



Professor Fiona Barclay
University of Stirling

Advocacy: Royal Society of Edinburgh

Group of academics and business leaders working to raise the profile of languages with politicians and business

Nov 2025: invited languages event at RSE

Mar 2026: open letter to political parties

April 2026: public engagement event at RSE

Sept 2026: create cross-party parliamentary group on languages

Oct 2026: toolkit for Headteachers

Aim: a review of languages and a commitment to develop a national languages strategy

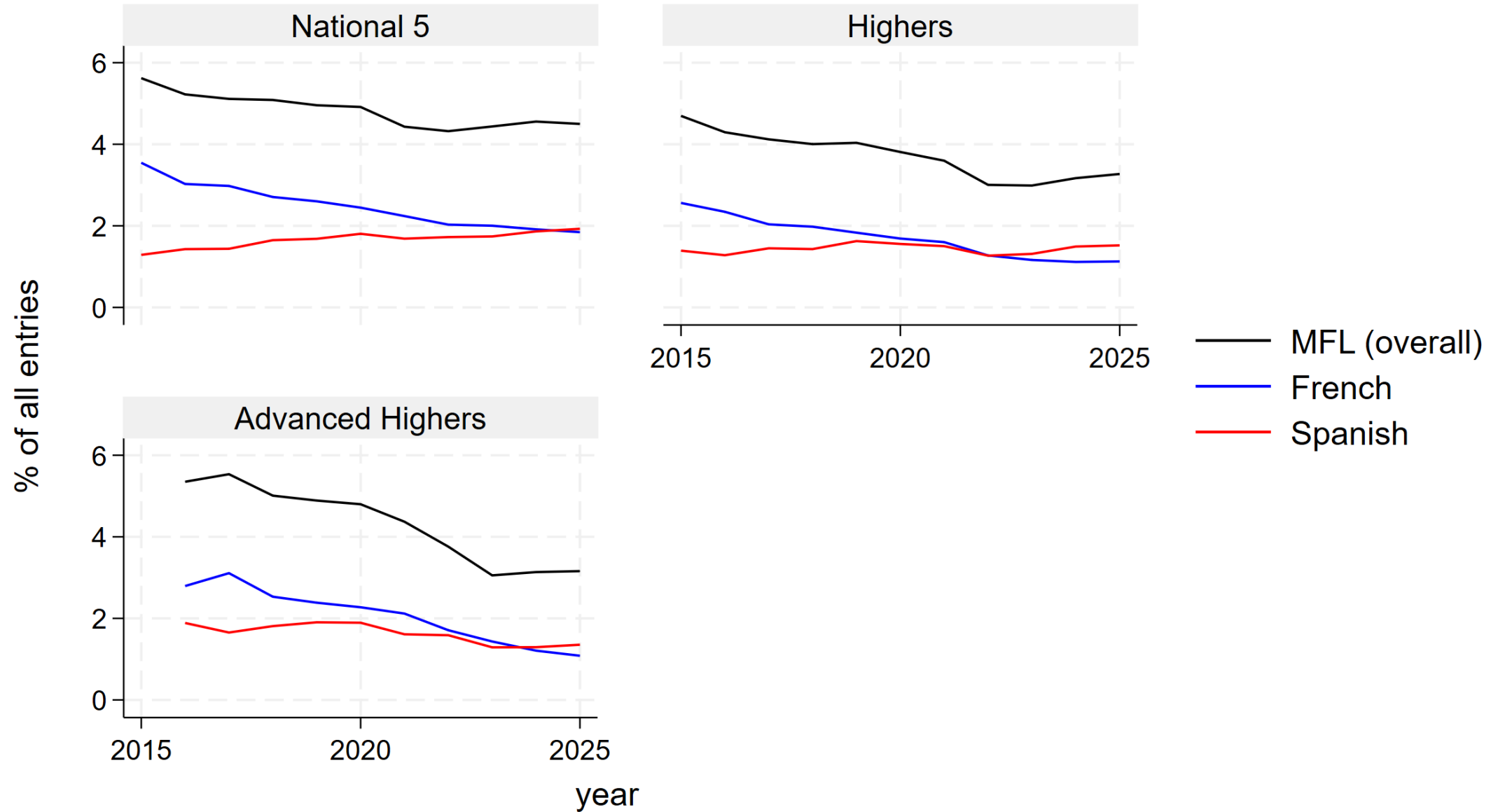


Research project: ‘Transforming Cultures of Language Learning’

