

Report on lesser-taught modern languages in Scotland and recommendations for reintroducing Russian to Scotland's schools. Mary Bailes, University of Glasgow

1. Background. What is the current status of minority modern languages in Scotland's schools?

- Primary education
- Secondary education
- Where is Russian currently taught?
- School qualifications

2. Language teaching in Scotland: recent developments

- The 1 + 2 initiative and recommendations of the Modern Languages Working Group
- The Curriculum for Excellence

3. What is being done to encourage learning of other lesser-taught languages in Scotland?

- Mandarin, Italian, German
- Teaching
- Language assistantships
- *Support from Cultural Organisations, Embassies, Foreign Ministries*
- Online resources.
 - national IT resources: Glow, Scholar, SCILT websites;
 - other resources: China Club HQ, The Voyage and Think German

4. Conclusion

1. Background. What is the current status of minority modern languages in Scotland's schools?

Primary education.

Scotland's National Centre for Languages, SCILT, carried out surveys of modern languages provision in state-funded schools across the country in 2007 and 2011. The 2011 survey of primary schools¹ showed that few currently provide modern languages tuition from P1 (13% of respondents). However, all local authorities provide language tuition in P6 in the majority or, in some cases, all of their schools. This represents a considerable increase in language teaching in Scotland's primary schools since the 2007 survey. French is by far the most widely taught modern language at P6 and P7, taken by 90.1% of pupils, followed by German (13.9%), Spanish (6.2%), and Gaelic (3.5%). Languages taken by fewer than 2% of pupils were Italian, Mandarin, Urdu and Hebrew. Russian was not taught in any of the responding schools.

The survey shows provision of languages at primary level is highly variable, not only with regard to which languages are taught (according to the survey, Urdu

¹ The survey had a response rate of 29% of the total number of state-funded primary schools in Scotland,

was only taught in Edinburgh, while Mandarin only in the East Ayrshire, Fife and North Ayrshire local authority areas. However, it should be noted we know from the Confucius initiative that Mandarin is also taught elsewhere in Scotland; see section 3 below), but also to the availability of languages in general: some respondents' schools did not offer any modern languages at all on the curriculum, while others offered more than one.

The majority of primary schools teaching modern languages offer lessons once a week (78% of respondents for P6 and 76% for P7). 63% stated they teach language as a stand-alone subject, while 33% in P6 and 32% in P7 link languages to topics.

Secondary education

The SCILT secondary schools languages survey 2011² looked at which modern languages are available to students in S4. Whether languages are optional or compulsory, the availability of different languages and the take-up figures for modern languages in general are highly variable across schools.

French is dominant, available in 93% of cases, followed by German (52%). Availability of both French and German has declined since the 2007 survey, while Spanish availability has increased from 39% to 47%. Of the lesser-taught languages, availability of Italian and Urdu have declined from 10% to 4% and from 8% to 2% respectively, while availability of Mandarin has increased from 1% to 2%. Russian provision appears to have remained stable, but it represents the least available language, at 1%.³

The survey showed that over the preceding three years modern languages uptake overall in secondary schools had either remained static (56% of respondents) or declined (31%).

Almost half the responding schools make modern languages compulsory until the end of S4, a drop from 61% in 2007. However, in 39% of schools modern languages are non-compulsory from the end of S2. This situation is expected to change with the full implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE; see section 2 below) nationwide, which will require the majority of pupils to study a language until the end of S3. The CfE will make languages optional from S4. The SCILT survey noted respondents' concerns that the CfE will, therefore, have an adverse effect on language teaching in a number of secondary schools by removing the quasi-compulsory status of modern languages in those institutions. The structure of the CfE is also expected to reduce opportunities for pupils to study a number of different languages.

² The secondary schools survey had a proportionally higher response rate than the primary schools survey, at 49% of the total number of state-funded secondary schools in Scotland.

³ The 1% figure is in fact rather misleading; as further investigation by SRF revealed none of the survey respondents appeared to currently teach Russian.

A large majority of SCILT's survey respondents commented on factors influencing the availability of modern languages in their schools. The most commonly cited factors positively influencing provision related to learning experience, curriculum issues and staff. Respondents highlighted motivation and enjoyment by pupils and support from other departments, senior management and parents. Motivation and enjoyment was related to good teaching and pupils having access to a choice of languages on offer.

The most commonly cited factors negatively influencing provision related to perceptions of the subject ('useless' or 'difficult') and timetabling issues. Making modern languages non-compulsory was cited as a reason for decreasing or static numbers by half of respondents.

In the majority of secondary schools languages are taught three times a week or more.

