

**CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON  
MODERN LANGUAGES IN  
SCOTTISH FURTHER EDUCATION  
2000-2002**

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements for the degree of

Doctorate in Education

Institute of Education

University of Stirling

**2005**

Stirling University

Abstract

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The research in this thesis focuses on issues surrounding modern language provision within Scottish further education during the period 2000-2002. The study analyses the arguments regarding the place of modern language study within Scottish further education (FE) as expressed in formal and informal discourses, and assesses the influence of socio-cultural and socio-historical assumptions on these discourses.

To this end, a multi-strand and multi-level research model was adopted, examining official and other public documents, together with views expressed by stakeholders from five Scottish FE colleges and from industry. These were analysed both on their own terms and by taking into account changes in the external context.

The initial focus of the study centred on the motivational characteristics of student participants. However, changes in the external context prompted the inclusion of further data into the research design and a shift of methodological emphasis, exploring the ways in which assumptions underlying data collection procedures related to labour market information and uptake of individual FE subjects may be contributing to a continuous re-affirmation that 'English is enough'. The validity of this assertion and the authority accorded to it are called into question.

It is argued that the belief will increasingly limit Scottish FE students' potential to participate as self-confident and self-determining individuals in a global and multilingual economy for which their vocational education and training is ostensibly trying to prepare them. Some suggestions, arising from the research, for a more inclusive language education policy are considered.



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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The author wishes to acknowledge the support from many people who have contributed in various ways to the preparation and completion of this study.

Professor Richard Johnstone, my thesis supervisor, has given me invaluable advice throughout the length and breadth of the project. I am deeply indebted to him for his time, patience, and his skills in guiding my research from the beginning, and in placing important 'navigational tools' across my course along the journey.

My thanks go to the language lecturer participants whose collaboration in the early stages of the research went beyond the normal call of duty. Their help in collecting the initial student data cannot be underestimated. I feel indebted to the other research participants, both in colleges and in industry, who gave freely of their time, which I know was precious to them in their busy professional lives.

I owe a lot to Lesley Low and Irene Malcolm for their professional advice at crucial stages of the research process.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to my family who understood how much this work meant to me and, whenever necessary, managed their time and schedules around my writing.

Last on this list but first in my heart is my husband, Michael. I can hardly find words to express what his support, encouragement in times of crises and seemingly boundless patience have meant to me. More than anyone he made me realise how important it is to feel valued and supported. Without him, this thesis certainly would not have been completed. I dedicate it to him.



## ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

<b>CT</b>	Communication tutor (lecturer). Member of staff who teaches English for vocational purposes. Communication is a core subject on all NC/NQ/HNC/HND programmes (see below).
<b>FTE</b>	Full-time equivalent: calculation which reduces the total amount of student unit measurements into the notional equivalent of full-time students, e.g. given that one full-time student on an HNC programme would complete 12 SUMs two part-time students each studying 6 SUMs would equal one FTE. See also SUM below.
<b>GSVQ</b>	General Scottish Vocational Qualification; a fixed framework for a range of pre-vocational programmes at non-advanced level, e.g. GSVQ Travel & Tourism. However, programme leaders (see PL below) may devise programmes that include units not in the GSVQ framework, provided they can show that these units are in demand by local employers.
<b>Higher</b>	The level accorded to a range of Scottish subject qualifications that are traditionally required for entry to advanced level study at a further education college (i.e. for Higher National Certificate/Diploma) or at university.
<b>HN</b>	Higher National. This term applies to units and programmes deemed to be at advanced, i.e. undergraduate university level.
<b>HNC</b>	Higher National Certificate, a programme consisting of 12 SUMs (480 hours), equivalent to first year undergraduate study at university. See also HND below.
<b>HND</b>	Higher National Diploma, a qualification consisting of 30 SUMs (1200 hours); equivalent to the first two years of undergraduate study at university. Both HNCs and HNDs must stay within specified frameworks laid out by SQA (see below). Depending on the vocational specialism, there are a number of core units, and a range of optional units, which can be selected as appropriate. See also PL below.
<b>LT</b>	(Modern) Language tutor (lecturer). Within this study referring to a member of staff who teaches one or more languages at a Scottish FE college.
<b>ML</b>	Modern language(s); in this study all languages excluding English; within the Scottish FE context referring to the most commonly taught languages therein, i.e. French, German, Italian and Spanish. Modern languages are included as options in most frameworks, but are not a core subject.
<b>NC</b>	National Certificate, the name preceding post-16 subject qualifications with a vocational focus, e.g. NC Spanish (levels 1-5), as well as post-16 vocational programmes at non-advanced level, e.g. NC Scottish Tourism. The term has now been replaced by National Qualifications (see below)
<b>NQ</b>	National Qualification, the current title preceding non-advanced (i.e. up to and including Higher level) units and programmes of study, e.g. NQ Spanish, NQ Scottish Tourism.
<b>PL</b>	Programme leader. FE lecturer, normally in a promoted post, who is responsible for the ultimate design of one or more programmes related to his or her vocational specialism. With respect to the list of (mandatory) options in the curriculum framework, PLs can choose which to include in their framework, and whether to provide students with a range of options, or offer a 'take-it or leave-it' programme of fixed units.
<b>SFEFC</b>	Scottish Further Education Funding Council; responsible for the funding of Scottish Further Education Colleges; based on the amount of SUMs delivered at a given college, within a fixed upper limit.
<b>SM</b>	Abbreviation used for a senior member of a Scottish further education college, e.g. Principal or Assistant Principal.
<b>SP OR</b>	Scottish Parliament Official Records
<b>SQA</b>	Scottish Qualifications Authority, responsible for the design and assessment of post-16 qualifications in Scottish schools and further education colleges.
<b>SUM</b>	Student Unit of Measurement, equivalent to one student completing a notional 40 hours of study. Units requiring 80 or 120 hours of study would be equivalent of 2 or 3 SUMs respectively. See also FTE.

## INTRODUCTION

Qu'est-ce qu'un homme révolté? Un homme qui dit non. Mais s'il refuse, il ne renonce pas: c'est aussi un homme qui dit oui, dès son premier mouvement. (Albert Camus, *L'homme révolté*)

In early 1997 I was startled to hear that the Scottish Office was commissioning a major research study to identify the causes for the decline in the number of learners studying a modern language at 'Higher' level, the Scottish qualification required for university entry.

Having worked in the British hospitality and tourism industry for over ten years, I had experienced both the need for and lack of ML (modern language) skills. I had entered the teaching profession in 1989, the same year the 'Languages for All' policy came into effect (Scottish Office 1989)<sup>1</sup>, and a number of modern language (ML) pilot projects in primary schools were launched, culminating in the introduction of the MLPS policy<sup>2</sup> (Scottish Office 1993). These two initiatives had signalled to me that the government was committed to increasing the ML competence of its population, and I, perhaps naively, assumed Scottish people implicitly supported these intentions.

In 1992, I had moved into the further education sector, as lecturer of French, German, and tourism, confident that because of government policies and European integration demand for ML study in the FE (further education) sector would rise. To my surprise,

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<sup>1</sup> Although not legally binding, the policy nevertheless led to the understanding at local authority level that modern languages were a compulsory part of all four years in the secondary school curriculum

<sup>2</sup> Modern Languages in the Primary School: Scottish government statement that all primary pupils should be taught a modern languages during their last two years of primary education (P6 and P7).

ML provision in FE programmes remained dominantly at beginners' level. My own efforts to increase and widen ML uptake had limited success, with most interest being shown in acquiring 'holiday' Spanish. Until the announcement by the Scottish Office in 1997 however, I had been convinced that ML uptake in schools had been rising and that the low interest in ML study at my institution was an exception to the rule. Enquiries around a number of other colleges indicated that this was not the case.

Yet, this state of affairs appeared incongruous. In an earlier survey, the increasing need of Scottish industry for employees with ML skills had been forecast (Duncan & Johnstone, 1988). It seemed logical to assume that after the establishment of the Single European Market in 1992 companies involved in trading with clients from abroad would increasingly need and wish to employ people knowledgeable about other cultures and able to communicate with foreign clients in their own language. Language and culture skills are arguably required in order take full advantage of every European Union citizen's right to employment mobility within member states.

Was it therefore the case that FE students were not aware of this need? Did they not wish to take advantage of this particular right? Alternatively, were they being dissuaded from studying languages by programme leaders or by funding and curriculum policies? There were no published statistical data on ML study within FE programmes so it was not possible to ascertain whether perceived trends of decline were uniform across Scotland or varied between institutions. These were some of the considerations weighing on my mind when I started my doctoral studies in October 1998.

Having completed the requisite preparatory essays in June 2000 the main data collection period was set for June 2000 – June 2001. During this time, a number of significant pro-ML papers and initiatives were expected. In May 2000, the Nuffield Foundation had already published the findings of its inquiry into Britain's future language needs over the next 20 years. The Ministerial Action Group for Languages (MAGL), set up by the Scottish Minister for Education in October 1998, was due to publish its findings and recommendations by the end of 2000. Finally, the European Commission and the Council of Europe had jointly declared 2001 as the European Year of Languages.

In the initial design of the investigation, I considered it important to explore the motivational and attitudinal factors amongst a range of college students and college staff with regard to ML study in the light of these potentially powerful pro-language initiatives. At the same time I wanted to find out what kind of statistical information was being collected regarding ML study within Scottish FE and to what uses, if any, the data were put.

In the selection of the research strategy and data collection methods, the limited time to negotiate access to potential research participants and to conduct the investigation itself whilst still fulfilling my professional commitments was an important consideration.

Nevertheless, I was keen to gather evidence beyond my own institution. As steering group member of the Scottish FE Network Modern Languages (henceforth FE Network)<sup>3</sup> I was fortunate to have immediate access to four colleagues in similar college

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<sup>3</sup> The FE Network is a voluntary association made up of FE language lecturers and was 'called into existence' by a government inspector just after the incorporation of Scottish FE colleges in 1994 as a professional organisation that would meet regularly to exchange ideas, and act as a pressure group for FE-related language matters. The steering group meets infrequently, but usually 2-3 times a year and an annual conference for members is held on the third Friday in June.

posts to mine (i.e. in charge of ML provision), and whose colleges represented an even spread from east to west within the so-called central belt of Scotland. All of them agreed to participate in the research and to identify further potential research participants, i.e. student groups and relevant programme leaders, within their respective colleges.

In June 2000, I obtained some preliminary data from lecturers attending the annual FE Network conference as well as statistical data on ML uptake from the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)<sup>4</sup>. I then proceeded with the first set of student data collection in the autumn 2000.

My four language colleagues agreed to act as research collaborators for this initial phase by helping me to collect student data in their own colleges thus reducing the time commitment by myself. Although the student evidence was to be qualitative in nature it was recognised that staff might encounter difficulties negotiating or obtaining access to some student groups. We therefore agreed to ask students to complete a semi-open questionnaire, which would entail a minimum of disruption, and which could be followed by a more in-depth qualitative probe in the form of a group discussion where possible.

I was initially quite hopeful that I would be able to complete my data collection by the June 2001 deadline. However, ‘turbulence’ in the external context proved to present greater barriers than envisaged. My own college was going through an unsettled (and unsettling!) phase. A new chief executive took office in March 2001, just months before

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<sup>4</sup> SQA: organisation responsible for the design and assessment of post-16 qualifications in Scottish secondary schools and further education colleges.

the college was due to move to a completely new site. The staff restructure negotiated by the old principal a few months earlier was put on hold and a new restructure implemented in June 2001. At the same time, I was preparing a major promotional language event for September 2001, as part of the European Year of Languages. In the end, I only completed a fraction of the staff interviews by June 2001 and had to abandon the collection of a further student data set.

A timely grant of research funding enabled me to continue my research during the subsequent academic session (September 2001 – June 2002) albeit with the inclusion of additional data sources. These additions were included partly by *obligation*, to fulfil research-funding requirements, and partly by my own *choice*, in response to changes in the external context. These contextual factors also caused me to re-examine my data and to shift the emphasis of my analysis from the motivational perspectives of the stakeholders *per se* to the ways in which knowledge claims with respect to ML learning might be constructed. Thus, by taking account of the socio-cultural and socio-historical context the research aims of the study have been more fully addressed. However, in order to keep to the allocated word limit of the Doctorate in Education<sup>5</sup> most of these additional data analysis sets have been attached as appendices.

Another important feature of this study is the research diary where I kept track of significant events as they occurred and recorded my reactions to them. By detailing the various factors, their impact on the research process and my evolving understanding of the data, the research diary became an increasingly important and integral part of my

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<sup>5</sup> Whilst both the PhD (Doctorate in Philosophy) and the EdD (Doctorate in Education) are said to be of equal merit, the former requires a thesis of at least 80,000 words whereas the latter is limited to 50-60,000 words (although it also requires 4 preliminary essays of 5,000 words each).

investigation. In order to help clarify to the reader my own differing perspectives within the research process, i.e. not just as ‘detached’ researcher but also as ‘engaged’ practitioner I wanted to (and felt I had to!) make these different voices visible in the thesis. I have done this by including footnotes of a personal nature at relevant points in the data analysis.

Finally, because of the complexity of the research process, and the nature in which I came to construct the analysis of the data I decided to present the findings in chronological format, almost as a narrative, thereby demonstrating the evolutionary process of my understanding. For this reason, the main literature review chapter is restricted to publications up to 2000, with later publications referred to in the appropriate chronological research phases. This is also why the study is written throughout using the first person.

Several features make this study unique: It is the first doctoral study into the state and status of modern languages in Scottish further education. The different theoretical frameworks employed in the collection and analysis of the investigation, (Foucault, Critical Theory), have also never, to my knowledge, been applied to this subject area. I hope that the analytical powers of these frameworks have been revealed in this study. In a time where both state and status of language study in Scottish education generally is in crisis, they also provide an analytical means to move beyond existing constraints to imagine alternative futures.

# 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDS UP TO 2000

**Archaeology:** the scientific study of material remains of past human life and activities; **here:** the subjective investigation of public and private discourses on modern languages in order to reveal some of the assumptions, expectations, values and beliefs underlying them.

**Genealogy:** an account of the descent of a person, family or group from an ancestor or from older forms; **here:** an account of the origin of a given belief regarding the place of modern languages in Scottish further education.

## 1.1 The Researcher as Archaeologist

When an archaeologist starts an excavation, s/he does not know what exactly s/he is going to find. The reasons for starting the search, how s/he conducts it, and where s/he looks for clues are influenced by her/his prior beliefs. Some finds may be as expected, others may surprise her/him, cause her/him to look for additional finds, and potentially alter her/his original beliefs. Time and other material resources are likely to limit the scope of the excavation and therefore any conclusions drawn include an element of faith that assumes that additional discoveries would not substantially alter the final interpretation of the findings.

As researcher investigating the reasons underlying the current state and status of modern languages in Scottish further education, I feel myself to be in a comparable position. My professional concerns influenced my initial research topic and the selection of the books



and journal articles or ‘archaeological records’ I decided to consult. As the data collection got underway, unexpected findings arising from the literature resulted in additional ‘digging’ for data as well as additional readings, and ultimately a change in my own understanding of the research topic. In order to allow the reader to follow the path of my ‘knowledge excavation’ the discourses examined in this chapter have been restricted to those published by the start of my data collection. They do NOT represent *all* the texts I read from that period, nor do they embody *all* discourses that might be considered relevant on the matter. I am satisfied, however, that the selection presented here are sufficient to illustrate the points I wish to make. Discourses published subsequently have been included in the respective data collection phase.

### **1.1.1 ‘Language Skills Matter’: A Personal Genealogy**

It is important to state from the outset that I approached this investigation with a positive inclination towards modern languages (ML) and its current relevance for the further education (FE) sector. How have I come to take this position? I am a native German speaker and was taught English from age 12 and French from age 14. Although at school I had found language learning both easy and enjoyable, when faced with a choice between a language or science-based curriculum at age fifteen, I had chosen the latter because I was interested in using the language in ‘live’ situations, not in studying its ‘dead’ literature. The science-based curriculum appeared more geared towards ‘practical’ application, even when it involved mathematical theory.

Then, the day before my 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, my family moved to the USA. To my utter surprise, few people in my new home country believed in the usefulness of learning

languages other than English. Whilst I could understand their position – I had after all, been taught English precisely because it was so widely spoken – it occurred to me that in such a society people with language skills would be in high demand (even though I had no empirical evidence of this). Therefore, I went on to study languages at university (*despite* having to concentrate on literature) and after gaining my Bachelor degree I took up the university's offer to study for a further qualification at a French university. During my four-year stay in France, I worked in the hospitality industry, using both English and my native German frequently.

In 1978, I moved to Scotland where, after training as a French and German-speaking tourist guide and tour director, I worked throughout the British Isles and Ireland for ten years before entering the teaching profession in 1989. During my time in industry, I had experienced at first hand both the need for and the lack of ML skills amongst native English speakers working in these sectors. However, it was not until I was working in education that I became interested in exploring the reasons behind the perceived resistance to language learning in native English-speaking countries, and in Scottish further education in particular. In Table 1-1 I try to show the developmental stages and contextual factors leading up to the start of my data collection phase.

Table 1-1: Summary of preparatory research phases

Time	Autumn 1998	Spring 1999	Autumn 1999	Spring 2000
<b>Assignments</b>	<p>#1: Managing Institutional Change</p> <p>A first attempt at formulating some research questions and exploring the substantive and methodological assumptions underlying these questions</p>	<p># 2: Analysis, Criticism and Interpretation of Research</p> <p>Compared and contrasted 2 different research projects, in positivist and interpretative paradigms respectively</p>	<p># 3: Impact of policy on professional practice</p> <p>A more in-depth look at how recent policy developments have affected the professional practice of modern language tutors in Scottish FE colleges.</p>	<p># 4: Research Planning and Design</p> <p>Research Proposal (involves revisiting Assignments 1-3 and expanding my literature review).</p> <p>I am drawn to texts by Foucault and critical theorists but am unsure how to translate their ideas into research questions / set methodology. Decide to put emphasis of analysis on motivation constructs as developed by Dörnyei.</p>
<b>Contextual Events</b>	<p>Start of Nuffield Language Inquiry announced and preliminary report published. In Scotland, the Ministerial Action Group on Languages is established.</p>	<p>Conduct a preliminary study in my own college ('Student Views and Staff Perceptions on MLs at Whitehill College'), the findings of which are presented at the College Board of Studies in June 1999.</p> <p>At my instigation, the FE Network (ML) prepares a response to the SEED consultation document 'Skills for Scotland'.</p>	<p>Hold a promotional event for languages in September ('European Connections'). It results in lots of publicity in the media but the increase in ML uptake is minimal.</p> <p>Evening class budget is cut in preparation for planned college move to new site at an as yet unspecified date, resulting in reduced ML provision and loss of ML staff.</p>	<p>Publication of final report of Nuffield Languages Inquiry and Hall (2000). The latter is a literature review regarding the contribution of foreign languages to Scottish industry.</p> <p>College principal announces planned move of college to new site for mid-2001. I decide to hold another ML promotional event in autumn 2001 as part of European Year of Languages in order to take full advantage of the college's new location.</p>

### 1.1.2 Policy and Professional Practice(s)

Findings from investigations leading to the Doctorate in Education should inform policy and academic professionals' practice. Thus I started by examining the literature concerned with policy, paying particular attention to the tensions between language and further education policies, at EU and UK levels. Other publications reported on the ways in which recent education policies had impacted on professional practice<sup>6</sup>. Many of these argued that policy implementation is modified through stakeholders' underlying attitudes, beliefs, and motivation. This in turn led me to numerous studies on the

<sup>6</sup> My earlier reflections on the relationships between language policy and FE language practitioners are recorded in Doughty (2000a).

motivation of language learners. Although the aim of my investigation – to gain a deeper understanding as to why despite the close economic links to Europe and the governmental promotion of language learning the dominant view amongst Scottish people appeared to be that ‘English is enough’<sup>7</sup> – has not altered, the way I tried to gain ‘enlightenment’ changed.

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, in the pages that follow I present a selection of the discourses published by June 2000 I read before, during and after the actual data collection phase that I consider relevant within my current epistemological and theoretical frameworks.

## 1.2 An Archaeology of EU Policies

### 1.2.1 EU Education Policies

The Treaty on European Union (The Maastricht Treaty) shifted the agenda of education and training policy in the European Community. Whereas the earlier Treaty of Rome (1957) had referred only to *training*, in the Maastricht Treaty (1992; in force from 1 November 1993) 'education' was included for the first time:

The Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organization of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity (European Commission, 1992, Article 126)

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<sup>7</sup> My initial thoughts on this matter are discussed in Doughty (1999a).

The article also refers to the encouragement of the “European dimension in education, particularly through the teaching and dissemination of the languages of the Member States” via a number of “incentive measures”. Although the rights embedded in the principle of 'subsidiarity' prevent any EU-wide legislative or other regulatory harmonisation, there have been increasing efforts to support the development for multilingual competence amongst all EU citizens through a number of so-called Action Programmes. The White Paper on Education and Training (European Commission, 1995) set out the objective, amongst others, to enable all EU citizens to be proficient in three European languages by the time they leave school. The proclaimed aims are the respect for cultural and linguistic diversity of each member state and the enabling of EU citizens to take full advantage of their rights to live and work in any one of the member states. However, a closer look at the implementation strategies across EU member states points to different purposes.

### **1.2.2 Implementation of Language Policies**

According to official figures (Wright, 1999: 94), the first foreign language taught in most member states is English. Clearly, this is not consistent with a respect for cultural and linguistic diversity within the EU. France, for example, shares borders with German, Italian, and Spanish speaking citizens, yet nearly 90% of French pupils learn English as their first foreign language (Goullier, 1997:1). It rather implies a strong vocational rationale that implicitly, if not explicitly, recognizes English as *the* dominant language of international business.

Although Scotland has only recently regained parliamentary powers, it had always retained control over its own education and training system within the United Kingdom, and the teaching of a foreign language has effectively been compulsory throughout the Scottish secondary school curriculum since the proclamation of the 'Languages for All' policy (Scottish Office, 1989). The most frequently taught first foreign language in Scottish schools is French, followed by German and there have been efforts to diversify language provision to include Spanish and Italian. In this sense, Scottish ML provision represents a closer approximation of the European 'ideal'.

Whilst here too the vocational rationale has been a consistent feature of policy statements with respect to ML study (e.g. Scottish Office, 1972, 1989, 1995) actual language learning practice within the EU has arguably weakened its credibility. Thus, for example, during the consultation phase for reforms to the curriculum framework of education for 16-19 year olds (subtitled 'Higher Still'), the government decided not to heed the call by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) to include ML study as a core skill (McMillan, 1994: 6).

However, the arguments regarding the place of ML in post-compulsory education have not been settled. Just before the start of my data collection phase in June 2000, the Nuffield Language Inquiry (2000) published its final report, and in December 2000, the Scottish Ministerial Action Group on Languages (henceforth MAGL) published its recommendations. Both made powerful arguments on the need for native English speakers to learn other languages. I will return to both publications later but for now it is worth emphasising that the Nuffield Inquiry, although with a UK-wide remit and concerning all education sectors, was not binding on politicians. The MAGL Report,

although it only had a Scotland-wide remit and was only concerned with the compulsory education sectors, required a ministerial response, and was therefore potentially more significant for my research.

### **1.2.3 Implementation of Lifelong Learning Policies**

The aforementioned European White Paper on Lifelong Learning (European Commission, 1995) is not restricted to language learning and includes all education sectors. Again, countries diverge in their interpretation of lifelong learning, but it is fair to say that in the UK and Scotland it is usually associated informally with learning in post-compulsory education settings.

The broad Government aims concerning lifelong learning have been spelt out in their policy document *Opportunities for Everyone* (Scottish Office, 1999a). The common theme running through the statements is the idea of linking economic success to an educated workforce whose members are willing to update their knowledge and skills throughout their lives.

According to recent figures, (SFEFC, 2000a) there were over 410,000 student enrolments in Scotland's 46 further education colleges in 1997-98, the majority of which (86%) were for vocational courses. Significantly, nearly 28% of all higher education study in Scotland is provided in FE colleges and around 40% of Scots who enter full-time higher education for the first time do so in an FE college. By comparison, there were just under 170,000 students registered in Scottish HE institutions during that same year, i.e. less than 50% of the total FE population. FE Colleges thus play a pivotal role

within the Scottish education framework interfacing with both schools and universities, and the state and status of ML study in Scottish FE has powerful implications for higher education (HE) as well.

There is increasing interest in the sector and a growing body of research exploring issues such as the distribution of provision, and patterns of participation within Scottish further education (e.g. Raab & Davidson, 1999; Gallacher *et al*, 2000). However, no published study to date has specifically investigated the state and status of modern languages within this sector.

According to Edwards & Usher (2000: 4) there are various traits apparent in other recent education policy statements, not just in Scotland, the UK or Europe, but in all Western, capitalist societies, such as:

- the need for change is largely cast in economic terms
- there is increasing criticism of schools & their failure to deliver what is required
- changes in schooling are being required without a significant increase in resourcing from governments
- educational reform is promoted through changes in forms of governance
- schools are being required to work in more commercial and market-like ways
- there is an emphasis on standards, accountability and testing.

With respect to the post-compulsory scene in Scotland, Osborne *et al* (2000) point to the tension between economist elements and the contradicting commitment to social inclusion. This is because the incorporation of colleges as independent institutions has allowed them to:



pursue different markets or the same markets in different ways. The introduction of such quasi-market relations in the sector has increased inter-institutional competition and weakened the relationship between institutions and local communities. This new *modus operandi* inevitably pushes colleges to de-prioritise social justice concerns in favour of economic survival in the market place [...]

The challenge for *both* HE and FE is to meet both individual needs in such a fashion, and to develop an education and training environment that can aid the economic development of the nation. (Osborne *et al*, 2000: 248-9)

Space does not permit a full discussion of the above issues at this time. For the purposes of this study, I wish to draw attention to two points: the need to produce curricula relevant to the world of work and the requirement to be accountable.

With regard to point (1), Haskel & Holt (1999) highlight some problems for economists when trying to 'predict' future skill needs. They contend that most measures of skill shortages fail to pick up the extent to which employers adapt to skill shortages by opting for product strategies that do not require high skills – thereby eliminating the skill shortage, but at the expense of a poorer performance for the economy at large.

Similarly,

[F]orecasts of skills are likely simply to extrapolate such low skill traps into the future - so that if individuals use the forecasts they will merely replicate the existing problem. (Haskel & Holt, 1999: 40)

The question therefore arises in what ways employers' views on the need, or otherwise, for language skills, feed into economic surveys and forecasts because, according to a recent government paper,

The primary responsibility for addressing shortages and gaps lie with employers, individuals, and providers (Scottish Office, 1999b, online, §5.5)

At the same time,

there is a responsibility on Government to ensure that clear and helpful information is available on which people can base their decisions (*ibid*)

Taking Haskel & Holt's cautions into consideration, it is not evident how such 'clear and helpful information' can be obtained through skill forecasts as outlined above.

### ***GAPS IN STATISTICAL EVIDENCE ON ML UPTAKE***

Although there is a perception of overall decline in ML uptake in Scottish FE programmes, the increase at my own college in ML uptake in evening classes generally and in Spanish specifically, warrants the search for verifiable statistical information on trends of ML study within Scottish FE by language, mode of study and/or college. This brings us to point (2) and the potential difficulties associated with the requirement for accountability. Cloonan & Canning (2000) found that flaws with some of the statistical data collection methods used by SQA on uptake of Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) provide unreliable indicators of uptake and completion rates. The authors outline weaknesses in the evidence that is being presented as 'expert' and whose 'authority' is blindly accepted. Whilst I did not expect to encounter such difficulties with respect to SQA data for ML uptake it was nevertheless important to note the significance of assumptions underlying statistical data collection, as will be seen later.

#### **1.2.4 Colebatch's Analytic Framework**

Colebatch's exploration of the policy process (Colebatch, 1998) provides a number of useful analytical concepts with respect to the points raised above such as *coherence*, *expertise*, and *authority*. There is a common belief that different policies are part of one grand strategy, that policy makers will be in a position of *authority* and that policies have

specific, coherent objectives. The authority accorded to the person (or group of people) who endorses and legitimises the policy also implies an assumption that this person (or group of people) holds specialised knowledge (*expertise*) about the policy area so that implementation will follow in an orderly fashion. Colebatch, however, argues that policies frequently contain inconsistencies or conflict with other policies; that claims of expertise may be overstated and that the authority invested in certain knowledge claims may therefore also be misplaced (*ibid*: 7-8).

Colebatch also highlights that resources allocated to past initiatives restrict the formulation of new policies. Thus, the sheer amount of resources assigned to the learning of English in the past by the UK and by other EU states would make it difficult to bring about more truly multilingual language policies as envisaged by EU policy makers. At the same time, it would superficially justify the current dominant belief amongst UK citizens that there is little need for foreign language learning for their continued prosperity, despite the comprehensive challenges to it by Moys (1998) and the resultant Nuffield Languages Inquiry (2000).

### ***POLICY INCOHERENCE***

Since the White Paper of 1996 recommended the continued development of language skills, beyond compulsory schooling, this would, by definition, include both further and higher education sectors. However, in the Government Green Paper 'Skills for Scotland' the remit for developing the national capacity for languages was allocated explicitly to *higher* education (Scottish Office, 1999b: online, §8.1), although the importance of this skill within *further education* had been argued strongly earlier

(Scottish Office, 1991b). Is this simply an oversight, or have policy makers' views on the relevance of this skill for further education students changed over this period? This is an important question when one considers that currently a number of funding and curriculum policies within the Scottish FE sector are also undermining the position of ML study within the FE fulltime programmes.

For example, when Scottish FE colleges moved out of local authority control into direct government funding in 1993 students were no longer able to choose additional 'elective' credits on top of their main vocational programme at no extra cost to them, yet previously programme leaders had frequently offered ML study to their students in this way (Doughty, 1994: 11). Now ML units could now only be studied as an additional elective subject if *college managers* decide to offer funding for this type of ML study. In addition, ML units were removed from a number of award frameworks.

### ***POLICY INCONSISTENCY THROUGH ALLOCATION OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES***

Other factors working against ML are the low subject weighting and the notional funding allocations within colleges. The 'weighting' of a curriculum subject is calculated from estimated resource implications, which are considered to be negligible for ML. The low weighting means that higher numbers of students are required before a class becomes 'viable' for delivery in financial terms. New curriculum design rules for non-advanced (NC) provision mean that it is no longer possible to include a ML component in certain fulltime programmes. Because the rules specify that a subject must be studied at the level of the *overall award* or at the level just below, it is impossible to include any subject at beginners' level in a Group Award at 'Higher' level, for example.

This denies students the opportunity to add a further language to the one studied at school and disadvantages students who do not have previous ML skills (e.g. older students).

At the start of the data collection phase, similar design rules were about to be introduced to Higher National qualifications (advanced provision), i.e. Higher National Certificates and Higher National Diplomas (HNCs/HNDs). These awards are considered equivalent to first and second year undergraduate study respectively. Full implementation of the rules would effectively remove the possibility of the common practice to include up to three credits of a ML at beginners' level in a number of HN qualifications such as in tourism, hospitality or business. This decision seems doubly curious if one considers that a ML can be studied *ab initio* in virtually all higher education (HE) programmes, a practice that is indeed encouraged as part of institution-wide language programmes at many British universities.

### ***IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS***

The discussion on policy-related discourses has raised two areas for further exploration:

1. how policy-related discourses published during the course of the investigative phase would portray the role of modern languages in Scottish (further) education
2. what kind(s) of statistical information might be available, what kinds of assumptions are (and can be) made about its collection procedures, and about the implications of the conclusions arrived at

It follows from Colebatch's framework that stakeholder perceptions matter as much as policy statements themselves do. I shall therefore now turn to an examination of research studies from the perspectives of various FE stakeholders.

## 1.3 An Archaeology of Stakeholders' Practices

I have already indicated that the policy process involves the interaction between groups who construct their own meanings and practices during the implementation phases. It may not be possible to identify all the players in this cyclical and iterative process occurring in different contexts but they will certainly include students, college staff, college managers, and industry. Each one of them will somehow reformulate education policies into their own common-sense way of thinking, thereby altering the meanings originally intended<sup>8</sup>. What then was 'known' about stakeholder views on ML skills by the start of the data collection phase in June 2000?

### 1.3.1 The Uncertain FE Learner

#### *LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN FRENCH AND GERMAN FE*

According to SFEFC (2000a), the percentage of FE students aged 25+ increased from 47% in 1992/3 to 55% in 1997/8. This means that while there is a significant younger cohort, much FE is actually undertaken on a part-time basis by adult students. This distinguishes its character from the equivalent provision in other EU member states, such as France and Germany. Policy makers in these two states appear concerned about the extent of ML study in the vocational education sector. In Germany for example, only about 15% of students on vocational training programmes are estimated to be learning a foreign language (Fels, 1999: 6). In France, students in the academic stream of the baccalaureate are more likely to study a second ML than students in the vocational

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<sup>8</sup> My initial exploration of issues related to policy and professional practice please are discussed in greater detail in Doughty (2000a).

stream, and the learning of a subsequent language appears to have no purpose beyond that for academic achievement or advancement:

A large proportion of the French population seem to attach importance only to the first modern language as a key to access to the international community. By contrast, the learning of a second modern language appears to be seen merely as one subject among others, the usefulness of which is only assessed in terms of examination results and access to further education<sup>9</sup> (Goullier, 1997: 6)

Thus, in both France and Germany, any ML learning that does take place in vocational education appears to be because of compulsion, and this raises interesting questions as to those students' levels of motivation to learn *English* – an issue that could not be addressed in this study, however.

### ***RELEVANT UK STUDIES INVESTIGATING LANGUAGE LEARNER PERSPECTIVES***

#### **The ambiguity of the vocational rationale**

Within Scotland, the studies by Wallace (1993), Hall & Bankowska (1994), Coleman (1996), and McPake *et al* (1999) are of significance because they highlight the ambiguity of employers with respect to language skills. Wallace found that graduates who had obtained various joint degrees with languages, i.e. students who had been convinced of the vocational rationale for ML study, were often unable to use their ML skills to the extent they had envisaged, if at all. The FE and HE student participants in Hall & Bankowska's investigation were also studying the languages for predominantly vocational reasons. Both studies were small-scale and only investigated the views of

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<sup>9</sup> It is important to note that the term 'further education' is employed here in its literal sense, whereas in the UK it is usually employed when referring to post-compulsory training institutions that offer mainly vocational courses and programmes.

language learners themselves. By contrast the investigations by Coleman and McPake *et al* were large scale, with the latter also seeking the views of non-language learners.

### **Coleman's comparative study of HE language learners**

Coleman's study (1996) investigated the views amongst 25,000 HE students in Britain and six other European countries with respect to ML and their relevance to the world of work. Although the study was conducted with HE students, it may be possible to compare certain of his findings with those of FE students. Nearly all students in Coleman's sample had spent time abroad, in the country whose language they were studying and that attitude to people in these countries was a crucial factor in the success for language learning. According to Coleman's data, 'anxiety', which has been identified as a major barrier to successful ML learning (e.g. Arnold, 1999), was more common in women, and in young people, but was reduced as a result of stays abroad. Coleman's findings are important because it raises the question of FE students' strength of desire to travel and experience other cultures.

### **McPake *et al*'s study of ML uptake in Scottish secondary schools**

The study by McPake *et al* (1999) had been commissioned by the then Scottish Office Education Department to investigate the reasons behind the declining popularity of studying languages at 'Higher' grade. Around 1500 pupils across Scotland participated in the study and their responses indicated that they were less convinced of the immediate vocational language need and therefore tended to drop the subject in favour of others, perceived to be of greater immediate relevance. Students were also demotivated by course-specific factors, i.e. the 'boring' content of the compulsory language syllabus, the so-called 'Standard Grade'.



### ***GALLACHER ET AL'S INVESTIGATION OF SCOTTISH FE LEARNERS***

We can juxtapose the above findings with those by Gallacher *et al* (2000) whose research explored factors that influence participation and non-participation in a range of FE provision in Scotland, and also obliquely raised the issue of ‘anxiety’. According to the researchers, many of the research participants were ‘uncertain learners’ “with initially ambivalent attitudes towards learning and considerable doubts about the relevance and value of college, and their own ability to succeed” (*ibid*: 70). Whilst practical support through finance and childcare helped them overcome some of the barriers, the main factor in turning an uncertain learner into an ‘engaged’ learner was a “supportive learning environment and college staff” for the mature student whereas for younger students peer influences were important. There seemed to be a split between some who had clear vocational motives and the more reluctant participants, who were “often coerced by financial incentives, or lack of alternatives” (*ibid*: 71). Whilst Bottery advocates a true ‘empowerment of [learner] clients’ (Bottery, 1998: 173), Gallacher *et al* highlight the difficulties in the first steps of such an endeavour.

### **1.3.2 ‘Technical Rationalism’ or ‘Ideological Commitment’?**

Studies investigating the role of senior managers within the recently marketised education system come to different conclusions, depending on whose perceptions are being investigated. Those investigating it from the perspective of FE staff concluded that incorporation of FE colleges had gone hand in hand with the development of a ‘new managerialism’ (Randle & Brady, 1997) or ‘technical rationalism’ (Hodkinson, 1998), whereby the values of education and learning are assessed in terms of their demonstrable ‘worthiness’ for the economy. By contrast, a study of senior managers across four EU

member states concluded that cost-benefit considerations were also underpinned by “some ideological commitments” (Cloonan *et al*, 1999: 502).

The role of senior managers also comes under the spotlight with regard to ML provision in selected Scottish FE and HE institutions (Scottish Office, 1991b) where the Inspectorate recommended increased senior management support. Yet, in the follow-up study by Hall & Bankowska (1994) lack of such support was still a concern for ML staff. This was consistent with the conclusion by Doughty (1997, 1999a) that senior managers in one FE College considered European funding for exchanges or trips abroad an ‘expense’ and therefore explicitly discouraged such initiatives.

The disparity of findings in these studies highlights the importance of the research participant perspective and the difficulty in obtaining ‘objective’ qualitative data.

### **1.3.3 ‘Strategic Compliance’ or Lack of ‘Ecological’ Awareness?**

#### ***FE TEACHING PROFESSIONALS***

Whilst Randle & Brady (1997: 237) concluded that the new managerialist style they had identified was effectively leading to a de-professionalisation of FE staff Bottery & Wright (1996: 82) contend that academic staff may in fact be contributing to their own de-professionalisation. More recently, Bottery (1998) argues that to begin a professional response to the managerial directives, academic professionals must develop what he calls an ‘ecological’ appreciation of their practice, that is to say

One which ensures that they as individuals and as a profession are aware of developments within their society and are able to locate their practice within a wider picture of social and political issues (*ibid*: 170)

The case study of 5 colleges, Shain & Gleeson (1999), which explored the practices of teaching practitioners to marketised relations in education, is therefore of interest. Shain & Gleeson concluded that lecturers were responding in different ways to the managerial directives. They found that a minority of lecturers either resisting any change or unquestioningly accepting the new values. However, a larger constituency of staff were attempting to reconstruct a new kind of professionalism through ‘strategic compliance’ (*ibid*: 456). This was illustrated by a commitment to new thinking about learning and IT, for example, but at the same defying the system by continuing to collaborate with staff in other colleges despite an official policy of competition between colleges.

Whilst the authors were not optimistic about the rebirth of professionalism in FE in general, they saw ‘strategic compliance’ as a possible basis for rethinking professionalism in the FE sector. In their interpretation of ‘strategic compliance’, the researchers suggest that staff following this maxim seek to minimise negative effects of managerial directives in order to maximise benefit for the student. However, I will argue that programme leaders do not necessarily have “an acute understanding of the political, social and ethical implications of the impact of their practice ...” (Bottery, 1998: 171). Indeed, staff may at times employ ‘strategic compliance’ to protect subjective professional interests, in particular when it comes to decisions about the inclusion of a ML component in a vocational FE programmes. I highlight this by a number of examples.

