Brexit as Linguistic ‘Symptom of Britain Retreating into its Shell?

Brexit-Induced Politicisation of Language Learning

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<ABSTRACT>

Debates about the future of UK language learning in the context of Brexit intensified as soon as the referendum outcome was announced. This politicisation of language learning, evidenced recently also in the U.S. and France, falls upon an already difficult context of the UK in a 'language learning crisis', and an increasing social segregation between those who learn languages, and those who do not. In the Brexit-induced politicisation of language learning, some suggest that the UK's unwillingness to learn languages is indexical of Europhobia, while others contend that the 'global English' phenomenon is the root cause. We examine the evidence for these rationales.

Our data analysis uses Van Dijk's methods of macrostructure Critical Discourse Analysis, to examine 33 publicly available texts on the topic of Brexit and language learning in the UK that appeared in the immediate aftermath of the referendum (June - November 2016). The analysis reveals how different stakeholders frame language learning as a habitus associated with social markers, and thus either reinforce patters of the social divide in language learning, or challenge these. The conclusion proposes avenues of politicising language learning that might foster rather than hinder uptake in those currently disengaged from language learning.

KEYWORDS: language policy; Brexit; Critical Discourse Analysis; politicisation

Modern foreign language (MFL) education is inherently linked to ideological agendas (Spolsky, 2004), and often used for political ends (Scollon, 2004). In 2005, Kramsch demonstrated how this politicization intensifies during seismic political events. In the United States, 9/11 was one such event: In this case, the teaching of Arabic was particularly affected (Thompson, 2017a). Of course, one can find anti-immigrant, and generally anti-“other” policies, in many contexts outside English-dominant countries. In France, for example, the *Front National* promotes both anti-immigration, mono-cultural, and ‘French first’ policies (Berezin, 2007). The French context serves as illustration that anti-“other” attitudes, including negative stances toward languages other than one’s own, are not unique to either Anglophone countries, or the United Kingdom specifically: The phenomenon may occur in many contexts. However, the United Kingdom shares with other Anglophone countries the paradox of being a richly multilingual country (British Academy, 2013) whose multilingual resources are often ignored (e.g., Norton 2013; Norton & Gieve, 2010). We shall return to the issues of ‘othering’ and erasure of language diversity later.

In the United Kingdom, the British exit from the European Union (Brexit) intensified the debate on the poor record of language learning. This article asks why: What links between these topics could be made? How is the link between Brexit and language links debated? We do this in a two-pronged approach: The context section offers a critical appraisal of common rationales for the United Kingdom’s poor language learning record, and their potential links to Brexit. The empirical section offers a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of public texts discussing the issue of Brexit and MFL in the United Kingdom. This analysis investigates how different authorship groups frame the problem of Brexit and language learning, and how these topics might relate to social segregation in language learning. Different stakeholders expressed views about issues such as connections between attitudes to MFL and anti-European feelings, future needs for different languages, and MFL teacher shortage (Koglbauer, 2018). The rapid emergence of public texts on this topic, in the absence of any concrete knowledge about the Brexit-related impact on MFL, may indicate that stakeholders are keen to avoid negative Brexit consequence for language learning, for instance by lobbying for the continuation of Erasmus exchanges. On the other hand, authors might also use Brexit as a political springboard to express their general views on causes and remedies of the UK language learning crisis, or as vehicle for political agendas unrelated to MFL.

The overarching research question can be stated as follows:

RQ 1. How was the topic of language learning and Brexit debated in public media in the immediate Referendum aftermath (June to November 2016)?

The sub-questions are:

RQ 2. Which rationales for the UK’s record in language learning are evoked in the articles by the different stakeholders/authorship groups?

RQ 3. In what ways, if any, do the discourses frame Brexit as opportunity or problem for the future of language learning?

RQ 4. In what ways, if any, do the discourses perpetuate or challenge the social segregation in language learning?

RQ 5. In what ways, if any, are nation–specific discourses around MFL and Brexit politicized for national interests?

<A> POLITICIZATION OF MFL IN TWO ANGLOPHONE CONTEXTS

Two recent events, Brexit in the United Kingdom, and the 2016 presidential election in the United States, have put issues of attitudes toward immigration, languages other than English, and fear of the “other” in the spotlight worldwide. In the United States, the policies of President Trump pursue a disdain for languages and cultures outside of the perceived American monolingual norm, evidenced, for instance, by the removal of Spanish language pages from WhiteHouse.gov (Bowden, 2017; Ordoñez, 2017). As Stavans (2017) indicates, Trump “appears to be allergic to foreign languages”. In his social media contributions, he “constructs the image of the homeland being threatened by an evil, yet unspecified ‘other’ that needs to be prevented from invading ‘our country’ “ (Kreis, 2017, p. 613). These anti- “other” discourses had immediate societal consequences, with people feeling emboldened to tell foreign students to stop talking their “oriental” language (Richards, 2017). There is evidence that his ideology impacts on MFL. For instance, the Fulbright exchange program, a language and cultural exchange program, might see severe funding reductions in the near future (Morello, 2017). Furthermore, 40% of U.S. colleges saw a decline in international student enrolment immediately after the election (Redden, 2017). In foreign language classrooms in the United States, teachers face the task of combatting negative feelings toward other languages and cultures (Thomas, 2017). Thus, in the United States, language educators nation–wide work under increasing challenges, fighting perceptions of cultural norms, and of cultural and linguistic isolation—a change brought about by the highest governmental office (i.e., the President).

In the United Kingdom, the publicly voiced concerns and speculations about the future of UK language learning post-Brexit started immediately after the Brexit result was announced (e.g., Cactus, 24 June; Oxford University, 26 June). This debate fell upon long-standing concerns over the disinterest in language learning and language skills deficits in the United Kingdom, in two respects. First, the United Kingdom has seen a steady overall decline of students engaging in MFL study at all post-compulsory levels, over the last two decades. This decline has been attributed to a complex interplay between language policy changes, poor learner motivation, and systemic difficulties within schools concerning the delivery of MFL (British Council, 2017; Lanvers 2017a, b; Tinsley & Board, 2017; Tinsley & Dolezal, 2018).

Second, in parallel with this decline, the (fewer and fewer) students who do opt to study a language beyond the compulsory phase increasingly come from advantaged backgrounds, leading to a stark social segregation in MFL study (Coffey, 2018; Lanvers, 2017b). It is therefore possible that learners, or their parents, currently not interested in languages, might find their demotivation reaffirmed by public portrayals of the British as inherently bad at languages (Graham & Santos, 2015). Furthermore, such negative spirals might mainly influence especially those from less advantaged backgrounds.

Given the lack of clarity of the actual fallout from Brexit on languages in the United Kingdom, academics have started to speculate about future UK language needs, and changes in language learning opportunities. Academics and policy advisers put forward their arguments in favour of language learning with increasing urgency (e.g., social and cognitive advantages of language learning, cost of the language skills deficit to the economy, see British Council, 2017; Kelly, 2018; Tinsley, 2018). Public debates on this issue, however, freely accessible to all, have the potential to reach wider, more diverse audiences, and impact on motivation toward MFL in those that matter most: existing and potential learners. Therefore, it matters how the issue of Brexit and MFL is framed, and Tinsley & Dolezal (2018) report the first evidence of a negative effect of this debate on learner attitudes toward MFL. We shall return to this in the Conclusion.