In conclusion, the two surveys conducted by SCILT suggest:

- that lesser taught modern languages have a valuable place in Scotland's schools
- that when promoting the introduction of Russian, we should continue to stress pupil enjoyment, the positive benefits of children having a range of languages to choose from, and the presence of good, well-qualified teachers in Scotland. We need to continue to tackle the misconception that it is a difficult language for children to learn.

Where is Russian currently taught?

Currently, Russian is taught as part of the curriculum in the state-funded Peterhead Academy and is taught as a non-timetabled subject at the state-funded Fortrose Academy. It is also offered by John Ogilvie High School in Hamilton, South Lanarkshire, according to the school's website⁴. Independent secondary schools occasionally offer Russian among their modern languages at senior level but none has Russian on the curriculum and (in comparison to the independent sector elsewhere in the UK) provision is generally scant.⁵

School qualifications

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) at the time of writing offers at least some national qualifications in the following modern languages: Cantonese, French, German, Italian, Mandarin (Simplified and Traditional), Russian, Spanish and Urdu. Russian has been available at the upper levels of national qualifications, from Access 3 to Advanced Higher. However, the Advanced Higher in Russian was discontinued in 2008 and Standard Grade examinations in

⁴ <http://www.johnogilvie.s-lanark.sch.uk>

⁵ School websites were accessed via the Scottish Council of Independent Schools, www.scis.org.uk

2010. Despite strong opposition⁶, the SQA intends to eliminate Russian national qualifications entirely from 2015, citing low levels of uptake.

For comparative purposes the following figures from the SQA's Languages Progress Report, give the total number of entrants for qualifications in the lesser-taught languages at all levels from Access 3 (where available) to Advanced Higher, for the past three years⁷

(http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/Languages_progress_report_final.pdf)

Italian: 2899

Cantonese: 0

Mandarin: 103 (total is for both Simplified and Traditional)

Urdu: 503

Russian: 73

The figures above show there is a correlation in qualifications take-up and availability of teaching as shown the 2011 SCILT report, with the minority languages which are taught more widely (Italian, Urdu) also having greater qualifications take-up. Russian is clearly not in a strong position, but the popularity of initiatives such as Russian clubs and taster classes can be used to support the argument that it is lack of availability and not lack of enthusiasm on school pupils' part that causes low take-up. Furthermore, in England and Wales, A-Level examination entry numbers showed an *increase* in pupils taking Russian in 2012 compared to the previous year.⁸ Entries for Russian A-levels have doubled in the past decade and AS levels have also risen by a considerable number.⁹

Scottish baccalaureates in languages, sciences, expressive arts and social sciences were introduced in August 2010. Initially offered by only 13 schools, the TES reported that in 2011 37 schools were seeking to offer the languages baccalaureate¹⁰. At the time of writing the eligible subjects are Cantonese,

⁶ The campaign was led by the Scotland Russia Forum, see <http://www.scotlandrussiaforum.org/keepschoolexams.html>

⁷ Mandarin is examined up to Intermediate 2; there were no exams before 2008. Urdu is examined only at Standard Grade and Higher. Cantonese was introduced in 2009. Russian Advanced Higher ceased in 2008; there was no 2009 exam.

⁸ Entries for Polish, Japanese, Mandarin and Arabic also rose, while French, German and Spanish all fell. 'A-level foreign languages decline alarms examiners', *The Guardian*, 16 August 2012. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2012/aug/16/alevel-foreign-languages-decline>

⁹ According to figures from the Joint Council for Qualifications, A-level entries in 2012 were 1,008 compared to 493 in 2002, and AS level entries were 764 compared to 441 in 2002.

¹⁰ 'Relevance is the key to a revival of modern languages', Times Educational Supplement Scotland online, 15th March 2011. <http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6074425>

Classical Greek, Gaelic, German, French, Italian, Latin, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish, Urdu. The removal of qualifications in Russian and Classical Greek by the SQA will affect this recently introduced programme, reducing the options available to potential students.