1. For each unit it delivers, a vocational department (e.g. business or information technology) receives a 'SUM,'<sup>10</sup> which equals a notional 'sum' of money. Subjects located outwith the main vocational area have to be 'bought in' as if they belong to an outside body although they are of course part of the same college. ML study frequently falls into this 'ex-departmental' category. There certainly is a danger that this kind of artificial monetary allocation encourages programme leaders<sup>11</sup> to make choices that benefit their own subject area irrespective of long-term consequences to students.
2. There is evidence to suggest that the monetary incentive connected with the 'European dimension', designed to encourage the inclusion of a ML component in FE programmes has not been implemented in the way that policy-makers intended:

The recognition in [Scotland] that the ability to cope with a modern European language is a necessary competence for the new citizen of Europe is entirely laudable. It is doubtful, however, if a module 1 level performance, which seemed to be all that was envisaged in many cases, would be sufficient to enable a student to cope with the language to the degree anticipated by some programme planners (Scottish Office, 1991b: 1).

According to the Inspectorate, the decision to include a 1-credit beginners' language option was a simple pedagogical misjudgement. However, ML staff interviewed by Hall & Bankowska (1994) claimed that in many cases the inclusion of their subject was a calculated choice by programme leaders to attract European funding:

[Programme leaders] are not really interested in languages; they're just paying lip service to Europe. They may want to tart up their courses to get students in the door...(*ibid*: 49)

Unfortunately, Hall & Bankowska did not investigate the views of programme leaders to verify these claims, an omission the present study aims to address.

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<sup>10</sup> Student Unit of Measurement: A SUM equates to a notional 40 hours of student study time and relates directly to a 1 credit Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) unit. The majority of activity delivered by Scottish FE colleges is based on units approved by SQA.

<sup>11</sup> Lecturers in charge of devising a fulltime programme

***LANGUAGE SPECIALIST TEACHING STAFF***

Counter-productive forms of strategic compliance can also be found amongst ML specialists themselves. McPake *et al* (1999), for example, concluded that a number of ML teachers in secondary schools were deliberately discouraging lower ability students from continuing with ML study post-16. This can be interpreted as a ‘negative’ act of strategic compliance with respect to the ‘Languages for All’ policy, whereby certain students are excluded from ML study ostensibly ‘for their own good’. Again, Hall & Bankowska (1994) did not investigate this particular aspect in their research although they concluded that the students’ “modest aspirations matched the expectations which the teaching staff had of these students” (*ibid*: 3). This statement suggests that ML teaching staff had pre-conceived ideas about the kind of language skills required for work, and the type of employment FE students would be going into. The quote by one of the staff certainly lends weight to this interpretation:

*A University linguist expects a reasonably good salary, whereas business want to pay people who can operate a telephone, which is basically a clerical grade ... the employers like them to be functional and operational (ibid.) original italics*

The respondent has clear expectations regarding the type of jobs for which FE students should be preparing themselves, and the kind of ML competence for which FE students should be striving. Similarly, the finding by McPake *et al* – that ML teachers in secondary schools had discouraged less able pupils from taking the subject – would have direct implications for the FE sector, as its intake is largely from students who do not hold sufficient qualifications, if any, to enter directly into university.

### ***EMPOWERING UNCERTAIN LANGUAGE LEARNERS***

Byram & Risager (1999) see the potential role of language teaching to fulfil a key function in European integration. However, it is not clear to what extent such an ‘idealist’ vision can be implemented in a vocational education sector which is severely restricted. However, if we consider the number of non-native speakers learning vocational subjects through the medium of English, the teaching of the subject, or at least some part of it, through the medium of the target language other than English, commonly referred to as ‘CLIL’ (content and language integrated learning) seems a potential area worthy of exploration. Coyle (2000) writes of some of the successes achieved with lower ability pupils, and I was therefore interested to explore to what degree FE staff would be prepared to ‘comply strategically’ with ML staff in order to ‘empower’ ‘uncertain learners’ by means of a methodology which represents a radical departure from established practices.

#### **1.3.4 Ambiguity in Employer Feedback**

According to policy makers, “the primary responsibility for addressing shortages and gaps lie with employers” (Scottish Office, 1999b, online, §8.1). However, we have already shown that feedback from employers is problematic, and a number of Scottish-based studies investigating the need for ML skills in industry have similarly come to contradictory conclusions as to the messages from employers in this respect<sup>12</sup>.

In the period leading up to the introduction of the ‘Languages for All’ policy in Scottish secondary schools, Duncan & Johnstone (1988) had predicted a rising need amongst

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<sup>12</sup> To paraphrase President Clinton: “The employers have spoken but we can’t be sure as to what they’ve actually said.”

Scottish-based companies to recruit employees with ML skills. Eleven years later, the ELISE study (University of Dundee 1999) into language use and practice in Scottish companies concluded that lack of ML skills was still hindering business communications. However, the sample of companies responding in both studies was low.

More recently, Hall (2000) affirmed that the research evidence for the benefits of ML in Scottish industry was inconclusive. Nevertheless, Hall's other conclusion, that graduates of pure modern language degrees were less likely to find employment than those of other disciplines is directly contradicted by government statistics which show that graduates of 'pure' ML degrees have consistently low unemployment rates (Marshall, 1998; 1999; 2000). On the other hand, MLs did not necessarily feature in those same graduates' jobs and employers may simply appreciate the transferable skills that language graduates acquire as part of their studies.

With the *direct* vocational requirement for language skills in business remaining 'not proven', it seems 'rational' that current Government are not pursuing a strong implementation strategy for a potentially 'irrelevant' skill. However, taking on board the cautionary remarks by Haskel & Holt cited earlier (viz. p. 16), it may well be that employers are simply adapting to language skill shortages. They may do this either by employing foreign nationals as was claimed by Nuffield (Moys, 1998; Nuffield, 2000), or by investing in technology, as evidenced by the introduction of language audio-guides in numerous UK visitor attractions, or the (still problematic) translation tools available on the Internet.

Interestingly, UK labour market researchers concluded that

In the period '94-5 and '96-7, the foreign workforce increased at a faster rate than those of the UK (Salt & Clarke, 1998: 371).

Whilst this increase does not necessarily imply a corresponding rise in demand for, or use of, language skills the findings are nevertheless consistent with Graddol's claim that

Paradoxically, the more English becomes used as the world language, the more the British will need skills in other languages' (Graddol, 1998: 24).

If one accepts Graddol's argument, the marginalisation of the multilingual argument within Scottish FE would serve to exclude FE students from the international labour market. Thus, there is a need to examine the ways in which employers arrive at decisions about the desirability of ML skills whilst further statistics on foreign workforce trends would also be of interest.

### **1.3.5 Analytical Frameworks for Stakeholder Views**

#### ***ATTRIBUTION THEORY***

Attribution theory has its origins in two seminal works, *Psychology of Interpersonal Relations* (Heider, 1958) and *Social Learning and Clinical Psychology* (Rotter, 1954).

In his study of the way 'everyday' people made sense of their world Heider came to the conclusion that when people look for meaning in their experiences, they seek to explain them in terms of simple cause and effect. They may perceive these causes (rightly or wrongly) as external or internal to themselves. They may perceive these causes as being



specific to one instance or valid in a more general sense but in any case, the meanings they have taken from these experiences influence their subsequent thoughts, feelings, and actions.

Rotter’s (1954) was also concerned with internal and external attributions but also paid attention to the perceived locus of control. Both locus of control and causal attributions refer to the relationship between actions and outcomes. Locus of control is a belief about the nature of reinforcement (i.e. rewards and punishments); causal attributions are judgements about the causes of events. Thus, an internally focused individual might still give external causal explanations (e.g. “If I learn French it will look good on my CV but whether I learn French or not depends on whether the jobs I’m going for are likely to require skills in French”). There are parallels between causal attributions and Rotter’s notion of expectation. Because expectation is a belief about whether responses lead to (or cause) reinforcement locus of control is one determinant of expectation. Peterson *et al* (1993) have summarised the relationships between these different concepts, as shown in Table 1-2.

**Table 1-2: Examples of causal explanations for romantic rejection**

<b>Internal locus of control</b>		
	<b>Stable</b>	<i>Global</i> I'm unattractive
		<i>Specific</i> I'm unattractive to X
	<b>Unstable</b>	<i>Global</i> My conversation is <i>sometimes</i> boring
		<i>Specific</i> My conversation bored X
<b>External locus of control</b>		
	<b>Stable</b>	<i>Global</i> Romance is difficult for other people
		<i>Specific</i> Romance is difficult for X
	<b>Unstable</b>	<i>Global</i> People <i>sometimes</i> have rejecting moods
		<i>Specific</i> X was in a rejecting mood

Peterson *et al* (1993:149)

By categorising participant responses into the categories above it is possible to identify whether the causal explanations they give for (not) learning a language tend to be located in the internal or external loci of control, whether these loci are seen as stable or instable, and whether global or specific conclusions are drawn from these allocations. The concepts outlined have in turn informed the so-called self-determination theory.

### **1.3.6 Self-Determination Theory**

The discussion on stakeholders' practices has pointed to 'instinctual' action under certain 'environmental' circumstances, as well as the potential of the individual to dissent from current 'common-sense' assumptions and to act with 'ecological' awareness. With regard to these two notions of the human psyche, i.e. instinct and will, the concept of 'self determination' has recently become of interest again to motivational theorists in Western societies, where individuality and personal control dominate (Beck, 2000). 'Self-determination' can be defined as the conscious act of choosing from available options in order to satisfy one's perceived needs. It is thus not simply an act of pure volition; it implies that one has accepted or integrated certain boundaries and limitations.

#### ***THE MOTIVATION SPECTRUM***

Sociological psychologists have traditionally juxtaposed *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* motivation. The former represents behaviour aimed at satisfying an internally situated reward, such as arising from the enjoyment of doing a particular activity from satisfying one's curiosity. The latter represents behaviour geared towards receiving an externally situated 'reward' (e.g. completing an obligatory subject) or avoiding punishment. There

was a belief that any kind of compulsion would act as a demotivating influence. However, recent research suggests that when extrinsic rewards are sufficiently self-determined and internalised they can be combined with or lead to, intrinsic motivation. Building on their earlier theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), Ryan & Deci (2000) have developed a framework for the various degrees of motivation along the 'self-determination' spectrum that runs from complete apathy or 'amotivation' through a range of extrinsically motivated behaviour to truly 'self-determined' or intrinsically motivated action.

According to Ryan & Deci's conceptualisation, an *amotivated* person lacks intentionality and a sense of personal causation (or locus of control), resulting from either not valuing an activity or not feeling competent to do it. There are several forms of extrinsic motivation, which depend on the degree of acceptance of external influences. *External regulation* refers to the least determined form of extrinsic motivation. *Introjected regulation* involves externally imposed rules that the students may dislike but accepts as normative behaviour (e.g. 'I should be in class on time'). *Identified regulation* means that the individual accepts the usefulness of the regulatory process (e.g. 'I have to pass these courses if I want to go to university'). *Integrated regulation* signifies that the individual has fully assimilated the external requirement with his/her own value system. In other words, the more the individual feels able to identify with these influences, the more autonomous his actions become. Thus, the *intrinsically* motivated individual at the opposite end of the scale feels completely free from external constraints and able to act according to his/her own desires.

**Table 1-3: A taxonomy of human motivation**

Regulatory Styles	Amotivation	Extrinsic Motivation				Intrinsic Motivation
		External regulation	Introjection	Identification	Integration	
<b>Associated Processes</b>	Perceived non-contingency  Low perceived competence  Non-relevance  Non-intentionality	Salience of extrinsic rewards or punishments  Compliance or reactance	Ego involvement  Focus on approval from self or others	Conscious valuing of activity  Self-endorsement of goals	Hierarchical synthesis of goals  Congruence	Interest / enjoyment  Inherent satisfaction
<b>Perceived Locus Of Causality</b>	Impersonal	External	Somewhat external	Somewhat internal	Internal	Internal

Source: Ryan & Deci (2000: 61)

With reference to the study by Hall & Bankowska (1994), one could argue that some of the students interviewed had chosen to include a language option within their study programme because they had either identified or even integrated the language competence requirement imposed on them in order to take advantage of their right to mobility within the EU. By contrast, many of the pupils participating in the study by McPake *et al* (1999) seemed to have merely introjected the external regulation of completing four years of language study. Although they could see some benefit for language learning in the more distant future, it did not fit into their present value system. With respect to participant stakeholder responses, we can explore to what degree college students and staff have identified with the various external regulations imposed upon them.

### 1.3.7 Dörnyei's Analytic Framework for Language Learners

Motivation theories that apply specifically to language learning originated from research conducted by the Canadian social psychologists Gardner and Lambert from the late 1950's onward. In addition to the generic concepts of 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' motivation, Gardner added language specific concepts. Learners who wish to acquire a ML because they are interested in the people associated with that language and its culture have an *integrative* orientation, whereas those who simply learn it to accomplish external goals, such as increasing their employment prospects are *instrumentally* orientated. In the 1990's other writers, notably Dörnyei (1994, 1998) expanded this initial framework and gave it a more education-focussed setting by introducing additional motivational components at the learner and the learning situation levels, as shown in Table 1-4.

Like Gardner, Dörnyei argued that language-related factors were very much context-specific, i.e. varied according to the **socio-cultural context** in which the language learning took place, and could override both the learner and learning situation levels (Dörnyei, 1994: 275). This is significant, as Gardner's study were conducted in Canada, where integrative factors for French would have greater significance than in other English-dominant nations, and Dörnyei's studies relate to the learning of English, where instrumental orientation would be expected to be much higher than that of say, US or UK students learning another foreign language.

The relevance of Dörnyei's expanded framework is evident when we consider the research by Coleman (1996) and McPake *et al* (1999). Both research studies had

concluded that language use anxiety was associated with learners' feelings about language learning generally. McPake *et al* (1999) identified a number of concepts related to the learning situation level, citing both course- and teacher-specific components.

**Table 1-4: Dörnyei's framework for motivation (language learning)**

LANGUAGE LEVEL	Integrative motivational subsystem Instrumental motivational subsystem
LEARNER LEVEL	Need for achievement Self-confidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language use anxiety</li> <li>• Perceived L2 competence</li> <li>• Causal attributions</li> <li>• Self-efficacy</li> </ul>
LEARNING SITUATION LEVEL	
Course-specific motivational components	Interest Relevance Expectancy Satisfaction
Teacher-specific motivational components	Affiliative drive Authority type Direct socialisation of motivation
Group-specific motivational components	Goal orientatedness Norm & reward system Group cohesion Classroom goal structure

Source: Dörnyei (1994: 280)

### ***IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS***

From the above discussions, we now have a second area for exploration in this research study: the perspectives from the different stakeholders in Scottish FE (students, staff, senior managers, industry representatives) on the place of ML study within FE programmes. By incorporating a multi-perspective dimension into the research design it may be possible to identify more accurately what kind assumptions underlie expressed beliefs, and on what basis these beliefs are justified.

All responses, however, are partly dependent on the context in which they are made, and I am aware that this may be changing – in particular, with the declaration of 2001 as the European Year of Languages. This changing context is the third area of exploration.

## 1.4 Investigating Knowledge Constructions

### 1.4.1 Anticipated Discourses and Events

Because 2001 had been declared the European Year of Languages (EYL) the timing of my research was fortuitous, as it had the potential to provide an impetus for the formulation of pro-MI policies and/or increased public recognition of the importance of ML study.

The Nuffield Inquiry into the language needs for the UK was published in May 2000, just one month before I was due to start my own investigation. The authors of the final report (Nuffield Languages Inquiry, 2000) stress again the economic reasons for modern language study and the need for Britain as a whole to have a 'national language capacity' to cope with the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This, the authors suggest, includes the need to consider the language rights of people living within the country, to have access to information and cultural knowledge about other speech communities, whilst still affirming the role of English as a marker of national identity. However, to what degree would student / staff responses reflect agreement with, or resistance to, such pro-language discourses?

As the data collection was getting underway, the publication of the Ministerial Action Group for Languages (MAGL) was imminent but was in fact not launched until December 2000. Its implications (in the light of student responses made just a few months before its publication) are discussed in Section 3.4.

Whitehill College<sup>13</sup>, where I was working for the duration of the data collection phase, was due to move to a more prominent site, and language staff at the college were planning to capitalise on this with a promotional event for languages as part of EYL 2001.

Finally, the steering group of the Scottish FE Network of Modern Languages, of which I am a member, was intending to become more pro-active in light of the threats facing its members. It would therefore be important to track any important developments arising from these interactions with official bodies.

## 1.4.2 Unforeseeable Discourses and Events

In the various research phases, I updated my ‘archaeological records’ and the way in which these influenced the understanding of my research. Although I could not have anticipated most of these, one particular discourse that appeared in 2001 (but which I did not become aware of until 2002) had a directly identifiable origin, in the form of a monograph by Osborne *et al* (1999). In this document the authors refer to the establishment of the Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning (CRLI), a joint initiative between Glasgow Caledonian University and the University of Stirling, and the SFEFC-funded research in which CRLI staff is about to participate: *The supply and demand for Scottish FE*. Osborne *et al* signal some of the concerns they have about their impending investigation, which reflect those outlined by Bottery (1998) earlier:

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<sup>13</sup> pseudonym



The dangers to academic freedom and of becoming too economically deterministic are apparent here [...] However, the need to know more about what employers want is a pressing one which is not limited to FE. One problematic area is that what employers and potential students want, may well differ. The two sets of consumers may have widely different expectations and it is by no means clear that a lifelong learning agenda should be shaped purely by the ability to pay for a product. The documented *needs* of employers may conflict with the *demands* of (potential) students and the CRL will be keenly aware of such tensions. It will seek to explain such conflicts, stimulate debate over their nature, and suggest possible remedies. (Osborne *et al*, 1999: 11)

The findings of the above study are discussed in Section 4.1 as they did indeed prove to be pivotal to my understanding of the ways in which various FE stakeholder may be constructing knowledge claims about the need for ML study.

### **1.4.3 Theoretical Frameworks for Knowledge Constructions**

Motivation theories tell us about the kind of impulses that lead to action, the strength of which could be measured in statistical terms, if desired. However, by considering the ways in which individual experiences are conditioned by processes and structures operating at a wider institutional or societal level a deeper analysis of the underlying assumptions implicit in the rationales and justifications for action is possible. The archaeological records examined in this chapter have pointed to the existence of a (currently) dominant monolingual ideology within Scotland, and a (currently) dominant managerialist ethos within English and Scottish FE sectors. This raises two kinds of question:

- (1) how did this kind of ideology and ethos come to be dominant?
- (2) whose interests are being served by this kind of ideology and ethos – i.e. do these dominant forces move us towards a more equal and just society?

### ***FOUCAULT'S POWER / KNOWLEDGE KNOT***

According to Foucault, who was primarily concerned with the first question, putting 'knowledge' into the public domain increases the power of the 'knower' (Foucault, 1976). Certain claims about or representations of, social reality become (temporarily) accepted as 'truth'.

Using Foucault's analytic framework, one might be able to show, for example, how the colonialist measures of the British Empire and the emergent economic and political strength of the USA contributed to the establishment of English as a major world language, and in turn facilitated the notion amongst native English speakers that 'English is enough'.

#### **Limitations of the Foucauldian Perspective**

Foucault argues that the exercise of power usually happens through concealed channels, but once power and its exclusionist nature are recognized, people are liable to resist it (Foucault, 1976: 86), thereby revealing its existence. However, to what purpose should people resist any such power? Foucault refused to make any universal political or moral judgements. Whilst we may resist perceived oppression, Foucault argues that this resistance may not necessarily lead to a more equal and just society:

Liberty is a practice. So there may, in fact, always be a certain number of projects whose aim is to modify some constraints... but none of these projects can, simply by its nature, assure that people will have liberty automatically, that it will be established by the project itself. The liberty of men is never assured by the institutions and laws that are intended to guarantee them. (Foucault, 1984: 245)

Foucault suggests that power undermines the rational basis and practical efficacy of resistance but according to this logic the resistance he advocates loses its own justification. With respect to ML learning, for example, which practice approximates

that of ‘liberty’ – those who resist the dominance of English, or those who resist the learning of other languages? Whose ‘interests’ merit greater attention?

### ***‘KNOWLEDGE CONSTRUCTION’ AND CRITICAL THEORY***

Critical theorists have argued that whilst the idea of an equal and just society may be utopian we should nevertheless endeavour towards it. They consider the contemporary historical and cultural contexts in their investigations, and attempt to address issues in a way that goes beyond the focus on the past to consider future possibilities.

#### **Tendency to technical rationality in ‘scientifically enlightened’ societies**

In their influential collaborative publication, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer, and Adorno argue that science and progress, which were meant to replace the manipulative power of myth, in fact created a new mythology. Humans, they argue, only want to increase their understanding of nature in order to subjugate it, i.e. merely (ab)using it as a resource, even to the point of sacrificing it for their own gratification (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1979: 4). Scientific or instrumental reason has in fact led to a narrowing of the faculty of reasoning where ends have become more important than the means and “...whatever does not conform to the rule of computation and utility is suspect” (*ibid*: 6).

The concern of successive Scottish policy makers to establish ‘statistically verifiable’ skills maps of demand and supply, and to regard the achievement of measurable ‘performance indicators’ of individual FE colleges as reliable, trustworthy evidence that

they are doing well, can be seen as continuing, visible manifestations of this projected tendency.

### **Self-determination according to Marcuse**

Marcuse's conceptualisation of the term 'self-determination' can be traced back to Freud's work in psychoanalysis. In an attempt to 'fuse' the writings of Marx and Freud, Marcuse (1955) sought to explain how mass media and popular culture through the production of pervasive and increasingly provocative sexual images serve to produce an effect of 'desublimation' on the individual. This manifests itself, amongst other things, in political inactivity.

In *One-dimensional man*, Marcuse (1964) further theorised the decline of revolutionary potential in capitalist societies by means of the very technological advancement that is meant to 'liberate' humans from their toil. Instead, Marcuse argues, these technologies help to develop new forms of social control, which in turn help reproduce existing systems and eliminate oppositional standpoints. The result is one-dimensional construction of thought and behaviour; in other words, the ability for critical thinking and oppositional behaviour is diminishing. At first glance, self-determination as envisaged by Marcuse is similar to the conceptualisation by Ryan & Deci (2000). It implies an acceptance of boundaries and limitations, the ability (a) to recognise the forces operating on oneself and (b) to consciously choose a course of action that satisfy one's needs. However, according to Marcuse, this type of self-determining action is only possible if individuals can 'free' themselves from the subliminal influences of 'mediated' information that they are subjected to:

Self-determination will be real to the extent to which the masses have been dissolved into individuals liberated from all propaganda, indoctrination, and manipulation, capable of knowing and comprehending the facts and evaluating the alternatives. (Marcuse, 1964: 252)

In other words, Marcuse's self-determination is a critical faculty that enables one to realise the exclusionary forces of ostensibly rational decisions. With respect to this study, it can be defined as the ability to recognise that satisfying short term desires does not necessarily result in satisfying long term needs. Marcuse argues that this kind of self-determining action is unconsciously being suppressed, and our wilfully chosen actions will support the status quo.

Marcuse's premise that people expect greater convenience in all aspects of life can be extended into the field of education. For example, by reducing learning to a series of qualifications, which in turn are modularised into small 'chunks', education can be perceived of as a set of consumer goods to purchase rather than a cognitive process in which to engage. In such a marketised education system, curriculum subjects requiring a consistent and sustained effort, and/or those exposing individuals to 'alien' forms of thinking, will be not be popular choices.

### **Communicative Action and Emancipatory Knowledge**

Habermas (1972) is less pessimistic about the potential of individuals to 'free themselves'. In order to provide a theoretical framework to enable such emancipation, he demonstrates that different forms of science employ different modes of reasoning. They therefore serve different kinds of interest through the creation and production of knowledge. In Habermas's own words, "the specific viewpoints from which we can apprehend reality as in any way whatsoever' are an orientation toward "technical control", "mutual understanding" or "emancipation" (*ibid*: 311).

By exposing which interest we are serving, we may be able to ‘free’ ourselves from its ‘seductive’ elements. For example, we can be orientated towards ‘technical control’ for scientific investigations that work towards the improvement of human condition, but keep in harmony with nature. In social interactions, however, we should aim for ‘mutual understanding’ not ‘technical control’ of the other. For Habermas, as for Marcuse, the emancipatory power that holds power abuse in check is the ability to assess situations critically. However, he believes that such an emancipation is possible when “free and equal, autonomous individuals” are able to participate in discourse which facilitates the formation of a consensus that is free from constraint, a concept he refers to as ‘communicative action’ (Habermas, 1984; 1987).

In terms of my research, we can ask whether the implicit endorsement of non-language learning is defensible in a society characterised by ever-increasing movements of people from widely differing cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and we can explore possible ways in which vocational and educational aims may connect to emancipatory ideals of rationality, justice, and freedom. We can also ask to what degree students may be seduced by the idea that ‘English is enough’, and in what ways academic staff in FE colleges may be implicitly or unwittingly supporting students in the maintenance of this belief.

### ***IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS***

The knowledge construction theories of Foucault, Marcuse, and Habermas can be used to examine both the formal (written) and the informal (oral) discourses that will be produced in the external context during the investigative phase, as well as to assess the influence of these external discourses on the data produced (and/or vice versa). This flexibility is advantageous because the significance of the various discourses will only become apparent as the research progresses.

Using Foucault’s concepts, I can explore to what extent certain discourses are being resisted, implicitly or explicitly, thereby helping to expose hidden power relations. Using the Critical Theorist concept of ‘technical rationality’, I aim to identify how stakeholders’ actions and/or resistance are helping to advance the prospects of Scottish FE students, both as citizens of the European Union and as future participants in the international labour market. I intend to use Habermas’s concept of ‘emancipation’ to identify strategies that have the potential to transform existing ways of thinking into more liberating and empowering modes of action.

## 1.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have identified three interconnected areas for my investigation: policy, stakeholder views, and the external context. By means of theories relating to policy, motivation and knowledge construction I intend to analyse the arguments on modern languages presented in formal and informal policy discourses as well as those put forward by FE stakeholders, and consider these within the light of the socio-historical and socio-cultural factors. In Table 1-5 below I summarise the three key issues I intend to explore, based on the overarching ‘knowledge construction’ frameworks (the shaded boxes represent commonalities across the frameworks).

**Table 1-5: Key issues considered within knowledge construction frameworks**

Key Issue	Foucault	Marcuse	Habermas
<b>The state/status of ML in Scottish FE as expressed in official and other public discourses</b>	How are MLs portrayed in official discourses? Whose interests are being promoted in these texts? What are the implicit assumptions in the collection and use of statistical data?		
	Is there evidence of resistance to these discourses?	In the light of evidence arising from the data analysis what are the implications for the notion that ‘English is enough’?	
<b>The state/status of ML in Scottish FE as expressed by FE stakeholders</b>	How do stakeholders account for their views? Whose interests are being promoted in stakeholders’ accounts?		
	Is there resistance to any discourses?	What evidence is there of critical self-determination? Are the views expressed likely to lead to a more equal and just society?	
<b>Knowledge constructions regarding the state/status of ML in Scottish FE</b>	In what ways are the processes and structures in operation at professional, institutional and policy level conditioned by the specific cultural and historical context in which they operate?		
		Whose interests are being promoted through these assumptions and processes?	
		What evidence is there that newly published official discourses and/or FE stakeholder views (dis)empower Scottish FE students?	In the light of the data analysis, what strategies may help bring about a better-informed and more inclusive language policy?

## 1.6 Research Aims and Research Questions

In the light of the literature review the original research concerns can now be extended into three research aims, which in turn generate a number of key research questions:

1. Assess the arguments on the place of ML study in Scottish FE as arising from official and other discourses.
  - RQ 1.1** How is ML study being presented in official and other discourses? Whose interests are being promoted in the official discourses?
  - RQ 1.2** What are the implicit assumptions in the collection and use of statistical data? Whose interests are being promoted through these assumptions?
  
2. Analyse the views of stakeholders in Scottish FE with respect to ML study and the ML learning experience in Scottish FE programmes.
  - RQ 2.1** How do ML learners account for their views on the ML learning experience in Scottish FE. What are the underlying motivational characteristics of these views? Is there evidence of resistance to any official or other public discourses?
  - RQ 2.2** How do ML staff account for their views on, and their management of, the ML learning experience in Scottish FE? Is there evidence of resistance to any official or other public discourses?
  - RQ 2.3** How do stakeholders in Scottish FE (ML/non-ML students, ML/non-ML staff and industry representatives) account for their views on the inclusion of a ML in Scottish FE programmes? Is there evidence of resistance to any official or other public discourses? Whose interests are being promoted in stakeholders' accounts?
  
3. Assess the influence of socio-cultural and socio-historical assumptions in the production of knowledge claims with respect to the place of modern languages in Scottish further education
  - RQ 3.1** In what ways are the processes and structures in operation at professional, institutional and policy level conditioned by the specific cultural and historical context in which they operate? Whose interests are being promoted in these processes?
  - RQ 3.2** In the light of evidence arising from the data analysis what are the implications for the notion that 'English is enough'?
  - RQ 3.3** In the light of evidence arising from the data analysis, what strategies may help bring about a better informed, consensual and more inclusive<sup>14</sup> modern language policy?

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<sup>14</sup> By more inclusive I mean a policy that includes all languages (i.e. heritage, community and 'foreign') and all education sectors.



The data are presented in three ‘Research Phase’ chapters as set out below.

Research Phase	Data	Research Questions addressed
2000	Context	1.1
	Scottish FE Network - Languages	2.2
	SQA Statistics	1.2
	Students	2.1, 2.3
	Discussion of Findings 2000	3.1, 3.2
2001	Context	1.1
	Language Tutors	2.2, 2.3
	SFEFC Statistics	1.2
	Senior Managers	2.3
	Discussion of Findings 2000-01	3.1, 3.2
2002	Context	1.1
	Programme Leaders	2.3
	Communication Tutors	2.3
	Industry Representatives	2.3
	Discussion of Findings 2000-02	3.1, 3.2
Final Discussion & Implications		3.1, 3.2, 3.3

Each research phase starts with an outline of significant external events and an updated literature review (‘archaeological records’) thereby addressing not only RQ 1.1 but also, in an iterative manner, RQ 3.1. Each research phase has a different emphasis with respect to the remaining RQs. For example, in Chapter 3 (Research Phase 2000), the student data refers to parts of RQ 2.1 and 2.3 whereas the SQA statistical data falls under RQ 1.2. In Chapter 4 (Research Phase 2001), ML staff and senior manager data address RQ 2.2 and 2.3; RQ 1.2 is revisited via the analysis of SFEFC statistical data. In Chapter 5 (Research Phase 2002), I concentrate on RQ 2.3 through the analysis of the remaining stakeholder data: programme leaders, communication tutors, and industry representatives. At the end of each research phase I then consider the findings in the light of the contextual factors, thereby progressively addressing RQ 3.1 and 3.2. RQ 3.3 is addressed in the final chapter (Discussion and Implications of Findings).



# 2 INVESTIGATIVE FRAMEWORK

Philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it (Karl Marx)

## 2.1 Investigating My Inner Self

### 2.1.1 Fluid Understandings

As I intimated in Chapter 1, I did not begin the research with a clear focus on ‘knowledge construction’ nor did I approach it with an open or blank mind; indeed, it can be argued that it is impossible to do so. My choice of research topic, choice of research techniques and choice of which questions to ask in the interviews, were inevitably coloured by my own prior understandings, the genealogy of which I have outlined previously. Similarly, the responses given by the research participants would have arisen out of *their* prior understandings as well as by their perception of me in my dual roles as professional colleague and/or researcher.

As my research progressed the data did indeed change me, and the ways I thought about the issues, but certain discourses also changed my thinking. I began to read the interview transcripts differently, and to analyse them differently. In this sense, the process of analysis was an evolutionary one but the impetus for transformations resulted from key turning points in the external context. Some aspects of this evolution were predictable, but others certainly could not have been.

Although I decided to make use of both Foucault and Critical Theory concepts, I accept that I am using them in different ways to the original authors. I interpreted the data from an evolving standpoint, but one that had meaning within that interpretation. In this way, the data, my own knowledge construction, and the theoretical writings I used are all related in a reflexive way. The epistemological and theoretical expositions that follow thus represent my *current* understanding of myself, and my positions within the research.

## 2.1.2 Epistemological Underpinnings

During the data collection stage, I intended to engage in social interactions with the various stakeholders identified in Chapter 1 in order to gain an insight into their viewpoints and world constructions. This would involve the negotiation of new kinds of knowledge and would thus be consistent with a social constructionist epistemology.

According to Burr (1999: 3-5) social constructionists

- take a critical stance towards their own taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world;
- consider that the ways in which they understand their world are historically and culturally specific;
- believe that people construct knowledge through social interactions and that ‘truths’ are not objective observations but the result of social processes of daily life, i.e. they are ‘negotiated’ understandings;
- believe that these negotiated understandings can take a wide variety of different forms making many ‘social constructions’ of the world possible.

However, during my interactions with research participants I would be trying to elicit *their* perceptions on a topic of interest to *me*. In other words, whilst I would be attempting to discover *their* ‘common-sense’ view of the world, the outcome of this interaction would not (necessarily) be a newly ‘negotiated understanding’ about the

place of ML learning in Scottish FE. Rather, from participants' responses I would be formulating anew my *own subjective* interpretation about the issue. In this sense, my stance could be considered subjectivist. According to Crotty,

In subjectivism, meaning does not come out of an interplay between subject and object but is imposed on the object by the subject...(Crotty, 1998: 9).

Similarly, from my engagement with the literature I have taken subjective meanings. I recognize that other individuals reading the same texts might well have taken different meanings from those discourses that appeared coherent and meaningful to them in light of *their* previous experiences and understandings. I therefore openly included myself as an object of my own study, i.e. as a professional working within one of the sites during the ongoing investigation. In order to visualise to the reader the two distinct voices arising from my differing, sometimes conflicting, positions I created 'textual spaces' by means of footnotes; firstly as 'Hannah', the FE professional and secondly as 'HD', the researcher.

### **2.1.3 Theoretical Perspectives**

I have decided to give preference to critical theory even though a postmodern approach, which admits a multitude of perspectives, might have been considered a logical choice. Certainly, both critical and postmodernist thinkers are sceptical about the existence of 'objective' or scientific 'truths', and both maintain that in any discourse there are hidden powers at play. However, practical prescriptions are said to be incompatible with a postmodernist perspective (Usher & Edwards, 1994: 158). Critical theorists on the other hand believe as I do that the ideal of an equal and just society is a worthwhile aim to strive towards, even if its full realisation remains utopian (Crotty, 1998: 159). In order to

identify the potential for such alternative futures they advocate the re-reading of findings in the light of the contemporary socio-historical and socio-cultural context. I therefore will now attempt to reconsider my pro-language stance in this way.

## **2.2 Why Do Language Skills Matter?**

Bottery's (1998) plea for 'ecological' awareness amongst academic professionals has similar aims in mind when he urges them to reconsider educational practices within economic concerns and highlight deficiencies in the assumptions made by educational reformists. I now intend to follow his advice by re-casting my pro-language arguments within economic and sociological frameworks, in order to evaluate the 'ecological' strength of a pro-language stance.

### **2.2.1 The Game Theory Concept**

Habermas himself appears to have developed his theory of communicative action using elements of economic game theory, which was first put forward in the 1940s by von Neumann and Morgenstern (Habermas, 1984: 86). Game theory is a mathematical model frequently used to study problems in economics, although it has been applied in other fields such as political science and psychology. It is used to study interactions with formalised incentive structures ('games'). The predicted and actual behaviour of individuals in these games are studied and optimal strategies for participating players explored.

A key concept of game theory is the zero-sum game, essentially a competitive game where one person wins at the expense of someone else's loss. Conversely, in a non-zero sum game somebody's win is not necessarily somebody else's loss. For example, trade is considered a non-zero-sum activity when all participants in a voluntary transaction believe that they will be better off after the trade than before (because otherwise they would not participate). Not every participant may benefit equally but a trade is still a non-zero-sum situation whenever the result is a net gain, regardless of how evenly or unevenly that gain is distributed.

Similarly, we can consider knowledge to be a non-zero-sum commodity because it can be used by many people without being "used up." Finally, and most significantly, it can be argued that a globalising and globalised society will increasingly need to find non-zero sum solutions as it becomes more complex, specialized, and interdependent.

### **2.2.2 EFL Learning as a Non-Zero Sum Activity**

If we consider the learning of EFL (English as a foreign language) from the economic perspective, it can be argued that this, too, is essentially a non-zero sum activity since the result is a net benefit to both parties. In an idealised situation, the teacher earns money from teaching the language, fosters positive relationships with his or her students, who in turn use English to engage in trade with both English-dominant countries as well as countries where English can serve as a consensual medium for communication. Indeed, it has been argued that the means by which globalisation has been able to flourish is through English via the development of ever more sophisticated communication

technologies. Trade fuels economic activity and hopefully leads to greater prosperity for all concerned.

At the same time, we can contend that EFL learning involves subtle uses of power.

According to Phillipson,

the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages (Phillipson, 1992: 47; original italics)

a practice he defines as ‘linguistic imperialism’. According to Phillipson, the promotion of English as *the* premier language of international communication has engendered a neglect of, and even disregard for, lesser spoken languages. At the same time, he appears to wilfully dismiss the fact that current EFL learning does not entail the deliberate suppression of indigenous languages as might have been the case during Britain’s colonial expansion period. On the other hand, one could level the accusation of linguistic imperialism at other nation states, including those of Western Europe, which used the creation of ‘official’ languages as a powerful tool for nation building (Wright, 1999). In this sense, the current domination of English as *lingua franca* has been at the expense of other ‘contenders’ such as, say Spanish, French, or even German – the latter being the most widely spoken *mother tongue* language within Europe.

Let us for the moment, therefore, simply contend that EFL learning has *de facto* been consensual amongst EU member states – although that consensus cannot be taken for granted.



### 2.2.3 Global English and the Nash Equilibrium

One leading developer of Game Theory was the mathematician (and later Nobel prize winner) John Nash. Nash demonstrated by mathematical means that there are certain conditions under which competing players in non-cooperative games (such as poker) can reach what was later termed the 'Nash equilibrium'. The term refers to the state achieved when individual players, essentially out to win for their own profit (much like in a capitalist society), decide under certain conditions to pursue a strategy that will result in the best possible outcome for the group as a whole rather than for each individual (i.e. aim for a 'win-win' situation).

If we transfer this concept to the linguistic field, we can argue that the consensual agreement of speaking in English requires that negotiations are taking place in an environment that is mutually supportive of all speakers present. Thus, a state of 'Nash equilibrium' may be achievable when, in order to facilitate communication between all participants, each individual agrees, of their own accord, to opt for a consensual *lingua franca* rather than insisting on their own language. This can also be classed as a non-zero sum activity, as all participants benefit from it. However, a Nash equilibrium can have different degrees of stability. If two non-native speakers of English agree to speak English amongst themselves to facilitate communication, the equilibrium is more stable than when one of the partners is a native English speaker. This is because the power relationship is more likely to be evenly distributed in the former context and therefore mutual trust is more easily achieved. I will return to this point a little later.

## 2.2.4 Linguistic Resistance as Non-Zero Sum Activity

There is evidence (e.g. Nuffield Languages Inquiry, 2000) to suggest that the relative usage of English on the Internet, where it has traditionally been seen as the dominant language, is declining as people start to reclaim their linguistic identity. The sociologist Giddens in referring to “the Latinising of Los Angeles” (Giddens, 1999: online, Lecture 1) argues that the linguistic and cultural ‘re-awakening’ can be seen as a visible form of resistance to homogenising pressures. People, he claims, want to communicate in their native tongue, i.e. they seek to maintain their linguistic distinctiveness or individuality. The recent creation of the Scottish parliament after an absence of nearly 300 years, accompanied by a renewed interest in the indigenous or ‘heritage’ languages of Scotland - Gaelic and Scots - is testament to this claim.

Of course, Gaelic was not spoken in all parts of Scotland, and its promotion to national significance might be regarded by some as an ‘invented tradition’, similar to the invention of the Scottish tartan in the nineteenth century (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). However, I propose that these invented traditions have served Scotland’s tourism economy well, and that renewed interest in Gaelic allows the rediscovery of an ancient heritage that was in danger of disappearing. In this sense, linguistic resistance can be thought of as linguistic re-affirmation and termed to be a non-zero sum activity.

