination of both: the additional benefit that we believe can be gleaned from additional language proficiency simply does not justify what feels like a disproportional amount of money and time required?

In spite of significant improvements in public perception of language in recent years, it is undeniable that the U.S. is still left with a vastly inadequate language education system. Almost two generations have passed since the last attempt at a national report on language was submitted to President Carter in 1979.<sup>iii</sup> Since that time, much has changed in our understanding of the value of language and in the quality language education. What has not changed, however, is the inability of most of our schools, colleges and universities to make language an essential part of

our nation's education system. Given this contradictory situation, the question must be raised: What, if anything, is different about this time that makes raising the language question again a profitable endeavor? The following is an attempt to answer this question.

## ***Stakeholders***

*America's Languages.* While its history has not been particularly kind to them, this nation has a core set of languages that serve as its growing multilingual base: indigenous languages of the American Indians, Native Alaskans and Hawaiians; post-colonial languages English, French, Portuguese and Spanish; hundreds of immigrant languages, including German; and a myriad of "world languages" being studied in public and private venues across this country. All of these languages serve as the base on which to preserve, strengthen and add to America's multilingualism.

*The Language Enterprise.* Five distinct sectors constitute the "Language Enterprise"<sup>iv</sup> and represent the market forces for languages in this country: Education, Government, Industry, Heritage, and Overseas/NGO. Each sector has a distinct stakeholder role to play in the supply of, and demand for, America's languages.

- **Education:** Education has the responsibility for providing language capabilities to the nation's residents, ideally with equal access to language instruction for all. Its graduates represent the nation's capacity in language, while its teaching force constitutes a significant demand for language proficiency.
- **Government:** Government employs graduates of the education system with language skills when and where it can, although historically it has been forced to rely on its own training programs for adequate numbers of personnel meeting critical language needs.
- **Industry:** Responding to what they perceive as a "global war for talent,"<sup>v</sup> global and transnational companies, as well as the language learning and services industry, present a growing demand for language capabilities. The language services providers (LSPs) play a key role in supplying paid and gratis translation and interpretation as well instruction and usage opportunities.
- **Heritage Communities:** Immigration has resulted in heritage communities across the nation housing this nation's greatest potential supply of language talent, which they nourish through home language use and community language and culture programs.

Also, these communities more and more require government and community services in their own languages. (In addition, they are currently providing a critical research base for evidence on the cognitive benefits of bilingualism.)

- Overseas/NGOs: Governments and private institutions in nations around the world support our nation's language education efforts with teachers, testing, study abroad programs (Cf. HANBAN, the Japan Foundation, the Korea Foundation, Goethe Institute, Alliance Française, etc.) The domestic NGO world provides exchanges and overseas immersion programs that are critical to advanced language ability. They also draw on language talent for their international humanitarian and economic development programs.

These sectors together represent the Language Enterprise, the broad cast of stakeholders in language supply and demand consisting of leaders, managers, professionals, parents and learners.

### ***Historical Perspectives on America's Languages***

There was a time when the vast majority of residents in North America spoke a language other than English.<sup>vi</sup> However, as a young nation with evolving power structures, expanding demographics, geographical isolation, youthful self-assurance, assertion of a national identity and nationalist patriotism, we moved deliberately towards an English-speaking society. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the nation's linguistic wealth was diminished, with far fewer indigenous languages, a small set of widely used post-colonial languages (English, French and Spanish), and expanding but unacknowledged immigrant languages, albeit with a strong German language presence. Ironically, the emergence of the United States as a global power in the 20<sup>th</sup> century continued this trend and resulted in the deliberate abandonment of this natural resource in pursuit of a deceptive linguistic and cultural unity that pulls at our social fiber today.

Accordingly, for most of the last century, we trumpeted the nation as a "melting pot" with English as its dominant symbol of cultural integration, all under economic, social and patriotic guises. WWI led even to the prohibition of foreign language instruction in many of our schools. Racial prejudices resulted in laws severely limiting immigration from major world societies, while we shamed and incentivized immigrant groups already here into rejecting or concealing their heritage languages and cultures. And we neglected foreign language education to a degree that only a small percentage of our youth chose to enroll in a language program, let alone attain strong communicative abilities in a second language. This history of language in this country earns the 20<sup>th</sup> century a reputation as the "graveyard for languages" (Rumbaut, 2009).<sup>vii</sup>

The earliest impetus for reevaluating this posture and valuing languages other than English was WWII, when coping with the languages of our enemies became a wartime priority. Characteristic of the process of historic events helping to crystalize, albeit temporally, the national need for language, the launch of the first Sputnik in 1957 and the looming menace of an emergent Soviet Union drove home the national security aspects of language education and motivated a long-sought, first strategic federal investment in national language capacity: the National Defense Education Act.<sup>viii</sup> Title VI of the NDEA identified language as an educational priority, and the conversion of this legislation to Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965 made university language education a permanent responsibility of the federal government. In subsequent decades, the half century “Cold War,” the Arab oil embargo and Iranian crisis of the 1970s, Japan’s economic surge in the 1980’s, the Gulf wars of the 90s—all heightened our sense of vulnerability in security and economic domains. More recent attacks on the U.S., including 9/11 attacks, coupled with on-going conflict in the Middle East and Southwest Asian as well as current and threatening crisis in the Middle East, Eurasia, Africa, and East Asia, all confirm our government’s need for understanding both allies and enemies far removed from our cultural traditions and language capabilities.

Basically, these decades of real and perceived threats made language in the U.S. essentially a national security concern. Accordingly, this focus generated significant investments by the federal government to build and strengthen the its own language training infrastructure made up of defense, diplomatic and intelligence language programs and to invest in higher education for critical languages. In education, USED’s principal funding for language since 1965 through Title VI /Fulbright Hays of the Higher Education Act represents a continuation of NDEA’s Title VI modest funding for students teachers and researchers. Significantly, the USED language focus on higher education essentially ignored K-12, the exception being the small, and now defunct, Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) that provided seed money for local districts and/or states to develop K-8 language programs.<sup>ix</sup> In more recent times, the national security concerns of terrorism and particularly 9/11 boosted federal investments in language across the board, with (temporary) increases in Title VI, major funding for research like the Center for Advanced Language Study at the University of Maryland, and—most significantly, President George W. Bush’s National Security Education Initiative (NSLI), which enabled the Departments of Defense and State and the Intelligence Community to strengthen investments at all levels of language education.<sup>x</sup>

Along with this persistent focus on language as a national security issue, recent decades have seen the arc of a truly diverse and global society has been bending back towards its multilingual & multicultural roots. In spite of persistent efforts to make English the official language of the U.S., every day this country, like other English-dominant societies, becomes more like the rest of the world where a diversity of cultures and multilingualism is the norm.

“The United States is emerging out of its revolutions as racially blended, immigrant, multinational and multilingual—and diversity is becoming more central to our multicultural identity.” Stanley Greenberg, Washington Post, November 15, 2015

This shift is the result of major social changes that have broadened the nation’s understanding of the current and future role of language in the U.S. In addition to national security, demographic changes have brought broader incentives for focusing on language education and its benefits to individuals as well as to society. “Globalization,” the free movement of people, goods and information has changed America’s understanding of its place in this world with regard to politics, environment, health, and security. Continued migration into the U.S. has resulted in an expanding multilingualism, with the most recent U.S. Census Bureau’s reporting that over 60 million people now live in households where a language other than English is spoken. Almost two thirds (62%) of this population speak Spanish, making it for all intents and purposes our nation’s second language.<sup>xi</sup> Coupled with this is this country’s civil rights requirement for equal access to quality education and for language access for non-English speakers in community services as well as in employment opportunities. Finally, the most global of social changes are the Internet and Information and Communication Technology (ICT), which have made possible virtually unlimited global access and interactions.

### ***Persistent Challenges***

While the reactions to social changes noted above have made language today more visible and relevant, the U.S. education system continues to restrict access to languages other than English, with significant and stubborn elements sustaining the *status quo* more or less effectively and countering the forces outlined above that are pressuring society in the direction of multilingualism and multiculturalism. These negative elements include:

*Continuing and Chronically Weak Language Capability.* According to the General Social Survey, approximately 25% of Americans claim that they can speak a second language, while

only 10% say they can speak it very well. The preponderance of these who claim to speak “very well” testify to learning the language outside of school, presumably in heritage language communities.<sup>xii</sup> These figures can be compared with those from the EU, where 54% of Europeans “are able to hold a conversation in at least one additional language.”<sup>xiii</sup> Significantly, the U.S. numbers differ very little from a 1980 national survey by Eddy that estimated that 24% of the American public could speak a language other than English.<sup>xiv</sup> A quarter of a century has passed, and one must report little sign of change.