From 2015, the only remaining Scottish national qualification on offer involving Russian will be the Russian Unit of the Modern Languages for Work Purposes. Russian is one of ten languages on offer as part of a suite of units which comprise the qualification at Access 3, Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher. A total of 40 hours is spent on each unit.¹¹

It is likely that the loss of SQA qualifications will have a profound effect on numbers of pupils learning Russian. There are many arguments against losing Russian from Scotland's schools, including the following:

- Failing to equip Scotland's workforce to deal with one of the world's most important emerging economies will be harmful to the country's economic prospects. A recent CBI report highlights the languages skills gap in the UK. Companies need employees with linguistic and cultural awareness in order to compete in the global marketplace, however these needs are not currently being met in Britain, which has the worst foreign language proficiency in Europe. According to this report, Russian is one of the top ten foreign languages rated as useful to UK organizations.¹²
- While English is the global language of commerce, it is much less widely spoken in Russian-speaking countries than in the countries of, for example, Western Europe and Scandinavia. Therefore it may be argued language skills in Russian are equally and in some cases more valuable to international business than French, German etc.
- Having the choice of a range of languages is highlighted by SCILT, the Working Group and others as an important factor in pupils' take-up of modern languages. It stands to reason that the more languages that are available, the more likely pupils are to take one or more when it comes to choosing optional subjects.
- The popularity of extra-curricular courses including the clubs and taster courses run by the Scotland Russia Forum, and undergraduate courses in Russian, shows that pupils enjoy learning Russian, do not find it to be particularly difficult and that there is demand for the subject among young people.
- None of the Slavonic languages of Eastern Europe are represented in the curriculum and Russian is spoken widely in Eastern Europe and many other countries as a lingua franca. It also provides an excellent basis for learning other Slavonic languages such as Polish and Czech, the teaching of which Glasgow University in particular currently excels.
- Removing Scottish qualifications will affect state school pupils more than independent school pupils, as maintained schools are less likely to offer other exams like GCSEs and A-levels.

¹¹ <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/38219.html>

¹² CBI Education and Skills Survey 2012, p55-57

2. Language teaching in Scotland: recent developments

The 1 + 2 Initiative and Modern Languages Working Group.

In line with a 2011 manifesto commitment, the Scottish Government is to introduce over two parliaments the model recommended by the European Union for language teaching, such that every child is able to learn his/her mother tongue and two further languages, referred to as the 1+2 model.

A Modern Languages Working Group was set up in September 2011 to consider the best way to implement the 1 + 2 model of language education. The Group's report of May 2012¹³ focused on practices and initiatives that can promote 1+2 language learning in Scotland's schools. The report's findings have been broadly accepted by the Scottish Government.¹⁴ It stresses the benefits of modern languages for young learners (confidence, cultural awareness, etc.) and also the importance of languages to the national economy, noting the significance of the BRIC countries, where English is not always widely spoken (p10).

Considering the current situation in Scottish schools, the Working Group praises innovative teaching practices in Scottish schools (with reference to the SCILT 2011 Modern Languages Excellence Report) but also highlights the variability in language provision and the worrying decline in take-up of all languages, with the exception of Spanish.

The Working Group recommends:

- 1) Children should have access to a second language (L2) from the first year of primary school and access to L3 from no later than P5;
- 2) Local authorities are responsible for determining which languages are available to pupils in their area; the Working Group strongly recommends this take account of the languages of the strong economies of the future and community languages of schools' catchment as well as modern European languages and Gaelic;
- 3) The Scottish Government should fund a number of pilot projects in 2012-2013 on introducing access to language learning in primary schools from Primary 1 on a phased basis from 2013-14;
- 4) Central support for the curriculum and teaching should be provided by SCILT and Education Scotland;
- 5) Local authorities should assist schools with organizational and curricular issues, and this may include teaching support from appropriately skilled native

¹³ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/05/3670>

¹⁴ *The Scottish Government's Response to the Report of the Languages Working Group*, November 2012.

or near-native speakers, either from outside Scotland or living in local communities. However, languages must be fully integrated into the school's curriculum and not seen as an 'add-on'.

The report addresses the transition from primary to secondary education. It is very important that there is a proper articulation in place for pupils to continue the progress they have made at primary school.

Here, the report distinguishes between strategies for L2 and L3. Progression and continuity are particularly stressed for L2, whereas a more flexible approach is taken to L3:

'The Working Group expects young people to continue with some form of language study in the L2 language up to the end of the broad general education, i.e. to the end of S3. In terms of the L3 language, a number of approaches are possible besides a full subject option. For example, during the broad general education a new language could be taken forward through a carefully planned interdisciplinary approach, or through an elective or enrichment activity... The L3 language could thereafter be studied for certification purposes within the senior phase, based on learner choice. Such certification need not mean a full SQA course' (p20).

Language learning at senior level should be linked to global citizenship, employability and the world of work, working with local businesses and the community where appropriate (p24).

The report stresses gaining knowledge of other cultures as well as language learning as part of the curriculum.

Other recommendations the Working Group makes for languages teaching in Scotland's schools include: interdisciplinary working, making sure references to the language and culture of the link country are constantly on display, schools making more use of teachers with dual languages, partnership arrangements across schools and peripatetic language support. Materials should be inspiring and Education Scotland should provide support for schools on this front. The use of new technology, including GLOW, e-twinning and limited use of social networking sites are all encouraged to offer 'an enhanced experience of contemporary and relevant foreign language learning' (p23).

The Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)

The Curriculum for Excellence is still in the fairly early stages of implementation, and the new qualifications associated with it will not be fully in place until 2016. Guidance on principles and practice for learning providers has been made available by Education Scotland.¹⁵

¹⁵ See <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/thecurriculum/index.asp>

The CfE attaches considerable importance to the quality of the child's learning experience, which should be such that the child develops *active engagement*, *motivation to learn* and *depth of learning*.

The CfE will give children a broad general education from the early years to the end of S3, with the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills particularly emphasized. The broad general education covers eight curriculum areas: expressive arts, health and wellbeing, languages, mathematics, religious and moral education, sciences, social studies, technologies. Teaching professionals are encouraged to support learners in *making connections between areas*. Collaborations across topics, project-based learning and taking skills and knowledge from more than one subject area in a project are therefore encouraged.

Beginning from 2013-2014, pupils will take national qualifications in S4 in 5-6 subjects (the number is decided either by the school or local authority). These will be the new National 4 and National 5 examinations, which will replace Standard Grades and Intermediate qualifications.¹⁶ Hence, some concern was expressed by respondents to the SCILT survey (see above) that making languages compulsory only up to S3 will have a detrimental effect on languages take-up for qualifications at S4 and beyond, especially if languages are seen as more difficult or less useful than other subjects.

Taking into account the Working Group's recommendations for future language teaching in Scotland, the path to getting Russian back into Scotland's schools needs to start from primary school level. While L2 is to be taught from P1, it may be more practical in the first instance to aim to reintroduce Russian as an L3, that is, from around P5, because:

- L2 is likely to be one of the home languages (Gaelic, English) or one of the major modern languages such as French, given teachers' expertise and resources.
- With L3 there may be more scope for cross-curricular teaching and including cultural materials in the course.
- L2 is expected to continue seamlessly in transition to senior years and qualifications, whereas with L3 this can be more flexible.
- It may be easier to persuade those who feel the Cyrillic alphabet makes learning Russian difficult to take up Russian from P5 than from the first year of primary school.

When developing materials for primary school language courses in line with the CfE attention should be given in particular to:

- learning experience, in particular the *pupil voice* – allowing children's natural curiosity and desire for knowledge to inspire their learning
- cross-curricular teaching

¹⁶ Highers and Advanced Highers will remain the qualifications for pupils in S5 and S6, in a revised format.

- the importance of a variety of skills (literacy and numeracy skills in particular)
- developing the ‘four capacities’ in children. The latter represent the overarching aims of the CfE for each child or young person: to enable them to be a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen and an effective contributor.

3. What is being done to encourage learning of other lesser taught languages in Scotland and other parts of the UK?

On the basis of the SCILT modern languages survey 2011, the present report considers little-taught modern languages in Scotland to be Mandarin Chinese, Italian, and Russian. (Urdu and Gaelic are not discussed here due to their status as ‘home’ languages¹⁷). The case of German is also considered as although second only to French in availability it has undergone a serious decline in pupil numbers, and like Russian, it suffers from the image of being a ‘difficult’ language.

Mandarin.

In terms of usefulness, Chinese languages get ‘good press’. China’s economic strength means Mandarin and Cantonese are generally seen as valuable skills for the future employment market. The CBI’s Education and Skills survey 2012 puts Mandarin as the fourth most useful language to UK businesses, after German, French and Spanish. In Scotland, the Government has pursued stronger economic and cultural ties with China in recent years. The Strategy for Stronger Engagement with China was launched in 2006, and in the same year the (non-governmental) Scotland China Education Network (SCEN) was established, which played a key role in the establishment of the Confucius classroom network in Scotland. The strategy had amongst its objectives to raise understanding of Chinese culture and language in Scotland, including the target of having at least 200 pupils studying for Chinese language national qualifications in Scottish schools by 2010. **Considerable expertise and innovation has contributed to promoting and developing the teaching of Chinese language and culture in schools, discussed below. In addition,** high profile events which attract the attention of children and parents, such as two pandas coming to Edinburgh zoo in December 2011, are well covered by news channels. News reports frequently refer to the utility of speaking Chinese languages, for example Frasers in Buchanan Street, Glasgow employed 20 Chinese speaking staff this summer.¹⁸

¹⁷ along with Scots and Punjabi; see Education Scotland’s website: <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/studyingScotland/resourcesforlearning/literaturelanguage/scotlandslanguages/introduction.asp>

¹⁸ ‘Tax free shopping helps Frasers cash in on ‘Peking pound’’, Glasgow Herald 3rd July 2012. <http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/home-news/tax-free-shopping-helps-frasers-cash-in-on-peking-pound.18048390>

In Scottish schools, Mandarin is predominantly taught as part of a broader programme which allows children to discover the history, culture, wildlife and geography of China. The size, diversity and remoteness of Chinese makes it interesting to pupils and teachers and there are several curriculum areas which can be readily addressed through a study of China, such as social studies, technologies and expressive arts.