Expanding on my earlier point about the learning of English, *any* modern language learning would thus constitute such a mutually beneficial or non-zero sum activity. By voluntarily relinquishing their own linguistic rights, the language learner gains the respect of the native speaker, who in turn will make a greater effort to understand the communicative intentions of the language learner.

### 2.2.5 ‘English-only’ as Manufactured Risk

I have argued (cf. p. 56) that whilst the (consensual) use of English in trading transactions is a non-zero sum activity not everyone necessarily benefits equally. In such situations, the native English speaker might conclude that s/he has the ‘upper hand’ and consider reliance on English as both sufficient and unproblematic. However, in *sociological* terms this type of attitude, which I term ‘linguistic complacency’, can be seen to inculcate certain threats. According to Giddens,

Risk is the mobilising dynamic of a [capitalist] society bent on change, that wants to determine its own future rather than leaving it to religion, tradition, or the vagaries of nature... by calculating future profit and loss (Giddens, 1999 online, lecture 2)

The promotion of ELF (English as *lingua franca*), whilst creating numerous advantages for native English speakers, has also ‘manufactured’ a number of language-related risks for a ‘linguistically complacent’ society that relies on English only.

#### ***RISK #1: LINGUISTIC DEPENDENCY***

The continued reliance on English in multilingual settings increases English monolinguals’ dependency on other people. Trade interactions with multilingual speakers therefore require a greater investment of trust on the part of the monolingual. A loss of trust could arise if the multilingual partner was found to have deliberately manipulated the other’s lack of linguistic knowledge to his or her own advantage. This in turn would unbalance the maintenance of a linguistic ‘Nash equilibrium’ as referred to earlier. Abuse of linguistic power in political situations may have a similar effect. At worse, the resultant mistrust might lead to the development of a fundamentalist attitude to anything perceived as being ‘other’, an attitude which according to Giddens:

... has no time for ambiguity, multiple interpretation or multiple identity - it is a refusal of dialogue in a world whose peace and continuity depend on it (Giddens, 1999, online, lecture 3)

Of course, fundamentalism would not simply be 'cured' by multilingualism. However, the examples demonstrate that the power of language is hidden in many seemingly 'non-linguistic' contexts. By implication, the unmasking of this hidden power may be a complex process and consequently dislodging peoples' common-sense perceptions about the unproblematic reliance on 'English-only' could prove to be a difficult enterprise.

### ***RISK #2: PERCEPTION OF LINGUISTIC ARROGANCE***

We have already stated that the teaching of English as a 'value-free' international language has been contested (e.g. Phillipson, 1992; Pennycook, 1994; Tollefson, 1995). However, by refusing to learn other languages, non-native speakers of English (and others) may begin to believe, if they have not already done so, that native English speakers are at the very least exercising a form of linguistic arrogance, if not imperialism. It is irrelevant whether this belief is real or imagined; either way the consensual use of English as *lingua franca*, i.e. its Nash equilibrium, would be disturbed, with loss of trust on either side leading to a breakdown in communication.

### ***RISK #3: REMOVAL OF LANGUAGE 'OWNERSHIP'***

The Nuffield Languages Inquiry (2000) and others before (e.g. Graddol, 1997; Moys, 1998) have indicated that there are already a myriad of different 'Englishes' in existence, some even with their own dictionaries. Considering that the majority of the world's English speakers are not native speakers of the language, it is reasonable to assume that a non-British form of English will be accepted as the international norm. This might

involve learning a different kind of vocabulary for certain concepts, for example, or accepting phrases that are currently considered grammatically false.

Secondly, although considered improbable in the current circumstances, the dominance of English cannot be guaranteed. Speakers of Chinese as a first language already outnumber those of English, and other global languages, such as Arabic and Spanish are fast catching up (Graddol, 1997; 1998). Unforeseen changes in political order could threaten the present dominance of English, however unlikely this may currently seem from a Western viewpoint.

#### ***RISK #4: DIMINISHED EMPLOYABILITY***

Even if we assume that English will remain the dominant global language, we have to accept that because of people's linguistic resistance to hegemonising forces they are likely to use English as an *additional* rather than a 'replacement' language.

Thus, in light of the well documented increase in service industries the labour market statistics by Salt & Clarke (1998) can be read as potential indicators that multilingual workers will be the beneficiaries of this trend, as Graddol (1997, 1998) argued earlier. Accordingly, whilst trade may be a non-zero sum activity, the unequal balance of employment resulting thereof may lead to resentment on the part of the losers.

### **2.2.6 Language Learning as a Precautionary Principle**

Giddens (1999, online, lecture 2) cites the so-called 'precautionary principle' as a way of dealing with manufactured risk, where action is taken even though there is insecure scientific evidence. Thus in the 1980's, in several Continental countries, programmes were initiated to counter acid rain, whereas in Britain lack of conclusive evidence was used to rationalize inactivity about this and other pollution problems.

Similarly, the lack of conclusive ML skill benefits may justify Government's reluctance to divert expense and energy on ensuring the successful implementation of its ML policies. Yet if people accepted the arguments regarding the 'manufactured risks' of 'English only' they might support more proactively the development of a pro-language learning society as a precautionary measure. Such a consensus would reduce the need for a *quantifiable* proof for the benefits arising from a pro-ML stance. In that case, Government considerations could concentrate on effective ways in which the ideal of a pro-language learning society might be realised.

### **2.2.7 Implications for My Research**

I do not claim my stance to be an objective one. However, having submitted my pro-multilingual position to 'ecological' deliberations (e.g. considering whether it is a worthwhile economic / sociological aim for a country to encourage and actively support a policy of multilingualism if its national language has global proportions) I have added theoretical weight to my 'intuitive' preferences. In other words, I can claim on economic *and* sociological grounds that a pro-language strategy is a worthwhile and

desirable path for Scottish policy makers to pursue in a world that is recognizably multicultural and multilingual.

That is not to disregard the more negative conclusions drawn from the discourses presented in Chapter 1 such as:

- the speculation that in a society which is becoming increasingly reliant on technological facilitators the very people that would most benefit from increased language competence, i.e. students on FE programmes, may be ‘seduced’ into a sense of security that ‘English is enough’
- the speculation that FE staff and managers may ‘strategically comply’ to maintain monolingual attitudes and beliefs on the basis of ostensibly ‘rational’ decisions, which in turn are likely to be based on short-term financial criteria, whilst largely disregarding longer term ‘ecological’ consequences.

I have already elaborated on the ways in which I arrived at my pro-language stance and why I decided that I could maintain it for the purposes of the present study. Further, my multiple roles in the research – as researcher AND practitioner within Scottish FE, imply both a rational and an affective involvement in the object of study, and I exemplify this below.

During the study itself, I engaged in quite a lot of ‘positioning’ in order to maximize the success of attempts to establish contact. I did this by emphasizing the ways in which I could be said to be similarly located to the people I wanted to interview. With students I highlighted that I was myself a student thereby underplaying my lecturer status. With college staff and industry representatives, I emphasised other commonalities such as empathy with professional workload. At the same time, I added authority to my request for access by using letter-headed correspondence written by my research supervisor (see **Appendices XI, XV, XX**).

## 2.3 Research Strategy

### 2.3.1 First Doctoral Investigation into ML in Scottish FE

To the best of my knowledge, this is the first doctoral investigation into the state and status of modern languages in Scottish further education. For this reason, I wanted to lay some solid foundations onto which further studies could build. In order to fill some of the knowledge gaps identified in Chapter 1 I would need to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. However, educational researchers are divided about the benefits of adopting a so-called ‘multi-strategy’ methodology.

### 2.3.2 The Objections to Multi-Strategy Research

According to Bryman (1988: 104), the main objection to multi-strategy research is on epistemological grounds. For some researchers, decisions on a given data collection method are linked to certain “conceptions of the world which allow these instruments to be used for the purposes conceived” (Hughes, 1990: 11). Others (e.g. Guba, 1985; Morgan, 1998) claim that qualitative and quantitative research methods belong to different research ‘paradigms’.

The notion of ‘paradigm’ was introduced by Kuhn (1963), in relation to the set ways the scientific community conducts its research and produces credible empirical evidence. He claimed that quantitative and qualitative research paradigms are *incommensurable*, i.e. inconsistent with each other because of divergent assumptions, which links the argument to epistemological standpoints.



Bryman (1988: 126), on the other hand, argues that the choice of data collection is a *technical* one, and not dependent on one's epistemological position. However, I disagree with his claim and contend instead that the epistemological stance of the researcher determines the interpretation of the data. Thus, seen from an objectivist stance "subjective meanings ... at best 'reflect' or 'mirror' 'approximate' objective meanings" (Crotty, 1998: 15), whereas from a constructionist stance "scientific knowledge is just a particular form of constructed knowledge designed to serve particular purposes" (*ibid*: 16). This reinforces my earlier point of accepting that I started research with a given pre-disposition towards the subject, but one that has been acknowledged from the outset and scrutinized throughout the research process.

### **2.3.3 The Benefits of Multi-Strategy Research**

According to Hammersley (1996), the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, which he calls a 'multi-strategy' research, can offer a number of advantages, e.g.:

1. It can increase credibility through triangulation by methods
2. Quantitative methods can facilitate the collection of qualitative methods or vice versa
3. The two strategies can complement each other in order to highlight different aspects of the research

With respect to my own study, quantitative and the qualitative data would be complementing each other. The statistical information on ML uptake would either confirm or refute the perception that ML uptake was declining, whilst the views expressed by students and staff would shed light on some of the reasons underlying the

decline, and possibly identify opportunities for greater uptake. On the other hand, there was a chance that the quantitative data might influence the collection of the qualitative data. For example, ML statistics might be able to pinpoint colleges that were ‘bucking the trend’, and these colleges might then be included in the sample for the qualitative data.

According to Tashakkori & Teddlie, decisions on which data collection method to use may also

... depend upon the research questions as currently posed and the phase of the research cycle that is ongoing (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998: 24).

This certainly applied in my case. My original research design only envisaged statistical data collection from one source and (mainly) qualitative data from students and teaching staff. However, I eventually felt (and partly was) obliged to gather statistical data from a second source, as well as qualitative data from additional perspectives.

## **2.4 Data Collection Methods**

### **2.4.1 Initial Pragmatic Considerations**

I decided to allocate one year (June 2000 to June 2001) to the data collection phase, and to use my ‘insider’ knowledge to select suitable periods when intended research participants, students and staff in FE colleges, might be less burdened by academic responsibilities.

### ***SCOPE OF INVESTIGATION***

Whilst I chose to collect data from more than one college in order to increase the credibility of my findings, I also had to consider whether it would be practicable to collect data from all five institutions willing to participate.<sup>15</sup> Since there would be a maximum of 24 staff participants I decided this would be feasible.

### ***STUDENT DATA***

Taking into account the gaps in the research by Hall & Bankowska (1994), I decided to collect views from three different types of (full-time) study programmes:

1. programme with NO language component (ML-no)
2. programme with OPTIONAL language component (ML-option)
3. programme with COMPULSORY language component (ML-yes)

The choice to collect data from fulltime programmes was made for several reasons. Firstly, it is important to note that although fulltime students make up a minority of college enrolments, they account for the majority of SUMs, and are therefore an important source of income for the college (a detail that would become more significant during research phase 2002). Secondly, it would be easier to arrange access to full-time students, as they attend during the day. Thirdly, I wanted to include the views of younger students, who again tend to be on full-time programmes. Finally, I knew from professional experience, that there were few, if any, part-time programmes with ML components, so it would not be possible to have comparative data across colleges.

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<sup>15</sup> The participating colleges are of varied size and their demographical locations can be described as either industrial or semi-industrial, and all were located within what is called the 'central belt' of Scotland. This is an area extending from Dundee in the east to Glasgow in the west. To preserve colleges' anonymity they have been renamed as follows: Blackford, Greenbank, Redhall, Yellowcraig and Whitehill (the latter being my own college).

I calculated that there would be a maximum of 15 student groups or between 100 and 200 students. Various qualitative collection methods were considered, including setting up a website. However, in collaboration with the participating language tutors we agreed that the data collection would consist of a questionnaire with open-ended questions, which would also serve as the basis for a (recorded) follow-on group discussion. In this way, each student would have an opportunity to put down at least some of their thoughts on the various questions posed even if they did not volunteer any further information in the group discussion. To facilitate the collection of the student data, language tutors agreed to administer the questionnaires and hold follow-up group discussions in their own institutions, if possible, on my behalf. Thus the questionnaire was also a fall back position should staff not be able to find the time or be able to negotiate lengthy access to student groups.

### ***COLLEGE STAFF DATA***

With respect to college staff data, I decided that the semi-structured interview would be the most suitable means. This method allows the researcher to explore questions around the topic s/he is researching but allows research participants to include items of their own concern. The selected staff categories were firstly language tutors and programme leaders as they are in positions of influence on students, through the language learning experience and programme design respectively. I also included Communication Tutors (CTs) because communication is highlighted as an essential skill in almost every job advert and it is a core subject in virtually every NC and HN qualification validated by the SQA. In addition, this inclusion would enable me to compare two staff categories who teach communicative skills, one with 'official' policy backing (CTs), one without (LTs).

### ***MULTIPLE COLLECTION POINTS***

The allocated 12-month period for the data collection (June 2000-June 2001) happened to coincide with a number of ML-related publications and initiatives. I therefore wanted to attempt to gather student and staff views with respect to ML learning towards the beginning, middle, and end of the academic session 2000-01. The first data collection was to establish initial views from student and staff perspectives, and the two subsequent data collections were intended to establish, in what ways, if any, the various pro-language initiatives might be influencing these views.

### ***INFORMAL POLICY DISCOURSES***

According to Humes (1997), people close to the policy making process ('insiders') may not be willing (or not be allowed) to divulge their own opinions on the issue being investigated. Further, their accounts are likely to have undergone a "socialisation process" of the 'inside' world of policy community with its "taken-for-granted values" (*ibid*: 22). By contrast, if gaining access is found to be difficult or time-consuming, he suggests using the 'outside' approach, i.e. subjecting published documents to discourse analysis. I intended to use the first option because it was conceivable that in the wake of reports such as the Nuffield Inquiry and the MAGL Report, or in anticipation of the European Year of Languages, government officials might have been keen to engage in discussion.

Figure 2-1 represents a summary of how I envisaged the research process to evolve at the time of starting my data collection in June 2000.

Figure 2-1: Visualisation of intended research design

Timeline →	June 2000	Sep-Oct 2000	Nov00 – Jan01	Feb-Mar 2001	(Easter Break)	Apr-Jun 2001	July 2001 ----	
Research Question →	RQ 1 (policy)	RQ 3 (views)	RQ 1 (policy)	RQ 3 (views)		RQ 3 (views)	RQ 1 (policy)	
Research Strand ↓	RQ 2 (statistics)							
Data Collection	<p>Can perceptions of ML staff on ML trends be statistically verified?</p> <p>FE Network data</p> <p>SQA statistics</p> <p>Interview with SQA and/or HMI, e.g. any planned curriculum changes for ML in FE – why (not)?</p>	<p>Data set 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Programme Leaders</li> </ul>		<p>Data set 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Programme Leaders (PL)</li> </ul>	<p>Current views on ML – any changes in perception – why (not)?</p>	<p>Data set 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students</li> <li>• PLs</li> <li>• ML Tutors</li> <li>• Communication Tutors</li> </ul>	<p>2<sup>nd</sup> interview with SQA and/or HMI, e.g. any planned curriculum changes for ML in FE – why (not)?</p>	
Anticipated Events (External)	<p>Throughout data collection: Identify new public discourses on ML, i.e. in research and media</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Past / current ML learning / use,</li> <li>• Current views on ML, and future expectation</li> </ul>	MAGL Report	<p><b>European Year of Languages 2001</b></p>				
(Whitehill)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Past / current ML learning / use,</li> <li>• Current views on ML, and ML prognosis</li> </ul>		Amalgamation of ML and tourism			College moves to new site	
Planned tasks	Prepare data set 1		Analyse data set 1 Prepare data set 2		Analyse data set 2 Prepare data set 3		Analyse data set 3 Start writing up thesis	

## **2.4.2 Changes to Research Design**

### ***FROM MULTIPLE TO SINGLE RESPONSE COLLECTION***

No follow-up data were sought from any of the research participants. This was partly because I had under-estimated the time it would take to develop and audit questionnaires and interview schedules, but also because I recognized that a major change in perceptions, or ‘paradigm shift’ on ML learning was unlikely to ‘materialise’ in the allocated time-span.

### ***LENGTH OF DATA COLLECTION PHASE***

As the end of my intended research phase approached, I realised it would be impossible to complete my data collection by June 2001. Fortunately, I was able to obtain research funding from the Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU) to help me continue my research for another academic session (September 2001 to June 2002). In fact, I extended my literature review or search for ‘archaeological records’ to publications up to December 2002.

### ***VARYING RESPONSE RATES***

As expected, the range of data obtained from each college varied. For example, follow-up group discussions only took place in three colleges. Whilst there may have been time constraints, some of my ML colleagues and research collaborators may also have been reluctant to approach groups who did not study a ML. Further, in the latter stages of the data collection some staff did not respond to my initial request for access. In these cases,

I was sometimes able to engage another appropriate staff member in the research but this has resulted in somewhat ‘messy’ data. However, I consider this a strength of this study, as I have not tried to ‘clean’ the data artificially to meet some objective criteria.

### ***CHANGE OF DATA SOURCE FOR INFORMAL POLICY DISCOURSES***

I abandoned my original plan of trying to interview policy makers in favour of monitoring parliamentary proceedings for references to ML issues. This meant that I had access to ‘informal’ policy discourses, as Humes (1997, *op cit*) recommends, but without having to get involved in lengthy negotiations with officials to arrange interviews. Because the spoken discourse would not have gone through numerous mediation processes like published policy documents would have done I considered that the transcripts would offer a less guarded reflection of political views.

### ***INCREASED RANGE OF DATA SOURCES***

#### **A – Statistical data sources**

Initial enquiries to SFEFC had established that their collection did not distinguish uptake by individual languages. I therefore had identified SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority) as the most appropriate source for establishing levels and trends of ML study in Scottish FE. However, because of language tutors’ interactions with SFEFC it became apparent partway through the research that statistical data collected by SFEFC showed contradictory levels and trends. I decided to obtain additional data from SFEFC in order to examine this phenomenon in more detail.



## B – Extended literature review and research participant categories

One of the stipulations of SFEU funding was a greater emphasis on labour market information and a comparative perspective from other European countries. These requirements resulted in additional interviews with industry representatives, and a more extensive literature review incorporating French and German data on ML-uptake post-16. Issues arising from the interviews with language tutors resulted in additional interviews with senior managers and communication tutors. A summary of the proposed and actual sequence of data collection is set out in Table 2-1.

**Table 2-1: Proposed vs. actual research sequence**

Time	Intended	Actual
June 2000	Arrange interviews with representatives of HMI and SQA; Language Tutor perceptions on ML uptake, SQA statistics	LT (language tutor) perceptions on ML uptake, SQA statistics
Sep-Dec 2000	Student data set 1: questionnaires + interviews with selected students; Staff data set 1: interviews with participating language tutors and programme leaders	Student data (12 groups)
Feb-Mar 2001	Student and staff data set 2	Staff data: interviews with all participating LTs (4)
Apr-Jun 2001	Student and staff data set 3 including Communication Tutors	Staff data: interviews with 3 programme leaders (PLs)
June 2001	Second interview with HMI/SQA representatives	SFEFC statistics
Sep-Dec 2001	Follow-up on learners who studied a ML at own college	Staff data: interviews with 3 Senior Managers (SM)
Jan-May 2002		Staff data: interviews with 1 SM, 9 PLs, and 5 Communication Tutors (CT), additional student data (2 groups)
June 2002		Employer Data: Interviews with 7 Industry Representatives

However, the resultant data analysis has necessarily exceeded the maximum word count of 60,000. In order to overcome this barrier but afford the reader to assess the importance of the additional data, some data analysis sets have been added as appendices, i.e. Senior Managers (**Appendix XIII**), Communication Tutors (**Appendix IXX**) and Industry Representatives (**Appendix XXII**).

### ***SHIFT IN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK***

By shifting the emphasis of my research more towards the perspectives of non-language stakeholders my continued 'archaeological records' search 'uncovered' a number of newly published discourses whose knowledge claims were directly relevant to my analysis of the data from college and industry. This shift in emphasis also resulted in a change to my analytical framework. Whilst initially responses had been analysed using attribution and motivation concepts I reconsidered my conclusions using both Foucauldian and Critical theory concepts.

## **2.4.3 Actual Research Process**

### ***STATISTICAL DATA***

In the analysis of SQA data (Section 3.2), some of the assumptions made by SQA are considered and their implications identified. As a point of reference and triangulation, at the annual conference of Scottish FE Network of Modern Language Lecturers in June 2000, attendees were asked to indicate their *perception* on modern language uptake in their own college. The implications of the additional SFEFC statistics are analysed and discussed in Section 4.3.

### ***STUDENT DATA – DESIGN PRINCIPLES***

In order to identify possible questions for the student questionnaire and for the individual staff interviews a pilot study was conducted at Whitehill College based on the questionnaires developed by Hall and Bankowska (1994). The findings were treated as indicative only but did show marked differences between programme leader perceptions

and student views. The findings from the pilot study led to the inclusion of questions on students' immediate concerns with respect to college, as well as on their long-term visions regarding the role of ML. Ideas for the formulation of questions were taken from Hadfield (1992), Richards & Lockhart (1994) and Chambers (1999).

### **Design of questionnaires**

Although each of the three student categories identified received a different questionnaire, they contained the same blueprint, consisting of three parts:

1. background data about students' past ML learning experiences.
2. views on students' current learning experiences at college (including ML learning where applicable)
3. views about students' future intentions with respect to ML learning

The questionnaires themselves are attached as **Appendices III–V**. The first three questions in **Section A** asked students to give details about their age, gender, and name of programme studied. Since each questionnaire was coded differently for each college and programme category it enabled the coding of response patterns by age, gender, programme category and college.

The remaining questions in Section A related to the extent and achievement of students' past language learning experience at school, and the extent of contact with native foreign speakers outwith educational settings. Here the intention was to explore in what ways, if any, past language learning experiences might have influenced present perceptions (Section B questions) and future expectations (Section C questions) about language learning.

The questions in **Section B** explored students' rationales (attributions) for their views on the college experience and specific subjects on their programme. It was envisaged that the answers would be relatable to context or learner-specific concepts, using Dörnyei's framework. Students' views on the importance of communication and ML as part of their programme could be used as an indicator of the degree to which they had integrated or identified with external requirements of their programme along the self-determination spectrum, which links to the self-determination spectrum devised by Ryan & Deci (2000). To get students to think about language learning in greater depth and prepare them for a potential follow-up discussion, each student was asked to select three activities (from a list of nine) that could be compared to language learning, and to justify their choices. They also had the option of offering their own comparative activity, again followed by a justification.

In **Section C** students were asked to give information about their future expectations with regard to ML learning. Here the conceptual framework of attributions by Peterson *et al* (1993) could be used to identify in what ways students' expectations were perceived as stable or unstable, specific or global, internal or external. Thus, when it came to the analysis of the data, I already had some pre-conceived concepts in mind. At the same time, I intended to explore the data for any additional concepts that might arise from the responses, which might or might not cause me to modify my internalised conceptual framework.

### **Analysis of questionnaires**

The analysis of the student data was quite an arduous task. First, questionnaire responses were typed up and the group discussions transcribed. I then colour-

highlighted response items which corresponded to pre-established concepts. For example, if a student had indicated that s/he had chosen the course because s/he was intending to work in that vocational field, the response item was highlighted in blue; if s/he indicated an interest in the subject area, it was highlighted in yellow. Some students gave both work- and interest-related rationales, and here each response item was coloured separately. For questions relating to likes/dislikes, positive responses were highlighted in green, negative ones in red. I then devised a spreadsheet matrix for each student category. Vertically, I inscribed student participants' personal codes. Horizontally, I inscribed the questions in severely condensed format, and an abbreviated version of the response given was recorded in each corresponding cell. To arrive at the shorthand responses, I referred to Dörnyei's concepts although I did not always use the actual words. For example, I used 'work' instead of 'instrumental' because of space restrictions (two examples of the matrices thus produced are given in **Appendix VII**).

It is important to note that I was not seeking to validate the various motivation constructs or to measure the extent to which these existed within the respondents. Instead, I used them as an analytical lens through which to interpret students' expressed rationales, as shown in Table 2-2. Some of the above responses, e.g. 'I must have good communication and language skills to get the job' would also give an indication as to the degree to which the student had internalised the external requirements or obligations imposed on them (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Here, too, I was not intent on measuring or precisely categorising the constructs but on using them as helpful indicators of the types of motivation professed by the respondent.

**Table 2-2: Student responses within Dörnyei's framework**

Concept	Sample student responses
<b>At subject/language level</b>	
Intrinsic	I am very interested in this subject area
Extrinsic	I'm studying communication because it is a mandatory subject on this programme
Integrative	I'm a Francophile
Instrumental	I must have good communication and language skills to get the job
<b>At learner level</b>	
Anxiety	I find the language class more relaxed compared to other classes; I like speaking in pairs but I don't like to be put in the spot
Attribution	I haven't a good memory so will never be able to learn a modern language
<b>Learning Context</b>	
Course specific	I don't see what this has got to do with 'Beauty' (relevance)
Teacher specific	I like German because the teacher has really good teaching methods (affiliative style)
Group specific	[Involved the comparison of collective responses from each student group]

Because each student respondent had a unique code, individual profiles could be produced for each participating student, which would allow the visualisation of trends and deviations in responses by age and gender. However, I also produced detailed summative EXCEL charts for each section of the questionnaire, which then allowed me to identify trends and deviations by student group, programme category and college.

### **Design of follow-on group discussions**

Each participating language tutor received careful instructions on how to develop a potential follow-up group discussion (see **Appendix VI**). All interview questions were designed to elicit from students more details about the rationales they had provided in their respective questionnaire. Thus, Peterson *et al*'s attribution theory concepts could be more fully explored. For example, to what extent might there be evidence that students were making globalising statements from personal experiences?

Simultaneously, they might indicate whether they agreed with certain external requirements or obligations, thereby facilitating the use of Ryan & Deci's concepts. Of

course, Dörnyei's concepts would still be relevant as well, as students might cite language-, learner- or context-specific rationales in their responses.

### **Analysis of follow-on group discussions**

The transcriptions of the student responses were placed into three tables (one for each corresponding section of the questionnaire), with further columns added which contained the letter code given to each student. A cross was marked in the appropriate column for each speaking turn taken by a student. Thus I was able to visualize the sequence of speakers whilst at the same time being able to count the number of turns taken by each speaker. For each section I also noted my initial thoughts, and in the case of other staff any comments they had sent in with the tapes. A sample transcript is included as

### **Appendix VIII.**

I was now able to mark passages that referred to concepts identified in the questionnaires, but I also re-read each document several times in order to identify additional concepts. Table 2-3 shows how I substituted the examples given by Peterson *et al* (1993:149) with explanations that students used (or might have used) to justify resistance to language learning (again, some of these statements could also be re-interpreted within Ryan & Deci's self-determination spectrum).

**Table 2-3: Student responses within Peterson *et al*'s framework**

<b>Internal locus of control</b>	
<b>Stable</b>	
<i>Specific</i>	I wasn't very good at French in school
<i>Global</i>	I'm not good at learning languages
<b>Unstable</b>	
<i>Specific</i>	I could get by in English when I went to France on holiday
<i>Global</i>	I will in most cases get by in English when abroad
<b>External locus of control</b>	
<b>Stable</b>	
<i>Specific</i>	Employers in computing don't ask for language skills
<i>Global</i>	Employers don't ask for language skills
<b>Unstable</b>	
<i>Specific</i>	My programme doesn't have a language option.
<i>Global</i>	Vocational programmes don't always have language options

Adapted from Peterson *et al* (1993: 149)

### ***COLLEGE STAFF DATA – DESIGN PRINCIPLES***

Table 2-4 summarises the topics raised with the different staff categories. The corresponding appendices show the more detailed interview schedules.

**Table 2-4: Interview topics for college staff**

<b>Language Tutors (Appendix X)</b>	<b>Senior Managers (Appendix XII)</b>	<b>Programme Leaders (Appendix XV)</b>	<b>Communication Tutors (Appendix XX)</b>
Students' prior ML learning	Current position of ML provision	Rationale for program units	Student views on Communication
Current position of ML provision	External factors on ML provision	Student views on communication	Learning / teaching of communication at own college
Management of ML provision	Internal factors on ML provision	Student views on ML	Links between communication and ML
Learning / teaching of ML	Links to external organisations	Vocational relevance of ML	Vocational relevance of ML
	Past ML learning experience	Past ML learning experience	Past ML learning experience
Professional development	Support for professional development of ML staff	Professional development	Professional development
Prognosis for ML uptake at own college	Prognosis for ML uptake at own college	Prognosis for ML uptake at own college	Prognosis for ML uptake at own college



**Language Tutor (LT) and Communication Tutor (CT) Data**

The topics raised in the interviews with LT staff (Spring 2001) again included those in the study by Hall & Bankowska (1994) in order to explore whether the kinds of issues raised by LT staff in the earlier study were still of concern now, such as perceptions of dependency on programme leaders and lack of support from senior managers. However, the interviews also sought to explore LT staff perceptions on factors affecting ML uptake in greater detail. Here, Chapter 2 by Richards & Lockhart (1994) provided stimulus for the formulation of questions.

With regard to CTs, I decided to interview one member of staff from each college, and in particular one who had taught the subject on programmes where some, or all, students were learning a ML. This was to explore the assumption that students learning a ML might have less difficulty dealing with their own language. In addition, as already indicated, CT interviews sought to explore the perceived status of the subject as a result of its 'core skill' classification.

**Senior Manager (SM) and Programme Leader (PL) Data**

The above topics were raised in slightly amended form with senior managers (Autumn 2001) and programme leaders (Spring 2002). The interview schedules for participants in these two categories included a number of additional questions on the perception of relevance of ML, and past ML learning experience to explore potential links between responses to these questions.

The questions to each category of staff were designed to overlap at a number of points so that some triangulation could take place. All non-language specialists, for example,

were asked about their past language learning experience in an attempt to assess in what ways, if any, this might be influencing their current views on the place of modern languages in Scottish FE (with hindsight, this latter question should also have been included in the language tutor schedules). Both communication tutors and programme leaders were asked about their views on the potential for ‘CLIL’ (content and language integrated learning), i.e. teaching part or their entire subject through the medium of a foreign language. Table 2-5 provides a summary of all the college data collected.

**Table 2-5: Summary of college data**

	<b>Greenbank</b>	<b>Yellowcraig</b>	<b>Blackford</b>	<b>Redhall</b>	<b>Whitehill</b>
LT SM CT	Chris No response ✓	Leigh ✓ ✓	Alex ✓ ✓	Sandy ✓ ✓	See note 2 ✓ ✓
PL-yes	HN Tourism	No response	(1) No response (2) NC Tourism	[HN Tourism] See note 1	[NC Tourism] See note 2
S-yes	Q only 7	Q + D 6	(1) Q + D 13 (2) Q 15 only	(a) Q only 11 (b) Q only 11	Q + D 9
PL-option	HN Marketing	HN AIM	Not applicable	(1) ‘Highers’ (2) HN Business Administration	HN Tourism
S-option	Q only 14	Q + D 6	Not applicable	(1) Q only 10	Q + D 7
PL-no S-no	HN Computing Q only 12	HN Computing No response	Access Nursing (1) Q + D 11 (2) Q + D 8	HN AIM No response	HN Computing Q + D 10

**Key to abbreviations**

AIM	Administration and Information Management	Q only	Questionnaire data only
CT	Communication Tutor	D	Group discussion data
LT	Language Tutor	Q + D	Questionnaire and group discussion data
PL	Programme Leader	-yes	Full time programme with obligatory ML component
S	Student group	-option	Full time programme with optional ML component
SM	Senior (College) Manager	-no	Full time programme with no ML component

Note 1: Sandy was only interviewed in his capacity as Language tutor

Note 2: My views as language tutor and as programme leader for NC Tourism at Whitehill have been included as footnotes (in Sections 4.2 and 5.2 respectively), followed by my comments as researcher, where appropriate.

**COLLEGE STAFF DATA - ANALYSIS**

All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. This time the ‘starter’ list of codes included additional concepts such as ‘deprofessionalisation’ (Randle & Brady, 1997), ‘technical rationalism’ (Hodkinson, 1998), ‘strategic compliance’ (Shain & Gleeson, 1999), and ‘ecological awareness’ (Bottery, 1998). Through numerous

readings, responses from each staff category were eventually reduced to one-page matrices. Each draft thus produced was used to generate a graph that displayed as clearly as possible commonalities, tendencies and singularities among each respondent group. **Appendix XVII** shows the one-page matrix draft arrived at for the three groups of programme leaders.

### ***INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE DATA – DESIGN PRINCIPLES***

The interviews with industry representatives (June 2002) were designed to elicit participants' views on the impact of the new expanded Europe on their business and on issues that had arisen from the interviews with senior managers and programme leaders.

The interview schedule (**Appendix XVIII**) provides guidelines for the topics to be raised with participants, as set out below:

- Threats / opportunities for business with respect to the enlargement of Europe (to explore to what extent participants were willing to consider engagement with speakers who might not be able to speak English)
- Recruitment criteria (to explore the degree to which FE qualifications and/or ML competence featured therein)
- Awareness of / views on the decline of ML study within FE (to consider the extent to which they might be willing to lobby governmental organisations regarding the ML issue)
- Contribution to labour market statistics (to assess in what ways, if any, they reported the need or otherwise for ML skills in labour market surveys)

The intention was to identify whether the perceptions by senior managers and programme leaders, i.e. non-demand for ML-skills from employers, could be corroborated. If so, on what basis was non-demand justified? If not, in what ways was the demand for ML-skills passed on to relevant organisations or authorities?

### ***ELECTRONIC CODING WITH NVIVO***

In June 2002 I had received some training in NVivo, an electronic qualitative data analysis tool, and I was keen to experiment with this. When my university negotiated a student user deal with the authoring company some months later, I obtained a copy and loaded it onto my computer. Unfortunately, by this time I had already manually coded most of my documents, and forgotten some of the more advanced features of the tool. Nevertheless, I decided to use NVivo for coding the Industry Representative data and found some of the programme's simpler features to be of great help, albeit time-consuming in the initial set-up.

Before electronic coding could begin the transcripts had to be converted into Rich Text Files (RTF) and imported into the NVivo programme. The easiest way of coding in NVivo is by highlighting a specific quotation, then clicking on 'Coder' at the bottom of the screen and giving it a name. In NVivo-language this is called a 'free node'. In order to enable theory to be generated directly from the data, NVivo trainers had recommended to go through the transcripts simply assigning as many 'free nodes' as deemed necessary, over several readings. I generated 128 different categories in this way. By choosing to make the 'coding stripes' visible in a parallel document (visible on screen but neither saveable nor printable) I could see where different nodes overlapped, or tended to occur together in any given paragraph. A sample of a NVivo coding report is attached as **Appendix XXII**.

From the free nodes I then developed a number of so-called 'tree nodes' with dependent 'child nodes'. For example, the tree node of 'English' had the child nodes of 'dominance' and 'complacency'.

If I had received NVivo earlier I have no doubt that it would have facilitated the coding process of all my qualitative data, and that using its more advanced features would have allowed me to explore this data in greater depth. However, for the purposes of this study I considered that the extent to which I had already manually coded and analysed the remaining data was sufficient. I outline my reasons below:

### ***IMPINGEMENT OF CONTEXTUAL FACTORS ON ANALYTICAL PROCESS***

At the same time as the analysis of the contextual factors and its influence on the qualitative data grew, the emphasis on the analysis of the collected data *per se* diminished. Instead of examining the various relationships between the identified concepts in the collected data external events and discourses caused me to explore, for example, the notion that some of the respondents' assertions, ostensibly for FE students' (short-term) benefit, were actually counter-productive to FE students' long-term future (RQ 3.2).

It was at this stage that Foucauldian and Critical Theory concepts became useful analytical tools. The Foucauldian perspective enabled the gradual construction of theorised knowledge paths with respect to the belief 'English is enough', while the Critical Theory framework facilitated an assessment of the degree to which this belief might be affecting FE student prospects in the international labour market.

Indeed, the questions to Industry Representatives may at first glance appear simply to be about causal attributions. Yet they can also be interpreted as Foucauldian and Critical Theory questions as they seek to unravel how certain knowledge claims are transmitted

and how these ‘transmissions’ may help to serve or hinder the interests of FE students in their preparation for the international labour market. Further, at the time of Industry Representative interviews there were sufficient data from stakeholders and external events to allow concurrent analysis of the responses using attribution and self-determination theory as well as Foucauldian and Critical Theory concepts.

### ***CONTEXTUAL DATA SELECTION***

In order to enable me to keep track of (potentially) significant events and discourses in my socio-cultural context I kept a detailed research diary to record my research progress, as advocated by Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998: 96). Additionally, I recorded information about myself as I was going about my research study, my feelings about the methods I had decided to employ, changes made along the way, and the reasons for these. Thus, the research diary was not only the place where I recorded my reflections but it also provided criteria by which both the dependability of the research process and the conclusions (or interpretations) drawn from it could be judged. Below I give more details as to why I had decided to keep track of certain events and discourses, and how I have incorporated them into the data analysis chapters.

#### **Events at researcher’s college (Whitehill)**

My college was due to move to a more prominent location where language staff hoped ML uptake would increase. At the same time there was concern whether an imminent restructuring of the college would affect the position of ML.

### **Interactions with external bodies**

During the duration of the research phase (and beyond) the steering group of the FE Network, Modern Languages (FENW) attempted to raise ML-related issues with SQA and SFEFC. One of these interactions, a letter to the SFEFC highlighting staff concerns about ML decline in FE, resulted in the collection of additional statistical data, and an exploration of the assumptions underlying the divergent conclusions being derived from these data.

### **Updated and extended literature review ('archaeological records')**

During the intended data collection phase (June 2000 – June 2001) I anticipated potential effects resulting from the imminent publications and initiatives I was aware of: The MAGL report was due by the end of 2000, and 2001 had been declared European Year of Languages. It was reasonable to assume that these official discourses would not only be important in their own right but any reference to them in the media might also have repercussions on stakeholder views. This in turn involved the regular scanning of broadsheets, complemented by searches of Scottish parliamentary minutes, for ML-related references. Finally, I periodically consulted new publications and journals in order to ascertain whether any newly published research findings might be relevant to my own study.

Some of the discourses, particularly the media-related texts, I simply considered in general terms as either promoting, confirming or resisting the discourses of research participants. They are therefore simply referred to as entries in my research diary in the respective research phases, and attached as appendices (**Appendices I, IX and XIV** respectively). Others, like the SFEFC survey, which turned out to have significant

impact on my research process, were incorporated into the main discussion of the findings in the relevant research phase.

In the final discussion of the findings I summarise the issues arising from the separate research phases and consider potential paths for the development of a more informed language policy for Scottish FE (RQ 3.3).

Overleaf I have summarised the actual research process (Figure 2-2), the development of my understanding of it (Figure 2-3), and the means by which I analysed the various data (Figure 2-4).