*Anemic Language Enrollments.* The surging demand for language from industry and government is simply not being met by the language education system, judging from enrollments in school and university programs. The latest data on language enrollments are the following:

<b>Grade range</b>	<b>Students enrolled</b>
K–12	18%
7–12	32% <sup>xv</sup>
13–16	8% <sup>xvi</sup>

While all these numbers are weak given current demand signals, the latest MLA study of enrollments in higher education is particularly puzzling as it documents a decline of 6.7% since 2009.<sup>xvii</sup> Added to this is the perception by language professionals that many K-12 language programs with enrollments fewer than those for Spanish and French are being eliminated.<sup>xviii</sup> *In fact, the enrollments in foreign languages as a percentage of total enrollments in our education system has not changed two generations, mirroring the observation above concerning the number of language capable Americans now and in 1980.* These data represent the most obvious challenge to multilingualism in this country and, accordingly, direct any focus on language onto the nation’s education system.

Such enrollment statistics clearly demonstrate that there are persistent and significant challenges to language education in the U.S. These challenges include the range of issues to which we now turn.

*U.S. History & Culture.* While awareness of the value of multilingualism to society and its individual members is becoming more widely recognized, this awareness is countered by a dismissive neglect and even a politically active resistance that is seemingly intrinsic in this country’s culture and history. Americans are advantaged by having English as their dominant language, which as the world’s dominant *lingua franca* provides easy access to much global communications and which in turn encourages the under-valuing of language education. More disturbing are recurrent surges of nativism and xenophobia that feed political resistance to language education. Reliance on English is reinforced by a tradition of political and geographic isolation that characterizes the history of this country. There is striking similarity with the other English-dominant countries like Australia and the UK, where decades of concrete efforts [some systematic, some intermittent] at the national level have not met a deeply felt need for language-competent citizenry:

*A deep and persistent malaise afflicts language education in Australia, regrettably shared with other English-speaking nations, and the expressions of concern, even frustration, at the fragility of languages suggests a public refusal to accept this state of affairs. —Joseph Lo Bianco*

*Competing Priorities.* In spite of the rising awareness of the benefits of language study, the past decade has seen science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) attract the bulk of attention and support from political and education leaders, the press, USED, Congress, and K-12 parents—93% of which believe that STEM education should be a priority in the U.S.<sup>xix</sup> *No Child Left Behind*, *Common Core* and now *Every Student Succeeds Act* have kept the focus on math and English for over a decade, while at the same time the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the nation’s education report card, dropped its effort to include Spanish language before even a single administration of the assessment. A zero sum competition among “core subjects” continues to obscure the benefits of language education, even though, for example, the wave of STEM in education is not antithetical to increased emphasis on language. In fact, STEM supports a more global view of science communication, which is more and more recognized as tied to language and culture.<sup>xx</sup> Every aspect of science, technology, engineering and mathematics involves communities across the globe. Even the recent evidence for the correlation of language ability and critical and creative thinking as well as English literacy fails to put language on the level of STEM.<sup>xxi</sup> This neglect is symptomatic of the broader questioning of the relevance of the humanities and liberal education in the U.S. in spite of efforts like the *Heart of the Matter*, which includes language learning as part of its cosmopolitan orientation.

*Equal Access.* In spite of strong efforts in bilingual education, the language education system as a whole is not seen as adequately addressing equal access issues in a consistent and effective manner. More specifically, language instruction remains a traditionally “nice to have” rather than a “need to have” and is more likely to be available in what might be called more “privileged” institutions. Language education has been described in the latest USED Strategic plan as “elitist,” a label that clearly runs counter to the Obama administration’s basic educational strategy.<sup>xxii</sup> Equally problematic is the issue of language education as regards ethnicity and race in the school system. For example, the situation with Latino minority students represents a growing “segregation and isolation,” as 2005-2006 data show 78% of Latinos attending schools with over 50% minority population, with 40% of Latinos attending schools with over 90% non-white population.<sup>xxiii</sup> As Gándara & Callahan 2014, point out, in such highly segregated contexts,

“...it is difficult to become truly biliterate due to insufficient exposure to naturally occurring academic English. At the same time, native English speakers also lose out on the opportunity to develop cross-cultural and linguistic competence and skills, isolated in socially, linguistically and culturally homogenous contexts as well. “ ( p.292)

*Cost & Budget Constraints.* Budget considerations are always present, and education at all levels faces funding constraints. Perceptions of higher costs specifically for language programming at the tertiary level are based on smaller class sizes, even though such costs pale in comparison to equipment and facilities required for STEM education. Across the board, cost estimations of language education are behind the times. For example, they fail to consider extramural on-line language learning that increase time-on-task and thus the ROI of actual classroom instruction.

At the K-12 level, the same consideration of the increased ROI of classroom instruction due to on-line learning and use opportunities must be considered. In addition, the almost neutral cost of Dual Language Immersion programming as not requiring dedicated language courses and teachers in fact represents a major reduction in language learning budgets at the district level.

*Relevance.* Another factor that most likely continues to play a role in depressing language enrollments is the failure of university language programs to respond proactively to the practical needs of employers in both the private and public sectors. While at least one higher education effort, “Cultures and Languages Across the Curriculum” (CLAC)<sup>xxiv</sup>, has attempted to move language instruction into

disciplines across the campus, there still exists a wide gulf between language instruction in language and literature departments and the career needs of students in disciplines more directly employment-related. Even in language departments, marketable skills like translation and interpretation are rarely taught. To be sure, the efforts of the community colleges on behalf of language hold promise of major advances on the issue of relevance.

The failure of language education, however, to align itself with employment needs in part may be due to the lack of clear demand signals from employers. Rivers cites data and studies that clearly indicate that managers of global companies overwhelmingly (93%) seek talent better able to deal with multicultural and overseas markets.<sup>xxv</sup> However, these same studies show that even these companies are less understanding of the connection of that need with the language competence of their employees, as only one in ten of these companies are seeking to “fill jobs requiring language skills.”<sup>xxvi</sup> These two data points reflect again the larger dilemma of language in the US: Apparently, American business is like the rest of the country in understanding the need for global communication and interaction, but companies still have not grasped the fact that the employee performance they want is undergirded by language ability, the enabler of meaningful multicultural experience.<sup>xxvii</sup>

Finally, it should be noted that an emphasis on employment aspects of language does not preclude focus on the other benefits of multiple language ability, among which are: aesthetic (literature and the arts), identity (with one’s ethnic heritage and culture), and interpersonal (interactions with peoples of different cultures), together with the “transversal” skills of critical and creative thinking.

*Capacity.* At the K-12 level, restrictions on enrollments have to do with availability of time in the instructional day, as adding or subtracting language courses is a matter of educational priorities mandated by time and facilities. The insertion of new language programming without extending the school day has traditionally required abandoning another program or discipline. This zero-sum consequence is removed with dual language instruction, where certified elementary teachers teach the regular curricular material in both English and another language.

*Outcomes.* The language profession in the US has excelled at establishing standards and metrics in contrast, not surprisingly, to international and higher education in general, where outcome metrics are problematic. This advantage has enabled the profession to document unprecedented success over the years in raising the proficiency of graduates. For example, the data from the

National Flagship Program show university students attaining ACTFL Superior & Distinguished /ILR 3 and above levels. A subsidiary benefit of enhancements in language instruction and assessment is that, for the first time, the door is open for K-12 programs to set higher proficiency levels as graduation targets. In general, the application of standards and metrics to language programming in schools, colleges and universities is spreading, but they are still insufficiently deployed. A sign of ambition in this regard is a still fledgling and by no means implemented effort now to use standards and assessments in a national peer review system, with the ultimate goal of accrediting higher education language programs modeled after the well-established Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, Inc. (ABET) system.<sup>xxviii</sup>

*Teachers.* The shortage of language teachers at the K-12 level is a significant hurdle that schools and districts must face in expansion efforts.<sup>xxix</sup> This problem is exacerbated by the fact that higher levels of proficiency are required for the more intensive language instruction such as in Dual Language Immersion.