Chinese language initiatives are also well-funded. Considerable funding for educational programmes comes from The Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban), affiliated to the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (it has been reported in the press that £50,000 per annum is spent by Hanban per university-based Confucius institute¹⁹). Hanban and the British Council also fund language assistants for UK schools. Multinational companies and banks such as HSBC are involved with sponsorship for language assistants and SCEN events.

German and Italian

German as a subject has suffered a severe decline in popularity in Scotland's schools. There is a general perception that it has lost ground to Spanish and Gaelic in popularity among pupils and also funding and support from educational authorities²⁰ and that the future for German in Scotland's schools is bleak. This is despite Germany's economic strength; according to the CBI Education and Skills Survey 2012 German is the language most frequently demanded by UK businesses. However, German is still considerably more widely taught than Italian in Scotland, and secondary teaching qualifications in German are also considerably more widely available.

Provision of German and Italian in Scotland's schools is supported by cultural organisations, embassies and their offshoots, in particular the Goethe-Institut, UK-German Connection, the Italian Cultural Institute and the Centro Promozione Italiana, which provide materials, organise continuing professional development (CPD) and various events for pupils and teachers.

In addition, much support is provided for the teaching of European languages by European Union initiatives. The Comenius and Grundtvig schemes provide financial support. The Comenius project was set up by the European Union to encourage teacher and pupil mobility across the EU and encourage language learning. It works with schools on collaborative projects between educational institutions, such as study visits and e-twinning; international assistantships and in-service training for teachers. Grundtvig focuses on adult learning and is therefore less directly relevant to schools, nonetheless, some school teachers may qualify for this scheme.

¹⁹ 'Not a propaganda tool' The Guardian, 6th November 2007.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2007/nov/06/highereducation.internationaleducationnews>

²⁰ McLay, P: German in Scottish Education – School Teachers' Perspectives. Scottish Languages Review 18, Autumn 2008. p44.

Teaching

Qualified, enthusiastic teachers and good methodology are essential to increasing and maintaining pupil numbers in all modern languages. The SCILT 2011 modern languages survey noted a number instances of falls or increases in pupil numbers over the preceding three years being attributed by respondents to staff leaving or newly employed staff, respectively. New teaching methodology was also given as a reason in the case of stable or increasing numbers. SCILT promotes its own CPD courses to enable teachers to refresh their skills and share ideas.

Responses to the primary survey showed that the most common way modern languages were taught in primary schools was for a qualified member of staff to teach a range of classes, with 77% of respondents indicating this was the method their school used. Schools where teachers took their own classes for modern languages accounted for just 15% of respondents. However, the report states the majority of teachers consider this to be the preferred model.

Aspiring teachers who wish to study for a postgraduate diploma in education (PGDE) in primary education do not currently need any qualifications in modern languages. For secondary teaching, PGDE qualifications have been recently introduced for secondary teachers of Chinese at the University of Edinburgh. At the time of writing, training as a secondary teacher of German is offered at the Universities of Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Strathclyde, and German as a secondary subject to French is offered at the University of Glasgow. Italian, however, is only available to aspiring teachers in Scotland in combination with French at the University of Glasgow.

For some languages good teaching is encouraged and promoted by teaching awards from embassies and cultural organisations. For example, John Ogilvie High School in South Lanarkshire was named 'Spanish School of the Year' by the Spanish Embassy in 2010. This does not in itself, however, guarantee the survival of the subject however, as the TES reported in March 2011 that 'a teacher at Monifieth High in Angus [...] won the German Embassy's German Teacher Award - but in August, the school will stop offering the language to its new S1 cohort'.²¹

Foreign Language Assistants

Budget restraints have meant many Councils have cut foreign language assistants in Scotland.²² According to an article in the *Telegraph* this year, the

²¹ 'Relevance is the key to a revival of modern languages', Times Educational Supplement Scotland online, 15th March 2011.

<http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6074425>

²² 'Poor language skills put Scots at disadvantage', Times Educational Supplements Scotland online, 1st April 2011.