On a different but related topic, Brexit has already triggered highly charged debates about the future of English in a post-Brexit European Union. Regarding learner attitudes, motivation to learn English will, in all likelihood, continue to be influenced by the global status of the language, rather than Brexit. However, with respect to EU policy, some EU nations have started to vie for an increased status of their language (Jenkins, 2018). Academics are also speculating about emerging European forms of English (Modiano, 2017). Notwithstanding these debates, an estimated equal number of EU citizens will have German or English fluency (Ginsburgh et al., 2016) post-Brexit, mainly because of the amount of formal learning of English in the European Union. For pragmatic reasons, English is likely to be of high importance in a post-Brexit European Union, even if this outcome might jar with preferences for other languages among some ‘Eurocrats.’ The details of such debates, and potential outcomes, will no doubt be the focus of future investigation.

In sum, we note that Brexit has further politicized the (already very political) controversies around language learning in the United Kingdom (and the European Union): We see Kramsch’s prediction, first stated in the context of 9/11, verified. In the following sections we critically appraise possible links between Brexit and language learning in the United Kingdom.

## <A> LANGUAGE LEARNING IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

## Evidence that Britons are reluctant language learners abounds, but uncertainty remains as to why. MFL proficiency among the UK adult population is often reported as the worst or, on some measures, as second worst (after Ireland) in the European Union (British Council, 2013; Eurobarometer, 2012b). By EU comparisons, UK provisions for MFL education is poor, with only 5% of students studying two or more languages, compared to the EU average of 51% (Eurostat, 2016), and the highest percentage of students in upper secondary education (57%) who do not learn a language at all (Eurydice, 2012). The United Kingdom also has the lowest percentage of tertiary students studying abroad in another EU country (Eurostat, 2015). Regarding attitudes to languages, 15% of UK citizens, compared to the EU average of 12%, think that no other language than the mother tongue is useful for personal development. However, several EU countries have higher agreement to this statement (e.g., Portugal 32%, Czech Republic 25%, and Bulgaria 24%). Similarly, 4% of UK citizens voiced the opinion that no language learning is useful, but so did 10% of Romanians (Eurobarometer, 2012b).

Given the large differences in education systems and cultures, cross-national comparisons of MFL outcomes, or attitudes, are fraught with methodological difficulties (see e.g., Bartram, 2010). Perhaps unsurprisingly, there is a dearth of such studies, but those that exist (Milton & Meara, 1998; Mitchell, 2010) suggest that differences in language education between the United Kingdom and other countries can explain the attainment gaps we observe. Examples include few teaching hours, compared to EU averages, low syllabus demands, and exam-focused systems. These problems suggest that systemic and policy issues, rather than learner characteristics pertaining to attitudes or ability, could explain the United Kingdom’s language learning lag.

Notwithstanding this evidence, two rationales are usually cited to explain UK ‘language complacency’: Some ascribe the UK disinterest in MFL to the global spread of English, and the ‘English is enough’ fallacy, that is, the notion that the spread of English has led native speakers to lose motivation to learn other languages (e.g., Clark & Trafford, 1996; Graham, 2004; Lo Bianco, 2014). Others speculate that the reluctance to learn languages could be due to a UK-specific mentality of Euroscepticism, insularism, and xenophobia (Coleman, 2009). The latter rationale received heightened attention since the Brexit decision, with pedagogues expressing concern that Euroscepticism will reinforce the nation’s general disinterest in MFL. Both rationales evidence some ideological slant: The Euroscepticism rationale assumes that the purported British mentality of interconnected linguaphobia and Europhobia is somewhat ubiquitous in the British population. This claim might be difficult to maintain in view of the divisive (almost 50/50 split) Brexit vote. The ‘English is enough’ rationale does not take sufficient account of the fact that ‘linguaphobic’ attitudes are not spread equally among the UK population (see section *MFL Policy and Social Segregation in MFL uptake*). Nonetheless, both rationales feature in the politicized debates around Brexit and the future for languages in the United Kingdom. Of course, these rationales are not mutually exclusive. For instance, one might argue that the overall weak policies and practices regarding language teaching in the United Kingdom are themselves a manifestation of linguaphobia, or in deed xenophobia.

In the next section, we will examine the validity of these two common rationales for the apparent reluctance to learn languages. The purported attitudes of Euroscepticism, and the ‘English is enough’ rationale, are counterchecked against (mostly European) statistical evidence on such attitudes.

## <B> Evidence for the Euroscepticism Rationale

A 2012 European survey (Eurobarometer, 2012b) revealed the United Kingdom as the most Eurosceptic country, with 54% wanting to leave the European Union. Fifty-seven percent of the UK population did not feel as EU citizens (the highest EU percentage), compared to an EU average of 38%. However, according to a June 2016 Pewglobal poll of ten EU countries, the views of the European Union were most negative in Greece (71%), followed by France (61%), then Britain (48%). The Eurobarometer’s (2012a) scale of *International Openness* (operationalized e.g., by measuring socializing with people from other countries), shows the United Kingdom scoring below EU average in this respect, but above Portugal, Bulgaria, and Italy (Eurobarometer, 2012a). UK citizens’ disagreement with the notion that all Europeans should learn another language also ranks above the EU average (all data except where indicated otherwise: Eurobarometer, 2012a).

## <B>Evidence for the ‘English is Enough’ Rationale

Across many European countries, the global status of English has led to a decreased interest in other MFL (e.g., Bartram, 2010; Busse, 2017). Ninety-four percent of secondary and 83% of primary school students in the European Union are learning English (Eurobarometer, 2012b). If the ‘craze for English’, matched by a declining interest in other languages, is Europe-wide (Phillipson, 2004) and indeed global (Hu, 2009), Britons’ purported ‘linguaphobe’ attitudes might be part of the same global ‘ideology of (English) monolingualism’ (Wiley, 2000), rather than Euroscepticism, or similar national mentality-traits. Evidence from other Anglophone countries (United States, Australia, and New Zealand) regarding both MFL policy, and MFL proficiency levels, supports the notion that the global spread of English is a main demotivator for English native (L1) speakers to learn other languages (Lanvers, 2017b).

On balance, then, although the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union, Euroscepticism is also present, sometimes to a greater degree, in some other EU countries that have higher rates of MFL engagement, because students mostly learn English. The association between linguaphobia and anti-EU tendencies, central to the Euroscepticism rationale, therefore rests on false assumptions: There is little evidence that Euroscepticism (alone) might explain low MFL engagement. There is stronger evidence for the ‘English is enough’ or ‘monolingual mindset’ rationale. However, care must be taken not to confound this phenomenon with purported ‘intrinsic’ or ‘inherent’ national characteristics (’linguaphobia’, inability to learn languages), as (admittedly scant) comparative evidence suggests that attainment gaps in MFL between the United Kingdom and the European Union could be explained by systemic differences in education policy and practice. Regarding the global dominance of English, it is possible that the United Kingdom's disinterest to learn languages is a parallel phenomenon to the European (and global) trend of English as the dominant MFL, suppressing the learning of other MFL (e.g., Busse, 2017) and leading to ‘foreign language monolingualism’ (Quetz, 2010).

