

## Recent Publications – Abstracts and Weblinks

---

### **Alberta Teachers Association (2017) [Literature Review on the Impact of Second Language Learning](#)**

The purpose of the current literature review is to investigate whether and how learning a second language affects language learners. It focuses on research in the following areas: **cognition, academics, personal life, society at large, economics** and **intercultural understanding**. In addition, special attention is paid to the extent to which students with exceptionalities and other language learners are able to acquire additional languages. Learning languages takes time and effort, and the amount of time it takes depends on a number of factors. Some of these include the learning context, learning goals and the age of the learner, to name just a few. Most often, learning a second language has a positive impact on the language learner. At times, however, learning languages may pose challenges. The research presented here focuses both on the benefits and the challenges associated with learning a second language.

### **Alcantara Communications (2016): [The Teaching of Arabic Language and Cultures in UK Schools. Review commissioned by the British Council](#)**

This report was commissioned by the British Council in March 2016 as part of its Arabic Language and Culture programme, which is now in its fourth year. It builds on previous research undertaken by Alcantara Communications. As a result of this initial research, the British Council developed and tailored its programme, continued to build its contacts with stakeholders in the field, and commissioned further in-depth research into key themes identified. These were contracted as separate strands, since they required different types of expertise. This report covers Strand 2 of the research: ‘Review of the teaching of Arabic language and culture in UK schools’.

### **American Academy of Arts and Sciences (2017) [America's Languages: Investing in Language Education for the 21st Century](#)**

In this report, the Commission on Language Learning recommends a national strategy to improve access to as many languages as possible for people of every region, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background—that is, to value language education as a persistent national need similar to education in math or English, and to ensure that a useful level of proficiency is within every student’s reach.

#### Some Key Findings:

- The ability to understand, speak, read, and write in world languages, in addition to English, is critical to success in business, research, and international relations in the twenty-first century.
- The United States needs more people to speak languages other than English in order to provide social and legal services for a changing population.

- The study of a second language has been linked to improved learning outcomes in other subjects, enhanced cognitive ability, and the development of empathy and effective interpretive skills. The use of a second language has been linked to a delay in certain manifestations of aging. [...]
- One of the biggest obstacles to improved language learning is a national shortage of qualified teachers. [...]
- Native American languages are distinct in political status and history, and are the object of school- and community-based reclamation and retention efforts aligned with the Native American Languages Act of 1990.

### **American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Annual Report 2016**

**NB:** On 1 March 2017, ACTFL and a diverse group of private and nonprofit partners spanning the education, business and foundation sectors launched ***Lead with Languages***, a multi-year campaign aimed at reversing the language skills gap and making language learning a national priority in the U.S. The campaign seeks to build awareness across the U.S. about the growing importance of language skills to a wide array of careers [...] with the ultimate goal of supporting a new generation of Americans competent in other languages and cultures and equipped to compete and succeed in a global economy.

Find out more here: <http://www.leadwithlanguages.org/>

### **British Council (2016) Languages for Resilience: The Role of Language in Enhancing the Resilience of Syrian Refugees and Host Communities**

#### **KEY FINDINGS**

- Every language used by the refugees helps them to build resilience at the individual, family and community levels. Both home language and their additional languages matter
- Proficiency in additional languages provides new opportunities for education and employment
- Proficiency in key languages gives people a voice to tell their story in various contexts
- Language-learning can bolster social cohesion and intercultural understanding
- Language-learning activities can be supportive interventions to address the effects of loss, displacement and trauma
- Building the capacity of language teachers can strengthen the resilience of the formal and non-formal education systems in host communities

### **Corradini, E et al (eds) (2016) Languages and Employability: A Handbook**

This is a commercially produced book but you can download each chapter individually for free (scroll down the page)

**European Commission (2016) [Study of Foreign Language Proficiency and Employability](#)**

This study, commissioned by the European Commission's department for jobs, social affairs and inclusion, highlights the link between foreign languages skills and employability in EU countries. It analyses how it changes across countries, economic sectors and job roles and gives recommendations on further support and diversification of language learning, and certification and assessment procedures.

**Eurydice (2017) [Key Data on Teaching Languages in Schools in Europe 2017 Edition](#)**

Linguistic diversity is part of Europe's DNA. It embraces not only the official languages of Member States, but also the regional and/or minority languages spoken for centuries on European territory, as well as the languages brought by the various waves of migrants. The coexistence of this variety of languages constitutes an asset, but it is also a challenge for Europe. This fourth edition of Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe describes the main policies on the teaching and learning of languages, with a focus on foreign languages. It contains 60 indicators in five chapters entitled Context, Organisation, Participation, Teachers and Teaching Processes. While this book builds on the previous edition published in 2012, it also investigates new areas, principally the language provision for children from migrant backgrounds. The report was produced in close cooperation with the European Commission.

The publication belongs to the Key Data series, the aim of which is to combine statistical data and qualitative information on European education systems. The indicators are organised by thematic area within the chapters and sections. They provide clear, precise and comparable information displayed as graphics and are accompanied by brief commentaries a headline summarises the key points made.

**New American Economy (2017) [Not Lost in Translation: The Growing Importance of Foreign Language Skills in the U.S. Job Market](#)**

In today's globalised world, businesses need employees who can serve customers not only in English, but in a wide range of other languages as well. [...] Given this, it is not surprising that by 2020, proficiency in more than one language will be among the most important skills a job seeker can have. [...] Yet, despite this rapid increase in demand for foreign language skills, fewer students in the United States are taking language classes. [...] Previous attempts to understand the increasing demand for foreign language skills have been limited in scope. Many existing studies focus on demand for bilingual workers in fields like translation, interpretation, and language instruction—jobs in which language skills are clearly necessary. Other research has focused exclusively on Spanish-English bilinguals, or has relied on small-scale survey data. Such work does not accurately reflect the rich diversity of today's labour and consumer market. It also fails to provide meaningful insights into how immigrants or their children could help to fill the growing demand for foreign language employees. This study aims to overcome the limitations of past research, providing valuable insight into how the demand for bilingual workers has grown at both the state and national levels. We also explore demand for workers who speak specific languages including Arabic, Korean, or French.

**Social Research – Children Education and Skills (2016) Attitudes towards Language Learning in Schools in Scotland**

In the 2015 Social Attitudes Survey participants were asked about their views on language learning. 89% thought that learning a language other than English in school from the age of five is important. This was regardless of people's age, educational qualifications, or socio-economic status. The most common languages that people in Scotland think are appropriate for children in their area to learn are Western European languages.

**Welsh Government (2016) Global Futures – a plan to improve and promote modern foreign languages in Wales**

The five-year plan (2015-2020) sets out how [the Welsh Government] will work with the regional education consortia and key partners to help learners in Wales communicate effectively in other languages and appreciate other cultures.

The plan sets out three strategic actions:

1. to promote and raise the profile of modern foreign languages as an important subject not only at GCSE (Level 2) but also as a longer term choice which can lead to career opportunities
2. build capacity and support for the professional development of the education workforce to deliver modern foreign languages effectively from Year 5 onwards, enabling all learners to benefit from the bilingual plus 1 strategy via Professional Development for the education workforce, review of the Initial Teacher Education or Training (ITET) and pioneer schools network
3. to provide enhanced learning opportunities to engage and excite learners.

An annual report which looks at the progress made during the first year of the plan (2015-2016), is also available.