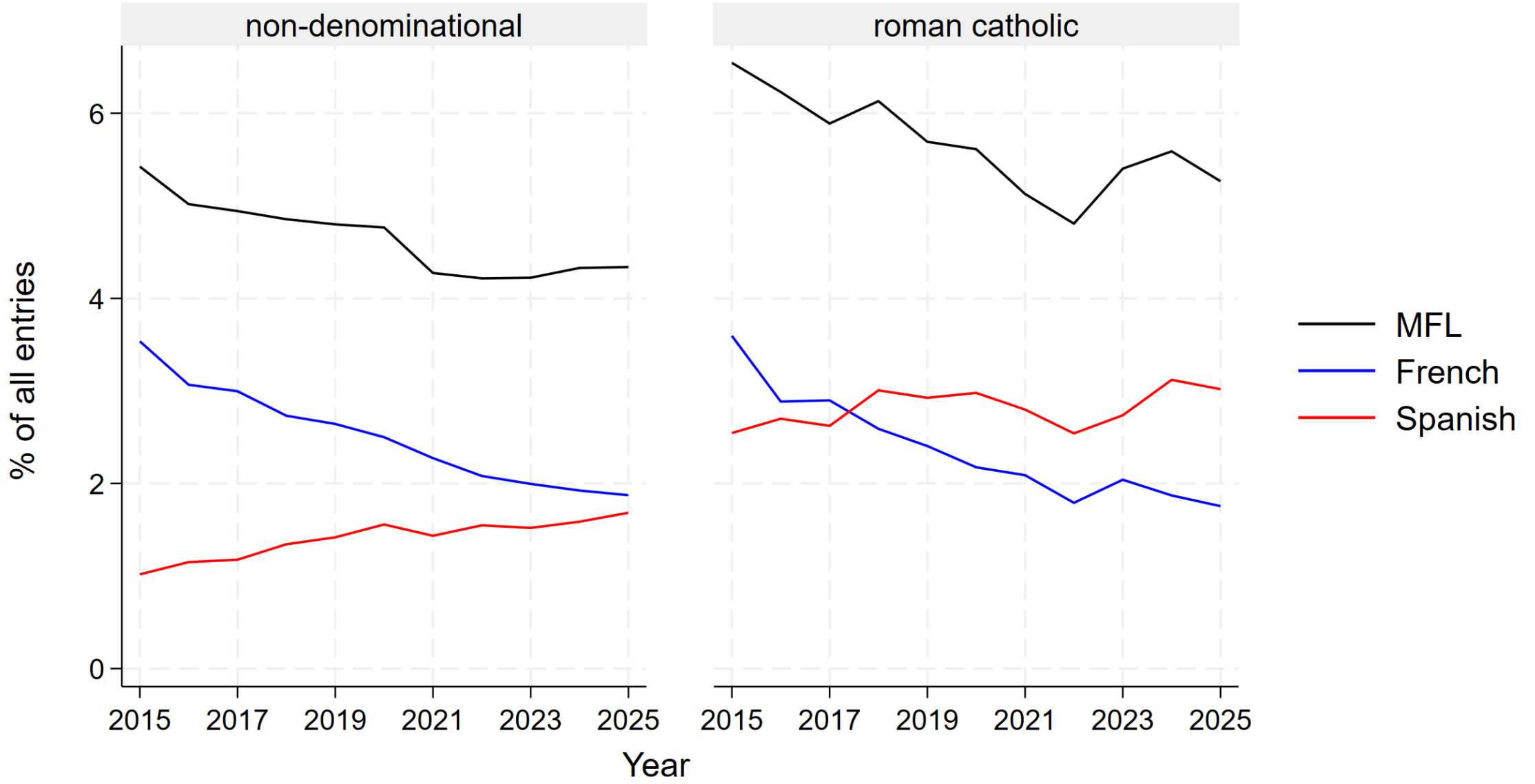
- Comparative study of language-learning in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Ireland (‘the Celtic jurisdictions’).
- Looking to identify the factors that support successful language learning
- 1 May 2026 for 20 months (£1.5M)
- University of Stirling, Cardiff University , Queens University Belfast, Dublin City University, University of London
- Languages ecosystem, from primary-secondary-FE/HE-teacher education, including the macroenvironment of policy, society, business, technology
- Statistical analysis, followed by new survey data collection