Figure 2-2: Visualisation of actual research process

Timeline →	Jun-Aug 2000	Sep-Dec 2000	Jan-Jun 2001	Jul-Aug 2001	Sep-Dec 2001	Jan-Jun 2002	Jul-Dec 2002	
Research Question →	RQ 1.2	RQ 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.3	RQ 1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 2.3		RQ 1.1, 2.3	RQ 1.1, 2.3	RQ 1.1	
Research Strand ↓	RQ 2.2	+ 3.1, 3.2			+ 3.1, 3.2		+ 3.1, 3.2, 3.3	
Data Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FE Network data</li> <li>SQA statistics</li> </ul>	Student Views	Language Tutors (LT)  SFEFC statistics		Senior Managers (SM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programme Leaders (PL)</li> <li>Communication Tutors (CT)</li> <li>Industry Representatives</li> </ul>	Extended literature review includes French and German data	
Actual Events (External)	<p><b>Throughout:</b> ML in Scottish parliamentary minutes (instead of interviews with HMI/SQA), media, and new research</p>	MAGL Report	<b>European Year of Languages 2001</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lothian Exports '01</li> <li>SFEFC letter (Sizer '01)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lothian Exports '02</li> <li>Connell '02</li> <li>Robinson '02</li> </ul>	EU Draft Guidelines for ML Policy
(Whitehill)		Amalgamation of ML and tourism provision planned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoted ML post removed</li> <li>ML split from tourism</li> </ul>	College moves to new site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ML evening provision up</li> <li>ML day provision down</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McConnell '01</li> <li>SFEFC Survey</li> <li>Alexander '01</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curtailment of ML provision</li> <li>General redundancy threat</li> </ul>	ML staff included in areas earmarked for redundancy
Research tasks + prompts for deviation from research plan	Questionnaires + group discussion schedules – emphasis on motivation / attribution theories	Interview schedules for college staff – emphasis on motivation / attribution theories	SFEFC letter prompts collection of SFEFC statistics	First analysis - decide to collect Senior Manager data	Research award requires collection of Industry views + EU data	Become aware of SFEFC Survey, Alexander '01 + other research	Decide to shift analysis to Foucauldian and Critical Theory frameworks	

**Figure 2-3: Summary of researcher's developmental stages**

Preparatory Phase	Phase 2000	Phase 2001		Phase 2002		Writing Up Phase
Oct 1998 – Jun 2000	Jun-Dec 2000	Jan-Jun 2001	Sep-Dec 2001	Jan-Jun 2002	Aug-Dec 2002	Jan 2003 – Dec 2004
<p>Towards end of preparatory phase we are told to start keeping a research diary – this ties in with my intention of trying to track views of FE stakeholders during a phase of intense activity with respect to the promotion of ML learning</p> <p>I therefore incorporate questions about past ML learning and usage into all questionnaires and group discussion schedules</p>	<p>The collection of student data has taken longer than anticipated and I realise that I am unlikely to collect any further student data during the intended research phase (i.e. before June 2001) but I am still hopeful that I'll be able to collect all staff data.</p> <p>I work through the questionnaire data and collate responses.</p> <p>I design interview schedules for staff, and again incorporate questions on past ML learning and usage.</p>	<p>The negotiations for arranging interviews with language tutors take up more time than anticipated and I realise that I am unlikely to complete my staff data collection by June 2001.</p> <p>As a result of initial analysis of FE network and language tutor data I decide to include senior managers in my research design. In SM interview schedules I again incorporate questions on past ML learning and usage.</p> <p>I become aware of contradictions between SFEFC and SQA statistics.</p>	<p>During the summer I have done a first analysis of language tutor data.</p> <p>I attend an evening course on critical theory and am particularly impressed by Marcuse's and Habermas's writings.</p> <p>I realise that some of the 'events' I have been noting in the research diary are more significant than I had anticipated.</p>	<p>In order to comply with SFEU research funding criteria I include industry representatives in my research design.</p> <p>During the discussion with a senior SFEFC representative he informs me that the SFEFC survey results have been published and sends me a copy of the CD-ROM.</p> <p>Though my connections with the EIS<sup>16</sup> I receive a copy of the ministerial directive to SFEFC (Alexander, 2001).</p> <p>I see possible connection between SFEFC data, ministerial directive, and decision to cut ML provision at my own college.</p>	<p>During the summer months I have done a first analysis of all the interview data and have extended my literature review to include French and German texts.</p> <p>I start writing the Literature Review ('Archaeological Records') and Methodology chapters but still haven't quite worked out how I am going to analyse the data.</p> <p>I realize that I will need to expand on my epistemological framework.</p>	<p>I had to condense all my findings for presentations at a national event in February (Doughty, 2003a) and an international conference in July (Doughty, 2003b)</p> <p>It was at this stage that I developed a clearer understanding of my data and recognized how my theoretical frameworks could be applied.</p> <p>However, it still took me another 18 months to make the ideas in my head explicit to the reader.</p>

<sup>16</sup> EIS = Educational Institute of Scotland, main professional union body for teachers in Scotland.

**Figure 2-4: Visual representation of analysis**

Data Type		Means of Analysis	Analysis Criteria
Numerical	SQA statistics on ML uptake	Compare uptake by language, level, and type of qualification	Validity
	Student questionnaire responses	Similarities/Differences by gender, age, programme category, college	Reliability
	SFEFC statistics on ML uptake	Compare ML SUMs (Student Unit of Measurements) with total amount of SUMs generated in a given session	
Private Discourses	Students (written and spoken) Language Tutors Senior Managers Programme Leaders Communication Tutors Industry Representatives	<p><b>Initial analysis:</b> Attribution concepts (Peterson <i>et al</i>), self-determination concepts (Ryan &amp; Deci) + <b>(student data only)</b> motivation concepts by Dörnyei</p> <p><b>Secondary analysis:</b></p> <p>Evidence of resistance (Foucault)</p> <p>Evidence of (lack of) <i>critical</i>/self-determination (Marcuse), i.e. consideration of ‘ecological’ consequences of professional practice (Bottery, Critical Theory)</p> <p>Assessment of effects of certain decisions on FE students, i.e. are decisions based on seemingly rational cost considerations to the benefit of FE students? (Critical Theory)</p>	Credibility Transferability Dependability Confirmability
Public Discourses / Events	Events at Whitehill College	Authority (power) accorded to certain ‘truth’ claims; identification of exclusionary consequences of certain actions/knowledge claims (Colebatch, Foucault);	
	Interactions with SQA/SFEFC	Try to track impact of interactions into ‘visible’ public discourse, e.g. policy statements (Foucault)	
	Parliamentary minutes	Compare with other discourse categories, private and public, for evidence of ‘consensus’ or ‘resistance’ with respect to dominant ML view, try to trace factors of ‘discordant’ discourses (Foucault)	
	Policy (-related) texts	In what ways do findings support or contradict those in my own study? Is there evidence to suggest that ostensibly ‘rational’ actions (motivations) of certain FE stakeholders is working to (dis)advantage of FE students i.e. in line with, or contrary to the pronounced aims of FE education and training? (Critical Theory)	
	Media		
	Research related to FE / ML		
<p>In the final discussion, consider how the various discourses have interacted with one another to either maintain or challenge the view that ‘English’ is enough. Consider to what extent the evidence supports the critical theory notion that ‘technical rationality’ is working against the interests of FE students.</p>			
<p>Finally, consider the potential for ‘Nash equilibrium’ (linked to Habermas’s concept of ‘emancipatory’ knowledge’): Under which conditions might individual stakeholder of their own accord (i.e. ‘consensually’) decide to pursue an ‘inclusionary’ ML strategy which would encourage the development of the emancipatory potential of FE students rather than their individualised, self-exclusionary tendencies.</p>			

## 2.5 Final Reflections on Methodology

### 2.5.1 Multiple Roles

For the duration of the research phase I was working in an FE college and was thus not only approaching this investigation from a pro-language perspective, but also as an ‘involved’ inside researcher, not an external consultant researching the topic from an outside perspective. In conscious and unconscious ways my biographical history and my professional position will have influenced my investigative approach throughout the research. I have tried to make these different roles in the research ‘visible’ at various points in the text by means of footnotes.

Whilst I had successfully used my varying positions to gain access to research participants it has presented me with a number of conundrums with respect to the data analysis. In many ways, at each interview both my own and the research participants’ life itinerary and current positioning would be subtly negotiated. For example, to what degree did my own student group (Whitehill-yes) try to present themselves as being more pro-language than they might have done had an unknown researcher interviewed them? To what degree did colleagues at Whitehill College and participants from other colleges and from industry try to be ‘collaborative’ participants, knowing my academic position at Whitehill College? I have not fully resolved these issues but hope to have minimised their effects through the application of a set procedure of inquiry for each category of research participant. I also considered that some of the research participants who might have reservations about the importance of ML would have wished to present me with arguments that would justify their scepticism.

## 2.5.2 Ethical Considerations

Bell (1993: 52-59) cautions that even when access to one level of data has been negotiated, it may have to be re-negotiated at different times and stages. To minimise such difficulties, potential research participants were informed as clearly as possible from the outset to what degree their anonymity could be guaranteed. For example, assurance was given to all participants that they would not be identified by name in the research report. However, students' total anonymity was easier to achieve than those of staff because their job titles would need to be referred to (see **Appendix II**).

Of course, the question of anonymity is not just to do with the ethical behaviour of the researcher, but it is also one of interest and power, namely that of the researched in relation to the researcher. Since anonymity can only be partially guaranteed and becomes even more problematic when the researcher's own institution is involved, student and staff participants admit to a certain act of faith in the judgement of the researcher.

## 2.5.3 Assessment of Research Design

To assess the 'worthiness' of any given research study, it should meet a number of criteria. With respect to quantitative data, researchers agree that these should be reliable (i.e. consistent and replicable) and valid (i.e. appropriate and truthful) (Bryman, 1988).

With respect to qualitative research, reliability and validity are less appropriate terminologies and have been expanded into the categories of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Tashakkori & Teddlie propose a number of means by which these criteria can be verified:

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Means of verification</b>
<b>Credibility</b>	<p>Prolonged and/or persistent engagement</p> <p>Triangulation, i.e. corroboration of data through collection from different sources, by different methods, or by different investigators</p> <p>Negative case analysis (i.e. examining instances that go against any identified patterns or trends)</p> <p>Referential adequacy, i.e. (re)-analyse data several times and at different stages</p> <p>Member / Respondent validation, i.e. submitting data analysis to the scrutiny of other colleagues / research participants</p>
<b>Transferability</b>	Thick description, i.e. detailed information of all available evidence through the data collection method
<b>Dependability</b>	Keep a record of the inquiry process, including significant decisions with respect to any changes during the research phase
<b>Confirmability</b>	The arguments presented in the findings should be internally coherent.

(Adapted from Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998: 83-87)

The investigation, by all accounts, was very ambitious. It included responses from different perspectives, i.e.:

- statistical evidence from two different sources
- three different student and four different staff categories in five FE colleges
- industry representatives from six different companies

and considered these in the light of a range of public discourses and events in the external context, i.e.:

- researcher's own college
- interactions with external bodies
- Scottish parliamentary proceedings
- other published texts (policy, research, media)

Clearly, despite the very extensive efforts of the researcher to identify potential influences contributing to the 'knowledge constructions' resulting in the 'negotiated understanding' about the purpose and relevance of ML study in Scottish FE, only a fraction of these will have been identified. Further, because my research shifted to the identification of knowledge construction paths I did not examine the other theoretical

concepts, and the relationships between them, in great detail. If time, and investigative scope had permitted, I certainly would have liked to make greater use of NVivo to help me in this exploration.

On the other hand, a number of factors strengthen the study's worth. With respect to **credibility**, there was firstly prolonged engagement with the sector. Secondly, information was gathered by both qualitative and quantitative methods. This was further enhanced through the engagement of LT participants as research collaborators in the collection of student data. LT participants were also crucial factors in obtaining access to and facilitating negotiations with, other research participants. At the same time, the reliability and validity of the statistical information provided by SFEFC have been called into question.

Before sending out student questionnaires and group discussion schedules, they were sent to professional research colleagues at the university for comment. A pilot study was then conducted with one student group and final adjustments made. The interview schedules for the various stakeholder categories were also first sent to research colleagues for comment. By recording all interviews and group discussions, the relative consistency of approach can be verified.

I satisfied the **dependability** criterion by the keeping of the research diary. However, this 'reflexive journal' served also as an essential tool by which I could verify the decisions and the rationales for them along the way. I have rendered this claim 'confirmable' by including significant research diary entries for each research phase.

With respect to **transferability**, views were gathered from several institutions. I have already indicated that the understanding I have taken from the participants' utterances are my interpretation and may not be their intended meaning at the time they were said. Nevertheless, the attempt to locate the qualitative and quantitative data in their socio-cultural/historical context did identify a number of crucial factors in the iterative processes of policy formation and implementation.

Lastly, research colleagues were asked to read through various drafts of my thesis and to comment on the **internal coherence** of the findings and arguments presented in the study. This has resulted in numerous redrafts and I trust the end result is satisfactory.

The presentation of the data follows in chronological order: Research Phase 2000 (Ch. 3), Research Phase 2001 (Ch. 4) and Research Phase 2002 (Ch. 5).





# 3 RESEARCH PHASE 2000: IN THE WAKE OF NUFFIELD

All languages are equal but some languages are more equal than others  
(adapted freely from George Orwell).

## OVERVIEW

3.1	<b>Context 2000</b> Events at Whitehill College, activities of the FE Network steering group, and an updated literature review. Selected research diary entries 2000 are attached as <b>Appendix I</b>	RQ 1.1
3.2	<b>The State We're In</b> Language Tutors' perceptions on trends of modern language study at their own college, and on barriers to and opportunities for modern languages in Scottish further education SQA statistics on modern language units	RQ 2.2 RQ 1.2
3.3	<b>English, English Everywhere</b> Student views on modern language study and modern language learning within Scottish further education programmes	RQ 2.1 RQ 2.3
3.4	<b>Discussion of Research Phase 2000</b>	RQ 3.2

## **3.1 Context 2000**

### **3.1.1 Significant Events**

At the start of the academic session, the then Principal at my own college (Whitehill) announced the details of a proposed restructure, to take effect in early 2001. In this plan, languages were to be linked closer to tourism. The language staff welcomed this proposition.

In response to a written request from the Scottish FE Language Network steering group SQA invited us for discussions on the future of HN language units. The same members of the steering group were helping me to collect student data in their respective colleges.

Within the written discourse context, the publication of the MAGL report was significant. The updated literature review follows. For a closer inspection of my development as a researcher, please refer to the 'selection of research diary entries 2000' (**Appendix I**).

### **3.1.2 Archaeological Records - Update 2000**

#### ***PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS***

Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) raised (foreign) language learning on several occasions, most frequently to stress its vocational usefulness:

**Irene Oldfather:** [...] No doubt that language skills could be decisive and enhance our ability to engage in e-commerce. (SP OR<sup>17</sup>, 24 February 2000, col 94)

**Nicol Stephen:** [...] I have no doubt that, if we want to trade successfully with other EU countries, we would be quite wrong to rest on our laurels. There is no doubt that businesses prefer to do business in their first language. That is an important lesson for our businesses to learn. (SP OR EU<sup>18</sup>, 4 April 2000, col 595)

**Irene Oldfather:** [...] The links between education and Europe present real opportunities for us. Some of the links are obvious, including those on the modern language agenda. (SP OR EU, 14 November 2000, col 862)

It was notable however, that only one of the statements, on 4 April, led to further discussions, when MSP Stephen reported on his visit to the Lisbon Conference to Committee on European Affairs. Whilst in the quote above he endorses the vocational rationale for ML Stephen had earlier indicated that English is in the process of becoming the only *lingua franca* within the EU:

**Nicol Stephen:** [...] On such occasions<sup>19</sup>, one has the constant *embarrassment* of realising that English is becoming the *dominant* language, especially – much to the *disappointment* of France and Germany – among the new countries that hope to join the EU. Representatives from those countries were speaking in English to one another as well as to UK representatives. (SP OR EU, 4 April 2000, col 595; my italics)

The use of the word ‘embarrassment’ suggests an apologetic position i.e. the use of English was due to consensual use by new member states and *not* due to ‘linguistic imperialism’ from the UK. However, the phrase ‘much to the disappointment of France and Germany’ suggests that this voluntary resort to English is seen as a political slight by the other two member states whose languages also carry official EU status.

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<sup>17</sup> Scottish Parliament Official Records

<sup>18</sup> Scottish Parliament Official Records European and External Relations Committee

<sup>19</sup> i.e. summit meetings of the European Union

Yet when concern is expressed about the lack of a coordinated approach regarding ML provision across Scottish secondary and further education, which are under separate ministerial remits (Minister for Education, and Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning, respectively), Stephen again cites the *vocational* rationale as the basis for action:

**Nicol Stephen:** [...] Because we are able to consider the significance of languages in the context of employment, skills and training, we can discuss the issues with the education department and place greater focus on them than ever before [...] Issues such as language skills will move higher up the agenda as a result of the creation of the enterprise and lifelong learning department. (SP OR EU col 600-601)

Where as the ‘foreign’ language issues were little more than references, ‘heritage’ language issues always engendered debate. These discussions culminated with the confirmation on 30 November that Gaelic, Scots and British sign language were to be included in the European Year of Languages 2001 initiative.

There was also a statement from an industry representative, the significance of which I shall highlight in research phase 2002 in connection with my own interviews with industry representatives (cf. p. 229)

**Paul McKelvie (Scottish Power):** [...] It is good for the business for our staff to engage in foreign language training and so on. That is hard to demonstrate, but our organisation believes it to be the case. (SP OR EL<sup>20</sup>, 5 May 2000, col 798)

### ***POLICY-RELATED DOCUMENTS***

General publications and research studies published in journals up to and including the year 2000 have been included in the main Literature Review (‘Archaeological Records’).

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<sup>20</sup> Scottish Parliament Official Records Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee

In this section, only the report by the Ministerial Action Group on Languages (MAGL, 2000) is highlighted because it had an official launch in December of that year.

The MAGL recommendations included an entitlement of language learning from Primary 6 through to secondary school, which was to allow the ‘Languages for All’ policy to be implemented more systematically but at the same time more flexibly. In contrast to the narrow vocational rationale for ML dominating the political agenda, the report emphasised a much wider range of benefits of ML to Scottish society emphasising the multilingual nature of current society. In this sense, the report was trying to reframe linguistic claims in educational and sociological frameworks – although the media seized upon the negative implication of the ‘entitlement’ notion, i.e. enabling students to ‘opt out’ from a disliked subject.

## 3.2 The State We're In

### 3.2.1 First Perceptions

The consultation document of the Nuffield Report (Moys, 1998) had highlighted the lack of accurate published data on modern language uptake in the post-compulsory education sector. This was confirmed when I approached the Scottish Office in February 1999 regarding statistical data on language learning; which is collected under the broad category 'Language and Linguistic studies'. While this data showed a decline in uptake both in real terms as well as percentage of enrolments, it was not possible to draw conclusions about the trend of individual languages. Before contacting SQA I decided to make use of the annual June conference of the Scottish FE Network, Modern Languages, in order to obtain indicative findings from modern language staff in other Scottish colleges about their perceptions on:

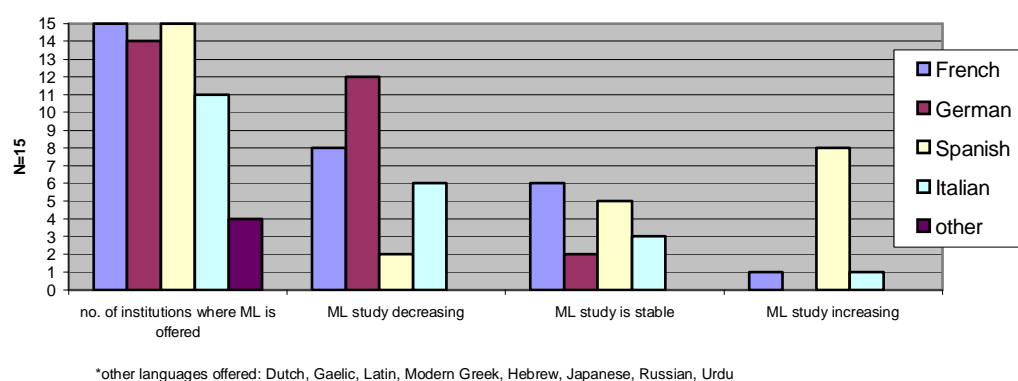
- modern language uptake,
- the range of levels taught, and
- barriers and opportunities for language uptake *at their own college*.

The perceived trend of language uptake is summarised Figure 3-1. Of the fifteen colleges represented at the meeting, ten offered the four main European languages, most frequently at beginners' level. Uptake in German had been decreasing in most colleges, closely followed by French. Spanish was increasing in just over 50% of colleges whilst Italian seemed to be experiencing mixed fortunes. With respect to *barriers*, the responses fell into four broad categories:

1. non-language staff i.e. programme leaders, senior managers (perceptions of irrelevance and lack of support) – 79%
2. funding constraints – 68%
3. students (lack of motivation, perceptions of irrelevance) – 53%
4. curriculum framework – 42%

It was noticeable that apart from ‘student motivation’ the identified barriers were beyond language tutors’ immediate control.

**Figure 3-1: Perceived trends of ML uptake**



When asked about *opportunities*, most staff (74%) indicated that improvements in the study experience would be of benefit. However, the ameliorations proposed (e.g. reduced assessments) were again beyond language tutors’ sphere of influence. Only 16% suggested pro-active measures such as trying to ‘sell’ MLs to programme leaders and/or senior management.



### 3.2.2 SQA Statistics

Shortly after the conference SQA provided language specific data, which are summarised in Figure 3-2 (entries at NC level) and Figure 3-3 (entries at HN level)<sup>21</sup>. Although the data is not sector specific (i.e. there is an unidentified percentage of uptake from schools for NC entries and from higher education for HN entries) it can be assumed that most study at HN level will be of FE origin. The FE percentage of NC provision is less clear because schools were encouraged to offer NC modules (later NQ units) to students in S5 and S6. More recently, there has been even greater blurring of division for the newly established NQ (National Qualification) units and courses at Access and Intermediate levels between school and FE.

A number of cautions must be applied to the data as provided. Firstly, the number of entries will not be equivalent to the number of learners registered as studying the various language units. At NC level, for example, one and the same student may have studied between one and three units in succession during one year. At HN level, some students will have studied a language for 40 hours (equivalent to 1 credit) others will have studied it for 80 or 120 hours (2 and 3 credits respectively). In fact, a more detailed analysis revealed that the most frequent mode of study was the 40-hour beginners' unit, with the 120-hour unit at beginners' level in second place.

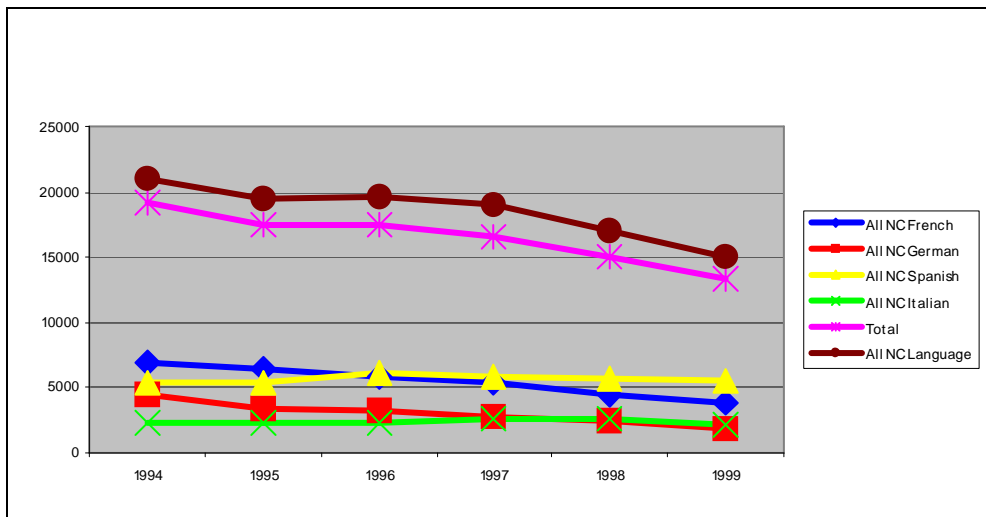
Taking all the cautionary notes into consideration, the trend of the figures are nevertheless in line with the perception of ML staff attending the FE Language Network meeting: ML uptake was declining overall, and particularly at NC level. At HN level,

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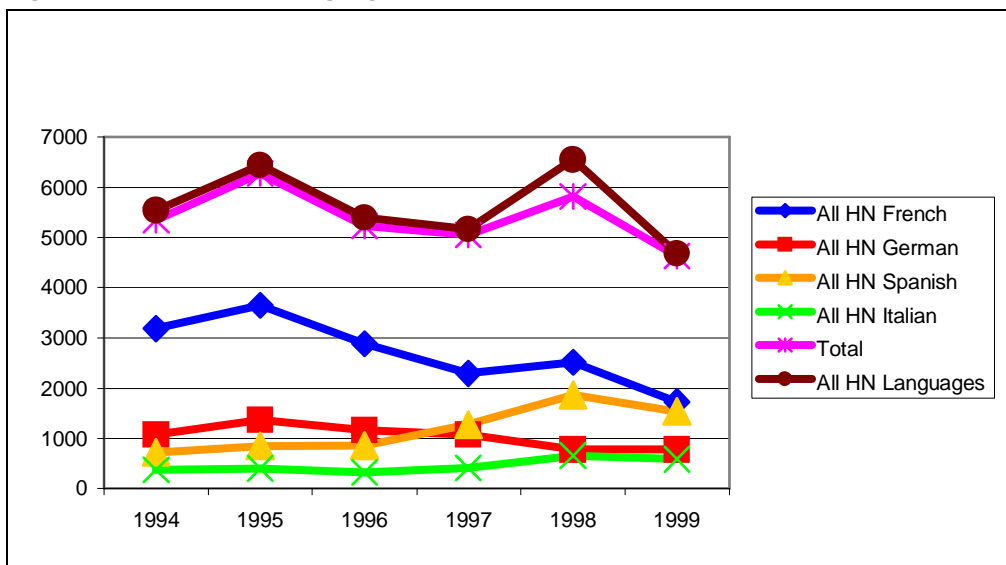
<sup>21</sup> NC refers to National Certificate and HN to Higher National awards. NC and HN units are also sometimes referred to as non-advanced and advanced provision. However, this is slightly misleading because HN language units are most frequently offered at beginners' level whereas NC units at level 4 are equivalent to 'Higher'.

there had been temporary surges in ML study in 1995 and 1998<sup>22</sup>. Spanish and to a lesser degree in Italian had seen some increases but uptake appeared to be levelling. By 1998-9 ML uptake at HN overall had fallen to below the 1994 mark.

**Figure 3-2: Trend of NC Language Entries 1994-1999**



**Figure 3-3: Trend of HN Language Entries 1994-1999**



<sup>22</sup> This may have been due to increased European activities in those years.

### 3.3 Student Perceptions: English, English Everywhere

Overall 150 students (26% male / 74% female) from fourteen different student groups completed questionnaires. Eight student groups (consisting of 70 students in total) held follow-on group discussions during which they were encouraged to elaborate on some of the responses given in the questionnaires. The type of data collected, and the number of participants in questionnaires (Q) and group discussions (D) is summarised in Table 3-1.

**Table 3-1: Summary of student data**

College → Programme Category ↓	Blackford	Greenbank	Redhall	Whitehill	Yellowcraig	Total Q	Total D
ML-yes	(1) Q + D 13 (2) Q only <sup>23</sup> 15	Q only 7	(a) Q only 11 (b) Q only 11	Q + D 9	Q + D 6	72	28
ML-option	<b>Not applicable</b>	Q only 14	Q only 10	Q + D 7	Q + D 6	37	13
ML-no	(1) Q + D 11 (2) Q + D 8	Q only <sup>19</sup> 12	<b>No response</b>	Q + D 10	<b>No response</b>	41	29
<b>Total Questionnaire Participants</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>150</b>	
<b>Total Group Discussion Participants</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>12</b>		<b>70</b>

#### ***PROGRAMME CATEGORIES***

##### **Students on full-time programmes with *NO* ML component**

There are 41 responses from four student groups (Blackford-no1, Blackford-no2, Greenbank-no and Whitehill-no). The tutor at Blackford College collected data from two student groups.

<sup>23</sup> These data were collected in March 2002

### **Students on full-time programmes with *OPTIONAL* ML component**

There are 37 responses from four student groups (Greenbank-, Redhall-, Whitehill- and Yellowcraig-option). In most cases ML staff collected data from those students who had actually chosen a ML option. Only the Greenbank-option responses include a small number of students (3) who had *not* chosen the language option. There are no responses from Blackford as languages in this college are only offered on a compulsory basis, or not at all, as previously indicated.

### **Students on fulltime programmes with *COMPULSORY* ML component**

A total of 72 responses were collected from six student groups (Blackford-yes1, Blackford-yes2, Greenbank-yes, Redhall-yes-a/b, Whitehill-yes and Yellowcraig-yes). The responses from Redhall-yes were split according to nationality (Scottish = Redhall-yes-a or foreign= Redhall-yes-b). Just under half of the respondents of Redhall yes-b (5 students) were Spanish. The remainder consisted of two French students, and one student from each of the following countries: Italy, Bosnia, Ukraine and Burundi. The two subgroups of Redhall-yes also completed a draft version of the questionnaire, which differed slightly from the eventual questionnaire employed. For example, it did not contain a question regarding the importance of the subject of communication nor did it list options for modern language comparisons.

There are again responses from two groups at Blackford. The responses from Blackford-yes1 include both questionnaire and group discussion data but it had not proved possible to interview the programme leader for this group. In March 2002 the programme leader of another group with a compulsory language element, NQ Tourism, was interviewed and agreed to ask his students to complete the questionnaire (Blackford-yes2). Both Redhall-yes-a and Yellowcraig-yes were female-only groups.

### ***CODIFICATION***

In order to preserve the identity of the research participants, each student was allocated a capital letter, followed by a gender, age, college and programme identifier. For example student Of44-by is a female student aged 40-44 on a programme at Blackhall College ('b') with a compulsory language element ('y' for 'yes'). Student Jm24-bn1 is a male student aged 20-24 at Blackford College on programme 1 with no language element ('n' for 'no').

### ***PROGRAMME COMPOSITION***

Because of the highly diverse student population and diverse modes of study in FE it is difficult to give an accurate estimation as to the degree of 'representative' value of the sample. Further, it must be borne in mind that whilst roughly two thirds of responses in this study are from FE students who were engaged in ML learning as part of their full-time studies, these students are actually in a minority with respect to the total amount of FE programmes available at any one college.

## **3.3.1 Questionnaire Responses**

### ***SECTION A: BACKGROUND DATA***

NB: As indicated in Chapter 2, the first three questions in Section A asked students to give details about their age, gender and name of programme studied. Since each questionnaire was coded differently for each college and programme category it enabled the identification of response patterns by age, gender, programme category and college.

***Q (all groups): Give your age, gender, and name of programme studied***

Students in the younger age group dominated the sample, nearly half falling into the 16-19 category. Details of the groups, including identifiers, as well as gender and age

composition, are summarised in Table 3-2. They show that most of the programmes are female-dominated. Whitehill-no, Redhall-option and Blackford-yes1, and Redhall-yes-b have a more substantial percentage of male students. Only one programme, Blackford-no2, is 100% male. The two ‘Access to HE’ programmes Blackford-no1 and Blackford-yes1 are designed for direct progression into university and have a higher proportion of adult returners.

**Table 3-2: Programme details, college identifiers and gender composition**

Programme	Code	Identifier	M %	F %	16-19 %	20-24 %	25+ %
NC Health & Life Sciences	Blackford-no1	-bn1	18	82	0	18	82
NC Electronic Music Technology	Blackford-no2	-bn2	100	0	75	13	12
NC Beauty Care	Greenbank-no	-gn	0	100	100	0	0
HN Computing Support	Whitehill-no	-wn	40	60	20	20	60
HN Marketing	Greenbank-option	-go	29	71	29	71	0
‘Highers’	Redhall-option	-ro	50	50	44	33	11
HN Tourism	Whitehill-option	-wo	0	100	100	0	0
HN Admin. & Info. Management	Yellowcraig-option	-yo	0	100	33	50	17
NC Arts & Social Science	Blackford-yes1	-by1	46	54	46	8	46
NQ Travel & Tourism	Blackford-yes2	-by2	13	87	60	0	40
HN Tourism	Greenbank-yes	-gy	14	86	33	50	17
HN Tourism (British nationals) <sup>24</sup>	Redhall-yes-a	-rya	0	100	18	18	54
HN Tourism (foreign nationals)	Redhall-yes-b	-ryb	36	64	9	27	64
NC Travel & Tourism	Whitehill-yes	-wy	22	78	67	11	22
HN Tourism	Yellowcraig-yes	-yy	0	100	100	0	0
Average Composition			25	75	49	21	30

The data in Table 3-2 further suggest that (travel and) tourism is the vocational subject most frequently associated with a *compulsory* language element. However, a more substantial survey of college programmes would be required to confirm that this claim has Scotland-wide validity. There is a wider range of programmes that include an *optional* language element. It is further important to note that at Whitehill, the NC tourism programme contains a compulsory language element (which in fact consists of two languages) whereas at HN level language study is optional. The implications of this anomaly are highlighted in Chapter 4 (cf. footnote p. 159).

<sup>24</sup> The figures in the age composition do not add up to 100% as one student did not indicate her age.

***Q (ML option/yes groups only): Language(s) studied as part of programme, if any***

The groups with optional or compulsory language elements in their programmes were then asked to indicate which language or language combinations they had chosen or had to study. The responses are summarised Table 3-3 below.

**Table 3-3: Languages studied (%)**

Programme Code	Type	French	German	Italian	Spanish	EFL	2 ML	Hours per ML
Greenbank ML option	HN	64			28	-	14	40
Redford ML option	Higher	100				-	0	160
Whitehill ML option	HN	43			57	-	29	120
Yellowcraig ML option	HN	17	83			-	34	120
Blackford ML yes-1	NC			100		-		40
Blackford ML yes-2	NQ			27	73	-		160
Greenbank ML yes	HN			100		-		120
Redford ML yes-a	HN	72	18	18	81		91	120
Redford ML yes-b	HN	27	9	54	45	54	91	120
Whitehill ML yes	NC	88	11	33	66	-	100	120
Yellowcraig ML yes	NC	33	100		17	-	50	120

With respect to language choice(s) made by students the following need to be noted:

- At Greenbank-option and at Blackford-yes1 the language unit consisted of 40 hours study, in all other groups it consisted of 120-160 hours. This means that in those cases the language was studied for the whole of the academic year (3-4 hours per week).
- While it appears that three of the four language-option groups *all* students had chosen to study a language it must be borne in mind that in some instances the group only represents a fraction of the total student numbers on that programme. For example, in the 'Higher French' group of Redhall-option, 70% of students were enrolled on a full-time basis (i.e. studying for at least two other 'Higher' qualifications). Similarly, the students groups of Greenbank-yes, Whitehill-yes and Yellowcraig-option/-yes, only represent a fraction of all students on that particular programme.
- Some groups did not have the full range of language choices available to them, e.g. Greenbank-option students could only choose between French and Spanish, and Yellowcraig-option/-yes students between French, German and Spanish.
- All students in the two Redhall-yes groups and in Whitehill-yes normally have to study *two* languages as part of their programme. In the Yellowcraig-yes group all students must study *one* language but may opt for two.
- In the two-language groups (Redhall and Whitehill) the most popular language combination was French-Spanish.

The data show that programme leaders can decide which MLs they wish to offer to students. Programme leaders' rationales for decisions on ML study are presented in Section 5.2.

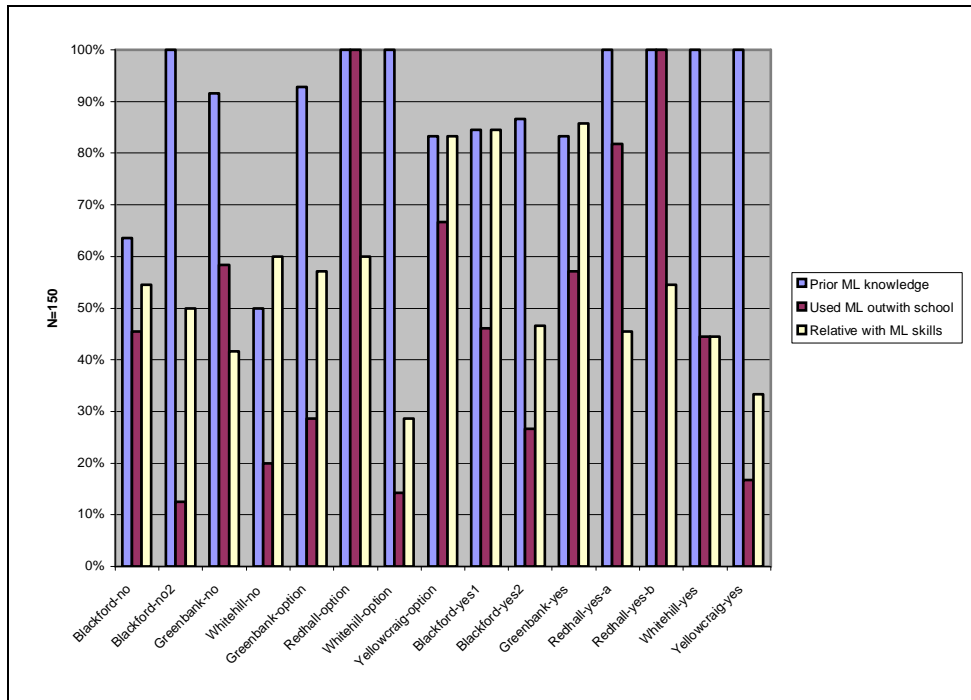
***Q (all groups): Did you learn a language at school? If yes, please give some further details (e.g. qualification and grade). Have you ever used a language outwith school? If yes, please give some further details. Does anyone in your family speak a modern language? If yes, please give some further details.***

Figure 3-4 summarises the responses with respect to the above. Some of the findings were as expected. For example, older students were more likely than younger ones to state that they had had contact with 'real' native ML speakers. Younger students were more likely than older ones to have studied a ML at school, which can be attributed to the implementation of the 'Languages for All' policy. This also accounts for the fact that most students in this age group had studied either French or German. For older students, previous ML learning at school varied; some had studied a ML for two years only, others up to Higher. Interestingly many of those aged above 30 claimed to have had no ML learning experience at school. On the other hand, older students were more likely to have used a ML outwith an educational context, e.g. on holiday, at work or through having lived abroad. Within the sample, however, and irrespective of age or gender, students in the ML-option or ML-yes categories were more likely to have had previous ML learning experience. In the Redhall-yes-b (foreign nationals) group most students already had prior knowledge in *two* foreign languages (in addition to their own native tongue) and were adding a third to their 'repertoire'. A surprisingly high percentage of respondents indicated that one or more of their family members spoke another ML. In retrospect this is likely due to a misinterpretation of the question as some respondents referred to people in their family who had learned a ML at school.



Nevertheless, in almost every group some family members appeared to be foreign nationals. A small number (e.g. Of44-by2) indicated that they had foreign partners.

**Figure 3-4: Prior ML knowledge / ML use by student category**



## **SECTION B: VIEWS ON COLLEGE AND PROGRAMME SUBJECTS**

Table 3-4 summarises the responses to the questions posed in Section B, and indicates any major differences by either gender, age or student category.

**Table 3-4: Summary of responses (Section B)**

Response Differences	by Gender	by Age	by Programme Category
Rationale for Programme choice	No: instrumental motivation dominant; however, interesting male/female split in Redhall-option group	Yes: instrumental motivation more pronounced in older students	Yes: respondents from groups with large ML component often chose programme <i>because of ML component</i>
College experience to date	Yes: Male responses tended to be more negative  Blackford-no2 (all-male group) responses <i>consistently</i> negative	Yes: Older students – inhibiting factors to positive experience  Younger students – favourable comparison to school experience	No: mixed responses
Rationale for favourite subject	No differences by age, gender or programme group; <i>intrinsic</i> motivation dominant		
Liked/disliked activities in above	No differences by age, gender or programme group; preference for practical activities		
Importance of communication unit	No: mixed responses; instrumental or external motivation cited	Yes: <i>consistently</i> more positive ratings in more mature respondents	Yes: ratings from HN- and ML-yes respondents more positive; from ML-no respondents more negative
Rationale for comparisons to ML learning	No 'memory', 'difficulty', 'repetition' and 'dedication' are frequent rationales		Yes: responses from ML-option and ML-yes respondents more positive
<b>Questions below to ML-option and ML-yes groups only</b>			
Recommendation of language learning	No: varied responses	Yes: Older students more positive than younger ones	Yes: respondents in groups with large ML component more positive
Importance of ML unit	No difference by age or gender; mixed ratings		Yes: respondents in groups with large ML component more positive
Liked/disliked tasks in ML unit	No difference by age or gender; preferred task = speaking		Yes: option-groups disliked listening and speaking; yes-groups disliked grammar and reading

### ***Q (all groups): Why did you choose to study this course?***

Instrumental motivation dominated the responses from all age categories but more was more noticeable in those aged 30 or above. For example, in the two groups with the highest percentage of mature students, Blackford-no1 (100%) and Whitehill-no (80%)

90% quoted instrumental reasons for coming to college although some added further motivational drives, e.g. intrinsic or self-improvement:

“I find it very interesting and would hope to become a nurse in the future” (Gf34-bn1);

“to better myself, job prospects” (Hf24-wn1)

Responses did not always follow gender stereotypes. In particular, the male students in the Redhall-option group, not the females, tended to cite *integrative* motivators:

“I’m a Francophile” (Em24-ro).