This validity assessment offers a foundation for the following discourse analysis of texts debating Brexit and language learning: It permits to qualify both the ‘linguaphobe’ and ‘English is enough’ rationales, as they occur in the data. Further contextualization of the data is needed, in terms of (a) differences in MFL policy between the four UK nations, and (b) the social segregation in MFL engagement. The first offers information to analyse if the four nations might differ in how they link Brexit to MFL. The latter provides contexts on which to base our analysis of social bias in our texts. This study adopts Shohamy’s (2016) view that discourses around specific policies are indicative of who is perceived to (dis)benefit from the policies in question, who holds such views, and who might be in power to induce change, if desired. The social nature of the issue in hand is central in this study; therefore, in the next section we present data on the social segregation in MFL uptake, and national MFL policy differences.

## <A>MFL POLICY AND SOCIAL SEGREGATION IN MFL UPTAKE

The four UK nations (England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland) have responded differently to the challenge of declining MFL uptake. Our research interest includes the question if politicization of MFL is slanted by national interests; therefore, we briefly sketch national MFL policy differences here.

Education policies differ between the four UK nations (England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland). In England, schools are required to teach an MFL to pupils aged 7–11 in primary school (Key Stage 2) and aged 11–14 in secondary school (Key Stage 3). Compulsory language learning for ages 14–16 was abolished in 2004, leading to a year-on-year drop of students taking a language exam at age 16 (Board & Tinsley, 2016; Tinsley & Board, 2017); the latest figures of students passing language exams suggest the downhill trend is continuing (Tinsley & Dolezal, 2018). One factor that contributes to the unattractiveness of MFL for students as a choice subject is the relatively harsh marking; that is, students score on average 0.5–1 grade lower in their language compared to other subjects (Myers, 2016; Vidal Romero, 2017). Schools, for their part, mindful of the UK ‘school league tables’ by which they are judged, are reluctant to make an MFL compulsory for all, as this would harm their league table results. Solutions to this systemic disadvantage of MFL might be to take MFL out of the league table measurement (Koglbauer, 2018), or to revise the marking system. To the best of our knowledge, however, no such changes are currently considered.

Individual schools may decide to make an MFL compulsory up to age 16, for some or all students, but many schools make languages optional at age 14+ (Lanvers, 2017b). The resulting school differences in MFL engagement are marked by social characteristics of schools’ intake.

Although England makes up 85% of the United Kingdom’s population, care must be taken not to confound MFL policy in England with UK-wide ones. In Wales, for instance, there is no statutory requirement for the teaching of an MFL at primary school. Welsh (not considered an MFL) is compulsory in the first 3 years of secondary school and an MFL is encouraged. The aim of the Welsh Government is to achieve ‘Bilingualism plus 1’ by 2020 (Welsh Government, 2015). Similarly, in Northern Ireland, there is no statutory requirement to teach an MFL in primary schools and MFL provision is statutory only at lower secondary school level (pupils aged 11–14). With only three compulsory school years this language policy might be described as weakest.

Scotland also has no statutory requirement for language learning but is committed to implementing the so-called 1+2 approach to language learning, which is based on the European Union’s ‘1+2 model’ (mother tongue plus two additional languages, Scottish Government, 2012). This policy aims to enable every child to learn two languages in addition to their mother tongue, by 2021. In contrast to the other three nations, Scotland also recently experienced an increase in uptake of MFL at the post-compulsory level (age 16+), suggesting that the overall stronger policy commitment to MFL might already impact on student uptake (Doughty & Spöring, 2018: 145).

Across the United Kingdom, fee-paying schools teach significantly more MFL than state schools, as do state schools with predominantly middle class intake (Board & Tinsley, 2014; Lanvers, 2017b). Only 20% of state schools make a language compulsory for all pupils aged 14–16; in the independent sector, the figure is 74%. Within the state sector, the uptake of MFL strongly relates to indicators of levels of social deprivation of a school’s intake: schools with high percentages of students entitled to free school meals (an indicator of degree of social deprivation of a school’s cohort) have low participation rates on MFL study beyond the compulsory phase (Tinsley & Board, 2016).

At university, students from private schools made out 28% of applicants for language study in 2013 (UCAS, 2013), compared to 10% across all subjects, making it the most ‘elitist’ subject to study (by percentage of students from private schools). Social segregation is exacerbated by the overall decline in MFL as a degree choice. Falling enrolments have led to closures of 40% of university language departments and a concentration of university language departments in high-performing ‘selecting’ universities (Lanvers, 2017b), which can demand high entry tariffs (A-level results). Students whose A-level results do not match the high entry tariffs of selecting universities have limited choices to study an MFL at all.

Recent studies have applied a Bourdieuan framework to explain this phenomenon, whereby language skills are dominantly valued (as cultural, social, and economic capital) by privileged minorities (Coffey, 2018; Lanvers, 2017a; Pavlenko, 2003; Taylor & Marsden, 2014). Conversely, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds have fewer encounters with MFL (due to e.g., lack of parental language skills, travel, international contacts, international mobility). They find it harder to believe in the oft-mentioned benefits for language learning that go beyond the immediate utilitarian (e.g., for jobs or travelling) and are encultured into a monolingual mindset or habitus. A Bordieuan interpretation of this social segregation constitutes a critique of the education system’s failure to counter inherent social inequalities; it does not imply any portioning of ‘blame’ of those lacking the ‘multilingual habitus’. The same sociopolitical interpretation applies to any links made between Brexit voting behaviour and social background (Hobolt, 2016). The stark social segregation in MFL uptake is a key characteristic of the UK language learning landscape, and therefore of great relevance to any CDA study on the issue: We will examine if discourses reproduce, or challenge, perceptions of languages as elite capital.

# <A>METHOD

## <B>Conceptual Framework: Critical Discourse Analysis

The article uses Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which assumes a reciprocal interaction between language and communities: Language can create communities but is also constrained by the community in which it is used (Fenton–Smith, 2007). Discourses, as a reflection of the social world (Tabrizi & Behnam, 2014), often reproduce social inequalities, but as a creative tool, discourses may expose or challenge these (van Dijk, 1993). This distinction allows us to investigate to what extent texts might take ‘conforming’ or ‘challenging’ stances toward the social nature of the specific problem discussed. Are they mainly written from the perspective of those who are disadvantaged, and/or those who might be in power to change the social inequality (van Dijk, 1998)? CDA takes an explicit sociopolitical stance: “The purpose of CDA is to analyse opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language” (Wodak, 1995, p. 204).