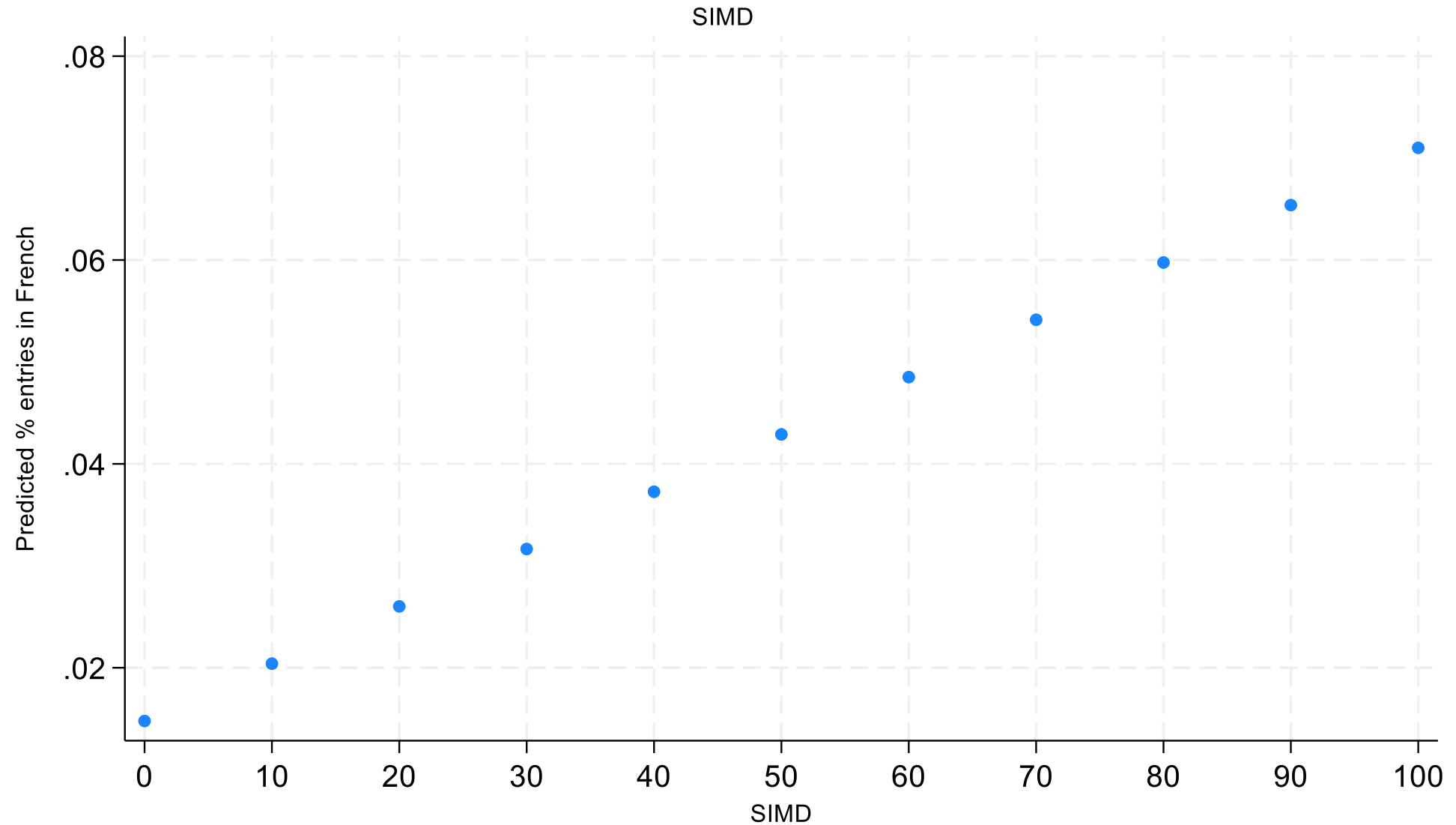
Language entries as a percentage of all entries