<http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6074424>

number of foreign language assistants in Scotland's schools has fallen from 284 in 2005 to 59 in 2012.²³

If schools have the resources, they can apply to British Council's scheme to bring native-speaking Foreign Language Assistants (FLAs), to UK schools. ²⁴ FLAs are occasionally, but not often, qualified teachers, and they assist with classes but are not expected to teach classes alone. Schools must meet the costs of employing the FLA for the contracted 12 hours per week, but two or three schools in the same area can share the cost and hours of the teacher provided additional travel costs are covered by the schools.

There is also a British Council scheme to bring Chinese Language Assistants (CLAs) to the UK. CLAs are qualified teachers and have slightly higher remuneration than other FLAs. CLAs can:

- work with Chinese teachers in the classroom if Chinese is already formally taught at the school;
- work on their own with groups of pupils if they are introducing Mandarin Chinese to the school;
- work across the curriculum, contributing a Chinese perspective to enrich other subjects like art and design, technology, geography and history etc, or
- run lunchtime Chinese clubs where the focus is mainly on Chinese culture.

Two CLAs were funded by the British Council and HSBC, in partnership with Hanban and CEAIE in 2011/12 and three in 2012/13.

For languages spoken in Europe, schools can apply for funded assistantships through the European Union educational programme Comenius²⁵, which provides grants to future teachers from European countries to spend between three and ten months in a school on an overseas placement. Schools may submit joint applications provided one school takes the main responsibility for the application. Schools may apply for an assistant from a preferred country, but the scheme cannot guarantee always to match the school's request for country of origin or mother tongue. However, the guidance suggests that if a teacher requests a specific school and vice versa best efforts will be made to match the two.

Support from Cultural Organisations, Embassies, Foreign Ministries

The Centro Promozione Italiana Ltd (CPI) promotes Italian language and culture in Scotland and Northern Ireland.²⁶ They have Italian teachers in Scotland, and

²³ 'Four-year-olds' to start learning two foreign languages', The Telegraph online, 18th May 2012.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/9273117/Four-year-olds-to-start-learning-two-foreign-languages.html#>

²⁴ <http://www.britishcouncil.org/languageassistants.htm>

²⁵ <http://www.britishcouncil.org/comenius-about-us.htm>

²⁶ <http://www.centropromozioneitaliana.co.uk>

the office provides material for their use, which in future will be available online. The CPI advertises continuing professional development courses for teachers and aspiring teachers of Italian language, including training days and in-service training courses in Italy, which teachers can fund through Comenius or Grundtvig in-service training grants. The office can also provide taster courses and other one-off events in primary and secondary schools, and facilitate cultural exchanges, school twinning and penpals.

The Goethe-Institut, the cultural organisation which promotes knowledge of German and Germany, has its Scottish branch in Glasgow.²⁷ Its work with schools includes services for teachers of German; co-ordinating foreign language assistants; special events and competitions for learners; and promotions in schools and in the Institut such as the current 'Fairy Tales' season in celebration of the 200th anniversary of the work of the Brothers Grimm.

The Institute has a Teaching Advice Service for teachers' enquiries, provides resources for the classroom, runs CPD such as training and refresher days, immersion courses, and so on. Online resources for primary schools include game banks, PowerPoint presentations covering such topics as Christmas and Easter vocabulary and so on. Online resources for secondary schools include a series of cross curricular materials, covering such topics as healthy lifestyles, biological diversity and animal protection in Germany, and the First World War.

The Institut regularly holds film programmes, exhibitions and competitions for school pupils.

UK-German Connection is an initiative launched by the foreign ministries of the two nations in 2004 to support youth links between the two countries.²⁸ They promote school links and offer advice and support finding partner schools, running joint activities and projects, taking school groups abroad and funding opportunities. They also run a site for teenagers and adults, *The Voyage*, which covers cultural aspects of German life such as recipes, customs and literature, and an attractive culture and vocabulary-learning site for children, *Voyage Kids*. The latter includes games, quizzes, songs and activities for primary school children and teacher's material online.

Scotland China Education Network (SCEN) is an organisation supporting the promotion of Chinese teaching in Scotland's schools.²⁹ It works with the Scottish Government, Education Scotland, the Confucius network and the British Council and schools to involve pupils in various ways of learning about Chinese culture and language and to support teachers of Chinese. Events organised by SCEN include pupil conferences, cultural summer programmes, teacher development networks and the recent China Youth Summit at Gleneagles. SCEN also recruits ambassadors who are young professionals, researcher, students and senior pupils that promote learning about China in Scottish Schools.