One aspect of CDA is to scrutinize patterns of access to the discourse in question (van Dijk, 1998:90). Access to scholarly discourse, for instance, is socially skewed, and academic discourses ignoring this might (involuntarily) perpetuate existing inequalities (Van Dijk, 1993:447). This CDA will also consider issues of access to the discourses under examination and ask who the likely or targeted readership might be.

Generally, educational discourses offer rich a scope for CDA (Rogers et al., 2005): CDA assumes that educational discourses may both reflect and reproduce believes, attitudes, and social practices of education, and that links between educational practices and the sociocultural believes and attitudes in which they are embedded (Goldstein, 2004) may be exposed, using CDA. Methodologically and thematically, this study aligns with ideology critiques of discourses on language learning and language policy found in public (e.g., de Jong, 2013) or in social media (Hogan–Brun, 2006; Phyak, 2015): It analyses how different authors discussing MFL learning in the UK may co-construct images of MFL, using the context of Brexit.

## <B>Data

Nexis UK and Google searches were run to establish a text database of English language newspaper articles and website texts, dating 1 June to 30 November 2016, in order to capture the immediate ‘post-Referendum shock’ momentum of this particular public debate. The following Boolean string searches were run:

* Brexit AND language learning
* Brexit AND languages

We selected only UK-based publications (for websites: hosted by institutions with a UK base). All texts are listed in Appendix B. Texts were assigned one of four authorship groups: professional linguists, political, journalistic, or commercial language providers. One affordance of new texts types, such as websites, is the increasing blurring between institutional, professional, and personal stances (Mautner, 2015); therefore, texts written by professional academic linguistics, written either in the name of their institutions, or personal comments, are subsumed under the same text group (professional linguists). CDA investigates relations between authorship, readership, and the issues discussed. Therefore, knowledge about authorship is considered vital, hence social media postings (Facebook, Twitter etc.), where authorship could be ambiguous, were not included. Comments, Opinions and Letters, appearing in UK newspapers, were also excluded: Even if authored by (often unidentified) individuals, they are published by editors with significant control over selection and editing of such contributions, leading to ambiguity as to the precise ownership of the voice represented. Applying these exclusion criteria, an initial list of 45 articles was reduced to a final body of 33. Most texts were written by professional linguists (16), followed by journalists (8), and few from commercial language providers (6) and politicians (3).

## <B>Procedures

This analysis uses Van Dijk’s (2013) framework of journalistic text analysis. This framework offers a wide range of structures for analysis, from microstructures (e.g., semantic and lexical choice) to the global structures macrostructure and superstructure. Macro-semantic, or thematic, analysis (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 272) is especially fruitful when combining textual and contextual information (Van Dijk, 1993), as is the case in this study.

Macrostructures are defined as topics or themes, and superstructures as “overall meaning [. . .] of a text as a whole” (van Dijk, 1980, p.14); in combination, these create a hierarchical topic structure. Thus, this study analyses ‘global structures of discourse’ (van Dijk, 1980:5), which pertain to the meaning or content, rather than the style, of discourse. Analysis of such structures constitutes the dominant starting point in van Dijk’s CDA, as the reader’s cognitive engagement tends to focus on these: We tend to remember what was in a text, not how it was written.

We used an iterative interpretative process to generate a framework of 13 macrothemes, through double-blind close reading. Appendix A offers a frequencies chart of macrothemes in each corpus type. Next, following van Dijk’s framework, the analysts developed a framework of superthemes, which capture the “overall meaning of the text” (van Dijk, 1980, p. 14, see above). The supertheme of a text was derived by evaluating the most salient macrothemes of that text. Appendix B lists the identified supertheme for each text. The analysts found three superthemes, framing the link between Brexit and MFL as either (a) an inherently British problem (indexical), (b) an opportunity (opportunistic), or (c) a prompt to raise specific policy demands or concerns (pragmatic). CDA operates within the triadic relation between author, text, and likely readership, making the audience design aspects of texts important to the analysis. Texts of different superthemes address different audiences; a hierarchy of likely, intended audiences is also given in Table 1. Table 1 lists all macrothemes and superthemes, and shows how superthemes relate to macrothemes.

<INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE>

TABLE 1

Macrothemes and Superthemes

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *A: Macrothemes* | | | |
| Macrothemes | *Code* | *Meaning* | |
| Macrothemes relating to concerns | English used globally2 | Any link between the United Kingdom’s poor language learning, unwillingness or inability and the global spread of English | |
| EU funding | References to the Erasmus(+) or other European funding scheme expressing concerns over future European exchanges for both students and Higher Education | |
| Teachers | Any mention of the notion that many language teachers (at any level) from EU countries might want to/be forced to leave the United Kingdom (exacerbating teacher shortage) | |
| Nonutilitarian rationales | Any references to rationales for teaching/learning languages that go beyond utilitarian (e.g., cognitive benefits, social cohesion, diplomacy, cultural enrichment) | |
| Euroscepticism | Any references to the United Kingdom’s Eurosceptic or Europhobia attitudes | |
| Policy criticism | Any critical references to past language policy | |
| Poor learners | Any (essentialist) references to the British as inherently poor language learners | |
| UK needs | Any references to the United Kingdom’s language needs economic loss due to the language skill deficit | |
| Macrothemes relating to opportunities | Especially now | Any claims that needs for languages will be greater in the light of Brexit (e.g., for Brexit negotiations & new markets) | |
| Positive examples | Any mention of positive examples of language teaching initiatives (e.g., schools, University) | |
| Promoting program | Any references from commercial providers or institutions to their language provisions and programs | |
| World Languages | Any reference to the United Kingdom’s needs to focus on world languages (Chinese, Japanese, Arabic…) | |
| Macrotheme relating to demands | Policy suggestions | Any suggestions or demands for future language policy | |
| *B: Superthemes* | | | |
| Superthemes | *Meaning* | | *Targeted Audience (in Order of Importance)* |
| Indexical | Texts that associate language skills with purported (national) British characteristics, with the following macrothemes: English used globally, Euroscepticism, nonutilitarian benefits, poor learners | | Academics, professional linguists, educators, general public |
| Opportunistic | Texts that frame Brexit as a chance to rejuvenate language learning, with the following macrothemes: Especially now, Promoting program, Positive examples, World Languages | | General public, potential clients, policy makers |
| Pragmatic | Texts that focus on potential Brexit policy-related fallout for MFL, with the following macrothemes: EU funding, teachers, policy suggestions, UK needs | | Policy makers, general public |

*Note.* EU = European Union, MFL = Modern foreign language(s), UK = United Kingdom

Next, both analysts used this framework to code all data; 50% of texts were double-blind coded. The agreement rate was 96.5 %; discrepancies were resolved by consent. Given the relatively small dataset, and to adjust for the varying texts lengths, and varying degrees of thematic repetitions within texts, any theme occurring in one text was counted once only; emphasis on specific themes in some texts is discussed qualitatively. Frequencies of macrothemes in the four corpora are given in Appendix B.

In the following section, we report the results on the macrothemes and superthemes analysis and concludes with a section on how MFL policy in the four nations is politicized in the context of Brexit.