*Outside Competition.* A little understood factor in the recent decline of enrollments documented by the recent MLA study may be outside competition: Could it be that language learners are going around the formal system by taking advantage of the myriad opportunities for language learning and use offered on-line by for-profit and not-for-profit enterprises? Are “workarounds” like “credit for competence” having an effect on depressing enrollments numbers at the K-12 level? Are formal education enrollments being supplemented by on-the-job language instruction? Such questions must be answered before a clear understanding of the market for language learning, to include both in and out of school programming as well as self-taught efforts.

*Unarticulated Systems.* The elements of K-12 language education represent a range of programs and environments:

- Classroom Language instruction (Foreign Language in Elementary School (FLES), Foreign Language Experience (FLEX))
- Immersion Programs (one-way (total) and two-way (dual language) immersion)
- On-line instruction and practice (e.g. Duolingo, LiveMocha, etc)
- Private afterschool and weekend programs (e.g. Language Stars)
- Summer programs (e.g. STARTALK)
- Language camps (e.g. Concordia)
- Study Abroad (NSLI-Y) & overseas language immersion programs

- Heritage community learning and use opportunities.

In different degrees and modes, these learning opportunities provide the key ingredients for language education at the K-12 level. The challenge is to find a way to assemble all the pieces of this puzzle into a coherent and recognizable map of the paths to proficiency. As a first step, data on the implementation of these programs and the number and kinds of students they reach are critical.

This challenge of extramural learning is matched by the persistent problem of secondary to tertiary articulation, including diagnosis, placement and responsive programming. Progress has been made in this area with College Board Advanced Placement tests and International Baccalaureate. Other efforts by individual universities to eliminate credit for first year Spanish and French require more dialogue between high school and university language programming. These developments are especially critical now, as higher education language programs are facing a bow wave of students with higher proficiency in more languages as a result of dual language immersion programs and more effective K-12 language programming.

### ***Basis for Optimism***

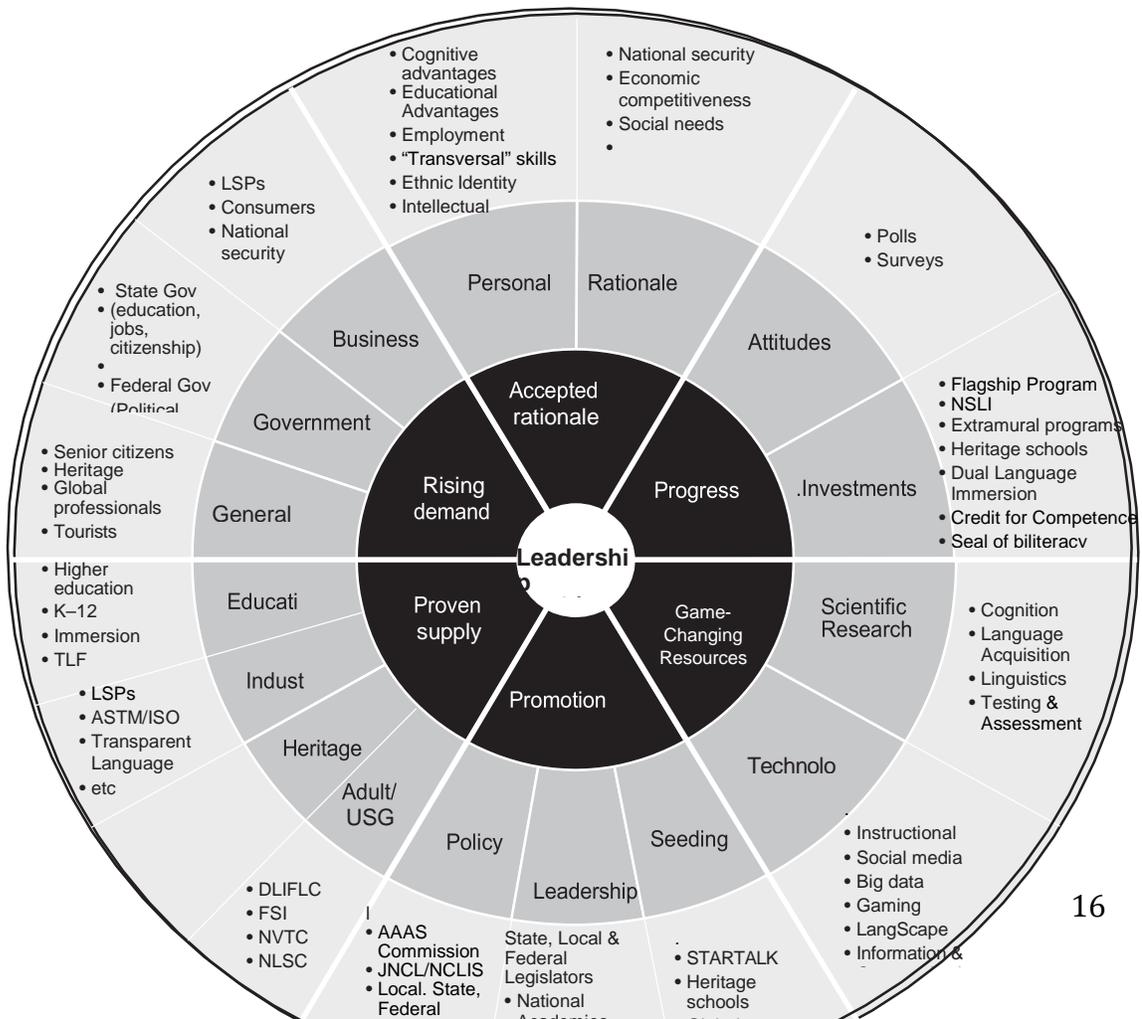
In spite of these challenges, there are clear and encouraging signs indicating growing support for language and language education in the U.S.:

- An emerging and articulated rationale for languages at the societal and individual level;
- Popular attitudinal changes<sup>xxx</sup> and a decade of innovative investments;<sup>xxxi</sup>
- Revolutionary advances in scientific research and information & communication technologies (ICT) as applied to language learning and use;
- Clear public promotion of language by organizations, businesses and academies;
- Proven supply from programs across the academic, government, industry, heritage and Overseas/NGO sectors; and,
- Rising demand in all 5 sectors and across society for language skills.<sup>xxxii</sup>

These currents are summarized in the following graphic, with a sample list of specific developments under each broad category of Rationale, Progress, Resources, Promotion, Supply and Demand. This graphic is followed by a brief description of each category.



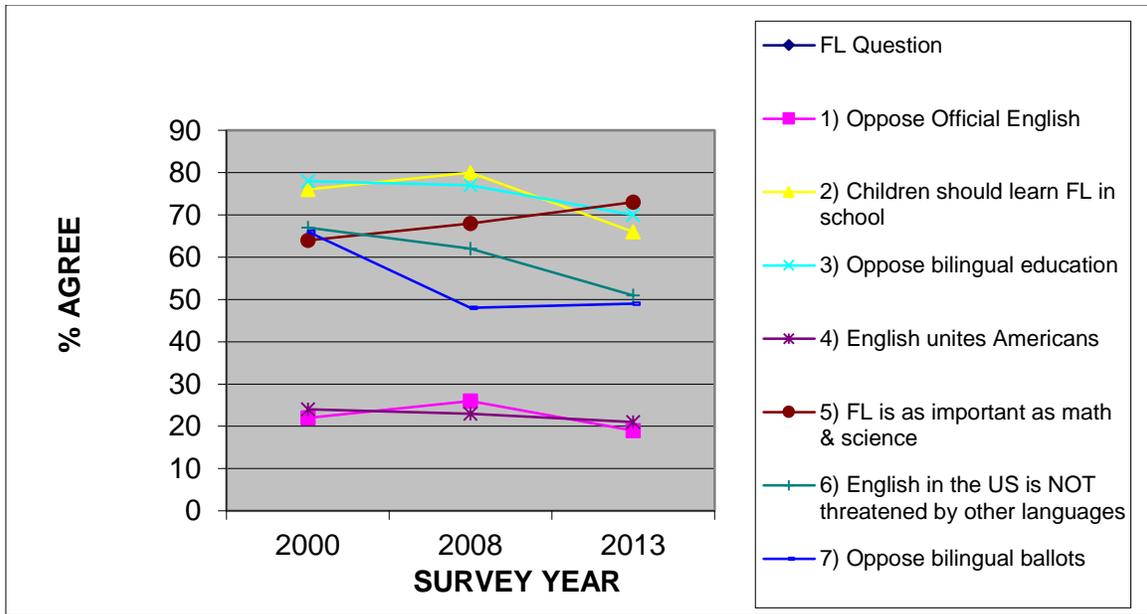
Spanish  
Chinese  
Japanese  
Russian,



*Emerging Rationale for Languages at the Societal and Individual Level.*

English-speaking countries around the world perennially have wrestled with the question of whether the English language is adequate for global needs and necessary for domestic cohesion. More specifically, societal rationale for language encompasses the political, economic, and social domains, both domestic and international. For example, in the last quarter century in the U.S. Congressional hearings, expert studies, and a series of GAO reports have convincingly documented language needs and deficits in defense, intelligence, diplomacy, and homeland security, resulting in significant federal investments in language training.<sup>xxxiii</sup> Similarly, a myriad of studies and pronouncements from the business world have made clear the economic imperative for language, both domestically and globally.<sup>xxxiv</sup> By comparison, the rationale for the domestic benefits and social good represented by languages, including support of diversity and multiculturalism, as well as of educational achievement and attainment has been largely neglected in the literature.<sup>xxxv</sup>