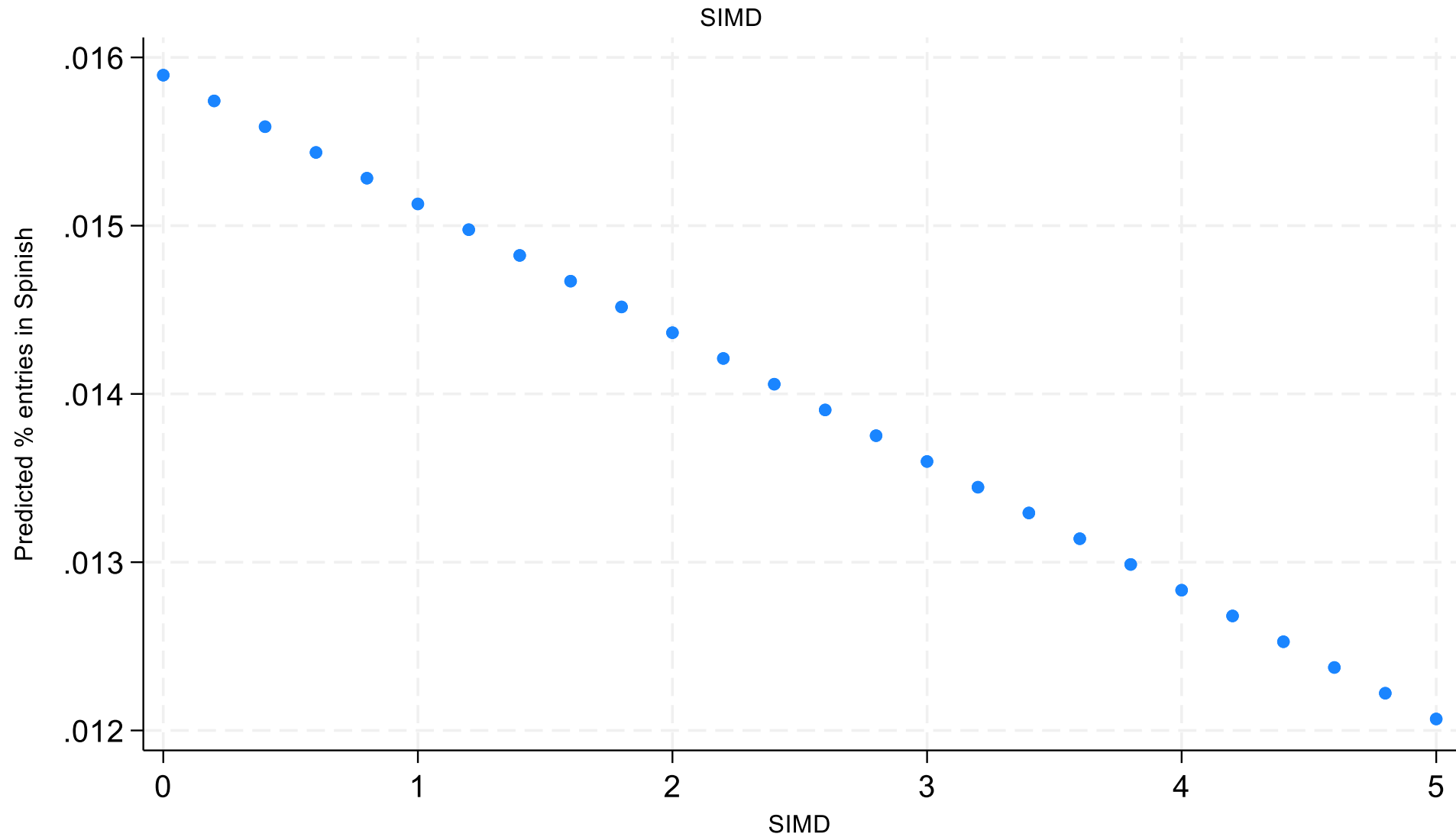
French, Spanish and MFL Level 5 entries as a % of all entries by denomination