# <A>Results

## <B>Analysis of Macrothemes

Discourses written by professional linguists provide the largest body of texts (n=16), with all but two from academics, often using university websites for dissemination. Five contributors are professors, and seven are academics from Oxford or Cambridge. They thus represent a select body of language professionals, concerned about the future of their own discipline, writing in outlets most likely to be read by fellow academics. These texts highlight advantages of language learning beyond its practical reasons (e.g., cognitive benefits, cultural openness, social cohesion). The following provides example citations for all salient macrothemes occurring in this corpus.

Sarah Colvin, Schröder Professor of German and Head of the Department of German and Dutch, argues that learning languages is key to understanding how people think and plays a major role in social cohesion. (Cambridge University Series, 26 September 2016).

Pro–language arguments are often coupled with institutional self-advertisement of elite Universities, framed as vanguards of MFL in a generally MFL-hostile context:

For centuries, the University of Cambridge has cultivated a deep understanding of and respect for the diverse nations of Europe. It is home to a vibrant, engaged community of students and scholars in the Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages who work hard to advance the study of the languages and cultures of the entire continent. (Cambridge University Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages: Statement, n.d.)

So if you’re concerned about whether you should take a modern languages degree in post-Brexit Britain, then I don’t think you need to worry. Nothing fundamental will change where our courses [at the University of Cambridge] are concerned in the next few years [. . .]. (Simon Kemp: Post-Brexit front page of a French newspaper, 26 June 2016)

In this text corpus, we also found (proportionally) the most instances (11) of the ‘global spread of English’ rationale, as well as the ‘Europhobia’ rationale.

One of the motivations to vote ‘Leave’ in the UK’s recent EU Referendum was (. . .) [the] discomfort (verging on fear) about multiculturalism and multilingualism in ‘Anglophone’ Britain (. . .) we still find ourselves swimming against a culture which all too easily rejects languages other than English. (Jocelyn Wyburd, Cambridge University Series, 13 October 2016)

Defiant stances (e.g., ‘learn languages to defy Brexit’) are occasionally found in these texts. These are, however, different to the utilitarian ‘especially now’ argument commercial providers offer. Texts by academics invite the readership to use MFL not for personal advancement, but as indexical, pro-European resistance to Brexit, thus simultaneously underwriting the Euroscepticism rationale, and relying on a multilingual habitus shared with the reader, who will need no convincing as to wider, non-utilitarian benefits of MFL study:

My advice? Actively and publicly learn a new language. Resist the easy line that “we Brits are no linguists,” and that we are destined to turn ever more inwards post-Brexit. (Andrew Linn, University of Westminster, 26 October 2016)

The eight journalistic texts stem from a variety of UK publications, including two with a focus on professional training, but also two reporting on language promotion events. In the following, we cite quotations for the most frequent macrothemes in this corpus. Newsprint texts emphasize the shortage of language skills, but also seek blame for the MFL crisis, first in language policy:

The statistics [on MFL uptake] are stark when it comes to higher education (. . .) But the problem does not begin here; it begins far earlier in the education system. (Prospect Magazine 27 October 2016)

Second, in the British themselves, indexed as essentially ‘bad’ at languages, and implicitly criticized for their ‘English is enough’ attitude:

As a nation of proud monoglots, we’ve never much minded that foreign language study has been declining in the UK for years—even though our lack of languages is estimated [to cost the economy around £48bn a year](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2013/dec/10/language-skills-deficit-costs-uk-economy). ( . . .) perhaps fewer people may be interested in learning ours [language i.e., English]. (The Guardian, 11 August 2016)

However, journalists also reported on the defiant stance voiced by some politicians: “Plan now to avoid post-Brexit languages crisis, say MPs” (BBC news 17 October 2016), and several articles refer to the positive outcome of the British Council commissioned poll on the overall positive attitudes to language learning (e.g., Huffington Post 17 November 2016). Overall, however, the dominant themes evoked in this text corpus are likely to resonate with those who are already convinced of the MFL arguments. They do not offer themes that might entice those with a monolingual habitus to consider the benefits of MFL, such as learning for instrumental benefits, fostering a ‘can do’ attitude for those despondent by poor learner achievement, or challenging the belief in the perceived dominance of English as lingua franca. Thus, journalistic texts tend not to challenge the social segregation in MFL.

Next, six texts from very different commercial companies were found. Commercial language providers stand out as providing very defiant and positive stances (“the importance of language learning has been given new life [by Brexit]”; Adaptabletravel, 16 November 2016), with companies keen to find new niches for language learning in the United Kingdom, as the following citations demonstrate:

(. . .) the very act of leaving the EU requires language proficiency with the need to use English interpreters and translators able to communicate these complex debates in and out of different languages. (Adaptabletravel, 16 November 2016)

(. . .) some experts expect that, while some major European languages may become less useful for employment and business opportunities with European countries, it is likely that other foreign languages will strive. (The Spanish Academy, 16 July 2016)

Finally, in the small corpus of texts by politicians, the following macrothemes were most frequent: demands on (new) policy, safeguarding the countries’ economic and political language needs, preventing negative Brexit fallouts, such as a worsening teaching shortage, or withdrawal from the Erasmus program. This corpus also has a few macrothemes of a promotional nature, in the form of the demand to improve language policies to “ensure the UK produces sufficient linguists to meet its future requirements as a leader in global free trade” (APPG on ML, 2016). These texts frame languages mainly as social and economic capital, do not evoke the ‘English is enough’ rationale, and makes no reference to social segregation in language learning. Rather than attributing blame to the crisis, they make political demands (e.g., APPG on ML, 2016).

In sum, politicians focus on resource- and finance-related concerns. Speculations about the Brexit-related fallouts for MFL feature mostly in texts by journalists and commercial providers. In texts by academics, the benefits of languages beyond any utilitarian advantage, and the need for a defiant stance, are foregrounded, but about 25% of texts, mostly from the academic corpus, texts also tend to blame the British population for the MFL crisis.

## <B>Superthemes, Readership, and Authorship

This section reports on the relation between thematic patterns, text authorship, and intended readership, paying attention to partisan interests of institutions or authors, and evocations of social markers of language learning (see Table 1). Both researchers independently allocated one of three superthemes to each of the 33 texts, resolving discrepancies by mutual consent (see Appendix B).1

The supertheme labelled *indexical*, for its tendency to associate language skills indexically with purported (national) characteristics, is presented first. Texts with this supertheme (seven in total) tend to share the following macrothemes: English used globally, Euroscepticism, and a focus on nonutilitarian benefits. Two citations, representing the two corpora where they occurred, serve to illustrate the indexical nature of texts:

To say ‘This is England, we speak English’ has always been historically ignorant. What better way to show openness to the world, hope for the future, and solidarity with the people of an international Britain, than to learn to speak, listen, and communicate with a wider world? (John Gallagher, Cambridge University Series, 1 November 2016)

Only one journalistic text also linked disinterest in languages directly to Euroscepticism:

Language learning, never our national strongpoint, is in an unprecedented crisis. Is this a symptom of Britain retreating into its shell, as evidenced by its vote to “Leave” the European Union on 23rd June? (Prospect Magazine 27 October 2016)

The indexical supertheme is mostly found in texts by academics (6 out of 17 texts). Elite institutions, foremost Oxbridge, are indexed as safe havens of language study, where language study, and the many benefits of MFL, beyond the utilitarian, are taken as read. The texts themselves appear on university websites or in broadsheet papers, with authors expressing concern over the future of their discipline. Thus, texts with indexical superthemes address a likeminded, well-educated readership. Those framed as possessing a monolingual habitus tend to be blamed rather than encouraged to consider MFL engagement. Thus, in all respects (authorship, likely readership, and themes covered), these texts mirror rather than challenge the social segregation in language learning in the UK.