*Popular Attitudinal Shifts.* The dilemma posed above of rising demand and stagnant supply is most clearly demonstrated by the apparent discrepancy between the decisions being made by federal and many state education officials and the attitudes of parents and businesses that they are serving. For example, Eddy (1980) reported on a 1979 University of Michigan survey, the results of which indicated that 47% of respondents agreed that high school students should be required to learn foreign languages, and 40% agreed that the same expectation should hold for elementary school students as well.<sup>xxxvi</sup> However, in a series of recent public opinion polls, almost two thirds of those polled agreed that children should learn a foreign language in school, while over 70% agreed that foreign language study is as important as learning math and science.<sup>xxxvii</sup>



These trend data and the Eddy study document significant attitudinal shifts from 1980 to 2013, with relative stability between 2000 and 2013. Most importantly, these data show strong support for foreign language study in schools, with no conflict with English as the dominant or “official” language of the U.S.

While such data are indicative of widespread positive attitudes towards language education, they are of course moot as to willingness on the part of taxpayers and their representatives to invest the required resources. If almost two thirds of parents think their children should learn a second language in school, why are language enrollments in school and college so meager? Are the poll data indicative of “nice-to-have” vs. “need-to-have” attitudes, or are we facing a burgeoning latent demand being met by vehicles outside of the formal education system, like on-line and out-of-school learning and use services? At this writing, data on this question are unavailable.

*A Decade of Investments.* The past decade has witnessed a number of strong language initiatives that are responsible for significant progress in language programming and the growing awareness of the value of bilingualism. These initiatives include federally sponsored programs, grassroots-inspired local and state efforts, NGO testing initiatives, and commercial and gratis on-line learning and practice opportunities. For example, significant federally sponsored programs have been established or strengthened as a result of President Bush’s 2006 National Security Language Initiative (NSLI) Education. These programs include: the DoD-sponsored Language Flagship

Program that has set new standards for outcomes of university language programs in critical languages; Department of State National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y) and Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) programs that provide high school and university students support to study an LCTL overseas for a summer or a year; and the STARTALK, a national language “seeding” program managed by the National Foreign Language Center with funding from the National Security Agency (NSA), that funds summer language and faculty development programs across the country.

At the state level, reacting to language acquisition opportunities outside of school, almost two dozen states now grant high school credit for language competence, whether acquired in school or as a heritage language. Similarly, under guidelines established by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL), the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE), and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) , a growing number of states and districts have established the *Seal of Biliteracy*, an acknowledgment on high school diplomas of graduates who have attained proficiency in English and another world language by graduation. Perhaps most promising is the wave of states and school districts across the national that are establishing Dual Language Immersion (DLI) programs benefiting both heritage and world language learners.

An example of NGO activity is the National Examinations in World Languages (NEWL), the newly expanded portfolio of Advanced Placement language offerings announced and formally endorsed in 2015 by College Board in cooperation with American Councils for International Education, to include 10 heritage languages. This program arose because the College Board recognized the contributions of heritage communities through weekend and after school community programs as well as home schooling aimed at preserving their languages and cultures. Added to these are the on-line language learning and use programs that are multiplying across the Internet, implemented both by for-profit and not-for-profit enterprises.

*Game-changing resources.* Perhaps the most important new impetus for language education in this country is current neuroscience and cognitive psychology research as well as the development of language use and learning technologies. Research on the brain and cognition now presents solid evidence that bilingualism provides cognitive advantages that manifest themselves in so-called “soft” or “transversal” skills, a set of skills that are linked to personality traits that influence all manner of

behaviors, like critical and creative thinking, leadership, and tolerance of ambiguity—skills in demand by all employers.<sup>xxxviii</sup> In addition, there is evidence that these advantages enhance educational achievement and attainment for heritage language speakers, including Latinos, as well as native speakers of English studying a second language. This research correlating bilingual proficiency and usage with specific aspects of working memory are leading to unprecedented breakthroughs in language acquisition and education. For example, recent studies at the Center for Advanced Study of Language at the University of Maryland indicate that aspects of working memory can be diagnosed and enhanced, thus enabling language instruction to be customized to the cognitive aptitude of each learner for more effective and efficient language learning.<sup>xxxix</sup>

These advances in neuroscience and cognitive psychology are providing motivation for language study beyond global access and cultural adaptability by taking language learning to a whole new level of relevance and attractiveness: educational attainment and achievement and increased qualifications for employment. Capitalizing on the maturity of the science, the National Science Foundation's Partnerships in International Research and Education has just awarded researchers at Penn State University five million dollars over five years to translate this cognitive research into K-12 education. In a similar fashion, the British Academy has awarded a significant grant to explore and document the cognitive advantages of bilingualism.<sup>xl</sup>

A final point with regard to language and cognition has to be emphasized: The cognitive advantage of bilingualism is based on knowledge and comprehension of cultural contexts and how culture shapes world views. A second language is the key to acquiring and utilizing this knowledge to understand, interact, and express oneself within alternative cultural and cognitive frames. Language gives access to knowledge of culture-specific information, cultural socio-linguistic awareness and *self-awareness*--where the critical thinking and re-definitions of self begin. A second language enables respect for other cultures and openness to the very act of intercultural learning, cognitive and emotional flexibility in selecting appropriate communication styles and behaviors, and the ability to react to other cultures and world views with empathy, rather than with a sense of judgment.<sup>xli</sup> An example of research making this point is a recent study documenting the firm relationship between advanced language skills and intercultural knowledge and behavior.<sup>xlii</sup> In sum, these are the abilities derived from advanced language competence that give rise to the serious cognitive conflict that advances cognitive abilities.

The other major, game-changing resources are communication and information technologies (CIT) enabling near-universal access to language learning and authentic utilization opportunities, a critical

ingredient for language learning. Other promising second technology breakthroughs include the current blossoming movement to personalize learning through the application of “big data” analyses of learning materials and opportunities available on line (Cf. Facebook joining with Summit Public Schools on “personalized learning plan”), the scientific language acquisition models behind the online language learning program Duolingo and Knewton’s developing a “friendly robot tutor in the sky.” U.S. language professionals have been working on this notion for some time, laying the basis in the National Foreign Language Center’s “LangNet” and the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center’s GLOSS program. The notion of providing language learning content on-demand that is suited to the needs and abilities of individual learners may soon be within reach, as thousands of learning and content “objects” are currently available and delivery systems are being developed<sup>xliii</sup> The consequences of these scientific and technological advances promise unprecedented advances in the effectiveness and efficiency of, and universal access to, language learning in school, on the job, and throughout life.

*Strong promotion.* The need and feasibility of successful language learning are recognized and widely promoted by journalists, policy makers, political and educational leaders, entrepreneurs and business executives, as well as by the language teaching profession itself. See, for example, the 2013 American Academy of Arts & Sciences study “The Heart of the Matter: The Humanities and Social Sciences for a Vibrant, Competitive, and Secure Nation,” and the U.S. Department of Education 2012 document “Succeeding Globally through International Education and Engagement: U.S. Department of Education International Strategy 2012-16.” Every day articles testifying to the need for language appear in the popular press, documenting the opinions of people like Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg and popularizing research findings about language learning and their application to “soft” or “transversal” skills and employability. The language profession itself is represented in these promotional efforts by ACTFL’s soon-to-be-launched effort to inform and engage parents and policy makers about language through its *Lead with Languages* national public awareness campaign.