There was a notable distinction in the key phrases used by most of the all-male group of Blackford-no2 and by most of the all-female group of Greenbank-no. The males consistently used the expression “I wanted to learn...” the females tended to put “I was interested in...” The male responses indicate a greater element of volition rather than task-enjoyment.

***Q (all groups): Some friends ask you what it’s like being at college. What would you say?***

The majority responded positively: e.g. “interesting, good fun” (Ff29-wy). However, the more mature students, aged 35 or above, and possibly more likely to have family commitments, often added an inhibiting factor:

“hard work but very enjoyable and interesting” (Af44-bn1), “it is fun but hard work” (Im44-by1); “enjoyable but hard work” (Ff44-wn); “at times find it hard to fit college into family commitments” (Ff39-yo)

The responses of male students tended to be less enthusiastic:

“it’s ok” (Hm29-bn2); “ok” (Em39-wn); “stressful” (Im-by2); “it’s ok if it’s what you want to do” (Hm19-wy)

The younger students frequently made favourable comparisons to their experience at school, and to the social element:

“I think it’s great, I prefer college to school” (Jf19-gn) “It’s really good, you meet lots of people and the course I’m doing is really great” (Ef19-wy).

However, views from the male dominated Blackford-no2 group were significantly less positive, with only one respondent claiming it was “great”, whilst others gave more qualified responses such as “a lot calmer than school”, “it’s good sometimes” or “it’s a goal”, one student even denouncing it as “crap!” (Fm19-bn2)

***Q (all groups): Which subject on the course do you find most interesting? Please say why.***

Whilst the choice of favourite subject varied within individual student groups practical subjects were preferred to theoretical ones. Most of the reasons can be grouped under ‘intellectual curiosity,’ which is part of the ‘intrinsic’ motivational construct.

Occasionally there is reference to past positive experience at school. Only rarely did a student refer to a teacher-specific motivational component. In the ML-option groups, students from Redhall and Yellowcraig almost exclusively singled out the ML as a favourite subject. At Redhall this tended to be because of intrinsic interest in the subject, e.g. “French- it’s fun as I like talking a different language” (Bf19-ro); at Yellowcraig the learning context component of motivation featured more strongly, e.g. “I find [the

language class] more relaxed compared to other classes” (Df24-yo). The comment also suggests that the student is feeling more anxious in other subjects.

In the ML-yes groups, languages were frequently singled out as the favourite subject by all language groups that included the study of *two* languages, e.g. 78% at Whitehill-yes, 72% at Redhall-yes-b, 63% at Redhall-yes-a. The percentage dropped significantly to only 13% at Blackford-yes2, where only one language is studied for the duration of the course. Finally, at Blackford-yes1, where the language element is small (40 hours) no student selected it as a favourite subject. Regardless of the favourite subject chosen, however, the underlying rationale can be classified as ‘intrinsic’ motivation. No student referred to integrative factors for language learning at this stage:

“French & Spanish, I love to learn languages” (Af19-rya); “German because the teacher has really good teaching methods” (Bf19-rya); “German language – learning fast and a lot” (Ef29-ryb); “Spanish – would love to be fluent” (Mf39-by2); “Spanish because it is more widely spoken” (If19-wy); “Italian, as it is a new language and I am interested in learning it” (Nf19-wy)

***Q (all groups): How important is the Communication element in the course to you? Please say why<sup>25</sup>.***

Several of the younger students in Greenbank-no and Blackford-no2 could not see the relevance of this subject for their vocational specialism:

“I don’t see what is has got to do with Beauty” (Gf19-gn); “not at all we are meant to be studying electronics music” (Hm29-bn2)

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<sup>25</sup> **NB:** *Students from Greenbank-option and Redhall-option groups did not reply to this question. In the former group communication was not taught as a separate subject, and in the latter students did not relate this to the subject of ‘English Higher’. On occasion, students in other groups interpreted the meaning of communication as ‘the act of communicating’.*

On the other hand, the dominantly mature groups (Blackford-no1, Blackford-yes1 and Whitehill-no) consistently rated communication as very important – although they were either instrumentally or extrinsically motivated:

“Very important! I wish to gain a career through doing this course. I must have good language and communication skills to get the job” (Af34-by1); “It’s important if I want to do HND”(Hf19-gn);

As one reply makes clear, this does not necessarily imply intrinsic motivation:

“I don’t think it’s interesting but I think it will be quite important in the future, when I’m looking for a job.” (Bf19-wo)

A number of the students referred to (the lack of) ‘self-confidence’, including all but one student in Yellowcraig-option:

“very important as I will need it in my new job as a holiday rep plus give me confidence in public speaking” (Cf24-yo); “I’m not very good at English and lack of confidence in talking and writing it; hopefully this course will help me improve in this area” (Af44-bn1); “[communication] has helped me grow in being around all kinds of people” (Gf49-by1); “very – it builds up my confidence” (If24-wn); “important – makes you more confident to do talks” (Ff19-wo).

For one student, her low self-efficacy was countered by the efforts of the tutor:

“I like English just not good at it; our tutor is very down to earth with a witty personality...” (Lf44-bn1).

***Q (ML-no groups only): What sort of activities do you particularly enjoy [in your favourite subject]? Which don’t you enjoy so much? Please say why.***

Favourite activities usually involved active participation, creativity or intellectual curiosity whereas negative views were linked with the more theoretical aspects:

“I enjoy the practical side” (Cf19-gn); “I enjoy making my own music” (Hm29-bn2);  
 “learning how to do new things with [the computers] (Df34-wn)

“I enjoy practical but not theory” (Df19-gn); “using maths isn’t so fun” (Bm19-bn2);  
 “the practical aspect appeals to me more than the theory side of computing (Am19-wn).

Unfortunately, most respondents only elaborated on their favourite activities. The question was included in order to identify any possible correlations with favourite activities in ML learning, in the ML-option and ML-yes categories. However, a number of students interpreted ‘activities’ to mean ‘subjects’. For example, Computing and Communication were singled out as disliked subjects by several students at Greenbank-no because it was felt these subjects had already been covered at school or were not needed. This points again to the motivational construct of ‘relevance’.

***Q (ML-no groups only): Would you have liked to study a ML as part of this course?  
 Please say why (not)***

Varying numbers of students in each group indicated that they would have liked to study a modern language as part of their course. On the Greenbank-no group 25% of students expressed such a wish. On the Blackford-no1 and Whitehill-no groups (higher proportion of adult returners) the percentage rose to 36% and 60% respectively.

However, there was no strong evidence of correlation between students’ age and their wish to study a modern language. Of the thirteen pro-language students five were aged 16-19, two aged 20-29 and six aged 30 or above. Because the sample was female dominated it is not possible to attempt a gender correlation, although it was notable that no student from the all-male Blackford-no2 group expressed a desire for ML study after their course. There also seemed to be no obvious connection between prior language experience or family connections and an interest in ML learning. For example, Cf19-gn claimed she had

“always wanted to learn another language. This would benefit me in this course as if I was able to speak another language I would be able to travel and work in a different country.”

Yet according to her responses she had never used a language outwith education nor did she have family members with ML competence.

***Q (all groups): Tick 3 activities you think are most similar to learning a modern language. Try and give a reason for your answer. If you can think of a better comparison, please note it here.***

Of the nine activities suggested, the 3 most frequently ticked were ‘learning mathematical formulas’, followed by ‘learning words in a play’ and ‘playing the piano’. The most frequent reasons cited were the need for a good memory, hard work and repeated practice and dedication. This implies a) a natural ability (a good memory) and b) a sustained engagement with the subject that does not come easily (hard work, repeated practice, and dedication).

Responses from the option and compulsory groups tended to be more positive than their ML-no counterparts, frequently indicating that once you had learnt “the basics” of a language, you would not forget it, but only two students in the non-language groups mentioned this more positive aspect. A number of students took up the opportunity to make other suggestions, e.g. Kf19-gn felt that “learning to be computer literate” might be a better comparison although she did not elaborate further on this. Other suggestions included “learning to fly” and “learning to talk again” because “you must start from scratch and work your way through.”

In the two Redhall-yes groups who had not been provided with the nine options many chose ‘playing an instrument’ but some unusual comparisons were also offered such as:



Redhall-yes-a:

“bungee jumping – scary and challenging” (Ef24); “learning to drive step by step” (Gf29); “roller blading – once you get the hang of it it’s fine but when you master it the world is your oyster – but if you fall just get back up and continue” (Hf34); “salsa dancing” (Jf39, Kf54)

Redhall-yes-b:

“dance” (Af19, Cf24, Im29); “sing” (Af19, Cf24, Hm29); “sex (no kidding), cooking”(Df24); “new culture” (Ef29, Ff29);

“We can travel and think to something else (Bm24); “you travel to another country with your mind” (Hm29)

Unfortunately the students offered no explanation beyond those given above and held no follow-on group discussion, where a more extensive answer might have been elicited from them. However, it could be argued that a common description for most of the above activities could be “thrilling” and in the case of the last two quotes “liberating”<sup>26</sup>.

***Q (ML-option/yes groups only): Your friends wonder whether they would enjoy learning a modern language. What advice would you give them?***

Of the students who had chosen a language option, the younger ones in particular tended to caution rather than recommend:

“Give it a go but only if you are interested as it can be hard work” (Df19-yy); “ you need to make sure you are going to committed [sic] to it” (Ef19-yy)

Students aged above 20 were more likely to be positive:

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<sup>26</sup> **HD:** As such they suggest metaphors for ‘arousal’ or ‘eroticism’ in the Marcusean sense, but this phenomenon has not been explored further.

“It is interesting to see how people communicate and live and it is useful if travelling abroad” (Cf29-gy); “It’s the best you can do; open your mind and broad [sic] your culture.” (Gm24-ro); “I think they would enjoy learning a new language” (Df24-yo).

One male student indicated that his mates were unlikely to agree with him, perhaps implying that in certain male circles ML study was not considered an appropriate ‘male’ activity:

“Yes, definitely go for it! My mates wouldn’t think that though.” (Fm24-ro)

***Q (ML-option/yes groups only): How important is the modern language element in the course to you? Please say why.***

Some student groups, particularly those from Greenbank-yes, Redhall-option/-yes and Whitehill-option/-yes, consistently indicated high importance, those from Greenbank-option and Yellowcraig-option/-yes were more divided in their opinion. Amongst those who rated it highly, the instrumental motivation was dominant, but surprisingly, especially in light of the earlier comment by Fm24-ro, males in the Redhall-option/yes-b group tended to indicate a more intrinsic orientation here, that appears to be independent of any external regulation:

“... allows me to go abroad and be able to communicate with natives rather than struggling to understand each other; it also helps gain an understanding of how language works in general” (Dm19-ro); “it’s more a personal challenge, fun rather than particularly important” (Em24-ro) “to communicate with foreign people” (Im29-ryb)

***Q (ML-option/yes groups only): What sort of activities do you particularly enjoy in the modern language class – and which don’t you enjoy so much? Try to explain why.***

The chosen activities under each category varied significantly. Grammar, for example, was occasionally mentioned as a favourite activity. Surprisingly, speaking featured significantly under the less favoured category. Although role-play speaking tasks with a

partner were overall most favoured, some students did not like “to be put on the spot” in front of others, which is a sign of learner anxiety. Other favoured activities included ‘fun’ activities games but also more passive tasks such as video watching and reading. It is notable that disliked activities did not receive high ratings in either ML-category. The low rating of grammar may of course also be due to the fact that it does not feature highly in the teaching methodology. Only 3% mentioned the amount of assessment – perhaps an indicator that this is more a teacher concern.

	ML-option (N=37)		ML-yes (N=72)	
Preferred activities	<b>Speaking</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>Speaking</b>	<b>40%</b>
	<b>All activities</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>All activities</b>	<b>18%</b>
	Games/Reading	11%	Videos	8%
Disliked activities	Listening	11%	Grammar	13%
	Speaking	11%	Reading	11%
	Writing	5%	Speaking	10%

As mentioned earlier, this question was meant to link to the question on preferred and less favoured activities cited by students in the ML-no category. It seems plausible to assume that speaking tasks are preferred because they imply ‘active participation’ whereas grammar tasks are disliked because they are perceived as forming part of the theoretical aspect of ML learning. Listening (for information) to speech at native speaker’s speed requires concentration and may result in frustration when even with the best effort understanding is not achieved. This could therefore lead to a loss in self-confidence and a sense of failure.

In summary, younger students’ enjoyment of the social aspect suggests a position of an introjected individual, as conceptualised by Ryan & Deci (2000) where the external identification may come from the approval from peers rather than from employer

demands. However, older students were more likely to ‘identify’ with activities they did not necessarily intrinsically enjoy but which they perceived *to be in line with employer demand*, e.g. communication. On the other hand, older language learners’ tendency to be more positive in their recommendations for ML learning than their younger counterparts, seems to be moving them more towards the ‘integrated’ position of the self-determination spectrum. In terms of gender difference the overwhelmingly negative attitude to ML learning by the all male group of Blackford-no2 was striking; yet the integrative motivation of male students in Redhall-option suggest that views on language learning are possibly more open to modification than is generally expected.

### ***SECTION C: YOUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE***

Table 3-5 below summarises the responses to the questions in section C, again pointing to significant differences in responses by either gender, age or student category.

**Table 3-5: Summary of responses (Section C)**

Response Differences	by Gender	by Age	by Programme Category
Intention to study a ML after college	No major differences by gender or age category		Yes: respondents from groups with large ML component more likely to do so; respondents from groups with no ML least likely to do so; also some college differences
Likely use of ML in the future		Some younger ML-students less certain	Yes: ML-no students perceived future use as unlikely; ML-option/yes students perceived use in work (60%) and travel/holiday (40%)
<b>Questions below to ML-no groups only</b>			
Circumstances for wishing/ having to learn a ML in future	No differences by gender or age category; ML learning perceived as contingent on wishing or having to move / work abroad		Yes: ML-no students perceived such circumstances as being unlikely
<b>Questions below to ML-option and ML-yes groups only</b>			
Expected ability of ML at end of study		Some younger ML-students less certain	Yes: respondents from groups with small ML component have lower expectations

*Q (all groups): Do you intend to study a modern language after this course, or in the near future? Please explain why (not)*

In the OPTION and COMPULSORY categories there were marked differences between the colleges, which perhaps points to learning context factors although this must remain pure speculation. Both Redhall- and Whitehill-option groups scored high continuation marks compared to Greenbank- and Yellowcraig-option groups. On the other hand, the continuation rate of Greenbank-yes surpassed that of Redhall and Whitehill.

Yellowcraig again scored significantly lower in this category.

Table 3-6 summarises the responses. Overall, there were no marked differences by either gender or age category – but there were according to the programme category chosen.

At course level, the percentage of students intending to study a ML after completing their current programme of study was lowest amongst the four groups whose programmes contained NO language element with an extreme zero rating amongst the all male group of Blackford-no2. Although 36% of the Blackford-no1 group had earlier indicated that they would have liked a ML included in only 9% intended to take up ML study independently after completing their full-time college programme. In Whitehill-no the percentage dropped from 60% to 20%, whereas in Greenbank-no it remained at 25%.

In the OPTION and COMPULSORY categories there were marked differences between the colleges, which perhaps points to learning context factors although this must remain speculation. Another variable may have been the timing of the data collection, as Blackford-yes2 and Greenbank-option were approached towards the end of their course, whereas the others had responded nearer the start. Redhall- and Whitehill-option groups

scored high continuation marks compared to Greenbank- and Yellowcraig-option groups. On the other hand, the continuation rate of Greenbank-yes surpassed that of Redhall and Whitehill. Yellowcraig again scored significantly lower in this category.

**Table 3-6: Likelihood of ML study after college**

Group	Type of study	Subject area	ML hours	% who may start / continue ML study after college
Blackford-no2	NC	Music	0	0
Blackford-no1	NC Access HE	Nursing	0	9
Whitehill-no	HN	Computing	0	20
Greenbank-no	NC	Beauty Therapy	0	25
Blackford-yes1	NC Access HE	Social Sciences	40	32
Blackford-yes2	NQ	Tourism	160	33
Yellowcraig-option	HN	Administration	120	33
Greenbank-option	HN	Marketing	40	36
Yellowcraig-yes	HN	Tourism	120	50
Redhall-option	'Highers'	French	160	80
Whitehill-option (1 or 2 ML)	HN	Tourism	120	86
Whitehill-yes (2 ML)	NC	Tourism	240	89
Redhall-yes-a (2 ML)	HN	Tourism	240	91
Redhall-yes-b (2 ML)	HN	Tourism	240	100
Greenbank-yes	HN	Tourism	120	100

When considering the data from the learner level, however, it was clear that those who intended to study a language beyond college (irrespective of age, gender or programme category) saw a definite role for languages in their future career and life. For example, in the NO-category, Cf19-gn considered it “another skill under your hat... if you are interested in travel”, Am19-wn “loved the language [Italian]” whilst for Kf19-gn it was “now a necessatie (sic).” Some were considering moving abroad. Amongst the OPTION and COMPULSORY groups, particularly the Redhall students enthused about their desire to take the language(s) further. This may be significant in the light of the fact that this college had a large percentage of foreign national students. Those who indicated no intention to continue cited subject difficulty, or non-interest as reasons.

***Q (ML-option/yes groups): In what ways, if any, do you think you will use the language(s) after you've finished the course?***

***Q (ML-no groups): How likely do you think it is that you may use a modern language after you've finished your course or studies? Under what kind of circumstances do you think you may have to/wish to learn a modern language?***

The majority of students in the ML-option/yes groups believed they were going to use languages for work (60%) and/or holidays and travel (40%). These findings are in line with Coleman's study (1996). Student responses from the ML-no groups indicated that the only circumstances where they would have to learn a language was when moving abroad for work reasons, which they believed to be unlikely, or if moving abroad in order to marry. They quite clearly did not consider this a likely prospect. Similarly, they did not consider the possibility of using a foreign language to communicate with visitors from abroad.

Only two students from the ML-no groups believed that they were likely to use a ML after college. Interestingly, they were from Blackford-no2 (Bm19-bn2, Em19-bn2), whose previous replies towards ML had been consistently negative. From their responses in Section A it may be presumed that they spoke a language other than English within their home environment. Unfortunately they did not elaborate on this aspect in the follow-up discussion so it is not clear whether their dislike was directed to ML learning in general, or just to 'foreign' language learning.

***Q (ML-option/yes groups only): What do you think you will be able to do in the modern language at the end of the course?***

The amount of time spent on learning a language as part of the course did affect responses amongst the ML-option/yes groups. Students from the 40-hours study

believed they would only reach a fairly basic level in the language, those from the Redhall-option/-yes groups (160 hours study) believed them to be sufficient for work and/or travel. Here again, however, some of the younger students expressed doubts about their expectations through the use of words such as ‘perhaps’, ‘hopefully’ and ‘probably’.

### **3.3.2 Summary of Questionnaire Responses**

Students tended to be instrumentally motivated for their programme and intrinsically motivated for the subject area they had chosen. They tended to prefer practical activities and dislike those involving ‘theory’. ML learning was most frequently associated with tasks that required the engagement of mind and body through memorisation, regular practice, and sustained commitment. The perception of relevance of ostensibly ‘non-vocational’ subjects like communication and ML was more prevalent amongst the more mature learners. However, those students whose programmes contained large ML components tended to see relevance in the subject irrespective of age or gender. Those who had opted onto programmes containing large ML components were more likely to be convinced of the vocational rationale for ML study and see future ML usage more likely. Overall, however, there were clear signs that younger learners were less certain about their future expectations. Figure 3-5 provides an overall summary of the questionnaire responses.



Figure 3-5: Summary of student questionnaire responses

	Gender	Age	Differences by Programme	College
<p><b>Commonalities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instrumental motivation for programme</li> <li>• Intrinsic motivation for subject area of programme</li> <li>• Intrinsic motivation for favourite subject</li> <li>• Preference for practical activities</li> <li>• Dislike of theory</li> <li>• ML learning tends to be associated with 'memory', 'dedication' and 'repetition'</li> </ul>	<p><b>Females (75%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Predominate almost all programmes</li> <li>• Redhall-option females show greater instrumental motivation than Redhall-option males</li> </ul> <p><b>Males (25%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More negative views on college experience</li> <li>• All male group Blackford-no2 most negative of all groups</li> <li>• Redhall-option males show greater integrative motivation than Redhall-option females</li> </ul>	<p><b>16-24 (70%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More likely to have used ML in school setting only</li> <li>• Preference of college over school experience, value social aspects</li> <li>• Less certain about relevance of communication</li> <li>• Less certain about recommending ML learning</li> </ul> <p><b>25+ (30%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instrumental motivation more pronounced</li> <li>• More likely to have used ML outwith educational setting</li> <li>• Rate college experience positive but also challenging</li> <li>• More likely to rate 'communication' as relevant</li> <li>• More positive about recommending ML learning</li> </ul>	<p><b>ML-yes/option</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally positive views on both 'communication' and ML study</li> <li>• Future use of ML seen as likely</li> </ul> <p><b>ML-yes 120 hrs+</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater importance attached to inclusion of ML component</li> <li>• Greater confidence in expected linguistic ability</li> </ul> <p><b>ML-no</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More negative views on 'communication' and ML study</li> <li>• Future use of ML seen as unlikely</li> </ul>	<p><b>Blackford</b> (no ML-option groups)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Groups least likely to study ML after college in their respective categories</li> <li>• <b>Blackford-no2</b> most negative of all groups</li> </ul> <p><b>Redhall</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Redhall-option</b> gender atypical: males show high integrative and females high instrumental ML motivation</li> <li>• <b>Redhall-yes-b</b> (non-native English speakers) greatest enthusiasm for ML learning overall</li> </ul> <p><b>Blackford-no1/no2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0-9% may study ML after college</li> </ul> <p><b>Greenbank/Whitehill-no</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20-25% may study ML after college</li> </ul> <p><b>Blackford-yes1/yes2, Greenbank/Yellowcraig-option</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30-33% want to continue ML study</li> </ul> <p><b>Yellowcraig-yes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50% want to continue ML study</li> </ul> <p><b>Greenbank/Whitehill-yes, Redhall/Whitehill-option</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80-100% want to continue ML study</li> </ul>

### 3.3.3 Follow-On Group Discussions

The following eight groups held group discussions after having completed the questionnaires:

ML-no	Blackford-no1, Blackford-no2, and Whitehill-no (29 students)
ML-option	Whitehill- and Yellowcraig-option (13 students)
ML-yes	Blackhall-yes1, Whitehill-yes and Yellowcraig-yes (28 students)

#### *SECTION A: PAST ML EXPERIENCES*

##### **ML experiences at school**

When asked about their language learning experience at school, a number of students in the ML-option and ML-yes groups referred to group-specific motivational components, e.g. the more favourable experience of language learning at college, due to smaller classes and mixing with students already favourably disposed to the subject. Students in the ML-no groups were more likely to cite negative experiences. For example, both Jm24-bn1 and Ff19-yo cited teacher-specific motivational components. Whereas the latter gave credit to her “real French teacher” for making languages enjoyable the former claimed to have had

“a teacher who you could just have a carry-on with, you know, so that’s what we did, had a carry-on and never learnt anything...” (Jm24-bn1).

Lack of language choice was a demotivating factor for others:

“ I wanted German but was made to do French. I’m more interested in German, it’s easier to pronounce, it’s very similar to Scottish.” (Am19-wn)

This comment indicates again a strong sense of volition<sup>27</sup>. Certainly, the interest in German does not seem to be associated with neither instrumental nor integrative views. Curiously, the perception of difficulty is solely based on the criteria of pronunciation, betraying disregard for, non-concern about or unawareness of, grammatical complexity.

In some groups, there were suggestions for improvement to the ML experience at schools. Blackford-no1 students in particular had a lot to say here. They put forward several proposals, such as an ‘enforced’ ML learning experience in the country, starting ML learning at a young age, teaching the subject frequently but in small doses, and offering immersion teaching programmes. Some of the suggestions had also been made in June by the staff of the FE Network, and later by some of the Redhall-yes-b students (foreign nationals).

Students in the all-male Blackford no2 group made only negative references to ML study at school, seeing either no relevance in it or professing a lack self-confidence:

“I feel there’s no real meaning to it unless you were going to Germany or you were going to be doing something with German in it...” (Unidentified male–bn2)

“I didn’t feel confident, I was no good at it. I know a little bit of German but not a lot. You know I did it for four years and I only know a little bit, and for four years knowing just a little bit, I don’t think it’s worth it.” (Bm19-bn2)

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<sup>27</sup> HD: It could also be interpreted as an example of the tendency as theorised by Marcuse to ‘buy’ an educational ‘good’ (which in this case happens to be a language) that is perceived to require the least amount of effort in learning.

### **ML experiences on holiday**

Amongst all student groups, irrespective of age or gender, the experience of using the language on holiday was mixed. While Jm29-bn1 was very proud of simply being able to order drinks in German, Lf44-bn1 hinted at feeling alienated by a different culture:

“I was in Turkey, found it difficult to communicate... but they were very friendly, in fact, the men were over-friendly...” (Lf44-bn1)

For Cf29-wn, on the other hand, having used Spanish on holiday in Mexico had been a positive experience:

A lot of people didn't speak English so we had to speak Spanish; ... it felt great to be able to communicate with someone who didn't speak English (Cf29-wn)

Again, none of the Blackford-no2 (all male) group had found using a language abroad a positive experience and displayed low self-worth:

“I tried to speak Spanish once to ask for a Coke and I got a big lecture but I didn't ken what he said so I just left and left the coke with him... I think I said the wrong thing.” (Cm19-bn2)

Negative feelings were also present in both Whitehill- and Yellowcraig-option groups, where individual students, particularly the younger ones, referred to a sense of alienation and anxiety, when being in a country whose language they did not feel to be in control of:

I was pleased I could talk but it was a challenge; the people were strange (Af19-wo)

I went to Mexico, I didn't speak Spanish; you thought they were talking about you, they might not have been but you felt a bit paranoid (Cf19-yo)

[French] people were friendly but not knowing as much [of the language] then I felt they thought Scottish people were stupid (Mm19-wy)

On the other hand, Cf19-yo's negative experience did not appear to have dented her self-confidence (perhaps as a result of her present learning experience?) for future attempts at language use abroad:

It'll be exciting not being in a class situation, just having to cope on my own. (Cf19-yo)

### **With family members**

Contact with family members of foreign origin was no guarantor for a positive orientation towards the language either, and could even lead to a strongly negative one, that could be transferred from one individual to the whole ML speaker community:

My aunt is Spanish. She has Spanish nights – I don't go; she walks round the house all day speaking Spanish; don't know what she's saying – she's weird. (Ef19-wy, who was studying German and Italian)

[My Polish father] is quite aggressive with his language, ...well there is some nice Polish people, but the Polish men aren't so nice I think. (Lf44-bn1)

### ***SECTION B: VIEWS ON COLLEGE AND PROGRAMME SUBJECTS:***<sup>28</sup>

The second set of questions did not generate a lot of additional comments as in many cases students simply read out their responses from the questionnaires. However, some elaborated on the reasons for the language learning comparisons selected, which clearly highlighted a sense of *alienation*, even the comparison selected as illustrating 'boring' is one that the speaker is unlikely to have ever engaged in:

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<sup>28</sup> By this time students of the Blackford-no2 group were getting restless

“It’s like learning to swim – learning to survive in water, the culture (Af19-wo); “it’s like learning to swim – you’ve got to train your legs and arms to do something else than they normally do; they are not accustomed to the same sort of thing – you’re using your tongue to do something it’s not accustomed to” (Bm19-bn2); “shearing sheep – because it’s boring” (unidentified male – bn2)

In Blackford-no1, Jm29-bn1 proposed a work placement in the country, which was received with much jovial chuckling, indicating favourable associations with the country:

A work placement to Italy or to Spain, or something like that to learn a language, that would be ideal [Tutor: so Care situated in Italy?] Yes definitely, you’d pick up the language a lot better, I think, if you’re in that environment...I’m waiting on my placement. (Jm29-bn1)

However, the above comment does not necessarily imply an affinity with the speakers of that language, and indeed is more likely linked to the seductive elements of a holiday rather than an actual work placement.

At the FE Network ML in June staff had raised concerns about course-related factors and students’ reluctance to commit. The first concern appears justified but students seemed less worried about assessment loads than about learner-related factors, such as past ML learning experience and ML anxiety.

### ***SECTION C: VIEWS ON IMPORTANCE OF ML AFTER COLLEGE***

Most discussion participants in the ML-no groups, as well as in the Yellowcraig–yes group, appeared to agree that English is the dominant language, frequently making generalising assertions based on personal experience:

“Businessmen always use English, especially over here in the Euro-conferences; ... people who log on to the Internet almost always use English as well because it’s mostly an Americanised type industry. “ (Kf29-bn1)

“Most people that I’ve known that have come from other countries learn English as a second language; I mean I know quite a lot of Chinese people and Indian people and they all speak English...” (Am19-bn1)

“There’s an awful lot of [holiday] reps who don’t know a foreign language, I mean I’ve met quite a few, especially in Lanzarote, they just don’t speak a word of Spanish... we expect everybody to speak English” (Af19-yy)

One student associated language domination with political power:

“It’s all got to do with the war anyway, that most of the people speak English anyway because like we won the war, so, ken like we, Britain and America, won the war.” (Fm19-bn2)

In the Yellowcraig-option group Cf19-yo referred to the need for translators with “so many people coming to live in Scotland... until they’ve established themselves”. Like others in her group she was convinced that English was more dominant by default, i.e. as a result of complacency:

“The British in general are lazy with other languages whereas other countries are making an effort with languages, we don’t make an effort so English might take over.” (Cf19-yo).

Indeed, most groups seemed to come to a consensus about English dominance, except in Whitehill<sup>29</sup>. Af19-wo suggested that there might be resistance: “some people don’t want to talk English.” She also thought that an ‘English-only’ world would be quite anodyne. Similarly, Ef19-wo felt that “it’s a nice idea but it would nae work.” On the other hand, both Af19-wo and Df19-wo pointed out those whose main job involved languages would lose out in a monolingual world:

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<sup>29</sup> HD: Since this is the college where I work as Head of Languages, was there some special effort made to try and show sympathy with my implicitly acknowledged pro-language stance?

“Translators would lose their job” (Df19-wo); “language teachers would lose their job” (Af19-wo). ]

However, Bf19-wo and Cf19-wo became more insistent on demonstrating the dominance of English:

“Most countries speak English, England, New Zealand, Australia” (Bf19-wo), “over in Spain, all people speak English anyway, as a second language; everyone in every country is learning English; English is getting more spoken in every country” (Cf19-wo)<sup>30</sup>.

Opinions were also split in the Whitehill-no group where there was a disagreement on the importance of language skills for work. Gm29-wn did not believe that having a modern language would be a plus factor when job-hunting:

“It’ll only make a difference if the job is language based, e.g. in a call centre.” (Gm29-wn)

Ff44-wn initially appeared non-committal about modern language study but suddenly became quite vociferous about the increasing requirement for modern languages in big companies:

“International companies hold the key, depending on what skills they ask for in their job specification, another trend” (Ff44-wn)

Nevertheless, many considered the idea of everyone speaking one language as deplorable:

“I think there would be a lot lost if everybody spoke just one language, there is a loss of culture, a loss of tradition, that’s what makes travel interesting. I mean in Sweden

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<sup>30</sup> HD: This seems at odds with the responses the latter student gave in the questionnaire regarding her views on Spanish.



they're becoming worried that Swedish is going to disappear because it's fashionable for young people to speak English, and that would be a terrible pity." (Df19-yo)

This view was also reflected in other groups:

"It would be easier but they would lose their heritage (Mm19-wy); "don't think that'll ever happen; each would want their own" (Ff44-wn); "I think there would be a lot lost" (Df34-yo); "I don't know, it just makes it more interesting if they all talk different" (Bf34-bn1)

Some students in other groups reflected on alternative language trend possibilities:

"It could be Spanish in America; in 2010 there will be more people speaking Spanish than English in America" (Bf34-wy)

"English could decrease, because Scottish Gaelic has decreased; there could be a totally different language appearing (Nf19-wy)

Interestingly, references to the use of Gaelic only occurred in the three ML-no groups, and were invariably pessimistic, whilst betraying perhaps a hint of sadness at a linguistic heritage lost:

We're forgetting our own language, Gaelic, yeah, which I think it's dying out and I don't think it should die out; it's part of our heritage and culture. (Lf44-bn1)

I don't think we should be learning any language, 'cause we're not even speaking the language we should be speaking in the first place, we should be speaking Gaelic. (Fm19-bn2)

We don't use Gaelic in our society (Gm29-wn)

### ***STUDENTS' FINAL THOUGHTS***

Although students were invited to put down any final thoughts after the discussion only few made use of this facility. Interestingly, in the Whitehill-option group the discussion on the dominance of English was continued in this space. Cf19-wo asserted that most in her group felt that “English will be the main language in a few years’ time.” However, the other students used the space to note their conviction to the contrary:

Af19-wo: “Speaking more than one language is beneficial if you want to do anything to do with travelling and also for a lot of jobs.”

Bf19-wo: I think it will be better to be able to speak more than one language in the future, I think those who only speak English will be disadvantaged in work etc.”

Df19-wo: “I feel that languages are expanding in the world and every body will be able to speak a few words of some sort of language.”

In the Blackford-no2 group two students suggested they might consider learning a language if they could see clear financial benefits for themselves:

“Same as any other subject, it comes down to the one thing: money.” (Gm19-bn2), “If there’s money in it, I’ll learn it.” (Hm29-bn2)

NB: Although not all students participated in the follow-up discussions, the responses from the questionnaires suggest that the majority agreed with the views expressed orally.

### 3.4 Discussion of Research Phase 2000

At the end of research phase 2000, we can start to address a number of the research questions.

- RQ 1.1** How is ML study being presented in official and other public discourses? Whose interests are being promoted in the official discourses?
- RQ 1.2** What are the implicit assumptions in the collection and use of statistical data? Whose interests are being promoted through these assumptions?

#### **The spin on the ‘entitlement’ to language provision**

The MAGL report published in December 2000 outlined not simply vocational but also personal, cultural and socio-economic benefits arising from language learning. Whilst its remit was limited to the compulsory school sector it also promoted the wider, long-term benefits for Scottish society.

The notion of a language ‘entitlement’ it championed can be read as an attempt to secure the provision of language instruction for pupils in the latter phase of primary schooling and throughout pupils’ compulsory secondary education, whilst explicitly acknowledging pupils’ right of refusal. The media’s interpretation of the term as ‘abandonment of compulsory language learning policy’ can be interpreted as an implicit acknowledgement of failure with regard to the ‘Languages for All’ policy in the face of pupil resistance. This interpretation in turn can be construed as either a reflection of public opinion or an attempt to influence the public towards such a belief. Both standpoints purport to serve the interests of Scottish pupils. The essential difference is in the acceptance or rejection of the argument that Scottish society needs to build up its language skills capacity to prosper in the global economy.

### **Linguistic competition?**

The discourses on modern languages in parliamentary proceedings suggest that politicians' understanding of the pro-language argument is concentrated on the vocational rationale – which appears discredited in the light of new EU member states keen to use English as a *lingua franca*. The implied linguistic slight to France and Germany by the Minister (cf. p. 99), on the other hand, suggests a politicised understanding of the issue, with 'English' emerging as the winner of a competition for linguistic supremacy. The concurrent promotion of Gaelic and Scots on the grounds of preserving Scotland's linguistic heritage is seen as a separate issue.

### **Implications of SQA data**

The perceptions by ML staff regarding the decline of modern languages were corroborated by statistical evidence from SQA. However, since this data had to be requested it follows there is little political concern about the topic at post-compulsory level. In the light of the parliamentary quotes, this lack of concern can be linked to the narrow and 'separatist' understanding of the ML argument.

- RQ 2.1** How do ML learners account for their views on the ML learning experience in Scottish FE. What are the underlying motivational characteristics of these views? Is there evidence of resistance to any official or other public discourses?
- RQ 2.3** How do stakeholders in Scottish FE (ML/non-ML students...) account for their views on the inclusion of a ML in Scottish FE programmes? Is there evidence of resistance to any official or other public discourses? Whose interests are being promoted in stakeholders' accounts?

### **Student Perspectives on ML: Common trends and singular peculiarities**

Students' strong instrumental motivation and generally positive feeling about their college experience indicate an internalisation of the external regulation requirements for a qualification. The prevalence of anxiety about language use even in positively inclined

language learners points to potential barriers for ML uptake when the only criteria for success are accreditation of all skills at certain levels, as the proposed SQA framework would require.

Most significantly, students' dislike of theoretical aspects and preference for experiential learning highlights a fundamental limitation of the seemingly self-determining individual who only considers new concepts once s/he has 'physically' experienced them. The age-related acceptance of the requirement to improve communication skills and the importance attached to the development of language skills are consistent with this interpretation.

Although students agreed that linguistic hegemony might be resisted they also saw it as an inevitable by-product of globalisation, implying that the linguistic 'trust' between native and non-native speakers of English would remain intact. In the light of Gallacher *et al*'s (2000) conceptualisation of the 'uncertain' FE learner, on the other hand, the fallback position on English would represent a risk avoidance strategy. By contrast, the liberating effect described by those from a pro-language perspective suggests that language learning can indeed be considered a non-zero sum activity, i.e. with gains in communicative understanding for both the native English speaking ML learner and the native ML speaker.

### **Links to Previous Research**

The dominant instrumental motivational force for language learning combined with intrinsic motivation for holiday/travel reconfirms findings by Hall & Bankowska (1994) and Coleman (1996). Similarly, Coleman's conclusion that existing stereotypes might

be reinforced by visits abroad is in line with the finding that having been abroad or having ML-speaking family members does not necessarily engender a more positive outlook on languages.

**RQ 3.1** In what ways are the processes and structures in operation at professional, institutional and policy level conditioned by the specific cultural and historical context in which they operate? Whose interests are being promoted in these processes?

### **Initial perceptions on evidence of resistance and techno-rational assumptions**

In the light of the vocational association with languages, the proposed link between ML and tourism at Whitehill College could justifiably be perceived as having the potential to strengthen the position of languages at that institution. On the other hand, the ambiguous understanding of the language issue at political level is contributing to further policy incoherence. As Minister Stephen MSP is proclaiming that modern languages will be ‘moved up the agenda’ the design rules proposed by SQA for Higher National awards threaten to eliminate ML study at HN level. Yet in the light of the ambiguous messages from employers and English being the dominant language studied across Europe, the prevalent linguistic complacency amongst politicians and students seems entirely ‘rational’.

On the other hand, a Foucauldian researcher might interpret the ambiguous commitment to ML-study as resistance to the powerful hidden force of ‘thinking differently’, which is inherent in ML learning. A Marcusian researcher might argue that in an education system that is ‘student-led’ and treats the student as a ‘customers’, subjects perceived as difficult will be in low demand, unless their vocational relevance has been personally experienced. At the same time, the evocation of ‘liberating’ activities when comparing ML learning by the pro-ML minority suggests that Marcuse’s notion of a dominant

‘desublimated eros’ in advanced capitalist society may be lessened by ML learning because it requires the engagement with linguistic forms and patterns that ‘negate’ the accepted ‘common-sense’ norms of thinking derived from one’s native language and culture.