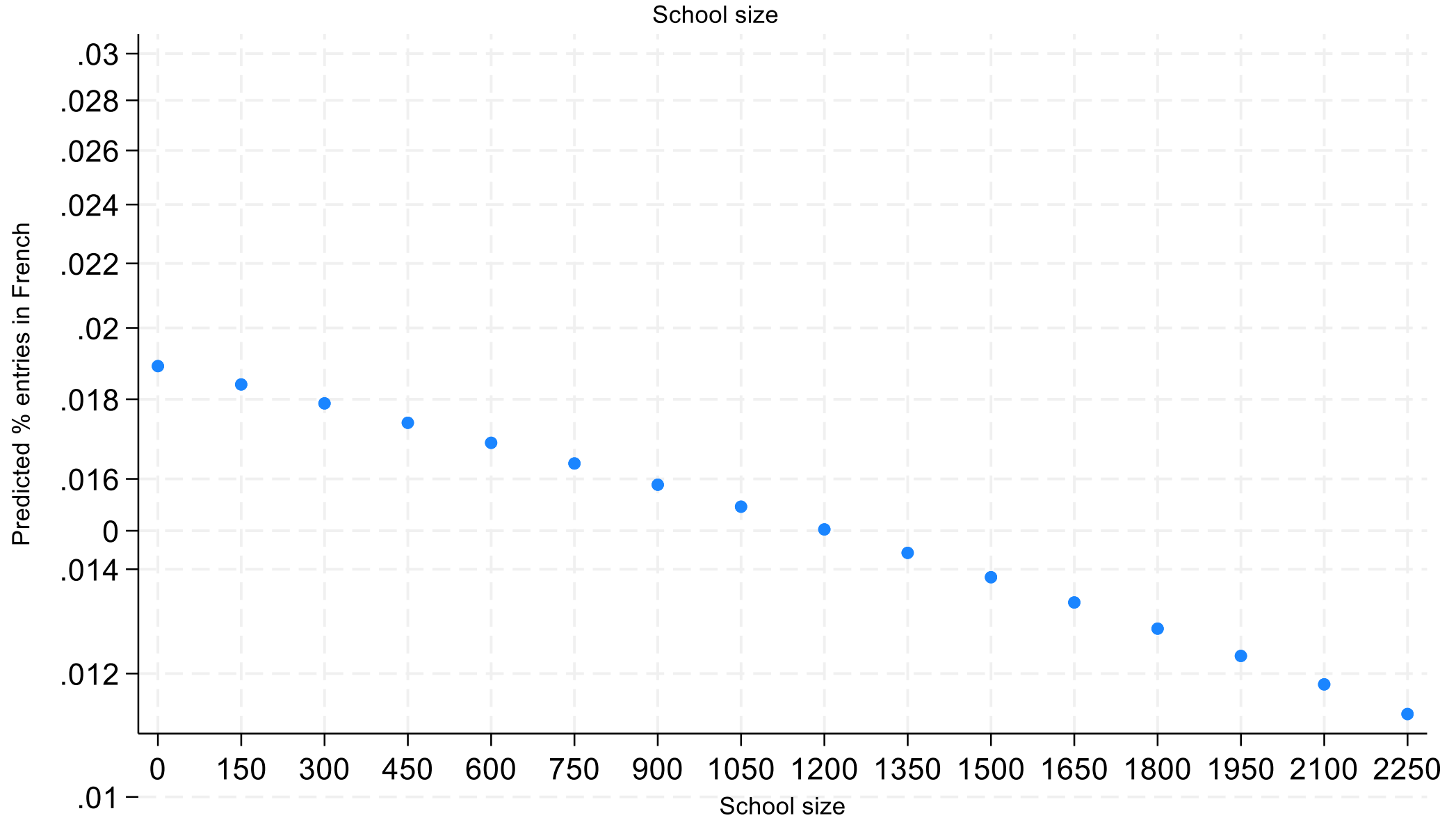
French uptake is higher in more advantaged areas (and lower in schools with higher levels of FSM)