*Proven supply.* While significant advances have been made in valuing the contribution of language ability to the benefits of enhanced cognitive skills, the core of what the language profession does is the teaching of an actual language and the knowledge and comprehension of specific cultural, historical, political contexts and how they shape world views. The ability to understand other cultures, to build and maintain relationships depends on *advanced language ability* to provide authentic and deep access to knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of peoples of other cultures.

The evidence that the language profession is able to turn out learners with this advanced language ability is itself unprecedented. On the ACTFL/ILR 0 to 5 proficiency scale, the DoD-sponsored Language Flagship Program, for example, is graduating students in critical languages with proficiency at the 3-level (ACTFL Superior) and above. This result demonstrates the progress that is possible in language programming when compared with students beginning language study in the typical colleges and university language program who attain on average 1+/Intermediate Level of proficiency produced.<sup>xliv</sup> At the K-12 level, anecdotally, some schools in this country are educating pupils in language to ACTFL Intermediate High/Advanced, Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) 1+ and 2-levels. However, 1-way (total immersion in the target language) and 2-way (two target languages alternating in the instructional day) immersion programs are achieving much higher proficiencies.<sup>xlv</sup> More proof of advance levels of supply are to be found in government intensive language programs; for example, the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) is turning out *ab initio* learners from the military services in moderately difficult to the most difficult languages at the 2 and 2+ levels, which is an unprecedented accomplishment for an intensive program aimed principally at high school graduates. Finally, heritage communities continue to provide the overwhelming percentage of high level critical language speakers in this country.<sup>xlvi</sup> Unfortunately, here as well as in proprietary and corporate language programs there are no comprehensive data available.

*Rising demand.* Perhaps the clearest indicator of rising demand for language comes from the business community, where multiple studies and testimonies attest to the gap between demand and supply. By comparison, government needs are detailed in a series of GSA reports and Congressional hearings between 2006 and 2012 on language readiness in the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, and State.<sup>xlvii</sup>

Finally, any discussion of demand must take into consideration the concept of “latent demand.”<sup>xlviii</sup> As noted above, recent cognitive research clearly demonstrates the cognitive advantages of proficiency and usage in two languages. These cognitive advantages are themselves linked to educational achievement and attainment as well as to a broad range of “21<sup>st</sup> century “ or ”transversal” skills” that every employer seeks in the hiring process. A broader recognition of the advantages of bilingualism both in education and in business will most certainly raise demand for language ability from latent to overt.

## ***Moving Forward***

Given the opposing conditions of the chronically poor state of language in the U.S. and the countervailing recent positive developments, what can possibly mobilize public and political support for making progress in expanding language education, let alone making a second language available to any and all who desire it? In this context, the parameters of targeted interventions appear to revolve around the two ROI issues identified at the beginning of this document: the perceived level of need on the part of leaders, managers, parents and students, and the effectiveness, efficiency and availability of language programming across the country.

Given the national polling data on the importance of language, public perception seems to be ready to accept new messaging on the benefits of language to U.S. society and to its members. However, accepting or even asserting the value of language on the part of polltakers does not constitute a commitment to act. As reported by the surveys discussed above, years of seemingly overwhelming support for language education at the K-12 level have not produced a nationwide increase in the numbers of language learners or their proficiencies. There are pockets of improvement on both counts, but a societal shift towards language education has not transpired. Is it, then, reasonable to expect parents, school educators and political leaders to be willing at this time to adjust current priorities in favor of language education, assuming that this would involve rising education costs and time and curricular reallocations in the school day? If, however, quality can be enhanced and costs controlled, could progress be made? For example, one- and two-way immersion programs reduce, if not eliminate, specific language education costs, and the general educational and employment benefits of the proficiency outcomes of these programs certainly do add to the return on investment of language learning. The same argument of lower costs and increased outcomes pertain to technology-enabled, blended learning, which also enjoys the added social benefit of increased and equal access language programming for all.

The deciding questions, though, remain:

- Can an enhanced ROI argument be made that will influence funders and managers to invest in more language education?
- Can the language profession deliver on the ROI with more effective and efficient language learning opportunities for all who desire it?
- What are the opportunity costs of not making, and not delivering on, this investment?

Among the considerations required to answer these questions are the following.

*The Locus of Language Policy, Planning, and Action.* In the last half century, language education in this country has been a roller coaster affair with enrollments rising and falling with world events. This waxing and waning of enrollments reflect media and national policy makers' attention to international concerns and the historic focus on language as a national security issue rather than as a vital part of the general education of our nation's children. As a matter of fact, in spite of the reappraisal of the federal role in education under the last two administrations, language as well as international and area studies have been kept firmly within its national security mandate.<sup>xlix</sup>

Traditionally, in the United States the constitutional obligation for education resides with the states. In spite of federal efforts like *No Child Left Behind*, the constitutionally established roles for defense (federal) and education (state & local), let alone the current priorities of the Congress and administration particularly now with ESSA, mean that the broader language education mandate ultimately resides with state and local government, federally legislated incentives and security programs like Title VI, Title VIII and the Flagship Program notwithstanding. To be sure, the language education track record of the states has been uneven, with some states and local jurisdictions making language an educational priority while most keep their focus elsewhere. We have discussed these reasons for this neglect above. However, it goes without saying that social and economic conditions at the state and local level vary greatly across the country, which make a state- and local-based language education strategy a complex and long term endeavor.

While the language education mandate rests with state and local government, the base of language education is the "Language Enterprise" comprising all five supply and demand sectors. Dramatic improvement in language education depends on this broad enterprise agreeing on and supporting a common mission, message, and action plan that the language educators can carry out. The challenge is to find a mechanism that will enable these stakeholders to arrive at this consensus and to agree to support the education system that they rely upon.

*Motivation for Change.* As reported by Joseph Lo Bianco, its author, the original Australian national language policy was not motivated by the usual "large-scale problem-solving, secession-stemming, or commodity-acquiring," but by an ideology attempting to "will" the nation to "otherness."<sup>1</sup> By comparison, language policy and planning in the U.S. are both pragmatically driven by national security, economic competitiveness, and social change as well as motivated by a social justice ideology motivated by an inevitable reality of "otherness," of multicultural diversity. There is little appetite in this country for mandated national language education reform

(as in the UK) or a legislated national language policy (as in Australia), attempts to make English our official national language notwithstanding. Federal considerations of national defense aside, language education is motivated at the state level largely by economic considerations (jobs, trade, etc.) as well as by social justice, i.e. the need to accommodate the over 60 million residents who speak a language other than English at home. This latter consideration involves social services and education and is a major force for language education change at the state and community levels.

*Strategic Language Planning.* Unlike mathematics and even art, the language profession as a whole has engaged in little comprehensive strategic planning that might unify its developmental efforts, public relations messaging, profession-wide funding strategies, and long-term research priorities. To be sure, its multilingual and language-specific teacher organizations have led in standards and testing, while its umbrella organization, JNCL/NCLIS, focuses on policy and legislative priorities. Nevertheless, the profession as a whole has not evinced a concerted willingness to unite all language sectors in establishing a “policy monopoly” with convincing rationale and effective mechanisms that ensure a constant and consistent voice in public educational policy for language.<sup>11</sup> The last partial attempt in this regard, the 1989 “Coalition for the Advancement of Foreign Languages and International Studies” (CAFLIS), sponsored by the American Association of Universities and partially funded by the DoD, focused on a single national mechanism, a National Language and International Studies Foundation. Unfortunately, the effort was unsuccessful, ending without effective agreement (and even with some acrimony) among a too broad number of language and international studies stakeholders.

Against this history and context, strategic planning for concerted action to improve language education in the U.S. can logically take quite different paths. For example:

- A. A national effort could encompass language education’s traditional partners of area and international studies as a way to raise all boats concerned with global affairs. However, the CAFLIS experience was not encouraging in this regard.
  
- B. A set of specific activities explicitly targeting different aspects of language education, each separately funded and undertaken by individual players or partnerships, much like the Carter Commission’s recommendations and or the Bush administration’s National Security Language Initiative. This is perhaps the most viable approach, but one that

inevitably will address specific aspects of the language challenge and enjoy incremental, but not necessarily dramatic, success.

- C. A very targeted approach that focuses on one or a few of the most innovative and/or promising developments in the profession. For example:

Dual language immersion programming at the K-12 level could be target, as it is exploding across the country due to its high proficiency outcomes, low cost and adaptability to existing school scheduling, not to mention its effect on educational achievement and attainment. By a dramatic improvement of K-12 language education, all language education, including higher, will profit, as will public and private employers.