In Figure 3-6 I start to theorise a Foucauldian path of knowledge constructions relating to the belief that ‘English is enough’, which I intend to augment at the end of each subsequent research phase. For Research Phase 2000, I only make a connection between the ‘archaeological records’ up to 2000 and the dominant view of FE students.

**Figure 3-6: Theorised paths of knowledge construction (Research Phase 2000)**

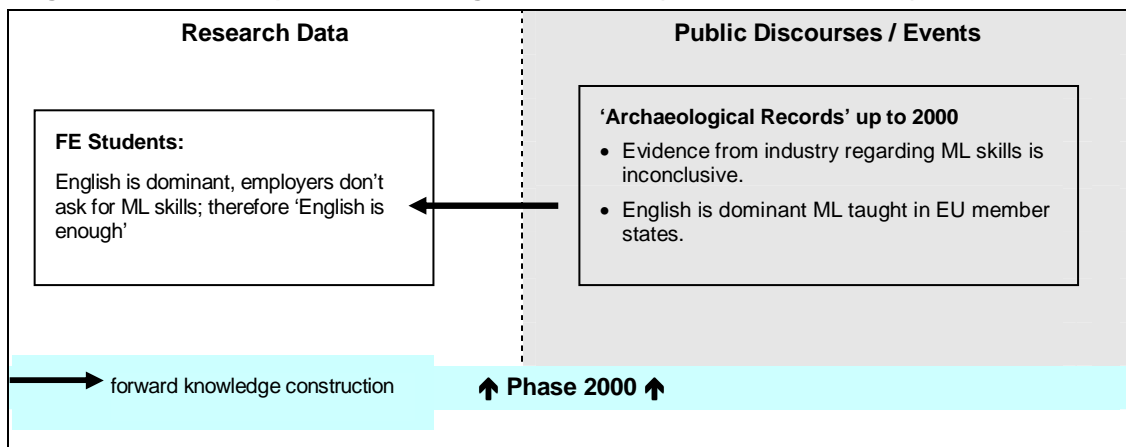





Figure 3-7 overleaf summarises the findings from the different strands of data collection in Phase 2000.

Figure 3-7: Summary of Research Phase 2000

Timeline →	Jun-Aug 2000	Sep-Dec 2000	Initial Findings
Research Question →	RQ 3.1	RQ 1.1	
Research Strand ↓		RQ 2.1	
<b>Data Collection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FE Network data</li> <li>SQA statistics</li> </ul>	Student Views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SQA statistics confirm perceptions of ML decline expressed at FE Network.</li> <li>Student views confirm negative perceptions expressed at FE Network, e.g. few ML-no students see relevance in ML-study. By contrast, pro-ML students cite 'liberating' activities when asked to describe ML learning.</li> </ul>
<b>Public Discourses / Events (External)</b>	ML in Scottish parliamentary minutes, media, and new research	MAGI Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MAGL Report cites both needs for and benefits of ML skills in multilingual world; asks for 'entitlement' to ML study in compulsory education.</li> <li>Scottish politicians highlight vocational benefits of ML skills and promote the rights of Gaelic and Scots as heritage languages.</li> <li>Media divided over significance of ML skills following the publication of Nuffield; Scottish papers interpret 'entitlement' concept in MAGL report as abandonment of 'Languages for All' policy.</li> </ul>
(Whitehill College)		Amalgamation of ML and tourism provision planned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closer links of ML with vocational specialism seen as a positive development by ML staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusions Phase 2000</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Majority of student views conclude that dominant use of English justifies linguistic complacency.</li> <li>Majority of student views at odds with views on vocational relevance of ML skills, and the promotion of Gaelic/Scots in parliament.</li> <li>Media articles reflect (encourage?) student views. It does not seem likely that European Year of Languages will affect anti-ML views within the time allocation of the intended research phase.</li> <li>From a Foucauldian perspective students' resistance to ML is an indicator of ML power.</li> <li>From a Critical Theory perspective, students appear to themselves as self-determining individuals who reject (exclude) ML from their programmes and 'force' ML speakers to use English when abroad. They do not consider that in so doing they may actually pass control (power) to ML speakers. The evocation of 'liberating' activities when describing ML learning the pro-ML minority suggests that Marcuse's notion of a dominant 'desublimated eros' in advanced capitalist society may be lessened by ML learning because it requires the engagement with linguistic forms and patterns that 'negate' the accepted 'common-sense' norms of thinking derived from one's native language and culture.</li> </ul>			





# 4 RESEARCH PHASE 2001: THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING A NUMBER

If Scotland aspires to be the most globally connected nation in Europe, either we look outward and win, or we look inward and fail. (From: *'Smart Successful Scotland.'* *Scottish Executive, 2001*)

## OVERVIEW

4.1	<b>Context 2001</b> Events at Whitehill College, activities of the FE Network steering group, and an updated literature review Selected research diary entries 2001 are attached as <b>Appendix IX</b>	RQ 1.1
4.2	<b>We could get by with a little help from our friends</b> Language tutor views on modern language study and modern language learning within Scottish further education programmes	RQ 2.2
4.3	<b>Lies, damned lies and language statistics</b> SFEFC statistics on language uptake within Scottish further education	RQ 1.2
4.4	<b>Summary of senior manager responses</b> Summary of college manager views on modern language study and modern language learning within Scottish further education programmes. The main data analysis section is attached as <b>Appendix XIII</b>	RQ 2.3
4.5	<b>Discussion of Research Phase 2001</b>	RQ 3.1, 3.2

## 4.1 Context 2001

### 4.1.1 Significant Events

#### *AT WHITEHILL COLLEGE*

In March 2001 a new Chief Executive was appointed at Whitehill College (SM Whitehill). He unexpectedly, just before the college's move to a new site during the summer break, implemented a different restructure of college staffing from the one announced in September 2000. This included the removal of the promoted posts for languages and communication provision respectively. SM Whitehill justified this on the basis of the low SUMs count of modern languages and communication<sup>31</sup>. At the same time, responsibility for the NC and HN tourism programmes (previously split between languages and business administration) was moved to the new curriculum group of catering & hospitality.

Nevertheless ML staff at Whitehill remained cautiously optimistic. This optimism seemed justified when at the start of the academic session 2001-02, interest in language evening classes was even higher than had been expected, and the ML career & education fair for secondary school pupils held to coincide with the European Day of Languages (26 September) proved hugely popular and successful. During the day, students with special educational needs were offered a language option for the first time and responded favourably.

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<sup>31</sup> Both the Head of Communication and I realised that the SUM count was not accurate and tried to raise the issue with the new Chief Executive. However, neither one of us realised the full implications of the problem at that time.

Unfortunately, these successes were offset by disappointments in other areas. There was limited uptake of ML options from students on Higher National programmes and abnormally high levels of absenteeism on the NC Tourism programme (cf. diary entries 20 August and November, **Appendix IX**). With support from the new Curriculum Group Leader, we decided to develop new ML-led programmes for session 2002-03.

### ***FE NETWORK STEERING GROUP ACTIVITIES***

Meanwhile negotiations with SQA were progressing well. At a meeting in April we were given assurances that SQA would support the development of new HN units, and in November arrangements for appointing writer consultants were agreed. At the same time, a letter written to the Chief Executive of the Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC) resulted in exposing a significant flaw in the statistical data collection procedures of SFEFC. The implications of this are highlighted in the **Section 4.3**.

For a closer inspection of my development as a researcher, please refer to the ‘selection of research diary entries 2001’ (**Appendix IX**).

### **4.1.2 Archaeological Records – Update 2001**

Two items have been given extended attention: the Letter of Guidance to the SFEFC by the Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning (Alexander, 2001) and the research study commissioned by the SFEFC into the supply and demand of FE in Scotland (SFEFC, 2001a). As will become clear they relate directly to RQ 1.1, 3.1 and 3.2. Although their existence did not come to my attention until Research Phase 2002 they

contributed in a significant way to my understanding of the events at my own college during Research Phase 2001. The other significant publication for 2001 was the Lo Bianco report 'Language and Literacy Policy in Scotland' (Lo Bianco, 2001).

### ***PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS***

References to ML followed a similar pattern to that highlighted in Phase 2000. Again, the topics of heritage languages and the linguistic rights of the speakers were more likely to involve discussion. Modern 'foreign' language 'promotions' again revolved around their vocational benefits, and the introduction of ML in the primary curriculum was referred to positively on at least six different occasions, but were not debated in depth. Yet the issue of ML was *not* discussed in connection with the announcement to increase efforts of globalising Scotland's economy.

### ***SFEFC SURVEY***

The SFEFC survey into the supply and demand of further education in Scotland (Osborne *et al*, 2001) merits special attention as its findings were published in August 2001 and bear direct relation to subsequent happenings at my own college. The survey was based on both quantitative and qualitative data; the researchers complemented statistical labour market information and college statistics with open questionnaires and selected interviews from a range of perspectives: college managers, careers services, adult guidance networks, enterprise and employment agencies, and national agencies.

Languages featured infrequently in the report, and there are conflicting messages about it. For example, according to two respondents from the enterprise and employment agency sector there was scope for greater language provision (SFEFC, 2001a: 11) whereas one respondent from the careers services and adult guidance network sector believed that there would be a decline in non-advanced courses with language elements because school leavers had poor skill level in languages (*ibid*: 23). Further, a number of local enterprise companies foresaw increased demand for tourism but did not mention language skills as forming part of this demand. In Colebatch's terms, these are perceptions by individuals in positions of *authority* and with perceived *expertise*. Contrary to their stated intentions (Osborne *et al*, 1999:11, cf. quote on page 40) however, the researchers only reported but did not seek to highlight or resolve these incongruities.

In their conclusions, the authors recommend two key areas for further research:

The first relates to a more comprehensive picture of supply and demand and the adequacy of FE provision. The second relates to greater insight into identifying and understanding need and therefore the appropriate responses (SFEFC, 2001a: 47)

Specifically, they urge SFEFC to commission research into

long-term trends and regional differences in the labour market, and their implications for education and training" (*ibid*: 48)

By implication, the researchers admit that the present report has revealed only short-term trends and perceptions.

***POLICY-RELATED DISCOURSES: MINISTERIAL LETTER OF GUIDANCE***

In December, the Minister for the Department of Enterprise and Lifelong learning published her Letter of Guidance to the SFEFC for the academic session 2002-03 (Alexander, 2001), which constitutes a key ministerial directive to FE managers. The minister starts by commending SFEFC its mapping exercises because the drive to increase employability skills is linked closely to the aim of having accurate knowledge about employment trends:

In order to achieve our goal of a full employment economy [...] there needs to be a real focusing on employment needs. [...] It is increasingly essential that new learning and skills opportunities are directly relevant and geared to the current and future needs of employers. (Alexander, 2001: 2)

Alexander then expresses her concern that the current structure of FE is not efficient. Referring again to the SFEFC survey, she asks the Council to accelerate the pace for strategic review and to consider rationalisation of provision:

I would look to such developments to reduce administrative duplication [...] and particularly to encourage the development of stronger units of delivery [...] as well as the reduction of weaker units of delivery (ibid: 6).

Despite the explicit cautions expressed by Osborne *et al* (2001) about the short-term nature of their findings, Alexander asks senior managers to make decisions with long-term consequences (i.e. the rationalisation of FE provision). Thus the Minister's demand for long-term vision (providing learners with the skills for tomorrow's workplace) is rendered 'irrational' by her request for 'rationalisation' based on short-term evidence. A notable absence in the letter is the reference to the right of any European citizen to live and work in any of its member states, and the resulting cultural and linguistic implications of this right.

### ***OTHER PUBLICATIONS***

The Beedham Report (Beedham, 2001), a quantitative-qualitative survey of over 300 responding Scottish companies investigating the need for ML skills, concluded that shortcomings in ML skills were still causing concern although employers were beginning to address the issue. The Lothian Exports report, published around the same time (Lothian Exports, 2001) however, directly contradicted these findings. In a survey exploring export-related issues a significant percentage of the 200 or so responding companies in the Edinburgh and Lothian area reported that they did *not* consider ML skills a barrier to export. In Section 5.4 I take up the assumptions made by the researchers in the analysis of the questionnaire that help to explain some of these dichotomous findings.

In his publication arguing for a comprehensive cross-sector language and literacy policy in Scotland Lo Bianco (2001) advocated the consideration of language as a ‘resource’ rather than as a ‘problem’ or a ‘right’. He advocated the integration of language issues with Scottish public policy priorities, e.g. citizenship, culture, education, social inclusion, and tourism. He also argued that language and literacy issues, as critical determinants of social exclusion in contemporary society, should be addressed together. This can be construed as an attempt to find a Nash equilibrium amongst potentially competing stakeholders faced with limited financial resources.

Salt & Clarke (2001) revisited their earlier research (Salt & Clarke, 1998) regarding the influx of foreign workers in the UK, and found that the foreign nationals were consistently filling positions at professional and managerial level, a finding consistent with Graddol’s paradox (cf. page 31) that the increasing use of English as global language may disadvantage monolingual speakers of English:



“All available sources on labour migration to the UK suggest that the inflow of foreign workers has been rising throughout the 1990’s. Consistent net gains of non-British professional and managerial workers have offset consistent net losses of British professional and managerial workers. Foreign national workers and foreign-born workers have increased by 20% since 1992. Foreign workers are generally more skilled than British workers. (Salt & Clarke, 2001: 473)

The findings from two research reports are consistent with my own findings. Firstly, in a study within higher education of students’ reasons for dropout from ML options, Reimann (2001) concluded that the priority of the main degree subject was the most significant influence on non-continuation, combined with a perception of the added workload, and difficulty of the language; this was linked to the modularity of the course structure and students’ interpretation of credit accumulation and transfer. Positive classroom experience in ML classes did *not* guarantee continuation. Dropout was least likely where the language seemed an integral part of the main subject studied. These conclusions are consistent with my student data collected in 2000.

Secondly, some of Aldridge’s findings into adult learners’ ML learning patterns (Aldridge, 2001) resembled those of my student cohort. In her sample 49% of adults whose mother tongue was *not* English spoke two further languages, whereas only 11% of adults whose mother tongue was English did so. In my sample, too, the foreign national group of Redhall-yes-b had competence in a greater range of languages than any of the other groups. This suggests that the pro-language argument has gained greater prominence in non-native English speakers.

On the other hand, there is evidence to support the argument that English continues to dominate the vocational training agenda in EU member states with the promotion of ‘cultural understanding of other cultures’ seemingly added as a mere afterthought:

In line with the Europeanisation and internationalisation of the economic and labour markets, the English language should be firmly established in the training regulations for all occupations... In addition, an understanding of other cultures should be promoted in vocational training. (Borch & Wordelmann, 2001: 8)

The study conducted by Gogolin (2001) comes to a different conclusion. Building on Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus' she argues that the increasingly multicultural character of formerly largely monolingual nation states requires teachers to become much more conscious of their ingrained cultural assumptions in order to transcend them in their teaching of learner groups that are increasingly culturally diverse.

Finally, Hua noted an increase of Chinese students in German universities (Hua, 2001). This supports the claim that internationalisation is happening in all countries, but also unwittingly challenges the assumption that non-native speakers of English would exclusively wish to study English, or wish to study in native English-speaking settings.

## 4.2 Language Tutors: We Could Get By with a Little Help from Our Friends

Between February and April 2001 four modern language lecturers were interviewed, one each in Blackford (Alex), Greenbank (Chris), Redhall (Sandy) and Yellowcraig (Leigh). The participants' professional positions can be interpreted as an indicator of decline in language provision. When Leigh took over her post, the senior lecturer post for languages was removed. Although Alex and Sandy still had senior lecturer (SL) status, they had additional curriculum responsibilities, communication and tourism respectively.<sup>32</sup> The interviews aimed to explore in greater depth perceptions of language tutors (LTs) on the following issues:

- Current position and management of ML provision
- Learning and teaching of ML
- Professional development issues
- Prognosis for ML uptake at their own college

In order to allow my own voice as language tutor to be reflected in the data collection, I have given summary responses to the questions in the footnotes as 'Hannah', member of staff at Whitehill College. I follow these remarks with a brief analysis in my role as researcher 'HD'. Even though the conversations did not necessarily follow the same linear paths in order to enable comparison between responses I have regrouped staff replies under the original headings where appropriate.

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<sup>32</sup> At Greenbank the SL Languages had been given responsibility for tourism provision during a restructure in 1996. He was interviewed in his role as programme leader (viz. Section 5.2). At the time of conducting the interviews with language tutors I was still in a promoted post with responsibility for language provision at Whitehill College plus all certificated language evening classes across Whitehill region, as well as the non-advanced travel & tourism programme.

Table 4-1 below summarises gives details about the academic qualifications of the participating LTs. As only one of the participants is male, the feminine pronoun is used throughout in order to safeguard anonymity.

**Table 4-1: Background details of language tutors**

Name	College	Teaching + other postgraduate qualification(s)	Non-teaching work
Alex	Blackford	MA (French, Italian), PG Diploma (Business Administration), TQFE <sup>33</sup>	Export
Chris	Greenbank	PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate of Education)	-
Sandy	Redhall	PGCE, Dip TELF <sup>34</sup>	-
Hannah	Whitehill	PGCE, MEd [Researcher studying for EdD]	Tourism/hospitality
Leigh	Yellowcraig	PGCE, DEMML <sup>35</sup>	Export

## 4.2.1 Current Position of ML Provision

### *Probe 1: Range of students studying ML and strategies for dealing with different prior ML knowledge / experience*<sup>36</sup>

All participants commented on the wide range of language students, in terms of age and ability. Most staff had noted an increase in school leavers (learners who have only just completed their compulsory school education), except Sandy in Redhall, who had seen a decline from that particular student group.

<sup>33</sup> Teaching Qualification in Further Education

<sup>34</sup> Diploma in Teaching English as a Foreign Language to adults

<sup>35</sup> Diploma in Export & Marketing with Modern Languages

<sup>36</sup> **Hannah:** Whitehill has a wide range of students studying languages. Daytime students tend to be school leavers, usually with Standard Grade qualifications in one language, occasionally two. Even though they have not received top grades they are usually very keen to study languages and have chosen the NC travel & tourism programme because of the ML component. Evening ML provision in session 2001 has been restricted to one French and one Spanish class due to college financial constraints. Whitehill has also pioneered a ML 'drop-in workshop', which is open to all students and community members. This acts as the weekly contact point for various flexi-study courses but also serves as a support session when students have missed a ML class. Between 15-20 people attend this session in any given week. **HD:** Hannah's perceptions on student views are corroborated by student views of the Whitehill-yes group. She is keen to stress the flexibility of ML provision as well as the restrictions placed on it by senior management.

In response to the wide range of prior ML knowledge and experience LT staff employed varying degrees of what I shall call ‘language manipulation’:

[We cater for that kind of range] by putting them into other languages, rather than giving them French, we’re putting them into one of the main portions and we give them Spanish, German and Italian... (**Chris**)

Here, the assumption is that most students would have studied French at school, and that by giving students another language, there would be a clear break with the school experience. This could be cited as an example of ‘strategic compliance’ (Shain & Gleeson, 1999), ostensibly for the student’s benefit. In Sandy’s case, where programme leaders have selected for all students to be given the same language, Sandy would promote Spanish on the grounds that it would be an ‘easy’ option and had application in a non-vocational context.

When [students] come in for our own courses, they have a choice... but when it comes down to the individual sections it’s more difficult to give a choice ... and often it’ll end up being Spanish beginners or maybe Italian beginners... a lot of [students] had a very negative language learning experience at school, and therefore the idea of learning a fairly bright new language, which is relatively easy, you know, compared with perhaps German, which is a bit more difficult you might argue, or certainly Russian, or Japanese, or anything exotic – so the idea that they can learn a fairly simple language, which they probably might hear more of than any other, through holidays, is attractive... (**Sandy**)

Strategic compliance for the benefit of the learner again appears to be in evidence here, because students are being asked to study an ‘easier’ language than that compulsorily studied at school. A further caveat, in the case of Spanish, is its usefulness as holiday language combined with its status as a world language. The latter argument is essentially the same as the one used to promote the learning of English, i.e. that the language studied has supra-national currency. Italian, by comparison, would have only holiday appeal. Russian and Japanese are dismissed as being both difficult and ‘exotic’.

According to Leigh, students themselves, when given choices between languages, tend to opt for one not previously studied, with a preference for Spanish – which in turn has presented her with problems on the supply side at Yellowcraig:

I think sometimes [students] also decide that they'd like to try another language – we leave it up to them, as far as the numbers allow it... It used to be French [for the NC Tourism class but] the students didn't enjoy it; they found it difficult even if they'd done it at school, so we decided, along with the course coordinator, that we would have a go with Spanish and that seemed to be better ... We have a huge increase in Spanish and that's given us staffing problems... **(Leigh)**

At Blackford, Alex had reduced the restricting factor of staffing by only offering supply-led language choices in the first instance:

Sometimes there isn't much choice because of staffing. For instance, we don't offer them German because we don't have a full-time German tutor ... So, normally, if they've done French or German they would probably do Spanish or Italian with us and that helps us to obviate the difficulty of mixed level teaching **(Alex)**

Beginners' level dominated provision even where students were able to continue with a language studied at school. Here, too, there was evidence of professional judgement at play. According to Leigh, younger students often lacked the necessary linguistic competence to enter into an Intermediate level programme:

I've always been a bit concerned about them going straight into Intermediate with Standard Grade because I don't think their knowledge is very high... even in the Elementary<sup>37</sup> they reach a point where they're not finding it so straightforward because they're covering language they haven't come across before, and they often don't have a great grasp of grammar either at that level... **(Leigh)**

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<sup>37</sup> 'The Elementary' refers to a Higher National unit, which is studied for a full academic session (120 hours), and is said to be the vocational equivalent to achieving of a 'Higher' grade.

***Probe 2: Levels of daytime / evening provision and orientation of student motivation***<sup>38</sup>

Tutors considered that most ML activity took place during daytime programmes, with Spanish dominating but that motivation amongst evening class students was higher. At the same time, this motivation did not appear to be strong as attendance to class diminished as a result of inclement weather or the requirement to pass an assessment to fulfil external qualification requirements. Dependency on evening provision was not a sound financial option as a result:

We have more during the day and I think that's what we would prefer, to be honest. The evening provision is the icing on the cake but I think that's how it should be, rather than the department having to rely on evening classes to pay the bills. (**Leigh**)

However, although daytime students might be more certificate-driven this did not necessarily amount to a strong 'staying-on' factor:

... the language requirement for constant attendance and constant assessment as opposed to a lot of [students'] other subjects, which are large assessments or assignments. So they find that difficult to fit in with their other things, and the commitment (**Chris**)

Some LTs raised concerns about students' learning ability or students' attitudes to learning generally:

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<sup>38</sup> **Hannah:** Up to September 2000, the percentage of day/evening provision has been roughly 40/60. Although the majority of students are well disposed towards ML attendance has been a constant problem with daytime students. Feedback from course team meetings has consistently highlighted a personality clash between one LT and younger students. From time to time there have been ML-training contracts with business, and occasionally staff have received requests for translation. However, no financial benefits have been accrued for the ML section as a result of these activities other than additional contracts for part-time staff. **HD:** The day/evening spread differs markedly from the other colleges. She is again suggesting that there has been little management support for ML, despite some success in obtaining commercial contracts. Attendance (or the lack of it) appears to be a common problem amongst daytime students in all 5 colleges. Hannah is suggesting that absenteeism may be exacerbated when there are interpersonal problems between tutor and students.

I think also – because some of the students come now – because of the higher employment rate, they're not always quite as able, in terms of study skills, as our students used to be... (**Sandy**)

We don't attract what might be called 'high flyers' from school... So the ones who come during the day, they are generally reluctant learners, shall we say... (**Alex**)

Sandy refers to external circumstances that she felt dictated to some degree the type of student FE will attract: in a thriving economic climate, more academically poor students will attend as they have been left 'on the shelf'. To Alex, FE appears to be the selection of choice for what Gallacher *et al* had termed 'uncertain learners', regardless of the economic state. Although Leigh, too, is focused on learners' reluctance to study languages as a result of past ML learning experience she then highlights the high levels of encouragement required rather than dwelling on their academic ability. This suggests that she believes the students to be capable of achievement in their ML studies:

A lot of [our students] don't have a very good past experience, and they'll say, you know, 'Oh, I wasn't very good at languages at school, I didn't feel it was for me, I used to feel inadequate and so on. And we find that's quite a hindrance when we're trying to encourage students at induction to come and do a language. A lot of them they don't even consider it; it's just '*no, past experience is bad, I'm not even going to think about it*' and so it involves quite a lot of work on our part to encourage them. (**Leigh**)

### ***Probe 3: Changes in level of ML provision***<sup>39</sup>

Language tutors raised different points in response to this question. Alex appeared reasonably satisfied with current trends, indicating that this was in part due to support both by programme leaders and senior management. Chris, on the other hand,

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<sup>39</sup> **Hannah:** In the evening, Spanish, and to a lesser degree Italian, have been popular choices, with French uptake remaining stable and German declining. However, because of financial cutbacks during the 2000-01 session, the employment of temporary lecturers has been denied, reducing provision to one French and one Spanish class each. During daytime, Spanish is again the most popular option. To maximise uptake, we have the language workshop on a Wednesday afternoon. However, overall there is only a small percentage of students who study languages. **HD:** Spanish appears to be the most popular language chosen by students across all 5 colleges. Despite the flexibility offered at Whitehill, ML uptake is low, and has been further restricted by management.



highlighted the loss of more advanced language courses and language-led programmes, which she put down to cross sector competition:

We previously had a language course ‘Languages and IT’, where we taught up to advanced credit on that. So we’ve dropped advanced, and we’ve dropped intermediate [because of] lack of numbers, lack of applicants... We think that the universities took a lot of our students that had previously come with a good Higher French. **(Chris)**

Both Chris and Leigh again referred to the increase in Spanish, and to a lesser extent in Italian, away from French and German. Sandy was perhaps the most pessimistic about ML trends at her college:

We still offer the same range of languages at the moment to the same levels... what is changing is the numbers are dropping in every single class... but the trend is not upwards, in no case is it upwards. **(Sandy)**

To compensate for the loss of language uptake at advanced level, Greenbank had opted to increase students’ *range* of language skills instead:

It’s now set up that the HN Tourism do a 3-credit one language in the first year and a 3-credit in a different language in the second year, but both at Elementary level<sup>40</sup>. **(Chris)**

Leigh had found that the college decision to move from a 3-block to a 2-semester system had inadvertently negated one of her most successful ‘recruitment’ strategies because it had brought to the foreground a significant barrier to language study – learner anxiety:

Now in the past we’ve offered [the students] within the first block a sort of get-out clause; we included a 1-credit unit and so we said to them at induction ‘why not try, if you’re not sure, why not give it a try and if you don’t like it at the end of November you can cut and run but you at least have a credit in the bag – and that worked really well, and we found we did get large numbers and very few ever dropped out at the end of November. Now I’ve spoken to a few of the students and they were saying that they

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<sup>40</sup> This is the same HN unit referred to by Leigh earlier.

think that this year, because they had to make a commitment up to the end of January they were less keen to do so; they were frightened that they wouldn't enjoy it, or they would find it too difficult [...] (**Leigh**)

***Probe 4: Differences in type of ML provision<sup>41</sup>***

ML provision at Blackford was mainly offered on National Certificate (NC) / or National Qualification (NQ) programmes. The college policy stipulated that any language options included in a programme should be offered on a *compulsory* basis. In practice these ML components consisted mostly of single credit units (40 hours), except on the NQ Travel & Tourism programme where the language was studied for the whole of the session, twice a week for two hours, or 160 hours in total.

By contrast, at Greenbank, Redhall and Yellowcraig, ML provision was mainly offered on advanced programmes, i.e. at Higher National (HN) level. ML staff confirmed perceptions that travel & tourism programmes contained the biggest and widest range of ML components. ML options in other programmes were more restricted, e.g. only two 40-hour beginners' units on HN programme *International Trade and Business* at Greenbank. Sandy felt that this was possibly as a result of curriculum framework constraints rather than programme leaders' perceptions on the importance of ML:

Business studies does very little with us... but it's not that they're not willing, in fact, it's because other things compete, core skills – IT, communication – and by the time they've got those in plus their own subject, I think there's not enough for languages... (**Sandy**)

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<sup>41</sup> **Hannah:** There has been a gradual decline in the numbers of HN students taking up language options at Whitehill. We think this is in part due to a decline in student numbers for HNC Administration and Information Management. We are also aware that students of HNC/D Business Administration tend to be discouraged by the programme leader to take the ML option. NC tourism students study two languages during the whole of the academic session, i.e. 120 hours per language. HN students also have 120-hour provision but with the option of dropping the subject after the first 40 hours. This idea has worked well for us and was successfully copied by Leigh when she moved from Whitehill to Yellowcraig. **HD:** Hannah is pointing to dependency of ML uptake on uptake in other programmes with ML-options and on support from other programme leaders.

Only Blackford and Yellowcraig were involved in language training for business, but in neither college did there seem to be a huge amount of such activity. At Blackford this remit was allocated to a different member of staff within the commercial arm of the college, and there did not seem to be any direct link to the main college activity.

## 4.2.2 Management of ML Provision

### *Probe 1: Planning of ML provision*<sup>42</sup>

Language tutors raised the lack of power to influence the inclusion of language units within full time programmes:

[Language provision] is not planned in the sense that we are a servicing section so we cannot insist that a programme includes a language... (**Alex**)

The course leader makes the decision for including options... (**Chris**)

Normally, it's the sections who come to us; we have very little power, you know, to put languages in, unless they show willing... (**Sandy**)

It would be the course team who would decide what was on the framework ... (**Leigh**)

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<sup>42</sup> **Hannah:** At Whitehill, only the NC Travel & Tourism programme, for which I act as programme leader, has compulsory ML elements. Only two further programmes at the college offer ML options. Further, there is no appropriate articulation between NC and HN programmes in tourism, with the HN programme dominated by business modules. As a result, few NC Tourism students continue to HN study at Whitehill. Language staff had felt encouraged when the Principal indicated to them last autumn that responsibility for HN tourism provision would be passed to the Head of Languages in March 2001, the planned implementation date for the college restructure. However, a new principal has just started and has a different restructure in mind - but we won't know the outcome until June. **HD:** Hannah appears to suggest that ML study is not promoted highly at Whitehill. There is some uncertainty about the future position of ML within a revised college structure.

Whilst both ML staff at Redhall and Yellowcraig had control over some full time programmes, this did not guarantee increased uptake. At Redhall, for example, the attempt to run “a matrix of four languages at three levels” was

getting very difficult to sustain, because you need so many students to fill twelve classes  
(Sandy)

At Yellowcraig, on the other hand, one initiative appeared to have had more positive results:

We actually run two of our own programmes, a Spanish immersion course, and we did have a Gaelic immersion but that has now developed into an HNC...and it's been very successful (Leigh)

The popularity of Spanish was again raised as influencing factor with respect to staffing.

At Greenbank, a lecturer of French and Spanish found that most of her work now consisted of teaching Spanish. At Yellowcraig, Leigh had decided to enrol on a two-year programme to qualify her for teaching the language.

### ***Probe 2: European funding***<sup>43</sup>

Staff again highlighted the barrier created by the dependency on other programme leaders because it was they who were responsible for initiating trips abroad, not ML tutors. At Greenbank, the *Languages & IT* course had benefited from ESF funding but

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<sup>43</sup> **Hannah:** NC students are not eligible for EU travel grants and usually have severe financial difficulties so that trips abroad have only rarely materialised. Further, due to the diversification of language choices, individual language groups are too small to be viable by themselves, and a trip abroad would mean obtaining permission from all programme leaders concerned. **HD:** Hannah is facing a number of barriers with respect to organising a trip abroad. One is the financial position of students, another is the dependency on programme leaders to obtain EU funding, as well as obtaining permission from other programme leaders to release (potential) participants from units of study that would be missed as a result of the trip.

this programme was now defunct as indicated earlier. At Yellowcraig, the survival of ML provision had been a priority when Leigh started at the college:

[In 1995] the [languages] department was at risk of closing down and we felt our priority was to get in the door and, you know, build up those programmes first... (**Leigh**)

However, lecturers spoke favourably about the trips abroad that had happened and the positive effect on students. Here is Alex, for example, enthusing about a trip to France, which included a visit to the European Parliament and had, she felt, changed students' outlook on the world:

... It was immensely valuable in the way that students grew during that week. Some of our students have hardly ventured [outside their own locality]... and are quite narrow in their horizons, and in their outlook, and this was a huge experience for some of them (**Alex**)

At Redhall a social inclusion programme used both a ML and the trip abroad as powerful incentive:

We use Italian as a vehicle to both bring students together to study a subject all at the same level, and ... we take them to Italy as part of the deal, if you like, the prize at the end of the course (**Sandy**)

### ***Probe 3: Marketing of ML provision***

Whilst ML staff had considered various strategies to increase ML uptake, as indicated earlier, gaining access to students depended again partly on the willingness of programme leaders. At Greenbank, access to students was not always granted:

Sometimes we're invited in to speak to [the students], other times we're not. (**Chris**)

Leigh had quite actively sought – and obtained – agreement from programme leaders:

We asked, probably about five or six years ago now, we asked all the course coordinators if we could do that and they now invite us as a matter of course...**(Leigh)**

Sandy concentrated marketing strategies on her ‘own’ courses, admitting that this might be a failing:

There’s a difference between our own courses [where] we’ve done the hard sell before, during the interview. In terms of servicing, we don’t go round, perhaps we should go round, but we don’t go round asking students what languages they want to do, we leave that to the other sections. **(Sandy)**

### 4.2.3 ML learning and teaching in Scottish FE

#### *Probe 1: Student Perceptions of Difficulty, Student Perceptions of Importance*<sup>44</sup>

A major concern when marketing languages to students was alleviating learner anxiety about languages:

What I’m doing is a reassuring exercise because I do find that there is certain level of fear about languages, even amongst the youngsters, if they’ve had a bad experience, and certainly amongst the adults... **(Alex)**

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<sup>44</sup> **Hannah:** Initially I was allowed access to HN students at induction. This proved highly successful, with all four ML options able to run. Now, however, I am told that the course tutor will present all options to the students and then let me know who has chosen a language. This has resulted fewer students taking language options but programme leaders dispute that this is as a result of ‘non’-access. With respect to language learning, we have found that students with previous knowledge of French find Spanish or Italian an easy second language to learn. Students who previously studied German, have also found Spanish an easier option. I have found that lack of grammatical understanding is a barrier for students – to the development of their English communication skills *and* to quick progress in the foreign language. However, I believe that students on the NC tourism course have for the most part found languages enjoyable, and we try to keep the structural element to a minimum. Having worked in tourism and hospitality myself for ten years, I can bring first hand experience to the subject, and each year I invite a professional from the industry to come and speak to the students. **HD:** Dependency on programme leaders is again a feature. Hannah believes strongly in the vocational rationale for ML learning, and in the link between language and literacy skills.

We're trying to encourage students at induction to come and do a language. A lot of them, they don't even consider it; it's just 'No, past experience is bad, I'm not even going to think about it' and so it involves quite a lot of work on our part to encourage them. **(Leigh)**

LT participants were divided as to the vocational relevance of ML learning, and were aware that most students did not consider it relevant. Sandy felt that the presence of large numbers of foreign nationals at her own college had had a positive effect:

Those who are doing it as part of their course... partly because also we have a lot of foreign students in the college and therefore they understand that languages are part of the community here, you hear Italian and Spanish here all the time. So I think that they've been sold on that one... **(Sandy)**

Leigh expressed surprise about the lack of relevance perceived by tourism students and related this to students' academic ability and their perception of self-efficacy:

There's more motivation from the Business students because they can see the benefits...but Travel & Tourism we struggle a bit with; a lot of them are lower ability than the Business HNDs. So, och, there seems to be a perception that 'languages are not for me, I'm not clever enough'... now where this comes from I don't know...**(Leigh)**

Chris, too, felt that students did not believe in the vocational relevance of language learning:

[Students] see [languages] as something that's only handy for your holidays and not really much use in the business world, I would say **(Chris)**

Alex seemed to be in two minds about this issue. On the one hand, she claimed that the vocational rationale for including a language module in courses such as catering, office administration and tourism was "obvious", on the other she did not wish to:

...just sell [ML] on the grounds of 'this will help you get a job' because they know, and I know, that's not true. It may help them but, you know, it's a hard argument to win that

one ... We try to promote [ML] as a bit of fun, something that's a bit of a contrast to the rest of their studies, something that's not going to be too demanding and that they might actually enjoy. (**Alex**)

Whilst they had earlier deplored the decrease in French and German, when asked about the difficulty of ML learning, Italian and Spanish were favoured above those two languages. Although they referred to *students'* perceptions, Sandy's earlier comments suggest that these might be in line with staff's own *personal* views:

[Students] tend to find German more difficult than the others, French possibly more, yes, the Spanish and the Italian are in level of difficulty coming out easier, certainly that's the student perception (**Chris**)

I think they find German difficult because of the frightening size of the words initially; I think French also they have some difficulty with pronunciation. I don't know about Italian but I think Spanish, it seems easier for them... (**Leigh**)

Therefore the idea of learning a bright new language [i.e. Spanish], which is relatively easy, you know, compared to with perhaps German, which is a bit more difficult you might argue... so the idea that they can learn a fairly simple language, which they probably might hear more of than any other, through holidays, is attractive... (**Sandy**)

French pronunciation is more difficult – when they come to learn Italian, well, the Scottish accent lends itself quite well to Italian (**Alex**)

Given that 2001 was the European Year of Languages, it was surprising that it received little, if any mention, in the interviews. There were only brief references to college staff being given a 'Language Challenge' at Greenbank, but none of the other tutors made reference to the initiative during the interview.



***Probe 2: Conditions for success in ML study, preferred / disliked ML activities, difference to ML learning at school***<sup>45</sup>

Alex, Chris and Leigh believed that where learners showed commitment to language learning they usually succeeded, independent of academic ability. Sandy felt that a more inclusive position of ML in the curriculum framework would help to bring that commitment about:

What needs to be done is the languages need to be integrated into the course, they need to be seen to be part of a package of skills... we need to tell [students] that learning languages isn't a sort of isolated thing which is just an add-on, which I think a lot of them probably still see it is – doing Business *and* Spanish *and* something...**(Sandy)**

Whilst staff agreed that role-plays were both favourite student activities and beneficial for advancing their ML skills, Alex and Chris did not believe that students' preference for writing activities was of benefit:

[Students] tend to want to write, they tend to write too much sometimes...**(Alex)**

[Students] like a lot of writing, which I'm not too happy about; [they're] copying or trying to fill things in which they don't understand. **(Chris)**

With respect to disliked activities, tutors had noted students struggling with listening tasks but felt that views on grammar differed according to the age group:

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<sup>45</sup> **Hannah:** I believe that attendance and commitment are more likely to lead to success than academic ability alone. Students prefer speaking activities but I also teach some grammatical aspects of German, like verb position and case endings. Because FE is focussed on a specific vocational area I believe that students are able to progress more quickly in skill (albeit with a narrower range of vocabulary) than at school. Generally smaller class sizes are a further supportive factor. **HD:** Hannah's views are similar to those of the other LTs. The students on her programme (Whitehill-yes) support her claim that they prefer the ML study experience at college to that of school.