²⁷ <http://www.goethe.de/glasgow>

²⁸ <http://www.ukgermanconnection.org>

²⁹ <http://www.scen.info>

The Confucius Network. There are currently 12 Confucius Classroom Hubs in Scotland, and two Confucius Institutes at the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh. Hubs are currently located in local authority areas in Perth and Kinross, Ayrshire, West Lothian, East Dunbartonshire, Glasgow, North Lanarkshire, Aberdeen, Fife, East Renfrewshire, Edinburgh, Falkirk and South Lanarkshire.³⁰ The aim of the Confucius programme is to teach Chinese language and culture in UK schools, and promote understanding of China in local communities.

According to the Education Scotland website, Confucius classrooms are enabling many of the aims of the CfE, and it offers the case study of Hillhead High School on the Scottish Government website. This Confucius Hub enables primary and secondary schools across Glasgow to use resources and develop learning of Chinese culture, language, heritage, history art, food, music and sport.³¹

Online resources for schools: national IT resources

Glow is a web-based virtual learning environment for Scottish schools managed by Education Scotland.³² Log-ins for user accounts are managed by local authorities, schools and universities and directly from Education Scotland directly through a sponsor within the organisation. Teachers, pupils and parents all have access to different resources through Glow. Education Scotland provide some training for teachers in the use and design of games for learning at their Consolarium Centre, and there are also Glow 'cookbooks' on the website which provide models for using Glow and creating resources.³³ Glow is used for pupil projects and presentations and teaching resources ranging from simple texts to specially developed complex interactive resources made by professional software developers.

Education Scotland also provides a number of specially developed language resources through its website, such as *Passeport pour la Francophonie*, which is a suite of online films, texts, games and animations guiding pupils through various francophone countries around the world. Italian, German and Mandarin are all represented on Glow and the Education Scotland website.

Scholar is an e-learning programme created by Heriot-Watt University.³⁴ Online material consists of texts, images, animations, simulations and tests, and in some cases live sessions. It is UK wide, and has a specific area for Scotland aimed at pupils in S5 and S6, which provides learning materials for independent study tailored to complement Intermediate, Higher and Advanced Higher courses in a number of subjects. The user has access to communication with online tutors,

³⁰ <http://www.strath.ac.uk/ciss/confuciusclassroomhubsinscotland/>

³¹

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/curriculum/ACE/cfeinaction/hillhead>

³² <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/usingglowandict/index.asp>

³³ <http://cookbooks.glowscotland.org.uk>

³⁴ <http://scholar.hw.ac.uk/Scotland/>

and to their own report and revision planner. Currently it is used by 400 secondary schools in Scotland. French, German, Mandarin, Spanish and Gaelic are included in the subject areas covered by Scholar. Neither Italian nor Russian are offered.

The SCILT website contains resources for classroom use by teachers of French, German, Spanish and Chinese languages at primary and secondary level, as well as links to external resources.³⁵ Some resources have been developed in conjunction with cultural associations, such as the Institut Francais d'Ecosse.

The Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools (CISS) website is hosted by SCILT's website and contains teaching support materials for primary and secondary teachers. These are mostly in the form of PowerPoint slides the teacher can use to present language or cultural material, for example 'Tones for Pandas' uses visuals of a panda to demonstrate the four tones (the panda going up, going down, at a high level, and going down then up), and the cross-curricular 'Five Chinese Mountains' presents information about and images of China's mountains and also compares them to Ben Nevis and munros in Scotland.

Online resources for schools: other

China Club HQ is a commercial product developed by an educational enterprise. It provides a comprehensive online programme for teaching and learning language and culture. The programme 'incorporates a variety of media formats and has been designed to promote and facilitate individual, collaborative, flexible and mobile teaching and learning.'³⁶

China Club HQ's course has a wide range of materials online, specially designed to be used within the Scottish education system. The website includes curricular mapping documents, which are downloadable planning documents mapping cultural materials against the National Curriculum and Curriculum for Excellence, and language materials against Asset Breakthrough and SQA Access 3 Mandarin.

The numerous resources include (1) an English-language magazine featuring articles about life in China designed to appeal to a range of interests: Art, Cinema, Fashion, Food, In the News, Literature, Music, and Sport. Each article is linked to language exercises, classroom teaching activities and further reading. (2) 'China HQ TV', eight specially filmed 40-45 minute TV programmes which feature altogether 24 culture and 24 language modules in segments of around six minutes each. These are professionally made and introduced by both presenters and Chinese language teachers. (3) A resource bank containing over 250 animations, video, PowerPoint presentations, podcasts, interactive resources, documents, etc., supporting the teaching of language and culture at primary, lower secondary and upper secondary levels. Many of these are designed for use in subject areas such as History, Geography, RE etc. It also has an 'Enterprise HQ' section, exploring China in an 'enterprise-themed context'. (4) A dedicated

³⁵ <http://www.scilt.org.uk>

³⁶ from: <http://www.scdi.org.uk/tm/Docs/USAVisitBrochureMay2010.pdf>

Primary / Transition Area : a resource area for use in upper primary or as part of a transition programme. This introduces simple Chinese language (including a pronunciation guide for use by non-Chinese speaking teachers) and offers broad range of cultural resources for use over a 6 / 12 week block.