Another example of an extremely promising target could be the translation of cognitive research into language education at all levels and in all sectors. While this process is just beginning, a major impetus could change the effectiveness and efficiency of the way language is learned in this country.

Finally, program accreditation of language education at the tertiary level could be a powerful tool in dramatically altering the position of language instruction on the nation's campuses. A ancient accreditation effort exists, still in its infancy, the intent of which is to establish a rigorous "peer review" process of language education programs across the country, leading eventually to an accreditation process on the model of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET).<sup>liii</sup> The establishment of such a movement, housed principally in the national language teachers associations, could allow economy of scale for innovation by spreading influence of best practices. There is no question that agreed upon standards and metrics will motivate higher performance across language education at the tertiary level.

- D. A comprehensive, coherent and collaborative response to a broad set of issues, undertaken by an alliance of sector stakeholders operating from a common vision, message and action plan. This approach was articulated in the "Languages for All" final report and was aimed at an essential transformation of language education and its adaptability to the needs of the nation.<sup>liii</sup> Such a comprehensive and collaborative effort

is unprecedented and its success more uncertain, as it requires a long-term effort with substantial support from all the language sectors.

Of course, other discrete approaches are possible. The most realistic tactic in the current US language environment might be a blended or stepped approach, starting, for example, with C above with D as the eventual outcome.

*Driving Considerations.* Progress with regard to the language question in the U.S. will require consideration of the following considerations:

- A. *All of America's Languages:* All of America's languages should benefit: indigenous, post-colonial, immigrant and world languages.
- B. *Focus on the States:* As a state and local responsibility, progress in language education depends on initiative and leadership at these levels. Successful models, e.g. Dual Language Immersion, exist and should serve as the basis for expansion.
- C. *The Pre-K-12 System:* The key to education in this country is its base, the pre-K-12 system. Improvements of language enrollments and outcomes at this level will also benefit enrolments and proficiency outcomes at the tertiary level education and will encourage more innovative assessment and programming. This is a different picture than the traditional one where higher education essentially dictates the output of secondary education through its admittance requirements.
- D. *Higher Education:* Nevertheless, higher education must adapt to the new realities of public and private demand for language skilled graduates as well as the bow wave of entering students with diverse and higher level language abilities coming from heritage, dual language, and generally more effective K-12 language instruction.
- E. *All Sectors:* All five language sectors are active stakeholders and must be involved, with their unique responsibilities defined. Clearer demand signals from industry, government and NGOs for language services and workforce competence would enable the education system to set relevant goals and objectives.
- F. *Language Profession Engagement:* The language education profession is responsible and accountable for implementation of expansion and reform.
- G. *Innovative Funding:* Government alone cannot be relied upon to support a major initiative without significant contributions from business and foundations.
- H. *Accountability:* Funders are right to require baselines and accomplishments defined against specific objectives, timelines and goals.

- I. *Extension of the Language Brand:* Language provides learners with access and real knowledge of another culture, another part of the world and an in-depth understanding of a people, history and political system different from our own. This traditional justification for language learning based on global competence and expertise in a country or culture remains critical, but now we see paths by which the language brand can be broadened. As mentioned above, recent research makes clear the value of language as the key to educational achievement and attainment and employment—all based on language ability and usage enabling the development of “transversal skills” like critical and creative thinking that, like all the humanities disciplines, benefit individuals in all endeavors. There are significant ramifications for the design of language education as the enabler of a broad range of language expertise applications or as a subsidiary skill benefiting other professional specialization.
- J. *Research and Technology.* A concrete and strategic research agenda would facilitate any process of language learning and usage enhancement. To illustrate, a strategic research plan might include targets like:
- Continuous data collection and reporting on language efforts at the state level and across the five sectors in order to enable tracking the ebb and flow of language enrollments, teachers and programs around the country.<sup>liv</sup>
  - Big data tracking of individual language learning aimed at establishing career-long, tailored language learning systems.
  - Neuroscience and cognitive psychology findings applied to language education.<sup>lv</sup>
  - Educational achievement and attainment consequences of simultaneous and sequential bilingualism, including heritage language and immersion learning.
  - Employment demand for language, including linguistic expertise, cultural competence and transversal skill qualifications.
  - University language requirements for general education & employment inducements.
  - Motivation for language learners to take up language and to persist to high levels of proficiency.

### ***What is Different About This Time?***

The UK and Australia have attempted to address their language needs through national policy and legislation, albeit with mixed results. By contrast, the federal role in state and local education planning and implementation is limited, and any national language policy seems unlikely. Nevertheless, the U.S. regularly returns to the language problem, led mostly by federal efforts.<sup>lvi</sup> These federal efforts have been largely aimed at language as a national security issue, and so their

effect on the K-12 language education system *per se* has been limited. With the new ESSA, any significant language education efforts will certainly be left to the state and local jurisdictions. A number of states have stepped up to fund the expansion of language education, and it is from these states that leadership can be expected.<sup>lvii</sup>

Among all the positive changes making this time different, perhaps the most promising is the breadth of language activity across the country, as it involves all levels of education and all language sectors: academe, business, government, heritage communities and NGO, with particularly vigorous growth in the business sector—a reflection of both the current domestic and international environments. A broad base like this suggests the possibility of a concerted, comprehensive, cohesive and collaborative effort on behalf of language education across all the sectors, if leadership and a vehicle can be found. This energy sets the stage for discussion of common mission, message and action plan for the language profession itself<sup>lviii</sup> to improve effectiveness and efficiency and to broaden the “language brand” to include education and employment.<sup>lix</sup> At a minimum, this current convergence of factors presents the opportunity to raise awareness of the dangerous and inefficient waxing and waning of interest in language on the part of policy makers and education managers, and at the grassroots level it can help translate the positive attitude towards language on the part of parents into actual investments in language education.

With all of this said, it is far from certain that there is enough momentum now for significant national and strategic improvement of language education.<sup>lx</sup> So the questions remain for the AAAS Commission on Language Education and the language enterprise as a whole to address:

- Are these times different enough to encourage a national effort on behalf of language education?
- Of what would such an effort consist?
- Can it succeed? Why? And why not?

## ***Conclusions***

In addition to the relative importance of multilingualism to a society and to its individual members, determination of investment in language education must take into account assessment of the cost and likelihood of success (ROI). Feasibility is clearly at issue here because language acquisition takes many years and requires non-negligible money & resources. Current efforts described above in language education indicate that likelihood of success can be significantly

increased and costs driven down, suggesting that estimates against other priorities are now subject to change.

Logically, to be successful, any major effort would build on “America’s languages,” would include stakeholders across all five sectors, would focus on the states, would concentrate on improved outcomes at the K-12 level and reshaping of language education at the tertiary level, and would enjoy the unified support of the language enterprise. Furthermore, given the complexity of the challenge, such an effort would entail long-term support from multiple sources. All potential investors would have to play a role, including government, both federal and state, public and private foundations, and corporations. Finally, and critically, success would depend on a unified and concerted effort on the part of the language teaching profession.<sup>lxvi</sup>

The British Academy’s recent 4-year effort on behalf of language in the UK has produced a series of important reports and a number of on-going public activities aimed at strengthening language education and keeping language prominent in the public mind.<sup>lxvii</sup> It remains to be seen whether this work will have a lasting impact, but that is clearly the intent.<sup>lxviii</sup> In a similar fashion, the American Academy’s commission and the times in which it is now working represent an unprecedented opportunity, but the proof of the pudding rests entirely on its long-term impact on language education in the U.S. The case for and improved ROI for language education seems to have significantly strengthened, and the opportunity costs of not acting now appear higher than ever.

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## ENDNOTES

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<sup>i</sup> This paper borrows liberally from “Languages For All: Final Report,” which can be found on the website of CASL at the University of Maryland and from Richard Brecht, with Martha Abbott, Dan E. Davidson, William P. Rivers, Robert Slater, Amy Weinberg, and Anandini Yoganathan. 2013. *Languages for All: The Anglophone Challenge*, available on the ACTFL, JNCL, and American Councils for International Education websites.

<sup>ii</sup> See, for example:

- “The Heart of the Matter: The Humanities and Social Sciences for a Vibrant, Competitive, and Secure Nation,” American Academy of Arts & Sciences. 2013.
- “Succeeding Globally through International Education and Engagement: U.S. Department of Education International Strategy,” 2012-16,” 2012.