Next, texts with an *opportunistic* supertheme (14 in total), framing Brexit as a chance to rejuvenate the state of MFL in the UK, are described (e.g., “[Languages] will become a valuable resource for UK firms after Brexit”,Rosetta Stone 19 June 2016)*.* Texts of this supertheme share the following macrothemes: (a) promoting their own language learning opportunities, (b) emphasizing the need to learn different languages in addition to European ones, and (c) using positive examples of language learning in the United Kingdom. These texts do not attribute blame for poor learning—it makes little commercial sense to alienate potential clients by undermining their self-efficacy. This supertheme is found in all texts by commercial language learning providers and most journalistic texts (five out of eight). Place of publication and themes evoked do not suggest particular social bias in reader- or authorship. Language learners, for their part, are given an empowering ‘can do’ message, emphasizing self-promotional, utilitarian aspects of language study. Learners currently underrepresented in MFL engagement can particularly identify with this aspect. Thus, texts with this supertheme address a potential readership with a perceived monolingual habitus and offer avenues to challenge the social segregation in MFL.

Finally, 12 texts were identified as having a *pragmatic* supertheme, with these macrothemes: economic and political needs for languages, safeguarding language learning opportunities (Erasmus, MFL teachers from the EU), and policy suggestions. All politicians, addressing fellow politicians and policy advisers, as well as two journalistic adopted this supertheme. Any agency over the themes and demands made here lie with a small political elite, rather than with language learners themselves. In addition, these texts appear in outlets likely to be read by a similarly small elite of policy influencers (with the exception of one appearing in *Express*). Overall, these texts neither challenge or reproduce social segregations in MFL study.

In sum, we found a common thread running through *indexical* texts in that they interpret Brexit as evidence for a purported British attitude toward MFL and Europhobia. In all three respects relevant to CDA analysis (i.e., topics covered, authorship, and likely readership), such texts speak to those who already have a multilingual habitus and perpetuate rather than challenge social segregation in MFL. In contrast, texts framing the link between Brexit and MFL as an opportunity harbour the potential to address those currently in a monolingual habitus in all three respects and thus challenge the existing social segregation.

## <B>Politicizing MFL for National Interests

In this section, we report on how MFL in the four UK nations are discussed in the texts and ask if similar frames are used for specific national interests. The texts were coded for references to one of the nations; all such instances are reported here.

We recall that Scotland and Wales have committed to the European aim of 1+2 (mother tongue plus competency in two other languages); policies which are generally applauded in our text corpora. Welsh media texts (Welsh Western Mail, BBC Wales, see Appendix B) praise promotional MFL efforts (e.g., “Language scheme [to encourage MFL take-up, authors] extended in Wales,” BBC Wales 8 October) in the purportedly linguaphobe context of Brexit. MFL in Wales and Scotland are singled out as Europhile, despite the fact that one nation (Scotland) voted overwhelmingly to remain, while the other (Wales) voted ‘Leave’ like England.

Wales is a proudly bilingual nation which, through its [Global Futures strategy](http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/global-futures-a-plan-to-improve-and-promote-modern-foreign-languages-in-wales/?lang=en) is dedicated to promoting language learning and greater cross-cultural understanding. Scotland, meanwhile, has adopted the EU-wide goal of mastery of Mother Tongue plus two languages (. . .). No such goals exist for the UK as a whole or for England. (Wyburd, University of Cambridge website, Brexit and Languages Series, 13 October 2016)

The Scottish Government is to be applauded for adopting the EU’s policy that everyone should speak their mother tongue plus two other languages (. . .). (Ayres–Bennett University of Cambridge website, Brexit and Languages Series, 19 October 2016)

The author thus suggests the existence of a causal link between language policy and Europhilia. However, in the case of Scotland, other political agendas, such as devolution or greater independence from the London government might equally explain their different take on MFL policy:

[The Scottish Nationalist Party seeks] a future for Scotland as a Scandinavian-type welfare state with an egalitarian society, and concomitantly, has a tradition of being more EU friendly than the other UK nations. (Bieri, 2014, p. 3)

Viewed in this light, the relatively strong Scottish commitment to MFL may serve as a distancing tool to central UK politics, rather than, for instance, signalling stronger intrinsic interest in MFL than in other nations. No references were made to Northern Ireland in the corpus.

In sum, the few examples the corpus gives us on framing particular nations as linguaphobe, linguaphile, Europhile, and so forth, exemplify how authors attempt to essentialize nations to support their indexical interpretations of the MLF problem. All texts with references to nations were classified indexical. Again, we see Kramsch’s assertion in action.

# <A>Discussion

This text analysis has demonstrated disparate ways in which Brexit politicized discussions of MLF in the United Kingdom. We argued that some authors framed the British as essentially incapable of language learning, while others were using the Brexit context to promote language learning, often with a degree of self-interest. It would be fallacious to condemn politicization of language learning in and of itself: All language policy (Spolsky, 2004), and indeed all education policy (Freire, 1972) is inherently political; *politicization* per se should not carry a disparaging undertone (Byram, 2002). However, similar to 9/11 in the United States (Kramsch, 2005), Brexit has *heightened* this political dimension, and it is pertinent to ask how such politicization might benefit or harm language learning in a post-Brexit United Kingdom.

Some texts discussing Brexit and language learning in the United Kingdom posit a logical link between xenophobia and unwillingness to learn languages. We found little evidence to uphold this claim. Xenophobia might well be expressed as linguaphobia in some contexts, but it should not be considered a *necessary* condition for negative attitudes to foreign languages. Kubota (2016), describing attitudes of L1 Japanese learners toward English, has demonstrated how MFL learning and use may occur in xenophobic contexts, where learners are driven by utilitarian rationales rather than to develop cross-cultural understanding and communication. Of course, utilitarian rationales for language learning are harder to come by if you already speak the language carrying the most utilitarian cachet, and it may be little surprising that utilitarian-based incentives to boost language learning in the United Kingdom tend to have little effect overall (Lanvers, 2017b). Links between xenophobia and language learning may well exist in many contexts—indeed, the current U.S. situation may exemplify this (see Introduction)—but in the current UK Brexit context (and undoubtedly in other contexts), it is hard to substantiate such links.