They tend not to like the grammar but then again that's an age thing, some of the older students love that and they would do grammar till the cows come home – and they're not so keen on the speaking practice **(Leigh)**

They don't like grammar – the younger ones, the older ones you get some people who love it – the younger ones can't perceive that other languages are not like English... **(Alex)**

Leigh had observed that the lack of English literacy skills was holding back the development of ML skills:

They quite quickly want to make up their own sentences and there's a bit of frustration sometimes that sets in... I find that there's maybe a gap in their English structure knowledge that doesn't help. **(Leigh)**

All four tutors claimed that overall, students preferred their FE language learning experience to that at school because they were making faster progress, could see the relevance of the tasks, as well as due to situational factors such as smaller class size and a more relaxed atmosphere:

If you compare hour for hour, they can do quite a bit after just 40 hours, and after 120 hours they can be really quite capable in a language. **(Chris)**

What [students] said was at school they seemed to spend months and months and months doing sort of exercises and things but they weren't quite sure to what purpose... whereas at college they felt that after quite a short time they would actually have been able to go and buy something or go and order something or go and ask for help, and they felt that was quite nice, making progress quicker... **(Leigh)**

I think they perceive it, well (a) it's a smaller class size by and large and (b) they perceive it as more relaxed... **(Alex)**

I think that when they come to college the idea that the social language has a meaning because they're in a situation where they're actually exchanging information which someone because that person wants to know... **(Sandy)**

***Probe 3: ML curriculum and assessments***<sup>46</sup>

ML tutors at Greenbank, Redhall and Yellowcraig expressed varying degrees of dissatisfaction with the heavy burden of internal assessment requirements prevailing at that time. Sandy, in particular, took a strong anti-assessment stance:

If you'd really ask [staff] they would like to dump a lot of assessment... and actually teach the language... I think in most skills they could tell you exactly how good the candidate was... (**Sandy**)

She claimed that revised assessment arrangements under 'Higher Still' reforms meant that candidates were "finding out sooner that they weren't coping" and instead of persevering or dropping a level would simply drop out altogether. Alex, on the other hand, felt that assessments could act as an incentive - although they might also mislead students into a 'false sense of security':

I think [students] are surprised at how easy the assessments are and that gives them a great fill up, when they realise that...the evening class people they generally cope fine, it's a nice, steady, progression [but] there are certain students who I would not recommend to continue to Module 2 because they would just be building themselves up for failure... (**Alex**)

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<sup>46</sup> **Hannah:** NC Tourism students work towards a major project of preparing a 7-day itinerary for a group of foreign visitors, using the foreign language. Individual assessments are designed to fit in with various tasks along the way, e.g. contacting the travel agent abroad, by phone, fax and letter, and receiving the clients. This approach has worked very well. **HD:** Hannah's views are similar to those of the other LTs.

#### 4.2.4 Professional Development<sup>47</sup>

All five tutors indicated that their colleges had supported attendance at the recent national Higher Still training seminars due to the strong support from government. Further, attendance at language specific conferences, such as those organised by the FE Network or Scottish CILT, was also supported. Continuous professional development (CPD) in a country whose language was taught at college, in order to “get your enthusiasm back again” (Sandy), however, was less likely to happen. Time constraints were cited as barrier to the introduction of new technologies into classroom practice:

We do have some CD-ROMs but it would be nice to actually have the time to write a course round these rather than as opposed to just throw a kid in front of a CD-ROM and say ‘have a look at that’ (**Alex**)

Alex also felt that there should be more networking between FE language colleagues:

Getting together more; I think a little consortia, again this is something we’ve talked about with colleagues in other colleges but hasn’t really come to fruition.

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<sup>47</sup> **Hannah:** At Whitehill, requests for professional development are invariably granted. In April 2001, one member of staff has been supported to attend an in-service training event in France with a view to setting up links with a vocational institution offering travel & tourism and business administration. However, because we don’t know how the new college structure will affect language provision, the benefits of the trip are now less certain than they appeared three months ago. **HD:** Hannah is suggesting that in terms of professional development senior management has been very supportive to date, but hopes for an increased status of ML provision are thrown into doubt because of college restructure.

### 4.2.5 Prognosis for ML Uptake at Own College<sup>48</sup>

LT participants differed in their outlook. Alex and Leigh appeared more upbeat, Chris and Sandy more pessimistic in their prognosis. Alex considered that FE language provision might have to change as a result of a decreasing population of youngsters, coupled with increased level of language competence. Perhaps making an assumption that uptake of languages for Higher might continue to be problematic she foresaw an opportunity for FE in helping schools deliver Higher and Advanced Higher courses, possibly using ICT technology such as video conferencing. She also felt that the short courses for the community, as long as they were not subject to regulated assessment, would be “a growth area”. Alex expressed hope that the MAGL Report would help to change perceptions at senior management level:

“If it can get our Senior Management, [to] change their perceptions... Oh, they’re not against languages but they’re obviously subject to constraints and it’s not a priority for them...” (Alex)

She also believed that “even just in the media and in society at large” she was “starting to perceive just a slight sea change, ‘cause I think we had really gone as low as we could possibly go and I think the tide is beginning to turn a little bit”. Programme leaders were either “just entrenched in their positions” or simply constrained by the curriculum framework. Within the community, there was a need to widen people’s perception on why learning another language might be beneficial

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<sup>48</sup> **Hannah:** Although there is currently a cloud hanging over our section, I am in part optimistic mood. The college is moving to a new site during the summer, with nearby access to a much larger potential student body. As part of EYL 2001, I am planning a major career and education fair for languages at the new college site in September. I think the new academic session will be a make or break year for languages at Whitehill. **HD:** ML provision at Whitehill appears to be at a crossroads point.

“Most people I find think ‘oh, yeah, when you go to a foreign country you should make an effort... but I’ve never got any intention of going to Spain... They don’t look upon it from the other point of view of dealing with foreign people in this country... (Alex)

On the other hand, there was also a need to stop deceiving people that language learning would be easy:

I think there is a danger there, I think I’m all for making languages fun... but I think we do have to accept that yes, it is difficult, and I think if we try and kid people on we’ll lose credibility. (Alex)

Like Alex, Leigh saw opportunities in the link with schools (despite some resistance from ML colleagues in that sector) and also looked for greater support from senior management:

Hopefully the uptake will increase... we seem to be going down the line of the schools, offering courses which they can’t provide... I would like to see more encouragement from senior management, and I don’t see that in the college at the moment; it doesn’t seem to be a priority... without that there’s going to be a level of apathy... (Leigh)

She also believed that there was potential to develop more courses for business. For her the main threat was a decrease in student numbers on courses with substantial ML components, such as in travel & tourism. She intended to counter this by campaigning for a national SQA award “an HNC Languages and [a vocational subject]; it would give us more security rather than having to rely on servicing.”

Chris, on the other hand, saw predominantly barriers, e.g. in student apathy, competition with other subjects, and an ‘elitist’ view on languages:

I think the level is decreasing and the number of hours is decreasing, it looks as though lack of student interest, and then... there are so many other things, for example, Information Management... they have put in extras like law and things... which they then advise the students to do this... staff are interested for themselves but they’re not

willing to tell the students that they should do it...it's okay for me but actually you peasants don't need that...(Chris)

She appeared to be at a loss as to where opportunities might lie:

All that EYL sound very good and very upbeat, and yet people are not interested. Or should we widen provision and all teach Japanese? Would they take that up... so are we too European based? (Chris)

Sandy, too, was negative about ML prospects generally, and contrary to Alex did not believe that societal attitudes were changing:

It's just that there's not the interest in languages and it's across the board now, I think people are just not interested, and not that concerned for their kids to do a language anymore. I think there's lots of competing subjects as well... we can try with methodologies, to help those people that we capture – but it's actually capturing the people in the first place that's the problem – and it's just a sea change, and it's got to come from society, hasn't it, and from people's aspirations and I can see no sign of it whatsoever, in fact the opposite...I think the attitude to languages is still an old-style, you know, 'English is best' and 'everyone should learn English' and 'what's the point of learning foreign languages' (Sandy)

## 4.2.6 Summary of Language Tutor Responses

In their responses, LTs raised issues that can be classified under three headings:

1. Student-related issues (e.g. learner orientation, learner anxiety, learning experience and learners' literacy skills) Managerial issues (e.g. language 'manipulation', staffing problems, language promotion)
3. Professional issues (e.g. weak status, dependency and lack of support)

Figure 4-1 summarises the responses by language tutors according to their 'singularities' (issues they did not have in common with other LT respondents), 'partial' commonalities (issues that at least two LT respondent had raised), and commonalities (issues that all

respondents had raised). All LTs attributed the dominance of beginners' level ML provision to students' lower academic ability, and that their proven inability to sustain the engagement necessary to succeed in more advanced language learning. Although LT staff and ML provision were to varying degrees dependent on other programme leaders, LT participants themselves employed also some negative 'strategic compliance' by manipulating ML provision not simply according to demand but also according to staff resources. In all five colleges, Spanish dominated provision, which appeared to be related to student demand and/or manipulation of ML provision.

A curious contrast can be noted between the LT prognosis for ML study in Spring 2001 and the enthusiasm for starting or continuing language learning expressed by students in Autumn 2000. Whereas students' declared intention for language study at both Blackford and Yellowcraig had been fairly low, both Alex's and Leigh's outlook was optimistic. On the other hand, whilst students at Redhall had been most enthusiastic, Sandy's prognosis was pessimistic. We should not be overly concerned with these discrepancies, however, as we cannot be sure what contextual factors intervened between the two data collection points.



Figure 4-1: Summary of language tutor responses

	Blackford (optimist)	Greenbank (pessimist)	Redhall (pessimist)	Whitehill (undecided)	Yellowcraig (optimist)
<b>'Singularities' →</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ML uptake increasing</li> <li>• No ML-option programmes</li> <li>• Separate 'ML for business' unit</li> <li>• Assessment acts as incentive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lost ML-led programme to HE competitor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School leaver population down</li> <li>• High % of foreign nationals among student population</li> <li>• No access to (non-ML) students sought</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evening provision dominates</li> <li>• Planning large ML promotional event to decrease PL dependency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed ML-led programme to decrease PL dependency</li> </ul>
<b>'Partial' Commonalities (see below for details) →</b>	A C D E F H I L N	A B C E H J K M N	B C E G J M	A B D F G I K M N	A B C E F G I L M N
School leaver population up	A	Students lack literacy skills	F	Limited access to students	K
ML uptake decreasing	B	Partial dependency on PL	G	Free access to students	L
ML day provision dominant	C	Total dependency on PL	H	Excessive assessment	M
NC provision dominant	D	Some ML training for business	I	SM support required	N
HN provision dominant	E	No ML training for business	J		
<b>Commonalities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wide range of previous ML knowledge but mostly beginners' level offered; Spanish dominant</li> <li>• Some 'manipulation' of ML choices and 'selling' of ML as personal benefit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High % of lower ability students, often with high ML anxiety and reluctance to engage in sustained learning activities</li> <li>• Motivation of evening class students stronger / more intrinsic than that of daytime students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daytime students have narrow vocational focus; not all ML students accept vocational relevance of ML</li> <li>• Preferred ML activity = speaking; least liked ML activity = listening</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older students like grammar, younger ones don't</li> <li>• Quicker progress than at school</li> <li>• Professional development for LT staff is limited</li> </ul>	

### 4.3 SFEFC Data: Lies, Damned Lies and Language Statistics

In March the FE Network steering group had raised the matter of ML decline with the Chief Executive of the joint Scottish Funding Councils (SFC<sup>49</sup>), Professor Sizer. In his response, Sizer suggested that action would only be taken if it were found that ML provision was not available. Further, it was clear from his reply that a decline in ML provision was not a concern, since this would be as a result of decline in demand and thus provision should simply be ‘rationalised’:

There is little the Council can do to influence potential students to enrol for particular subjects...If the Council was aware that a range of courses was not available throughout Scotland it could seek to influence such availability through inviting colleges to propose strategic solutions which the Council could help to fund, for example collaboration between colleges to rationalise provision with low numbers and thus enhance provision in other colleges... (Sizer, personal correspondence, 31 March 2001)

He then went on to question the claim that ML uptake was declining:

Our data from colleges’ FES<sup>50</sup> returns actually shows an increase in the number of total enrolments for Spanish, French, German, Italian, Chinese, Russian, Japanese, Greek and Dutch from 2828 to 4200 enrolments (3180 to 4414 SUMs<sup>51</sup>) between 1997-8 and 1999-2000 (*ibid*)

The figures quoted above give reason for concern. Most obviously, they directly contradict SQA statistics (see Section 3.3) as well as LT staff perceptions of ML trend (see Section 3.2), over the same period. As indicated in Chapter 3, SQA statistics refer

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<sup>49</sup> SFC = Scottish Funding Council – the abbreviated name given to the joint funding councils of further and higher education.

<sup>50</sup> FES = Further Education Statistics

<sup>51</sup> The SUM (Student Unit of Measurement) count is higher than the actual enrolment count because some language learners will have studied double or triple language units, at NC or HN level respectively.

to enrolments by study unit, which may overestimate the number of actual language learners at NC level, because a number of them may study more than one ML unit in any given session. At HN level, however, the enrolment by unit is considered to reflect quite accurately the number of language learners because students either study a single or triple credit unit as part of their programme.

According to SQA figures, there were approximately 5200 HN language learners in 1997-98, peaking to 6500 in 1998-99, and dropping to 4700 in 1999. As there are 47 Scottish FE colleges, SQA figures for HN uptake suggest an average of about 100 HN language learners per college. At Whitehill College, which is relatively small, there were approximately 80 HN language learners in 1999, which is in line with my estimation<sup>52</sup>.

In addition, there would have been a considerable number of NC language learners. At Whitehill College, there were approximately 100 NC language learners in the period of 1999-00. Most of these learners would have studied either a succession of language units and/or double units, and thus should have generated approximately 250 SUMs. There are about 30 colleges that are at least the size of Whitehill and either in or close to centres of industrial conurbations. On this calculation, there would have been at least 3000 NC language learners, bringing the total of FE language learners in 1999-00 to approximately 7700, with a resultant SUM count of around 11550.

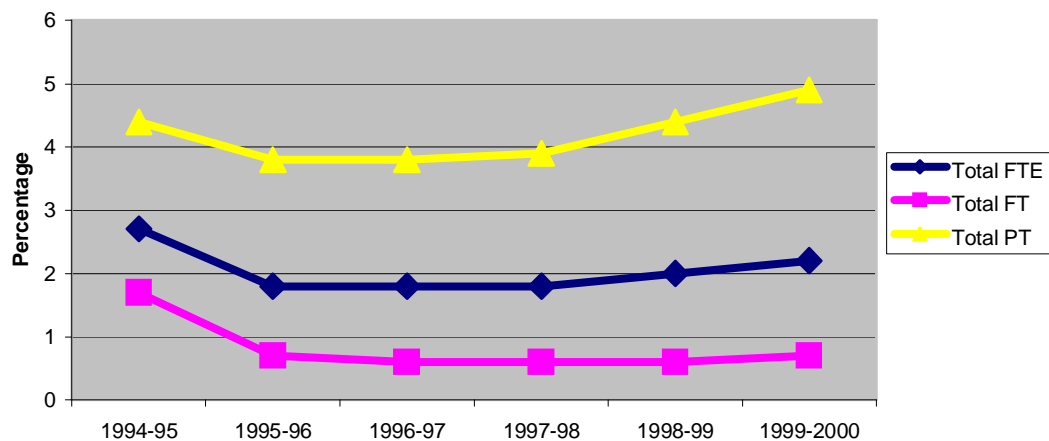
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<sup>52</sup> I did not attempt to collect figures from other colleges because of the administrative problems involved.

The figures quoted by Sizer, on the other hand, refer to the apparent *total* number of FE language learners, at NC *and* HN level, during that same period. In other words, there would have been an average of 60 language learners per college in 1997-89, rising to an average of less than 90 language learners per college in 1999-00. While there was some surprise that the low figures themselves did not give cause for concern, it was also important to establish, if possible, why the figures appeared to suggest an upward trend of ML uptake.

In early June I therefore approached SFC for more detailed statistical data. I was told that data were only available under the generic heading ‘Language and Language Studies’ which included EFL (English as a foreign language) and ESL (English as a second language) provision. Figure 4-2 below shows the data as provided by SFC. It should be noted, however, that because the method of data collection changed in 1996 it is not possible to compare the later figures directly with those up to 1996.

**Figure 4-2: Trend of Language/Language Studies SUMs as % of all subjects**



Source: SFC

The inclusion of EFL and ESL in the overall figures went some way to explaining why SFC might not be concerned about uptake under their general heading of 'Language and Language-related study': EFL had been increasing due to increased immigration from refugees and asylum seekers and was attracting government funding.

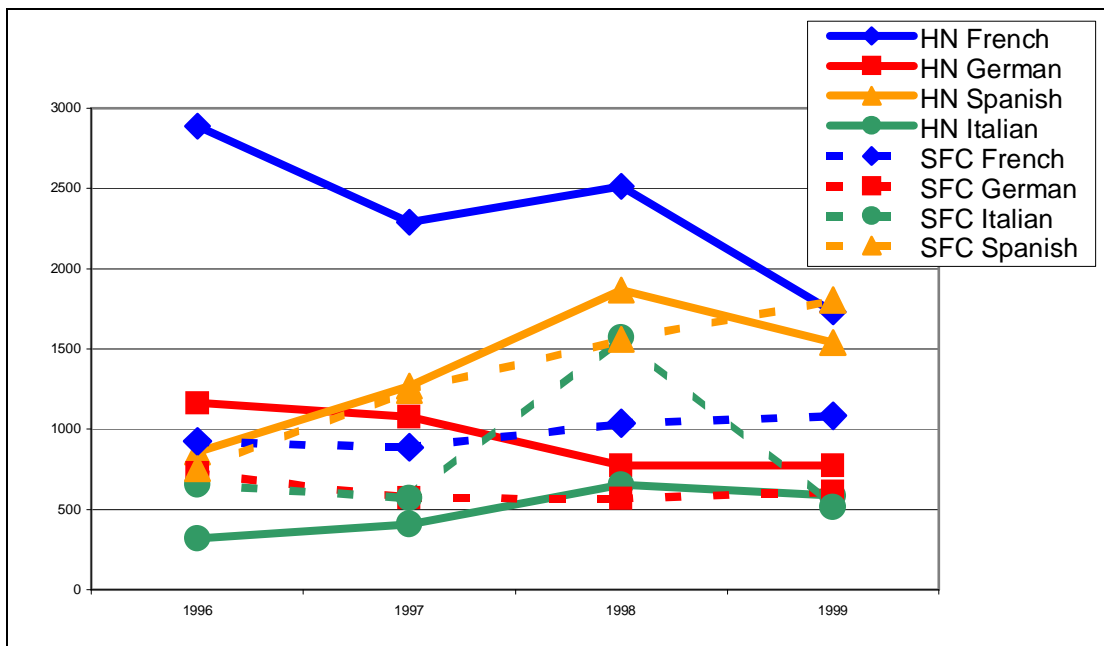
However, the reason for the apparent increase in other ML units referred to by Professor Sizer in his letter of reply was only established as a result of a meeting with one of the SFC statisticians (in March 2002). He confirmed that ML units studied as part of a vocational award do not currently register in SFC statistics because they are coded as part of the main vocational subject area.

It follows that SFC data refer mainly to independently studied NC language study, as there are few, if any, FE learners studying individual units at HN level. Most of this independent study would consist of evening class study. This in turn means that whilst SFC data shows considerably lower levels of uptake than SQA it is nevertheless an indicator that ML uptake in the evening has been increasing. This would explain the steady rise in Spanish according SFC, which is consistent with perceptions of LT staff at the FE Network meeting in June 2000 and those of LT research participants. The dramatic dip in Italian according to SFC data may be due to a decrease of interest by evening class students, but could also be because of lack of teacher supply.

However, there is an additional built-in accuracy. Because at Whitehill College even independent evening class study was coded as travel & tourism it did not register as language study, and thus language uptake *according to SFC data* appeared even lower than it actually was, and certainly masked the interest in ML study during evening

provision. Whilst I did not investigate this phenomenon further, college-specific statistical data on ML provision provided by SFC in June 2002 suggests that the coding in a number of other colleges was similarly artificially hiding actual ML uptake. The SFC data are summarised in Figure 4-3, juxtaposed by SQA data during that same period.

**Figure 4-3: Comparison of ML uptake 1996-1999: SQA vs. SFC data**



Source: SFC/SQA

By the time I came to interview senior managers in autumn 2001, I had unfortunately only been able to ascertain that the category ‘Language and Language Studies’ referred to both EFL/ESL and ML uptake. For this reason, I only sought to establish as part of the interviews to follow whether senior managers believed, as SFC appeared to do, that ML uptake was increasing, or whether they agreed with LT research participants that it was in crisis.

## 4.4 Summary of Senior Manager Responses

Senior Manager responses were sought because (a) their influence had been highlighted during language tutor interviews and (b) their views were felt to be important in the light of the ministerial response to the MAGL report. For a detailed analysis of the data please refer to **Appendix XIII**.

Figure 4-4 summarises senior manager responses in the same manner as was done for language tutors, according to ‘singularities’, ‘partial commonalities’ and ‘commonalities’. There was agreement among all respondents that daytime students have a narrow vocational focus and lack the intrinsic motivation to help them sustain long-term engagement with the subject matter. With respect to ML provision, all senior managers acknowledged the funding and curriculum framework restrictions, and the dependency on programme leader choices. However, these were accepted as ‘reasonable’ constraints in the face of lack of demand from students and/or employers. The resulting increase in part-time employment of language staff in turn meant that professional development needs could only partially be met, and ML provision generally was regarded as a ‘difficulty’. None of the colleges had a ML policy, despite the earlier HMI recommendation, because it was either not considered necessary or, in other cases, considered detrimental to the staff of other vocational subjects.

Like language tutors senior managers attributed dominant trends of ML uptake to the uncontrollable but stable external factor of society, in this case the consistently negative stance towards the need for ML skills. Whilst they positioned themselves as ‘negating’ individuals to the common-sense ‘climate of negativity’ regarding ML learning, they

also retreated from their position of authority. By claiming to be as powerless as language tutors to affect change, they effectively condoned the status quo.

From the self-determination perspective, senior managers can be regarded, in contrast to the externally regulated language tutors, as introjected individuals who have focused on the approval from funding and curriculum bodies, students and employers to guide their actions. By feeling justified in their decisions they show some ego involvement.











Amongst SM responses there appeared to be some differences of viewpoints that might be attributable to their length of position at senior manager and/or past experiences. The two most recently appointed managers, SM Whitehill and SM Yellowcraig coincidentally also expressed mixed views about some of their earlier language learning, and appeared to project this negativity onto their prognosis for language uptake at their own college. SM Blackford and SM Redhall both had teaching experience in communication subjects (English and modern languages respectively) and this appeared to manifest itself in their joint references to the lack of communicative competence amongst FE students, praise for LT staff, and a more optimistic prognosis for language uptake at their own college. However, the size of the sample simply permits the noting of these perhaps just co-incidental similarity in responses.

SM Whitehill, the most recently appointed manager, only shared one commonality with two of the other SMs – the desire to see greater flexibility from LT staff

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Figure 4-4: Summary of senior manager responses

	SM-Blackford (optimist)	SM-Redhall (optimist)	SM-Whitehill (ambiguous)	SM-Yellowcraig (undecided)						
<b>'Singularities' →</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ML provision up</li> <li>• Separate unit for ML business training but unaware extent of demand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Former ML specialist; no management responsibility for ML provision</li> <li>• ML provision down</li> <li>• No ML training for business</li> <li>• Competition between ML providers</li> <li>• Insufficient promotion from LT professional body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ML provision up but further increase required</li> <li>• ML training for business unlikely</li> <li>• Need lead from Scottish Executive</li> <li>• EU funding not suitable for ML promotion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ML provision even</li> <li>• Limited ML training for business</li> <li>• Some MLs likely to be replaced by English</li> <li>• Evening provision dominates</li> </ul>						
<b>'Partial' Commonalities</b> (see below for details) →	1 2 3 	1 2 3 4 	4 	1 2 4 						
<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 30%;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costs of EU programmes outweigh benefits <b>1</b></li> </ul> </td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 30%;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Praise for LT staff <b>3</b></li> <li>• Lack of literacy skills among students</li> </ul> </td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 30%;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive ML learning experience </li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivation of evening class students less vocationally focused; conflicts with external need for accountability <b>2</b></li> </ul> </td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need greater flexibility from LTs <b>4</b></li> </ul> </td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixed ML learning experience </li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costs of EU programmes outweigh benefits <b>1</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Praise for LT staff <b>3</b></li> <li>• Lack of literacy skills among students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive ML learning experience </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivation of evening class students less vocationally focused; conflicts with external need for accountability <b>2</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need greater flexibility from LTs <b>4</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixed ML learning experience </li> </ul>
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<p><b>Commonalities</b></p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top;"> <p><b>Daytime students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are reluctant to engage in sustained learning activities</li> <li>• have narrow vocational focus</li> <li>• don't see relevance of ML skills</li> </ul> </td> <td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top;"> <p><b>ML provision is</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• restricted by funding / curriculum frameworks</li> <li>• affected by PL decisions, but also employer / student demand</li> <li>• associated with 'difficulty'</li> </ul> </td> <td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top;"> <p><b>Other:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No ML college policy</li> <li>• Acknowledgement that professional development for LT staff is restricted</li> <li>• 'Powerlessness' in face of student / societal ML apathy</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>					<p><b>Daytime students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are reluctant to engage in sustained learning activities</li> <li>• have narrow vocational focus</li> <li>• don't see relevance of ML skills</li> </ul>	<p><b>ML provision is</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• restricted by funding / curriculum frameworks</li> <li>• affected by PL decisions, but also employer / student demand</li> <li>• associated with 'difficulty'</li> </ul>	<p><b>Other:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No ML college policy</li> <li>• Acknowledgement that professional development for LT staff is restricted</li> <li>• 'Powerlessness' in face of student / societal ML apathy</li> </ul>			
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## 4.5 Discussion of Research Phases 2000-2001

We can now further develop the arguments put forward at the end of Research Phase 2000, under the appropriate research questions.

- RQ 1.1** How is ML study being presented in official and other public discourses? Whose interests are being promoted in the official discourses?
- RQ 1.2** What are the implicit assumptions in the collection and use of statistical data? Whose interests are being promoted through these assumptions?

### **Language as a right or as a resource?**

Lo Bianco's notion of considering 'language as a resource' could be construed as an attempt to reach the state of a linguistic *Nash equilibrium* amongst political 'players' from different cultural backgrounds yet in parliamentary proceedings linguistic *discussions* still centred on heritage languages and linguistic 'rights'.

The self-congratulatory remarks about the introduction of ML teaching in the primary curriculum on six occasions during this European Year of Languages seem shortsighted. Whilst the initiative represents an important step in the aim to promote ML learning this 'technological' measure by itself has so far clearly been insufficient to 'cause' a change in attitude. Instead, it places an inordinate pressure on primary teaching staff to accept responsibility for pupils' future attitude towards ML learning as young adults.

The continued insistence on the vocational rationale for ML skills in parliamentary proceedings appears ironic in the light of the Lothian Export and SFEFC survey findings. However, if there were greater regard for the increase in foreign workers and greater consideration given to Lo Bianco's policy proposals the discussion could be

centred on how to harness the language resource that some of these workers undoubtedly have, to the advantage of the Scottish economy. Certainly, Gogolin and Hua's papers independently suggest that increased mobility of foreign nationals affects other European countries, too and will therefore require a more integrative ML education policy.

### **Continued policy incoherence**

Whilst the Minister for Education accepted all the recommendations of the MAGL report, the Lifelong Learning Minister's letter of guidance identified literacy skills as a separate challenge, not connected to language skills. Indeed, by asking senior managers to make curriculum cuts based on current subject popularity Minister Alexander MSP ignored the cautionary remarks of the SFEFC survey authors – whose report itself contained analytic weaknesses with respect to the evidence on the need and desirability for language skills.

### **Conflicting Labour Market Information**

If one compares the initial standpoints of the authors conducting surveys investigating language skills specifically (e.g. University of Dundee, 1999; Beedham, 2001) and skills shortages generally (Lothian Exports, 2001; SFEFC, 2001a; SFEFC, 2001b) one might 'rationally' conclude that those conducting the former may be prejudiced whereas those conducting the latter are likely to be more 'objective' in their assessment. Yet evidence from elsewhere throws some doubt on this assumed or taken-for-granted objectivity, and points to potentially damaging consequences for ML provision. For example, flaws were identified and explored in the SFC statistics on language uptake, and these had resulted in dichotomous interpretations by SFEFC and senior managers. These flaws appear more significant when considered in the light of the findings by Salt & Clarke

(2001) regarding the ‘replacement’ of British workers by non-nationals in professional and managerial positions. Yet because these data concern *UK-wide* labour market trends it is possible Scottish FE managers might not consider the data as relevant since they are duty bound to respond to *local* demand. This is consistent with Sizer’s remark that SMEs had not raised the lack of ML uptake as a strategic concern. LT staff should therefore be alarmed that SFEFC does not hold accurate data regarding ML uptake and is unaware of the implications of the inaccuracies.

Conversely, in the light of the doubts I have raised about the validity and reliability of the SFC statistics, one might raise concerns about the assumptions Salt and Clarke (2001) made in their statistical compilation, and there is insufficient space here to consider these. Regardless of the vocational rationale, however, it should be kept in mind that the right of mobility accorded to every EU citizen is facilitated by the knowledge of additional language skills, and that whatever conclusions we may draw from Salt & Clarke’s statistics we can accept in principle that a multilingual person is better able to deal with situations involving customer services within multi-national environments.

### **ML learning in French and German vocational programmes**

Seen from a wider European level, however, ML learning by German vocational trainees (Fels, 1998) appears to be low too, and also less prevalent amongst French students in the vocational stream (Goullier, 1997), even if this language is English. Given that both language tutors and senior managers concurred with Gallacher *et al*’s remarks about FE learners’ more widespread ‘uncertainty’ there may be room for further investigation of the motivational trends for language learning among students on FE programmes across

different EU member states. After all, none of the statistics imply that the French or German students actually learning English are doing so *willingly*. At the same time, the Salt & Clarke's statistics about the changing profile of the British labour market suggest, at the very least, that there is a linguistic factor involved, and that there are links to the EU right of mobility.

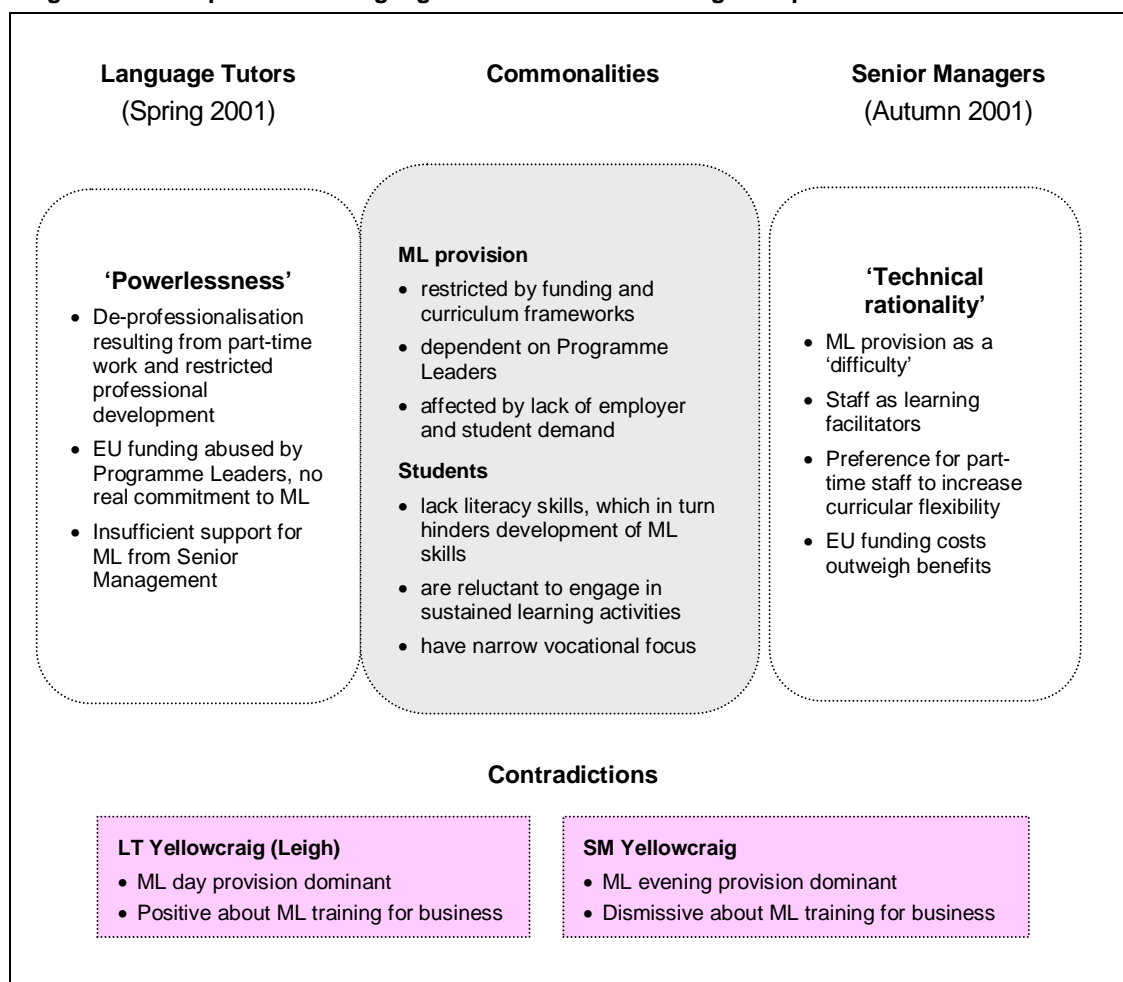
- RQ 2.2** How do ML staff account for their views on, and their management of, the ML learning experience in Scottish FE? Is there evidence of resistance to any official or other public discourses?
- RQ 2.3** How do stakeholders in Scottish FE (ML/non-ML students, ML/non-ML staff and industry representatives) account for their views on the inclusion of a ML in Scottish FE programmes? Is there evidence of resistance to any official or other public discourses? Whose interests are being promoted in stakeholders' accounts?

There were some similarities between LT and SM perceptions on the issues surrounding ML study in FE. Both commented on students' narrow and short-term vocational focus and, an unwillingness to engage in a sustained learning commitment. Both agreed that ML provision was partially dependent on decisions by programme leaders, which in turn was heavily constrained by funding and curriculum guidelines. SMs identified tension between funding requirements for vocational certification and intrinsically motivated language learners for whom certification was a strong *de*-motivator. This confirmed the claims made by LTs about older ML learners, who were more likely to be found in evening classes and whose 'instrumental' motivation was related to lifestyle rather than work. LTs had further identified ML anxiety amongst students and attempted to minimize this barrier. The consideration of students as FE 'consumers' was also evident in both views.

However, there were two instances of direct contradiction. Whilst Leigh had considered evening provision as merely 'the icing on the cake' SM Yellowcraig believed that this

provision dominated. There were also differences between the prognoses offered by language tutors and senior managers. In part these may be explained by temporal factors: language tutors responded during session 2000-01, senior managers during session 2001-02, and uptake at the start of the session may have differed from the expectations of language tutors. Other differences, however, appear to have a more 'permanent' underlying belief structure. For example, whilst LTs had expressed concern about the casualisation of their professional status because of increased part-time, temporary posts, SMs saw this development as a strength because it would allow them to cancel or commission teaching contracts according to FE client demand. Lecturers were seen as flexible learning facilitators. Although SMs acknowledged that professional development was likely to suffer as a result there seemed little concern about this aspect. At the same time, the academic qualification requirement for recruitment to the sector was high. In Marcusian terms, the increased 'productive capacity' of the language 'worker' is resulting in ever-increasing dependency on other agents, in this case vocational programme leaders or a favourable funding mechanism. SM plans for less tutor contact with students in the face of small class sizes appeared rational on financial terms. However, since oral work with others had been identified as the most popular ML learning activity it could be argued that this move would arguably be a further disincentive to ML study. The comparison of LT and SM responses is summarised in Figure 4-5 and Figure 4-6.

**Figure 4-5: Comparison of Language Tutor and Senior Manager responses**



**Figure 4-6: Comparison of ML prognosis: language tutors vs. senior managers**

College → Staff ↓	Blackford	Greenbank	Redhall	Whitehill	Yellowcraig
Language Tutor	Optimist	Pessimist	Pessimist	Undecided	Optimist
Senior Manager	Optimist	No response	Optimist	Ambiguous	Undecided

**Weakening of Language Provision as ‘Technical Rationality’**

At Whitehill, the removal of the promoted post for ML provision coupled with the separation of the ML link to a vocational subject weakened the position of ML staff. Indeed, the Principal had evidently been surprised (displeased?) by the subsequent increase in ML uptake. Yet the Minister’s directive totally justified the actions of SM Whitehill with respect to language provision. On the other hand, the findings by Salt & Clark (1998; 2001) and Beedham (2001), coupled with the EU right to employment

mobility, suggest that the general lack of concern about ML uptake by all SMEs interviewed is indicative of a narrow and short-term vision and thereby negates Alexander's directive to equip students with the skills for 'tomorrow's jobs'.

In the light of the above discussion, LT concern about the weak status of ML within the college framework identified by Hall & Bankowska is still justified. When Hall & Bankowska had conducted their research in 1991-92 they had noticed an increase in vocational language provision. With hindsight it can be argued that this increase was of a temporary nature, and was possibly linked to the then imminent implementation of the Single Market (Maastricht Treaty) as suggested by HMI (Scottish Office, 1991b). The report also had not foreseen the progressive funding cutbacks and restrictions in the design of curriculum frameworks, which would further limit possibilities for the inclusion of a language unit.

### **Language as a Problem**

Applying Lo Bianco's framework, it can be argued that the repeated use of the term 'difficulty' by SMEs in connection with ML provision indicates that the subject is considered a 'problem'. Whilst it was acknowledged that trips abroad could help to change student attitudes, European funding programmes with respect to ML learning were in fact considered a cost, which corroborates earlier conclusions by Doughty (1999a) and refuting those of Cloonan *et al* (1999). In 1991, HMI had identified the need for

“... the support of senior college management in respect of language policies, specialist resources and staffing, staff development, timetabling strategies, and incentives to encourage customised provision for commercial clients” (Scottish Office, 1991b)



From LT responses it appears that few, if any, of the above issues have been addressed, and SMs did not express any worry in that regard. SMs appeared more concerned with meeting explicit customer (student) wishes and client (employer) demand, which did not include ML skills. There is rather more evidence of the ‘new managerialism’ identified by Randle & Brady (1997). Even the possibilities for ‘strategic compliance’ (Shain & Gleeson, 1999) as a professional counter-strategy are severely curtailed, and appear to be focused on the relief of student anxiety within the language class.

- RQ 3.1** In what ways are the processes and structures in operation at professional, institutional and policy level conditioned by the specific cultural and historical context in which they operate? Whose interests are being promoted in these processes?
- RQ 3.2** In the light of evidence arising from the data analysis what are the implications for the notion that ‘English is enough’?