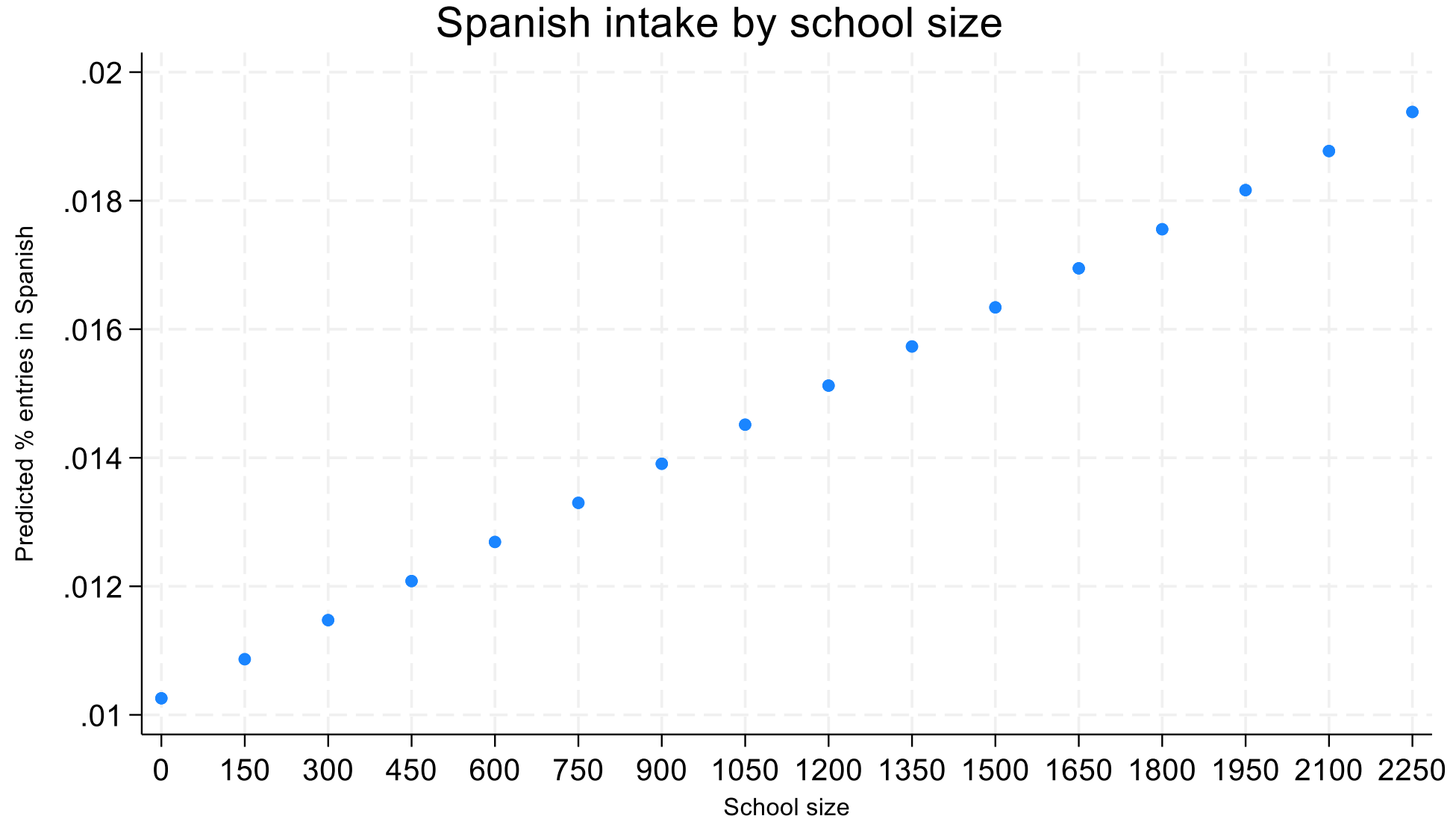
Spanish uptake is lower in more advantaged areas