Language policy efforts in other English-dominant countries are also relevant:

- Lo Bianco, Joseph and Inna Gvodenko. 2006. “Collaboration and Innovation in the Provision of Languages Other Than English in Australian Universities,” University of Melbourne, a study surveying the language policy history of 40 years from 1970 and identified at least 67 policy-related reports, investigations or substantial enquires into the problem and challenge of instituting an effective language education experience for Australian learners.
- Lo Bianco, Joseph. 2009. “Second Languages and Australian Schooling,” *Australian Education Review*, 54
- *Lost for Words*, part of the British Academy’s ongoing effort on behalf of language study in the UK (website at [http://www.britac.ac.uk/policy/Lost\\_For\\_Words.cfm](http://www.britac.ac.uk/policy/Lost_For_Words.cfm)).
- A Summary of Australia’s efforts in building a national language policy can be found in Lo Bianco, Joseph and Renata Aliani. 2013. *Language planning and student experiences: Intention, rhetoric and implementation*, Multilingual Matters.

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<sup>iii</sup> *Strength through Wisdom: A Critique of U.S. Capability: A Report to the President from the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies*, November 1979

<sup>iv</sup> First so designated by Bill Rivers.

<sup>v</sup> Personal communication from former vice-president of Deloitte.

<sup>vi</sup> At the time of Columbus, approximately 500 languages were used on the N. American continent. Cited in Macías, Reyhaldo F. 2014. "Benefits of Bilingualism: In the Eye of the Beholder?" In Callahan & Gándara, eds. 2014. *The Bilingual Advantage: Language, Literacy and the US Labor Market*. Multilingual Matters: Buffalo. P. 18.

<sup>vii</sup> Cited in Callahan, Rebecca M and Gándara, Patricia C. 2014. "Contextualizing Bilingualism in the Labor Market: New Destinations, Established Enclaves and the Information Age." In Callahan & Gándara, eds. 2014. *The Bilingual Advantage: Language, Literacy and the US Labor Market*. Multilingual Matters: Buffalo. P. 3.

<sup>viii</sup> The leadership at MLA had been lobbying for such legislation since 1948, under funding from the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation. (Parker, 1963). The point being that *Спутник*, much as 9/11, catalyzed investments that were already nascent, as was the case with the National Security Education Program and the National Language Service Corps before 9/11. Bill Rivers (personal communication) points out that Title VI "was dreamt up by old OSS hands - that it was, in fact, a reaction to WWII as much as Sputnik, if you read its history."

<sup>ix</sup> FLAP was enacted in 1991 and discontinued by the Department in 2011.

<sup>x</sup> The Department of State introduced its Critical Languages Scholarships (CLS), the National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y), both in support of overseas immersion study of critical languages, as well as a parallel initiative to bring visiting teachers from Egypt and the PRC to US K-12 programs prepared to offer or introduce the study of Arabic and Chinese into the curricula (the TCLP). The Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) introduced under NSLI a series of summer intensive stateside programs for students and teachers of critical languages called STARTALK. The NSA founded the Center for Advanced Study of Language at the University of Maryland, the sole research center devoted to language in the DoD and intelligence community.

<sup>xi</sup> Cited in Callahan & Gándara, eds. 2014. *The Bilingual Advantage: Language, Literacy and the US Labor Market*. Multilingual Matters: Buffalo, p.4

<sup>xii</sup> Robinson, J.P, Rivers, W. & R. Brecht. 2006. "Demographic and Sociopolitical Predictors of American Attitudes towards Foreign Language Policy," *Language Policy*, 5 (4), 421-42.

<sup>xiii</sup> "Europeans and their Languages: Report. June 2012 Special Eurobarometer 386 ([http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm))

<sup>xiv</sup> Robinson, J.P, Rivers, W. & R. Brecht. 2006. "Demographic and Sociopolitical Predictors of American Attitudes towards Foreign Language Policy," *Language Policy*, 5 (4), 458

<sup>xv</sup> Center for Applied Linguistics, *National K - 12 Foreign Language Survey*, U.S. Department of Education, International Research and Studies Program, 2009, <http://www.cal.org/projects/archive/flsurvey.html>. It is impossible to arrive at accurate numbers for elementary since most states don't collect it. The CAL study showed about 25% of elementary schools had programs. A new national survey of language enrollments is currently being conducted by the American Councils Research Center in collaboration with the Center for Applied Linguistics, the Modern Language Association and the National Council of State Supervisors of Foreign Languages.

<sup>xvi</sup> Furman, Nelly, David Goldberg, and Natalia Lusin, "Enrollments in Languages Other Than English in United States Institutions of Higher Education, Fall 2009," Modern Language Association, December 2010, [http://www.mla.org/pdf/2009\\_enrollment\\_survey.pdf](http://www.mla.org/pdf/2009_enrollment_survey.pdf). These numbers are updated in MLA'S 2013 survey, which shows a decline in language enrollments at the tertiary level of approximately 6%.

<sup>xvii</sup> "Highlights of the MLA's 2013 Survey of Enrollments in Languages Other Than English." Modern Language Association. 2015

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<sup>xviii</sup> To determine the veracity of this perception, as mentioned in footnote xv, American Councils is collaborating with ACTFL and CAL, MLA and NCSSFL in a major study to compile enrollment statistics for K-16 in the U.S., with funding from the Defense Language and National Security Office (DLNSEO).

<sup>xix</sup> “STEM Perceptions: Student & Parent Study Parents and Students Weigh in on How to Inspire the Next Generation of Doctors, Scientists, Software Developers and Engineers.” Commissioned by Microsoft Corp. Harris Interactive. Accessed August 2015.

<sup>xx</sup> For reference to OSTP position statement on language and STEM, see Rivers, W. The Contributions of Language to the Economic Interests of the United States. Briefing paper for the Commission on Language Learning of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Prepared by the Joint National Committee for Languages. November 25, 2015.

<sup>xxi</sup> Judith F. Kroll and Paola E. Dussias. Language and Productivity for all Americans. Center for Language Science The Pennsylvania State University. Briefing paper for the Commission on Language Learning of the American Academy of Art and Sciences. Available on AAAS Commission on Language Education website.

<sup>xxii</sup> “Succeeding Globally through International Education and Engagement: U.S. Department of Education International Strategy,” 2012-16,” 2012.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Gándara, P.C. 2010. “Overcoming triple segregation.” *Educational Leadership* 68 (3), 60-64.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Originally called “Languages Across the Curriculum” (LAC) or later “Foreign Languages Across the Curriculum” FLAC, and now CLAC.

<sup>xxv</sup> Rivers, W. The Contributions of Language to the Economic Interests of the United States. Briefing paper for the Commission on Language Learning of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Prepared by the Joint National Committee for Languages. November 25, 2015.

<sup>xxvi</sup> The Global Talent Survey, as cited in footnote xxv, cite employers overwhelming express need for employees who can “...work effectively with customers, clients, and businesses from a range of different countries and cultures” (93%) ,these same employers express only minimal interest in “...actively seek recruits with FL skills hiring language-skills (11%)

<sup>xxvii</sup> In 2008 the US had 90,386 mid-size and 18,469 large businesses, according to the US Census Bureau.

<sup>xxviii</sup> The ancient organization operates under the name of Partners for Language in the U.S. (PLUS)

<sup>xxix</sup>CF. Teacher Shortage Areas: Nationwide Listing: 1990-1991 through 2015-2016, March 2015. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education

<sup>xxx</sup> Trend data on attitudes towards language in the US have been led by Rivers and Robinson, with their colleagues Brecht and Harwood.

- Rivers, W., Robinson, J. P., Brecht, R, and Harwood, P. 2013. “Language Votes: Attitudes toward Foreign Language Policies,” *Foreign Language Annals*, 46(3), 329-338.
- Robinson, J. P., and Rivers, W. 2012. “The Unchanging American Capacity in LOEs: Speaking and Learning Languages other than English, 2000-2008,” *Modern Language Journal*, 96(iii), 369-79.
- Robinson, J. P., Rivers, W., & Harwood, P. G. “Stability and Change in Americans’ Foreign Language Policy Attitudes: 2000-2008.” 2011. *Journal of the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages*, Vol. 11, pp. 1-20.
- Robinson, J.P, Rivers, W. & R. Brecht. 2006. “Demographic and Sociopolitical Predictors of American Attitudes towards Foreign Language Policy,” *Language Policy*, 5 (4), 421-42.
- Robinson, J. P., Rivers, W., & Brecht, R. 2006. “Foreign Language Speakers in America: Correlates, Trends, and Possible Consequences,” *Modern Language Journal*, 90(4), 457-72.