Nonetheless, soon after the Brexit vote, UK stakeholders increasingly voiced their opinion that Euroscepticism is linked to the United Kingdom’s poor language learning records, and/or that the British are inherently ‘incapable’ of language learning. We identified such texts as having an indexical supertheme. This rationale disregards evidence supporting an alternative explanation of the United Kingdom’s poor language learning record, namely poor MFL policy and practice (Jones & Doughty, 2015; Milton & Meara, 1998; Mitchell, 2010). Further circumstantial evidence also leads to question the Euroscepticism rationale: The logic of this argument would predict some sort of correlation, at a national level, between Europhobia/xenophobia, and interest in language learning. No such correlation can be observed, neither in the four nations of the United Kingdom, nor EU-wide. Nonetheless, this rationale occurred relatively frequently in our data, mostly propagated by an elite already possessing the language *habitus* –in a Bordieuan sense–, addressing fellow linguists, and blaming those without this *habitus*. The most likely readership of texts with this rationale are professional linguists, not those disengaged from language learning. Nonetheless, this discourse harbours the danger of further undermining already poor learner self-efficacy, associated with disadvantaged backgrounds (Graham & Santos, 2015). Unwittingly or not, such discourse reproduces the social segregation in MFL study, in all three CDA dimensions (authorship, readership, content). Such indexing of MFL is not a new phenomenon (Rampton, 1999), but this study has shown how linguists as propagators of this rationale may promulgate social segregations in language learning and discourage rather than encourage those currently disengaged from MFL.

In contrast, texts with an opportunistic supertheme carry empowering messages to those currently disengaged from MFL: a ‘can do’ attitude, and the notion that Brexit offers opportunities for (even better) utilitarian exploit of any language skills one might possess (in the tone of *Get your Brexit negotiation language skills with us* ’). Although the optimistic overtone somewhat downplays the lack of clarity regarding MFL in a post–Brexit United Kingdom (Kelly, 2018), texts with this supertheme offer avenues to challenge the language crisis, and social segregation within it, in all three CDA respects: authorship, intended readership, and content.

Finally, texts with a pragmatic supertheme restrict themselves to making factual policy demands that would not worsen, and conceivably improve, language learning. If written for a general audience, rather than for (and written by) a small elite of politicians and policy makers, such texts could also challenge social segregation in language learning, in that they demand to defend or improve learner conditions for all.

<A>CONCLUSION

The limitations of this study need to be stressed: The body of texts is relatively small, since we applied strict time and text type boundaries (see Methods). The critique that some texts ‘speak to the converted’ also needs to be qualified: Some authors (e.g., professional linguists) may well intend to address the likeminded in an effort to propagate arguments against linguaphobia via this channel. As Brexit policies become more concrete, public discourses on the link between MFL and Brexit relations might change, and perhaps adapt more to post-Brexit political and linguistic demands. Text types omitted from this analysis, especially from social media, might also yield different results. Future studies might investigate if the changing nature of such discourses, in different texts types, offers more opportunistic stances, and challenges to the social segregation in MFL.

However, this study posits that it matters how we discuss languages for a post-Brexit United Kingdom, and this argument is corroborated by a recent survey on languages in England (Tinsley & Dolezal, 2018). The survey reports that 34% of secondary schools report that Brexit further worsened learner attitudes to language learning, predominantly in schools that perform below average and that have a high percentage of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The survey also underscores how Brexit has exacerbated the difficulty of schools in recruiting MFL teachers, as the vast majority of schools employ EU citizens to teach languages. The Brexit-induced deterioration of attitudes to MFL underscores that some form of link between Euroscepticism and linguaphobia has settled in students’ minds. It is high time to recall, as Jenkins (2018) does, that, quite to the contrary, Britain needs to improve their language skills, as the nations’ negotiation skills with other nations gain further importance. Furthermore, English monolinguals will increasingly be marginalized in English lingua franca (ELF) communications. The United Kingdom could ill-afford ELF-based miscommunication in a ‘post-divorce’ EU.

For the United Kingdom, the challenge is to engage *all* stakeholders. Therefore, we need to engage learners themselves, in discussions about language learning that focus on such utilitarian incentives for MFL, but also on developing more holistic types of motivation in learners, a principle applicable to all MFL learning. Examples of such holistic approaches to incentivize learners exist (e.g., MEITS; Lanvers et al, 2016; Routes into Languages). They lend themselves to application particularly to contexts where utilitarian incentives are rather poor, such as in Anglophone contexts, and focus on combatting ‘othering’ and ‘erasure’ of languages other than English in the public sphere. All target languages other than English have been described ‘in the shadow of English’ (Dörnyei & Al–Hoorie, 2017), with the effect that in Anglophone settings, motivation for *any* foreign language is jeopardized. One type of motivation for English L1 language learners might be to ‘go against the grain’ of the dominant culture, which they perceive as linguaphobe and/or xenophobe (Lanvers 2016; Thompson, 2017b). Such motivation is likely to remain niche, but in this Brexit/Trumpian era, more people from Anglophone contexts might be incentivized to use languages as a way to distance themselves from political ideologies with which they disagree, thus purposefully indexing languages as ‘anti-establishment.’ In fact, some indexical texts in our corpus evoke this motivation directly, but there is currently little evidence that this stance is gaining momentum. For now, one of the responsibilities of language educators should be to disentangle anti–diversity and ‘othering’ rhetoric, prevalent in some media outlets, from language learning. As Thomas (2017) states, those teaching languages in the United Kingdom and the United States must impress upon their students that “not all Muslims are terrorists, not all Mexicans are rapists,” and continue to foster cross-cultural experiences for students.

We should not criticize politicization of language learning per se: Simply denying the inherent political dimension of language policy would constitute ideological obfuscation. Instead, language educators and academic linguists might make it their business to ask *how* languages are politicized, and how this might help or hinder language learning. Given that the UK government is committed to evidence-based policy making (What works, 2013), and that most UK nations declare themselves committed to increasing language uptake (see *MFL policy* above, for England, also: MFL pedagogy review, 2018), it is reasonable to make two demands of such politicization: that it is evidence-based, and that it fosters rather than hinders language learning. This would include engaging those better who currently do not share the *habitus* of languages. In our corpus, most texts, except those with a pragmatic superstructure, fall short on the first demand. Regarding the second demand, our analysis has demonstrated that some current politicization of MFL in the United Kingdom (and the United States, see *Introduction*) shows the opposite characteristics. In our corpus, texts with an opportunistic superstructure might offer genuine new avenues to engage more students in language learning (see also British Council, 2017), while texts with an indexical superstructure harbor the danger of alienating those currently disengaged from language learning further. The latter texts tend to fall short on both demands.

In this study, the stark social segregation in language learning constitutes a very UK-specific challenge to language learning; our analysis has demonstrated that discourses of the topic may either offer opportunities to combat this segregation or reinforce it. Other CDA studies investigating similar discourses may find that their social challenges are somewhat different. Using the CDA principles of triadic analysis (authorship/ readership/ content), future studies may ask if their texts are written to conform to, or challenge, social inequality inherent to their specific problem.