China Club HQ also has a 'Chinese for Fun' course, a separate PDF based Chinese course, introducing elementary Mandarin for use in recreational context or supporting a certified course.

Annual subscriptions to China Club HQ cost primary schools and single departments of secondary schools £95 and secondary schools in entirety £295.

The Voyage, Voyage Kids, and Think German are websites dedicated to promoting the German language in the UK. Think German is financed by the Goethe-Institut, the German Embassy in London and UK-German Connection.³⁷ It promotes news and events about learning German, and has a newsletter that teachers can sign up to. *The Voyage* and *Voyage Kids* are run by UK-German Connection. *Voyage Kids* can be used at home by children as well as in the classroom. There is a teachers and parents section, which contains classroom project ideas and ideas for UK-German partner work on topics such as birthdays, food and shopping, and school life. The site has numerous games (for example an electronic version of Pelmanism with bilingual picture cards), songs and other resources for language learning. It also has 'Find Out' pages containing information (in English) on various topics of interest related to German, such as German inventions (the MP3 and X-Ray machine), women's football, and badgers (voted German animal of the year in 2010), among many others.

These resources are free to use.

Conclusions

- The lack of Russian at primary school is a cause for concern, considering on the SCILT 2011 survey that the other lesser-taught languages are represented in at least some form. The 1+2 strategy seems likely to involve introducing two modern languages at primary school, and so the SRF's campaign needs to consider ways to get Russian into Scottish primary schools.
- Primary teaching courses should have a good mix of 'cultural' (i.e. information about Russia and Russian speaking countries, songs, creative artwork, stories etc.) and linguistic elements, which are appropriate to the Curriculum for Excellence. The Modern Languages Working Group recommends that an 'inverse methodology' of introducing culture first has spurred children's interest in learning the language in the case of learning about China, and a course teaching Russian and Russian-speaking countries' culture might benefit from a similar model.
- Considerable resources and expertise have been devoted to introducing Mandarin to Scottish classrooms and using the latest methods and

³⁷ <http://thinkgerman.org.uk>

techniques, through the Confucius initiative, SCILT's programmes, and private enterprise like China Club HQ. Lessons could be learned from best practice in this area. However, resources do have limitations, for example subscriptions to China Club HQ is beyond the means of schools on limited budgets. Online resources for German from the Goethe-Institut and UK-German Connection are also very attractive and could be used as a model. Further research could be done into how these are used in classrooms and the feasibility of SRF creating similar websites or online resources.

- Provision of Russian in primary schools would ideally be linked to provision in state-funded secondary schools in the same area, so that pupils have the opportunity to continue their studies.
- Developing materials to fit in with the CfE would be best done in conjunction with practitioners in primary schools and SCILT or Education Scotland as well as qualified Russian teachers.
- The decision of the SQA to discontinue qualifications in Russian will be very damaging.
- As the Mandarin example shows, if interest at school level is created then it is likely to be easier to reintroduce teacher training and qualifications.
- Qualified Russian teachers who are teaching in Scottish secondary schools now or in the future should be supported to combat isolation and the devaluation of their subject. Ways that this could be done could include a platform to share materials, for example a folder on GLOW secure area on a different website, mini-conferences or 'twilight sessions'.
- If schools apply through Comenius for an assistant with Russian skills, it may be advisable to make contact with potential assistants first, e.g. in Latvia or Poland, before submitting an application.
- Since Russian, like Mandarin, is not widely spoken by primary school teachers, it will be useful to note that the initiatives promoting Chinese language and culture would appear to take advantage of the desirability of the own-class model, providing extensive materials and training for primary teachers in order that they can teach their class without prior knowledge of the subject. It has the added benefit of giving teachers access to CPD and new skills. Primary teachers who have taken advantage of the Confucius programme and initiatives to enable them to teach Mandarin may even be keen to add another string to their bow, and learn a similar amount of Russian.
- A course for pupils at around P5 could be connected to a Russian Hubs initiative and a complete course more in line with the Confucius model with CPD for teachers who don't have expertise in the language.