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<sup>xxxix</sup> Cf. “Languages for All”, a white paper summarizing the results of the international conference at the University of Maryland entitled “Language for All?,” drafted by Richard Brecht with Marty Abbot, Dan E. Davidson, Hans Fenstermacher, Donald Fischer, William P. Rivers, Robert Slater, Amy Weinberg, and Terrence Wiley. In a redacted form, it has served to represent the initial concepts underlying the “Language Enterprise” alliance, which are now being further revised.

<sup>xxxix</sup> Cf. Global Talent Survey focuses on the failure to understand the economic (jobs) benefits of a second language, or vacillations in support of particular languages dues to changing world events.

<sup>xxxix</sup> Gail H. McGinn. “Foreign language, Cultural Diplomacy, and Global Security.” Briefing paper for the Commission on Language Learning of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. November 15, 2015

<sup>xxxix</sup> Rivers, W. The Contributions of Language to the Economic Interests of the United States. Briefing paper for the Commission on Language Learning of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Prepared by the Joint National Committee for Languages. November 25, 2015.

<sup>xxxix</sup> Wiley, T. G., Arias, M. B., Renn, J., & Bhalla, S. (2016). *Language and the fulfillment of the potential of all Americans*. Washington, DC: American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

<sup>xxxix</sup> The study was funded by the Carter Presidential Commission on language.

<sup>xxxix</sup> The latest include: **Language Votes: Foreign Language Policy Attitudes in the Electorate and in Our Narratives**. William P. Rivers, *Joint National Committee for Languages – National Council for Language and International Studies*, John P. Robinson, *Department of Sociology, University of Maryland*, Paul G. Harwood, *Facebook, University of North Florida*, and Richard D. Brecht, *Center for Advanced Study of Language, University of Maryland*. See also *Language Votes: Foreign Language Policy Attitudes in the Electorate and in Our Narratives*. William P. Rivers, Ph.D. Executive Director Joint National Committee for Languages and National Council for Languages and International Studies November 23, 2013

<sup>xxxix</sup> Cf. Bialystok & Craik, 2010. “Cognitive and Linguistic Processing in the Bilingual Mind.” *Current Directions in Psychological Science* February 2010 vol. 19 no. 119-23. Also, Luk & Bialystok. 2013. “Bilingualism is not a Categorical Variable: Interaction between Language Proficiency & Usage. *J Cogn Psychol (Hove)*. 2013 Jan 1;25(5):605-621.

<sup>xxxix</sup> Mischler et al, 2013. “Working Memory Training for Improving Cognition and Language. Chapter 1”: Linck et al 2013.. “Working memory and second language comprehension and production: A meta-analysis.” Both studies available on the UM CASL website.

<sup>xl</sup> The British Academy’s Special Research Projects competition “Cognitive Benefits of Bilingualism” awarded University College London a research grant for their project: ‘Cognitive Benefits of Language Learning’

<sup>xli</sup> As an example of empirical research on these issues, see *Assessing Language Proficiency and Intercultural Development in the Overseas Immersion Context* Dan E. Davidson, Nadra Garas and Maria D. Lekic (To appear)

<sup>xlii</sup> *Assessing Language Proficiency and Intercultural Development in the Overseas Immersion Context* Dan E. Davidson, Nadra Garas and Maria D. Lekic (To appear)

<sup>xliii</sup> The challenge of a “big data” analysis approach is the reluctance of school districts and states to provide their data even for serious, well executed federally-sponsored study. American Councils for International Education working on the current, National Language Enrollment Project keep hearing that only math or reading data are worth collecting because only they are mandated to be reported.

<sup>xliiv</sup> Richard Brecht, with Martha Abbott, Dan E. Davidson, William P. Rivers, Robert Slater, Amy Weinberg, and Anandini Yoganathan. 2013. *Languages for All: The Anglophone Challenge*, p. 33.

<sup>xli</sup> Both the ACTFL Assessment of Performance Toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) and STAMP attest to higher results.

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<sup>xlvi</sup> Robinson, J.P, Rivers, W. & R. Brecht. 2006. "Demographic and Sociopolitical Predictors of American Attitudes towards Foreign Language Policy," *Language Policy*, 5 (4), 421-42.

<sup>xlvii</sup> The issue of demand in business and government is taken up by Rivers and McGinn in the AAAS Commission on Language Education briefing papers cited above.

<sup>xlviii</sup> Brecht, R., and Rivers, W. 2005. "Language Needs Analysis at the Societal Level," In M. Long, (ed.). *Second Language Needs Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 79-104. See also Brecht, Richard D. and William P. Rivers. 2000. *Language and National Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Role of Title VI/Fulbright-Hays in Supporting National Language Capacity*. National Foreign Language Center; Kendall Hunt. Brecht, Richard D. and Ewa M. Golonka, Mary Elizabeth Hart, and William P. Rivers. 2007. *National Capacity on Language and Area Studies*; Post 9/11: A Evaluation of the Impact of the Title VI/Fulbright-Hays on the Higher Education Act. National Foreign Language Center.

<sup>xliv</sup> "Title VI of the National Defense and Education Act (NDEA), passed in 1958, has allocated billions of dollars in the decades since to build the nation's higher education capacity in language learning and in world area and regional studies. The word 'defense' in the Act reflects a long-standing predilection on the part of legislators and policy makers to justify funding for internationalisation on national defence and security grounds." Eur Parliament p 265

<sup>i</sup> Joseph Lo Bianco. 2004. *A Site for Debate, Negotiation and Contest of National Identity: Language Policy in Australia*. Council of Europe: Strasbourg.

<sup>ii</sup> Baumgartner F.R. & B.D. Jones. 1993. *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*. University of Chicago Press. In the late 1980s an effort was launched by AAU to establish a broad partnership among international education associations, including language with the goal of establishing a National Foundation for Foreign Languages and International Studies. Unfortunately, the effort known as CAFLLIS foundered, revealing divisions between the language and international studies communities.

<sup>iii</sup> Partners for Languages in the U.S (PLUS)

<sup>iiii</sup> This report can be found on the website of CASL at the University of Maryland.

<sup>liv</sup> Right now the numbers are so evanescent that the picture changes radically for some languages, from one year to the next. It is not surprising that US policy on language is so weak, if no one at any level, it would appear, even knows how many languages are taught at which levels to how many students.

<sup>lv</sup> See the research of Judith Kroll and the research staff of the Center for Advanced Study of Language at the University of Maryland

<sup>lvi</sup> DOD-sponsored STARTALK has emerged as the first effective "seeding" program for critical languages across the nation. DoD-sponsored National Language Service Corps has proven to be a cost-effective means of warehousing precious language expertise available when needed by any and all government agencies.

<sup>lvii</sup> For a summary, see NCSSFL State Reports: [http://www.ncssfl.org/reports2/index.php?reports\\_index](http://www.ncssfl.org/reports2/index.php?reports_index)

<sup>lviii</sup> See "Languages for All? Final Report", available on websites of ACIE, ACTFL, CASL & JNCL. An informal group in the DC area comprising leaders of major language and humanities organizations has begun discussions along these lines.

<sup>lix</sup> "Groups of experts that are able to exhibit a united front toward the outside world are better able to get what they want from the political system." (Baumgartner & Jones, p. 176)

<sup>lx</sup> The classic model for developing and sustaining the needed social effort on behalf of language is what Baumgartner and Jones refer to as a "policy subsystem" with "...a monopoly on political understandings concerning the policy of interest, and an institutional arrangement that reinforces that understanding." (p 6) Were such a subsystem to exist, presumably it would ensure that support for language be free from dependence on global events and remain an abiding policy concern for the country and for its education system. According to Baumgartner & Jones (p. 7), successful

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subsystems require a “definable institutional structure” associated with a “powerful supporting idea,” a good example of a successful subsystem being environmental protection. Unfortunately, there is little evidence that such a subsystem is even being discussed, let alone that there is one within reach.

<sup>lxi</sup> There is precedent for this kind of collaboration: In 1985 a number of foundations came together to launch the National Foreign Language Center, which then received significant government support.

<sup>lxii</sup> <http://www.britac.ac.uk/policy/Languages.cfm>

<sup>lxiii</sup> Cf. the latest call in the UK for a "National Languages Recovery Programme" (<http://www.publicpolicy.cam.ac.uk/news/uk-language-policy>)

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