# <A>NOTes

1. One text, sharing opportunistic and indexical features to similar amount, was allocated both superthemes, see Appendix B.

2. In line with Jenkins (2018), we adopt the term ‘English used globally’ rather than ‘global English’, as there is no such variety.

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APPENDIX A

Macrothemes in the Four Corpora

# Appendix B

The Corpora

1.1: Texts by Journalists (n=8)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Institution/individual/press source and headline**  **website URL if applicable** | **Sourced via** | **Nation/**  **state** | **2016 date** | **Word count** | **Supertheme** |
| Express: Geoff Ho: Learning languages could make for a smoother Brexit | Nexis UK | UK | 2 Oct | 245 | P |
| Western Mail: Students in schools to boost learning of languages | Nexis UK | Wales | 12 Oct | 534 | O |
| The Guardian: Jo Griffin: “Hold your tongues”: why language learners fear a vote for Brexit | Nexis UK | UK | 11 Aug | 785 | P |
| Prospect magazine: The death of modern foreign languages | Nexis UK | UK | 27 Oct | 2576 | I |
| BBC : Plan now to avoid post-Brexit languages crisis, say MPs  www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-37659338 | website | UK | 17 Oct | 640 | O |
| Training Journal: Will language certification be affected by Brexit?  www.trainingjournal.com/blog/will-language-certification-be-affected-brexit | website | UK | 26 Aug | 630 | O |
| BBC Wales: Brexit: Scheme extended to encourage foreign langue take-up  www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-37595308 | website | Wales | 8 Oct | 105 | O |
| Huffington Post UK: Now more than ever  http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/vicky-gough/now-more-than-ever-why-th\_b\_13006772.html | website | UK | 17 Nov | 364 | O |

1.2: Texts by Commercial Provider (n=6)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Institution/individual/press source and headline**  **website url if applicable** | **Sourced via** | **Nation/**  **state** | **2016 date** | **Word count** | **Supertheme** |
| Cactus: Brexit: Britons need languages more than ever  www.cactuslanguagetraining.com/brexit-britons-need-languages-ever/ | website | UK | 24 June | 864 | O |
| Rosetta Stone: Why businesses need more languages | Nexis UK | UK | 19 July | 601 | O |
| Adaptabletravel: How will Brexit affect language learning?  https://www.adaptabletravel.co.uk/latest-news/353/how-will-brexit-affect-language-learning-and-the-role-of-english | website | UK | 15 Nov | 602 | O |
| The Spanish Academy: Drew Rogers: Will Brexit affect language learning in Great Britain?  www.thespanishacademy.co.uk/will-brexit-affect-language-learning-great-britain/ | website | UK | 16 July | 400 | O |
| BT: Studying foreign languages gains importance post Brexit, survey suggests  home.bt.com/news/uk-news/studying-foreign-languages-gains-importance-post-brexit-survey-suggests-11364112969419 | website | UK | 16 Nov | 377 | O |
| Priority Translation: Brexit: a bleak outlook?  www.priorytranslations.co.uk/single-post/2016/06/03/Brexit-%E2%80%93-a-bleak-outlook-for-foreign-languages-in-the-UK | website | UK | 13 June | 908 | O |

1. 3: Texts by Politicians (n=3)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Institution/individual/press source and headline**  **website url if applicable** | **Sourced via** | **Nation/**  **state** | **2016 date** | **Word count** | **Super-theme** |
| APPG on ML: MPs and Peers in plea for protecting language skills in Brexit negotiations  brexitlanguagesappgmfl.weebly.com/uploads/9/2/0/9/92099188/appgmfl-brexitlanguages-release17oct.doc | Website | UK | 10 Oct | 741 | P |
| APPG on ML: Brexit and next steps for university sector  universityappg.co.uk/meetings/brexit-and-next-steps-university-sector | website | UK | 17 Oct | 1161 | P |
| Baroness Coussins: House of Lords debate | Nexis UK | UK | 14 July | 111 | P |

1.4: Texts by Professional Language Providers and Professional Linguists (Academics) (n=16)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Institution/individual/press source and headline website url if applicable** | **Sourced via** | **Nation/**  **state** | **2016 date** | **Word count** | **Super-theme** |
| I newspaper: Pardon our French;  there's rarely been a better time to learn a foreign tongue | Nexis UK | UK | 27 Oct | 680 | I/O |
| Alec Hunter Academy: Students try to revive language learning (Braintree, England) | Nexis UK | England | 8 July | 269 | P |
| Cambridge University Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages: Statement from the Board of the Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages  www.mml.cam.ac.uk/ | website | England |  | 283 | O |
| Speak to the Future: Brexit needs languages  www.speaktothefuture.org/brexit-needs-languages-s2f-statement/ | website | UK | 19 Oct | 426 | O |
| Schools weekly: Nicky Morgan: Brexit could harm pupils’ language-learning opportunities  www.schoolsweek.co.uk/nicky-morgan-brexit-could-harm-pupils-language-learning-opportunities/ | website | UK | 30 March | 591 | P |
| University of Cambridge Opinion Series: Brexit and the importance of languages  www.cam.ac.uk/news/opinion-brexit-and-the-importance-of-languages-for-britain  1: Sarah Colvin: There are concepts in other languages…  2: Heather Inwood: The UK desperately needs more..  3: Jocelyn Wyburd: Some pupils have already announced…  4: Wendy Ayres-Bennet: Languages are central…  5: John Gallagher: To say: This is England… | website | England | 1: 26 Sep  2: 7 Oct  3: 13 Oct  4:19 Oct  5: 1 Nov | 1: 220  2:596  3: 611  4:529  5: 635 | I  I  I  P  I |
| University of Oxford Opinion Piece  Katrin Kohl: Modern Languages in the UK – all change after the EU Referendum?  http://www.ox.ac.uk/news-and-events/oxford-and-brexit/brexit-analysis/modern-languages-uk | website | England | 13-Oct | 1254 | P |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Association of School and College leaders: Brexit must not mean full blown languages crisis  www.ascl.org.uk/news-and-views/news\_news-detail.brexit-must-not-mean-full-blown-languages-crisis.html | website | UK | 17 Oct | 120 | P |
| Times Educational Supplement: Heather Martin: Don’t leave languages behind when Britain leaves the EU | Nexis UK | UK | 5 Aug | 681 | I |
| Association for Language Learning: Language skills ‘more vital than ever’  www.all-languages.org.uk/news/language-skills-are-more-vital-than-ever/ | website | UK | 14-18 Nov | 296 | P |
| SCILT: SCILT response to Brexit and languages  www.scilt.org.uk/News/NewsView/tabid/1311/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/9684/SCILT-response-to-Brexit-and-Languages.aspx | website | Scotland | 18 Oct | 280 | P |
| Andrew Linn University of Westminster: No wonder Theresa May won’t speak French – our languages education is a disaster  inews.co.uk/opinion/no-wonder-theresa-may-wont-speak-french-languages-education-disaster/ | website | England | 26 Oct | 766 | P |

*General notes*. Legend for superthemes: I= Indexical, O=Opportunistic, P=Pragmatic