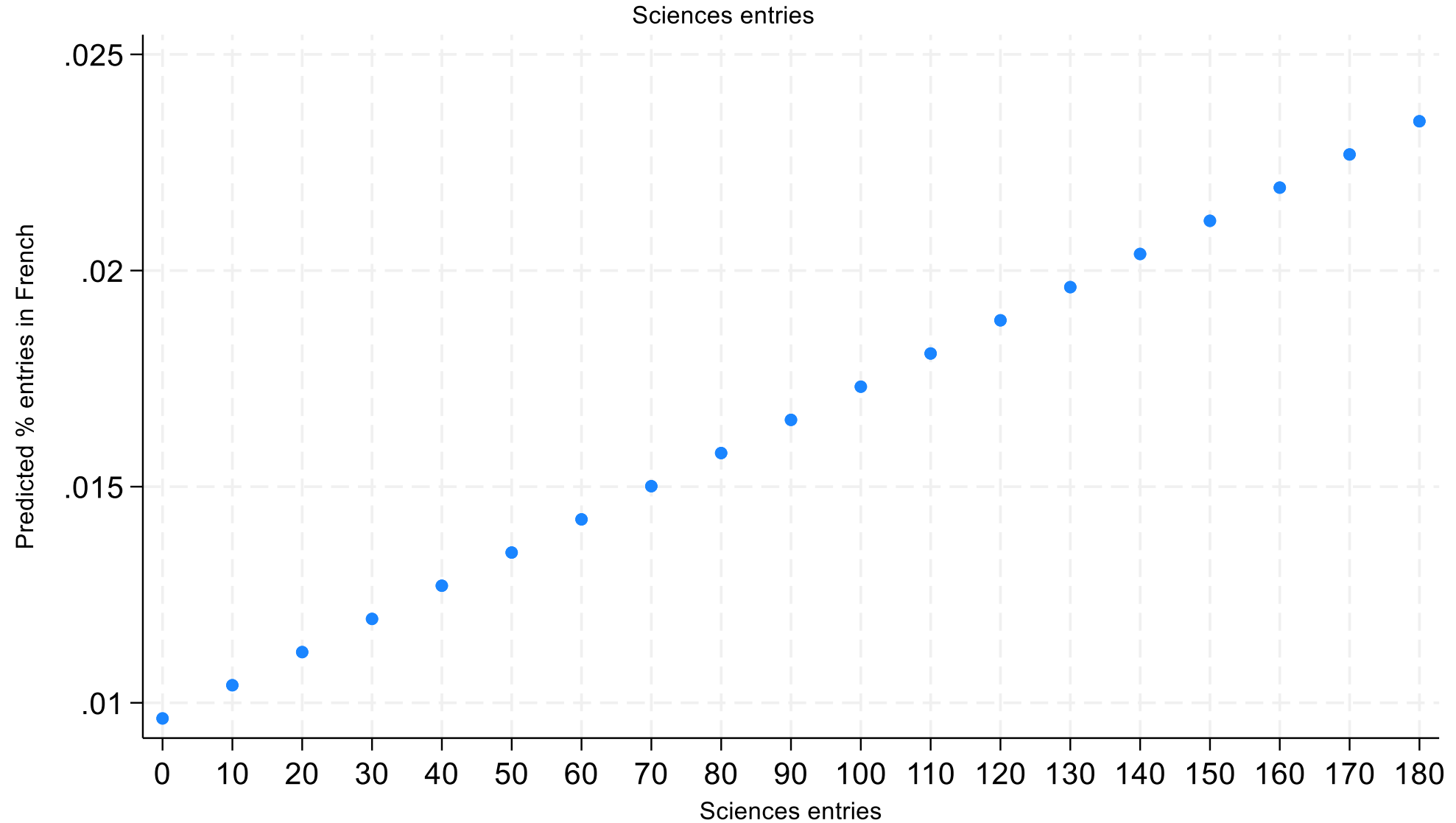
French uptake is lower in larger schools



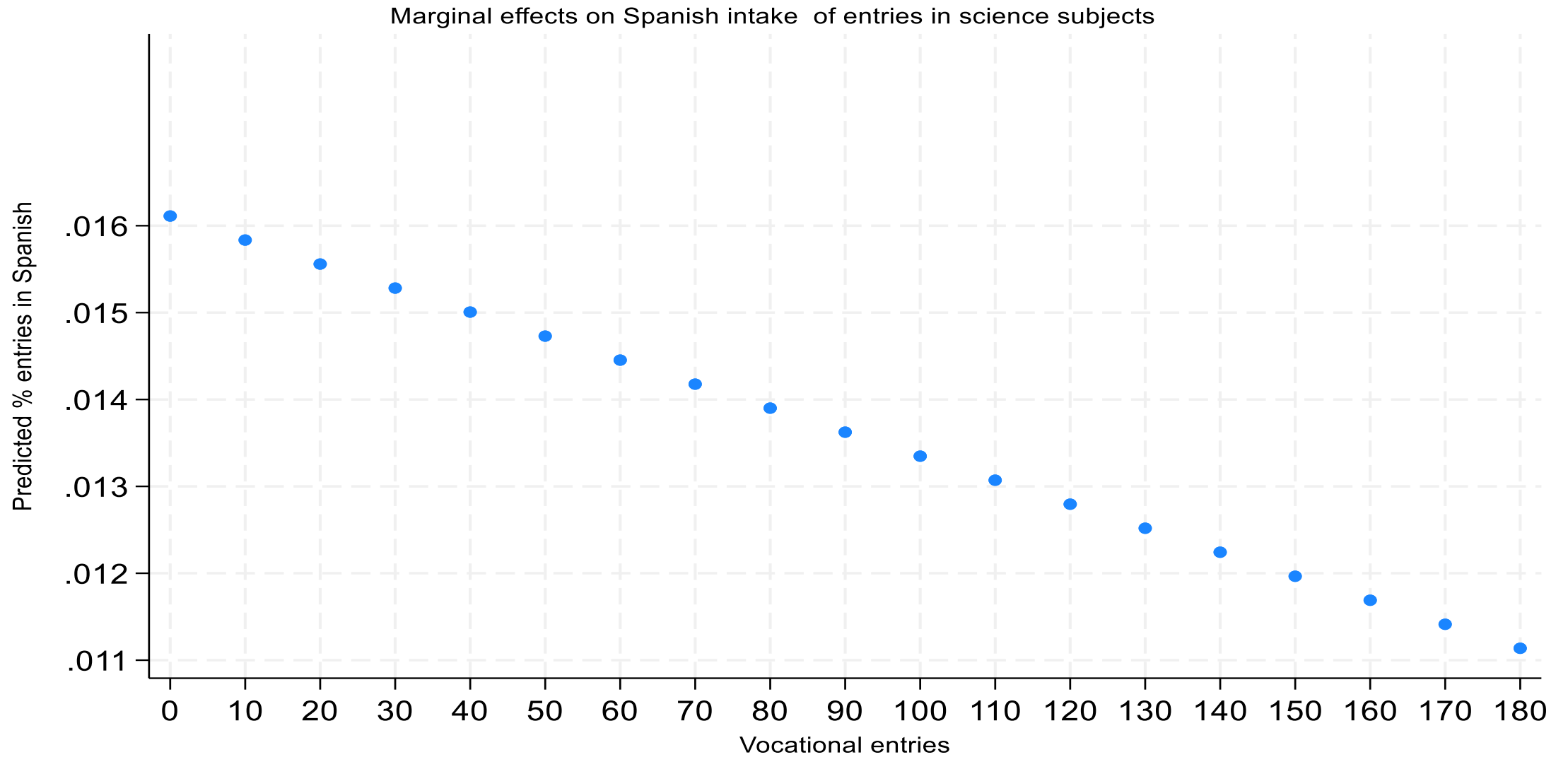
Spanish uptake is higher in larger schools



French uptake is higher where there is high uptake of Sciences



Spanish uptake is lower where there is high uptake of Sciences



What next?

- Quantitative data exists for all languages qualifications
- Bridges the gap between the national picture of languages as a unified subject, and local anecdotal knowledge
- Highlights gaps in the information available
- Informs the next phase of research – the collection of new data
 - Design of teacher, learner and parent surveys in selected schools across Scotland.