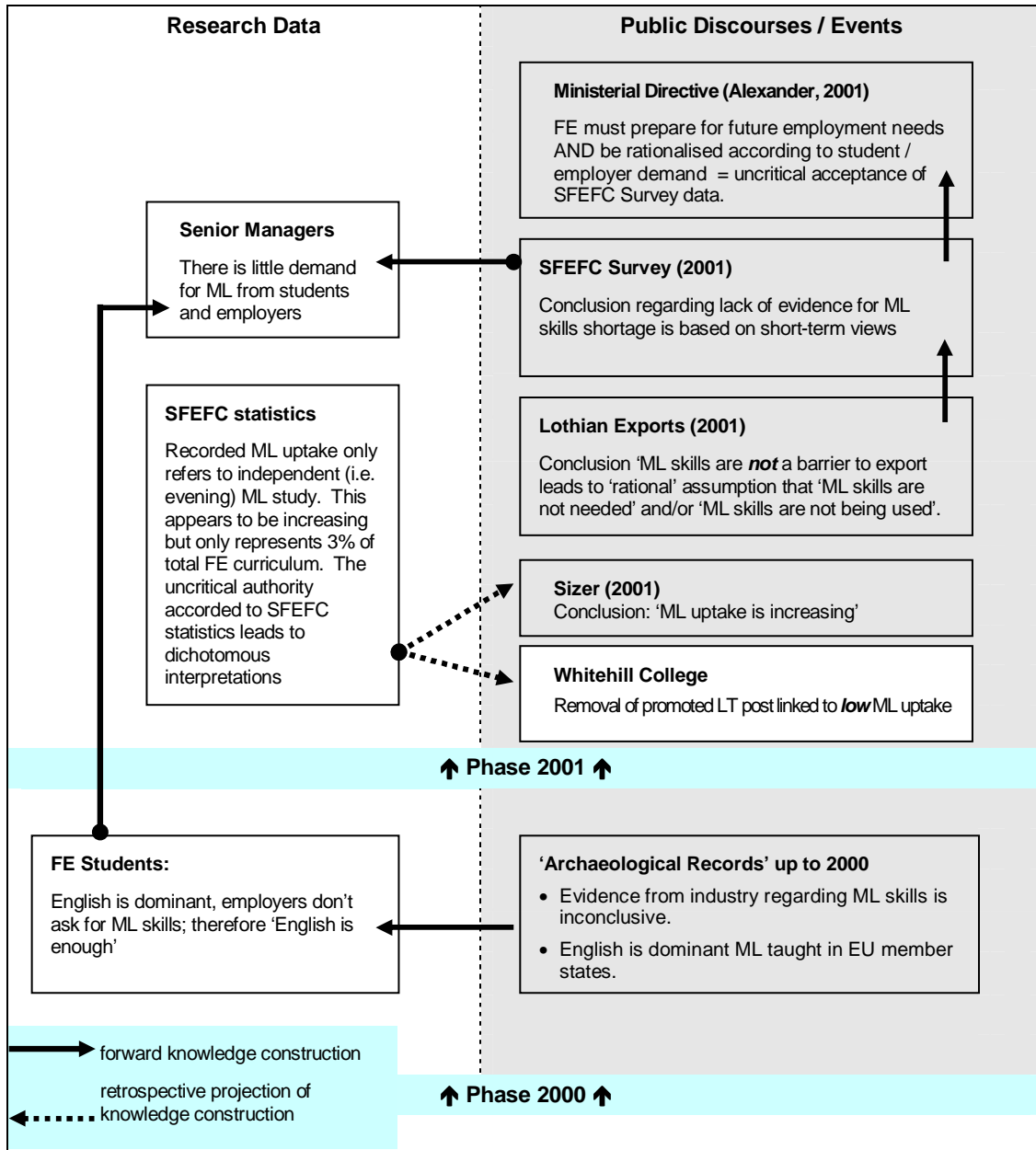
#### **Authority status of knowledge claims and resultant effects**

Building on Colebatch’s concept of ‘authority’ and considering it in a Foucauldian perspective, we can argue that SM responses are consistent with the theory that research commissioned by SFEFC with respect to *all* skills would be accorded greater credibility than that provided by research examining specifically the use of and need for, *language* skills. Further, it is only by continuing the search for further ‘archaeological records’ that we have been able to identify the various possible influences on SM responses.

In Figure 4-7 I extend my theorised paths of knowledge construction. On the basis of my data I can identify three knowledge constructions: Firstly, SFEFC statistics have led to dichotomous interpretations by Sizer and by SM Whitehill. Secondly, student responses and local labour market information as evidenced by the SFEFC survey are presented as ‘rational’ basis for curriculum decisions. Thirdly, the long-term validity of

these decisions can be called into question given that the knowledge claims asserted by the SFEFC survey are based on short-term and narrowly focused considerations.

Figure 4-7: Theorised paths of knowledge construction (Research Phase 2001)



From the Marcusean perspective, we can argue that the re-reading of stakeholder responses in the light of external contexts has exposed the illusion of an objective stance as purported in general skills surveys. Whilst there is no one definitive study that would

provide empirical ‘proof’ that the lack of language skills is disadvantaging FE students in the international labour market the combined results produced from the research by Beedham (2001) and Salt & Clarke (1998; 2001) supports Graddol’s paradox regarding the increased need for language learning by native English speakers.

### ***REFLECTIONS ON RESEARCH PHASE 2001***




During this year the external context started to impinge significantly on my position as a language professional, which in turn affected my perceptions as a researcher. The removal of the promoted language post was disappointing but it appeared rational in light of the low SUM count for language provision. On the other hand, the phenomenal increase in evening language provision at the new college site suggested new potentials. Yet unbeknownst to me a different kind of knowledge was being constructed elsewhere from ostensibly ‘reliable’ and ‘authoritative’ sources. At the same time, I was developing myself as a researcher by attending an evening class Critical Theory, which gave me the confidence to re-interpret my data. My improved understanding of my epistemological position in turn led to an increased ‘political’ activity in my professional capacity – as evidenced by my election onto the Executive Committee of the Scottish Association for Language Teaching and my (successful) request to be allowed to attend meetings of the COALA<sup>53</sup> forum.

The findings of Research Phase 2001 are summarised in Figure 4-8.

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<sup>53</sup> COALA (Cultural Organisations And Language Advisers) is an informal forum, which meets three to four times a year in order to discuss language-related issues at local authority level.

Figure 4-8: Summary of Research Phase 2001

Timeline →	Jan-Jun 2001	Sep-Dec 2001	Initial Findings
Research Question →	RQ 2.2	RQ 2.2	
Research Strand ↓	RQ 3.1	RQ 3.1, 3.2, 3.3	
<b>Data Collection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Language Tutors (LT)</li> <li>SFEFC statistics</li> </ul>	Senior Managers (SM) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LT highlight loss of professional autonomy and dependency on vocational specialists.</li> <li>SM regard ML as a 'difficulty' and proclaim 'powerlessness' in the face of client choice / employer demand.</li> <li>SFEFC statistics are shown to be both inaccurate and misleading.</li> </ul>
<b>Public Discourses/Events (External)</b>	<b>European Year of Languages 2001</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SFEFC letter</li> <li>Lothian Exports 2001</li> <li>Beedham Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministerial endorsement of MAGL Report (McConnell 2001)</li> <li>SFEFC Survey</li> <li>Ministerial directive to SFEFC (Alexander 2001)</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contradictory evidence regarding the need for ML skills (Lothian Exports, Beedham, SFEFC Survey) is rooted in assumptions made by researchers and research participants.</li> <li>Policy incoherence re ML skills between McConnell (2001) and Alexander (2001).</li> <li>Continued promotion of heritage language <i>rights</i> within parliament is insufficient according to Lo Bianco's (2001) call for 'ML as a <i>resource</i>' and Gogolin's (2001) plea for a wider and more inclusive ML policy in the face of 'internal' globalisation.</li> <li>Evidence by Salt &amp; Clarke (2001) is consistent with Graddol's (1998) paradoxical claim that need for ML skills will increase the more English becomes accepted as international language.</li> </ul>
(Whitehill College)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoted LT post removed*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful ML promotion</li> <li>ML evening provision up</li> <li>ML day provision down</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removal of promoted LT post during college restructure was linked to <i>low</i> ML uptake.</li> <li>Whilst geographical relocation and professional initiatives have mitigated weakened ML position, in the light of Alexander (2001) decrease in daytime ML provision poses potential threat to sustained recovery of ML at Whitehill.</li> </ul>
* Pivotal event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ML split from tourism</li> </ul>		
<b>Intermediate Conclusions Phase 2001</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From a Foucauldian perspective the authority accorded to SFEFC statistics was a significant factor in the decision by SM Whitehill to remove the promoted LT post. Pro-ML reports appear to be accorded lower authoritative status than generic labour market research. The uncritical authority accorded to SFEFC data as implied by Alexander (2001) heralds a pessimistic prognosis for ML provision.</li> <li>From a Critical Theory perspective the combined evidence produced by Beedham (2001) and Salt &amp; Clarke (2001) lends some support to the argument that the 'rational' decisions regarding ML provision may serve to disadvantage FE students in the international labour market.</li> </ul>		



# 5 RESEARCH PHASE 2002:

## CATCH-22

We are located in our own blind spot, in the darkness of the lived moment... (Ernst Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*)

### OVERVIEW

5.1	<b>Context 2002</b> Events at Whitehill College, activities of the FE Network steering group, and a selected literature review  Selected research diary entries 2002 are attached as <b>Appendix XIV</b>	RQ 1.1
5.2	<b>We'd like to help but...</b> Programme leader views on modern language study and modern language learning within Scottish further education programmes	RQ 2.3
5.3	<b>Summary of communication tutor responses</b> Summary of communication tutor views on modern language study and modern language learning within Scottish further education programmes; the main data analysis section is attached as <b>Appendix IXX</b>	RQ 2.3
5.4	<b>Industry representatives: Don't call us – we'll call you!</b> Details regarding the setting up of interviews with industry representatives; summary of industry representative views on modern language study and modern language learning within Scottish further education programmes; the main data analysis section is attached as <b>Appendix XXIII</b>	RQ 2.3
5.5	<b>Discussion of Research Phase 2002</b>	RQ 3.1, 3.2

## 5.1 Context 2002

### 5.1.1 Significant Events

#### *AT WHITEHILL COLLEGE*

In mid-January, the potentially harmful consequences of a techno-rational interpretation of the Ministerial directive started to become apparent. Senior management announced that the college was in financial difficulties and had therefore decided to cut its ‘non-essential’ provision. This resulted in the cancellation of all ML evening classes despite outrage from the students (one of the people affected was the local MSP) as can be judged by the following extract taken from a local newspaper:

“More than 100 language students at [Whitehill] College have been left speechless after their courses were axed [...] Beginners’ classes in Greek, Italian, French and German have also been forced off the timetable...” (Mooney, 2002: 3).

Worse was to come, however. The proposed new full-time language-led programme did not receive validation from the College Board<sup>54</sup>. One of the reasons cited was “no proven demand from local employers for language skills”. Unfortunately, this decision had far-reaching consequences. Because the NC travel and tourism programme had come to the end of its own validation period the Board’s refusal effectively eliminated virtually all daytime ML provision at non-advanced level. A short time later the Principal announced the need for redundancies across the college and it was no surprise that the curriculum areas targeted included ML provision. During the summer, one

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<sup>54</sup> The programme had three vocational options that would link directly with language-led vocational degree courses at a nearby university. It was also designed to be ‘cost-effective’ in that it integrated non-language provision with courses from other programmes.

permanent member of the ML team had already resigned. In October, the two remaining ML specialists accepted voluntary severance payments and moved out of FE<sup>55</sup>.

### ***FE NETWORK ACTIVITIES***

Ironically, just as language provision was being curtailed at Whitehill, new HN language units were being published by SQA, and HN design rules were being reconsidered in the light of responses from subject specialists in other areas.

### ***ADDITIONAL DATA SETS***

Two additional data sets were sought during 2002: from communication tutors and industry representatives. The communication tutor perspective was felt to be of interest because of the similarities of their subject with languages, and the potential for collaboration highlighted by Lo Bianco (2001). The perspective from industry representatives was a requirement from the Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU), which sponsored the last phase of my data collection. However, these interviews, combined with the newly emerging data and literature in 2001 and 2002, proved to be essential elements in helping me to gain an understanding of how the current ‘common-sense’ belief about the role of ML study within FE programmes might come to be constructed and be continuously re-affirmed. Because of word-count limitations, however, only the summative findings are included in the main text. The data analysis sections are attached as **Appendix IXX** (communication tutors) and **Appendix XXIII** (industry representatives).

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<sup>55</sup> The researcher moved on to freelance consultancy work, the two other staff moved into secondary education.



## 5.1.2 Archaeological Records – Update 2002

Although some of the texts reviewed here were published after the data collection proper was completed they have been included because of their perceived relevance to the overall data findings. For example, there is reference to Scottish parliamentary minutes from November and December 2002. In addition, Section 5.5 includes an extended discussion of the ‘Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe, Draft 1’ published by the Council of Europe in September 2002.

### *PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS*

On 30 January, the education convener for the Secondary Headteachers’ Association of Scotland, Alex Easton, gave evidence to the Committee of Enterprise, Transport & Lifelong Learning. He professed a belief that in ‘many’ schools low ability pupils were struggling with speaking tasks in a foreign language. Easton went on to suggest that ML were irrelevant and inappropriate for these students, and that head teachers would therefore interpret the notion of ‘entitlement’ as ‘no longer compulsory’ rather than ‘need to make available’. His views directly contradicted recent research findings (McColl, 2002), which claimed that students with special needs could benefit greatly from language learning experiences.

In November, the issue of ‘linguistic dependency’ was raised for the first time in parliament, although yet again the comment simply goes uncontested without a debate:

**Irene McGugan:** [...] If we acknowledge the importance of languages, we should strive for every Scot to be multilingual and should support choice in modern European, indigenous and community language options if they are needed. As language expert Professor Joe Lo Bianco puts it, "Monolingualism implies self-imposed dependency," which is something that we must strive to end. (SP OR 6 November 2002, col 14986)

Finally, during a European Committee meeting on 17 December the parliamentary convener takes a pro-language stance whilst the Scottish Enterprise representatives giving evidence clearly argue from a positivist standpoint when they point to the need for substantial quantitative ‘proof’ before admitting that there ‘is a problem’:

**Alan Sinclair (Scottish Enterprise):** The survey [by Future Skills Scotland] gave us the first firm—as opposed to anecdotal—evidence that the single biggest problem for employers' human resource policies, both in recruitment and in dealing with employees who are on the books just now, concerned the soft skills of their work force. I suppose that surprised us. Soft skills are about being able to deal with customers, speak articulately and solve problems as well as about having the traditional numeracy and literacy...

**The Convener:** [...] From meetings in Europe, I feel that there is a real drive in the employment agenda across Europe to encourage more children to learn foreign languages. Other countries in mainland Europe are already pretty good at languages. Is there any sense of that kind of initiative being developed within industry in Scotland?

**Sue Baldwin (Scottish Enterprise):** Unfortunately, we have only informal and anecdotal evidence about that at the moment. Some major employers have strongly articulated the need for language training at a young age. We need to consider, together with other organisations, whether foreign languages should be incorporated into the core skills that young people need to learn as they go through the later stages of schooling and on to the vocational training that we do. At the moment, the evidence is only anecdotal. (SP OR EU, 17 December 2002, col 1789-90)

Sinclair’s comments corroborate the claims made by CTs and Industry Representatives in this study about the lack of communication skills amongst students and people working in industry (Sections 5.2 and 5.4 respectively) but clearly show that policy makers are reluctant to believe in a widespread problem until there is sufficient empirical evidence to that effect. Baldwin’s remarks suggest that the arguments from CBI regarding ML skills (McMillan, 1994) have not been accorded any authority and that therefore language skills are unlikely to be addressed together with literacy skills, for example, as Lo Bianco had advocated (Lo Bianco, 2001). However, I hope to be able to demonstrate during Research Phase 2002 how the need for ML skills is

*unwittingly* hidden by the very people who may require it, now or in the future (i.e. employers), and how the assumptions made during certain data collection processes (such as those exposed in Research Phase 2001) help to sustain the resulting belief that ‘English is enough’.

### ***POLICY-RELATED TEXTS***

In February, the Green Paper for the 14-19 curriculum reforms in England proposed to remove ML from the statutory provision to an entitlement status. The proposals were confirmed with the announcement of the National Language Strategy for England in November 2002.

The Council Europe Language Policy Division published a series of texts. Johnstone, for example, argued that whilst early language learning had many advantages, it could be attempted successfully at all stages (Johnstone, 2002). Gogolin (2002) argued for educational reforms that recognise and value the linguistic skills of the ‘new’ minorities within EU member states, essentially reflecting Lo Bianco’s position. Beacco & Byram (2002) produced Draft 1 of a ‘Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe’, which I analyse in greater detail in Section 5.5. Finally, Marsh (2002) presented further evidence of the benefits of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). However, because the text was published after I had already interviewed programme leaders I do not intend to discuss his paper further at this time.

## ***RESEARCH***

Two research studies published during 2002 support Graddol's language learning paradox. In June, Connell (2002) produced a report on 'Languages and Employability', which identified London as a magnet for inward investment. In September, *Labour Market Trends* published the results of yet another statistical report into the flow of foreign workers (Robinson, 2002). Using National Insurance registrations as the basis, Robinson established that the largest grouping of (legitimate) foreign workers come from the European Union, and that over 50% of the total settle in either London or the South East. Whilst Robinson did not concern herself with the language implication, Connell points out that many employers "actually come to the UK precisely because they can recruit people with language skills" (Connell, 2000: 5). He goes on to itemize the diverse language requirements of several large companies based in and around the Greater London area. Connell also corroborates Gogolin's claims (Gogolin, 2001, 2002) regarding the commitment to the learning of community languages amongst the younger generation of former immigrants.

Two further ML-related reports are noteworthy. In the first, Nolan – noting that the learning of English was strongly resisted by large numbers in the Japanese school population – proposes to remove the subject from the country's compulsory subject list (Nolan, 2002). The research illustrates two points: Firstly, it negates the common-sense assumption that 'everybody wants to learn English'. Secondly, it highlights a preference for 'solving' a perceived lack of motivation by accommodating students' explicit wishes, whether they are for their long-term benefit or not.

Müller is more critical of student choice with respect to ML learning in the United States, in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 9/11:

Despite previous links between education and defense and the availability of federal funding to subsidize languages in schools, the predominant pattern of language enrolment appears to be in response to domestic concerns rather than international affairs. (Müller, 2002: 11)

Whilst this rationale is utilitarian in the extreme it supports my earlier argument (cf. p. 56) that the use of a consensual language at political level cannot be taken for granted. To 'solve' this problem, Müller argues for government to take a more active approach and to use 'incentive funding'. Two students from Blackford-no2 indicated that financial remuneration would be the only way to motivate them (cf. p. 137), and indeed a number of programme leaders in Section 5.2 propose exactly the same strategy. However, I would argue that whilst this tactic might bring about a change in behaviour there would have to be further support in order to affect long-term changes in belief and attitude.

## 5.2 Programme Leaders: We'd Like to Help But...

In total, twelve programme leaders (PLs) were interviewed (five in the ML-no, five in the ML-optional, and two in the ML-yes category). In most cases, but not all, I was able to interview the PL who had been in charge of a programme whose students had participated during Research Phase 2000 (viz. Section 3.4). Where this was not possible, I tried to interview another PL in the same ML-category, but there were additional criteria. For example, neither Sandy (Redhall) nor Leigh (Yellowcraig) had collected student data from ML-no groups, whilst at Greenbank the PL in charge of NC Beauty did not respond. As it happened the PL-no at my own college, Whitehill, had been in charge of HN Computing, so I attempted (successfully) to include further PLs in charge of HN Computing. This was at Greenbank and Yellowcraig. At Redhall, I decided to interview the PL-no in charge of HN 'AIM' (Administration and Information Management) as the PL-option of Yellowcraig was also in charge of HN AIM. Unfortunately the interviews took place too late in the session to attempt collecting corresponding student data.

In the PL-option category, I was initially unsuccessful in contacting the PL in charge of the 'Highers' programme at Redhall (PL Redhall-option1) and interviewed the PL in charge of HN Business Administration instead (PL Redhall-option2). I later also interviewed PL Redhall-option1 but decided to include the data from PL Redhall-option2 because his programme contained significant numbers of EFL students. In the PL-yes category, the PL in charge of the 'Access to Social Science' programme (PL Blackford-yes1) did not respond. Since the remaining ML-yes programmes were all in

the tourism category, I then approached the PL in charge of NQ Tourism (PL Blackford-yes2), and was also able to collect corresponding questionnaire data from the students.

Table 5-1 below summarises the PLs interviewed. As half of the interviewees in this group were male, the masculine pronoun is used throughout. Responses have been grouped under the appropriate heading, where necessary, as in earlier chapters.

**Table 5-1: Programme leader participants**

College → Category ↓	Blackford	Greenbank	Redhall	Whitehill	Yellowcraig
<b>PL-yes</b>	NQ Tourism <sup>56</sup>	HN Tourism	[HN Tourism] <sup>57</sup>	[NC Tourism] <sup>58</sup>	No response
<b>PL-option</b>	N/A	HN Marketing	(1) SQA Highers. (2) HN Business Administration <sup>59</sup>	HN Tourism	HN Administration & Information Management (AIM)
<b>PL-no</b>	Access to Nursing <sup>60</sup>	HN Computing <sup>61</sup>	HN AIM <sup>7</sup>	HN Computing	HN Computing <sup>7</sup>

It should be noted that the participating programme leaders in the ‘ML-yes’ category at Greenbank, Redhall and Whitehill were also ML specialists. As indicated earlier, Sandy at Redhall had already been interviewed in her capacity of curriculum leader for languages and was not interviewed again, and PL Whitehill-yes is the researcher.

<sup>56</sup> = Programme leader for Blackford-yes2; the programme leader for Blackford-yes1 (Access to Social Science) did not respond.

<sup>57</sup> The programme leader for this group was interviewed in his role as language tutor

<sup>58</sup> The programme leader for this group is the researcher

<sup>59</sup> No corresponding student data collected

<sup>60</sup> = Programme leader for Blackford-no1; the programme leader for Blackford-no2 (NC Music Technology) did not respond.

<sup>61</sup> The student data collected was from a different programme (NC Beauty) whose programme leader did not respond.

## 5.2.1 Views on Programme<sup>62</sup>

### *Probe 1: Rationale for inclusion of programme unit*

Even though options existed in theory on most of the programmes students were frequently denied the full range of these in practice. This is a 'rational' state of affairs since it would be physically impossible to have staff for each and every subject at each college. However, the assumption by policy makers is that the actual range of options available would correspond to local employer and/or community demand. As we will see, that assumption is frequently misplaced.

A notable exception was the 'Access' programme (Blackford-no1), whose programme had been negotiated with the local university, and the 'Highers' programme (Redhall-option1), whose provision was entirely dependent on student demand. Thus the staffing requirements (i.e. in terms of expertise required) were not questioned and the PLs in charge were striving to meet these obligations. Where programme leaders did offer a range of options they initially claimed to have chosen these on the basis of employer demand and/or student popularity rating. However, most PLs admitted that in practice curriculum options were also supply-led and that even within the constraints of the curriculum framework there was still potential for PLs to design programmes

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<sup>62</sup> **Hannah/HD:** Whilst the design of Whitehill-yes was influenced by personal conviction it was also partly supply-led. When I started at Whitehill, students on the NC Tourism programme had to study two languages but were offered no choice. All had to study French and Italian, the subject specialism of one of the language tutors. Because the programme had to be revalidated the following year, I took the opportunity to widen the choice of languages to include German and Spanish, but I was only able to do this because my staff could teach the four main European languages between them. In order to have sufficient student numbers in the four language options, the language classes were timetabled so that students from HN AIM and HN Tourism programmes could infill at the same time. On the other hand, it could be argued that the decision to have TWO compulsory language elements on the NC Tourism course was not just conviction- but also supply-led, i.e. to ensure that all language tutors had sufficient teaching commitments in each language to warrant their continued employment on a permanent basis.



conforming to their personal perceptions of vocational relevance or student preferences, and even their own personal value systems:

We just looked at the necessary core optional units – what can we teach, what skills do we have, what do we think are required for jobs basically (**PL Whitehill-no**)

When I became senior lecturer then curriculum leader, these were the units that have been selected as being the most popular (**PL Redhall-no**)

With the options, we felt at the college that languages are very important and that we were committed to it... we wanted to make sure that there were languages in the course and that's why we used all the options for languages. (**PL Greenbank-yes**)

PL Whitehill-no retrospectively justifies the supply-led decision with an 'imagined' link to employer demand; PL Redhall-no justifies his with a 'proven' link to student preferences, whereas PL Greenbank-yes justifies his with an implicit disregard for either, basing the curriculum choices essentially on personal conviction. At Yellowcraig, by contrast, there were strong financial considerations, but he felt that nevertheless the actual units did respond to employer demand:

Well, the main basis is – are they mandatory to the award and then can we double up classes? We are looking for economies of scale. We're under pressure from the senior management team... I think the new HND does definitely seem to offer students a chance to have skills that are needed in the marketplace (**PL Yellowcraig-no**)

In this sense, most PLs, with the exception of Greenbank-yes, present themselves as having 'introjected' external regulations, whether these are employer demands or student 'desires'.

***Probe 2: Dealing with prior student experience (including non-native speakers of English)***

LTs had circumvented the problem of different student knowledge by giving them a new language to study, thus effectively creating a new 'level' playing field. This decision

had been rooted partially in their lack of resources to accommodate student needs with respect to their existing language competence but also in their belief that they would thereby cater for students' preferences. As expected, PLs claimed to have support mechanisms in place to deal with students' academic needs in programme-related subjects. At the same time, there was clearly also some curriculum manipulation linked to the availability of staff resources.

When asked to identify the areas where students required additional support most PLs cited core skills such as communication or numeracy, and particularly among the younger age group. At the same time PLs noted that older students were more likely to be committed to study than younger ones. This is consistent with my student data (Section 3.3) where I concluded that younger students were less likely to see relevance of communication, and with LT views (Section 4.2) that younger students in particular lacked communicative competence in English.

PLs at Greenbank and Redhall had non-native students on their programmes and were asked to comment on this further. PL Greenbank-no was happy to accommodate weaknesses in English where the student was coping with the demands of the vocational subject:

We expect them in the first instance to have a basic command – a basic fluent command of the English language... We do not let anyone fall through the net because of language difficulties but we expect them to have at least a basic standard ... **(PL Greenbank-no)**

PL Redhall-option1 tried to dissuade non-native students with insufficient knowledge of English from studying certain programmes although students did not seem to take the advice on board:

Some business subjects like Economics they are attracted to and go into but have real difficulty with... (PL Redhall-option1)

These comments suggest that the non-native students on these programmes have a high sense of self-efficacy. Despite limited English skills they have in effect opted for 'content and language integrated learning' (CLIL), and are persisting despite apparent difficulties.

The above comments also signal a need for reflection on the implications for native FE students. Of course, we cannot be sure to what degree the English skills of the foreign students are nevertheless higher than Scottish students' ML competence. So we cannot say to what degree Scottish students would at least in theory be able to cope with equivalent vocational study abroad. We can also theorise that the foreign students have high levels of motivation because they are expanding not just the knowledge and competence of their chosen subject area (presumably of intrinsic interest to them) but also that of a recognised global language (an instrumental orientation). Just like native FE students the non-natives could thus consider themselves to be 'introjected' or even 'self-determining' individuals. At the same time, it cannot be disputed that of all the students who successfully complete the same study programme the non-native students will be more able to take advantage of their rights as EU citizens with respect to employment mobility. Further, even if their motivation for English is not integrative (i.e. is not extended to an affinity for the native speakers) the non-native students will have

undergone a process of socialisation, whereby they would have had to accommodate the views of native English speakers. This ability to recognise ‘the other’ – even to reject it in the end – would not be as highly developed in the English-only speaker who largely remains in locations with which s/he is familiar<sup>63</sup>.

### ***Probe 3: Satisfaction with current programme***

Whilst most PLs claimed to be reasonably satisfied with their programmes, both PLs for the HN AIM programme (Redhall-no, Yellowcraig-option) confirmed independently that a number of units were “out of date”. Employers had been consulted for the revised HN framework about to be introduced and both PLs confirmed that none of this feedback included a demand for language skills. Thus PL Redhall-no’s decision to exclude the ML-options from his programme seemed also entirely ‘rational’. None of the PL participants at any time raised any disquiet about employer feedback; employers’ expertise and authority were never put in question.

## **5.2.2 Perception of Student Views on Communication**

As already indicated, virtually all PLs claimed that students found communication hard, did not like the subject and/or could see no relevance in it. There were, however, differing opinions as to how the subject could be made more appealing to students. Some PLs believed that linking communication to the vocational specialism helped increase students’ perception of relevance. In fact, at Greenbank-option, communication was fully integrated with the vocational subject i.e. taught and marked by the vocational

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<sup>63</sup> HD: The potentially horrific consequences of such a rejection have been demonstrated with shocking clarity by the perpetrators of 9/11.

subject tutors, arguably a kind of ‘CLIL’<sup>64</sup>. Like PL Greenbank-option had intimated earlier with respect to non-native students, PL Whitehill-option indicated that for vocational specialists the criteria for passing a vocational subject depended less on proper spelling and grammar than on ‘getting the ideas across’. The question arises as to whether the condolence of weak communication unwittingly reinforces students’ resistance to the subject of communication itself. According to PL Blackford-yes2 there was a marking discrepancy between FE tutors and teachers at secondary school, with latter being more lenient. Only two PLs raised teacher-specific motivational components. PL Redhall-option2 believed that student views on communication would depend on the ability of the tutor to make the subject seem worthwhile; PL Greenbank-yes felt that support from the course team was important.

I think sometimes it can depend on the course team, whether they feel that Communication is important. So our course team do think it’s important, so they support the Communication lecturer. I think if they don’t attend, they find it difficult.  
(PL Greenbank-yes)

Thus, most PLs saw attributed student views on communication on the stable and global factor of ‘perception of (ir)relevance’ located within students but based on the external and stable factor of employers, similar to the way LTs had attributed student views on ML.

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<sup>64</sup> HD: I suppose virtually all specialist subjects taught by specialist tutors falls into this category. It is only at FE not in HE (as far as I know) that communication skills are assessed separately.

### 5.2.3 Views on ML Relevance and ML Staff

#### *Probe 1: Rationale for ML in-/exclusion; contacts abroad – why/not?*

PLs reiterated that there was little or no evidence from local employers that ML skills were either essential or desirable. The inclusion of optional or compulsory ML components was either considered a bit of ‘light relief’ (PL Redhall-option2) or designed with students’ potential desire to work abroad in mind. Even where PLs professed to believe in the wider benefit of ML skills they were not always in a position to include them in their programme. The fulltime HN Computing programmes at Greenbank-no and Yellowcraig-no, for example, had formerly contained ML units but the new curriculum framework had effectively removed this option.

Where the framework did contain ML options, PL had clear ‘power’ over its inclusion or otherwise. This is evidenced by the two HN-AIM programmes in the sample (Redhall-no, Yellowcraig-option). PL Yellowcraig-option, for example, had put successful strategies in place to ensure that as many students as possible were given the opportunity to take up ML study by giving visible support to the option whereas PL Redhall-no was content to continue with the units ‘historically’ included in the programme.

Compulsory ML elements were restricted to programmes in the tourism area and it is significant to note that three out of five programme leaders in the ‘ML-yes’-category were also language specialists. Although the rationale for the inclusion of the compulsory ML element seems to have been personal conviction by programme leaders (or people in authority) in all cases, PL Blackford-yes2 clearly thinks that students feel they have been ‘betrayed’ into taking up ML study:

Well, our section – our faculty head thought it was a good idea. I mean, it is a good idea and he thought he was giving them an option and it looked as if it was an option on paper but it really wasn't an option. But psychologically, [the students] thought it was an option. (PL Blackford-yes2)

***Probe 2: EU funding – why/not? Contribution of ML staff to programme***

In the 'NO'-category, only Greenbank-no and Yellowcraig-no had at one time been involved in EU exchange programmes. In both cases PLs cited beneficial effects, but pointed to staff time and students' extra-curricular commitments as barriers to the continuation of such experiences. In the OPTION-category, PLs Greenbank-option and Yellowcraig-option raised similar issues. Conversely, PL Redhall-option2 had been successful in attracting a number of students from abroad onto various programmes in business administration, which had been carefully designed to give insight into the different working methods of British companies. Whilst PLs regretted that Scottish students were not able to or did not wish to take up equivalent opportunities abroad they felt powerless to change the situation.

***Probe 3: Could a ML tutor teach a given aspect of a vocational subject on your programme?*<sup>65</sup>**

Although PLs were keen for Communication tutors to incorporate vocational elements into their subject they did not feel that ML tutors would be able to impart any vocational knowledge through the medium of a foreign language, and would likely have been surprised to hear of the significance accorded to it within the EU (Marsh, 2002). Even

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<sup>65</sup> **Hannah:** As I was asking this question I was acutely aware that my own attempts to teach 'Interacting with Customers' in French/German had failed because there had been extremely strong resistance to it by the students. Yet they had coped with the subject and I am still convinced that if this type of teaching was introduced earlier in the compulsory curriculum this resistance might fade.

when PL Blackford-no1 conceded that his students might benefit from learning about other cultures he clearly doubted that LTs would be in a position to provide this service:

I think the aspect of looking at foreign cultures rather than necessarily language is very important ...because more and more, we're meeting people whose native language or family culture is not necessarily Scottish or British... [HD: And do you feel that modern language staff might be able to contribute on that level?] They might do, if they themselves know a lot about the culture. **(PL Blackford-no1)**

PL Whitehill-option, too, was doubtful that integration would work, but cited curriculum framework constraints instead:

I don't think that any of the subjects lend themselves to that, because of the structure. ... And we do a unit called Customer Service in Travel & Tourism, which I suppose we could in there – customer role play – but I wouldn't be able to fail someone because they hadn't understood the customer speaking in the foreign language, because that wouldn't be part of the performance criteria, it's really how they deal with a customer. **(PL Whitehill-option)**

Whilst he clearly thought his comments a 'rational' explanation, one might ask why language and cultural skills should NOT form part of the performance criteria in the training of customer service relations.

Even PL Greenbank-yes, who encouraged the integration of assessments between ML and certain vocational subjects, was sceptical about CLIL. He cited students' insufficient ML competence, insufficient length of teaching time available for ML study in FE programmes, and the late start of ML learning as reasons, again external factors that appeared stable and global. Only Leigh (LT Yellowcraig) had attempted, apparently fairly successfully, a CLIL-type programme.



Judging from the above comments, the introduction of CLIL would meet with a lot of resistance in Scottish FE colleges.

***Probe 4: If career other than teaching – could you see any area in that profession where ML would have been useful, or might be useful now/in the near future?***

Ten of the twelve participating PLs had had another career before entering FE and their general areas of work are summarised below in Table 5-2.

**Table 5-2: Vocational background of programme leaders**

College → Category ↓	Blackford	Greenbank	Redhall	Whitehill	Yellowcraig
PL-yes	Banking	None	[Worked abroad]	[Tourism/Hospitality + worked abroad]	[No response]
PL-option	N/A	Sales	(1) Computer programming (2) Accountancy	Travel	Administration
PL-no	None	Worked abroad	Administration	Software Engineer	Worked abroad

NB: I have included the work background of PL Redhall-yes (Sandy) and PL Whitehill-yes (Hannah, researcher).

In the NO-category, only the two PLs who had worked abroad (Greenbank-no, Yellowcraig-no) were, *in principle at least*, in favour of including an optional ML unit and clearly saw their relevance. PL Greenbank-no in particular had found his interest in language skills valued, and his apparent talent for language learning further developed by his employer:

When I was working in Germany... I made a point of speaking to other nationalities ... And I would pick up a few words of communication in these languages ... the foreman where I worked noticed that I was speaking to these other nationals and asked me one day if I would be interested in working in the New Recruit Training Department assisting the new arrivals from other countries in all the documentation for visas etc and the paperwork and finding accommodation and then also training them. So I was then sent on crash courses in Serbo-Croat, Slovenian, Turkish, and more Italian and from there I spent a couple of years working with these people... **(PL Greenbank-no)**

Yet both PL Greenbank-no and PL Yellowcraig-no had now introjected the external requirements imposed by SQA and SFEFC, which made the inclusion of a ML unit highly unlikely. PL Blackford-no1 admitted that a huge potential within existing staff was being ignored. It transpired that many of tutors on his programme had actually worked abroad and were able to give students insight into working with other cultures:

I think [ML skills] is probably an area which would be relevant to have more input... Quite a number of staff have worked abroad from that side...I think to their own experience and the scenarios that they might discuss with their students, whether it be America, Philippines, Italy – people have been in different types of settings. (**PL Blackford-no1**)

Surprisingly, only two of the PLs in the OPTION-category (PL Yellowcraig-option and PL Whitehill-option) could think of examples where the knowledge of a ML might have been useful. Like students, PLs had to have had an actual personal experience of this need.

## 5.2.4 Past ML Experiences

Most PLs had had mixed experiences of ML learning at school but this did not necessarily correlate with negative views about the introduction of languages in the primary school or current language teaching methodology. For example, PL Blackford-no1 had not seen any relevance to ML learning during his school education but was supportive of current ML initiatives. PL Whitehill-no, on the other hand, had not liked the grammatical emphasis of his language learning but was not convinced that the introduction of ML learning in the primary school had been any more successful. Surprisingly, PL Redhall-no indicated he had studied languages post-16, but despite using French with family members admitted to lacking confidence in his language skills.

He too, had mixed views on current language learning methodologies. Again only PL Greenbank-no and Yellowcraig-no felt positive about their own language learning experience.

In the OPTION-category, only PL Whitehill-option and PL Yellowcraig-option had enjoyed their language learning experiences at school. Theirs were also the only two programmes with longer ML-option components, i.e. 120 hours rather than 40 hours, with the exception of the 'Highers' programme run by PL Redhall-option1. However, the length of this programme (160 hours) was an external stipulation from SQA, and applicable to all the subjects students would elect to study at this level.

Some additional causal explanations for FE students' reluctance to take up ML study were offered at this stage. For example, PL Greenbank-option felt that tying language study to a qualification was a barrier because of the importance of raising confidence levels in learners whose motivation might be low; PL Redhall-option2 believed that the main influential factor was the teacher himself.

In the YES-category, three out of the four research participants, i.e. including Sandy and Hannah, were also language specialists, i.e. who had studied languages at university. PL Blackford-yes2, the only non-language specialist, was keen to show her personal commitment to ML learning by encouraging her own children to use French when on holiday. Both PL Blackford-yes2 and PL Greenbank-yes expressed a clear preference for the current language learning methodology. However, they also felt that what students had gained in speaking confidence they had lost in understanding the structure of the language.

I think [the methodology today] is better in giving [students] confidence in oral skills but what I think is disappointing is the lack of rigour, that they don't seem to want to push themselves very hard, you know, they come from school and I feel they haven't learnt all that much in the grammar, you know, and I think that's a bit of a pity... (PL Greenbank-yes)

It was notable that PLs in the YES-category were all in charge of a tourism-based programme. Whilst one could argue that the interaction with foreign visitors in their own tongue would be an important element in tourism employers' strategy, responses by participating PL indicate that this is not necessarily the case. In other words, PLs in the YES-category, by insisting on large compulsory ML components in their programmes, were directly negating 'common-sense' views supposedly held by employers. In this sense they are 'externally regulated' individuals, employing 'strategic compliance' for students' benefit, but not necessarily with their agreement.

## 5.2.5 Professional Development

Some programme leaders, like PL Greenbank-no, had regular and planned professional development.

Well, because Computing is technologically constantly changing and being brought up to date, then it's essential that we update our skills almost every year on that basis. So we source out companies, usually private, who can provide that at a reasonable cost and members of staff are sent on these courses, basically to upgrade their skills as quickly as possible, so that we in turn can deliver these skills to our students. (PL Greenbank-no)

Others, like PL Redhall-option2, believed that most staff were happy to update their knowledge by more casual means:

Things like I teach don't really change much. You can read magazines if you want to. Read a magazine if you think there's something new happening. So I don't think many staff are going around updating their knowledge. (PL Redhall-option2)

In both cases, there is reliance on ‘experts’ in the field, who are believed to hold the necessary new technical knowledge. Language skills did not feature as part of any vocational updating programmes. It was also notable that none of the PLs appeared to have access to a professional support group similar to that available to LT staff in the form of the Scottish Association for Language Teaching (SALT), where cross-institutional training and networking could take place.

### **5.2.6 Prognosis for ML Uptake at Own College**

Some PLs from the NO-category claimed not to be aware of ML trends at their college, which would be consistent with an underlying belief that languages are largely irrelevant to their vocational specialist area. Most PLs from the OPTION- and YES-categories confirmed claims made by LT participants in Spring 2001 that ML uptake was decreasing. Their causal explanations for this state of affairs were very revealing. They centred on ‘financial inefficiency’ of ML provision and delivery, and students’ narrow vocational focus. Some suggested that only a strong instrumental incentive such as a clear message from employers, or a monetary award to study languages would change attitudes. ML learning as a form of ‘personal enrichment’ or ‘self-actualisation’ would be doomed to failure in the FE environment:

[Students] see this as training for work or for employment to better themselves financially by getting a decent job. They don’t see it as fulfilling themselves... **(PL Whitehill-no)**

These comments reflect those made by senior managers earlier; in other words, they reveal a mode of managerialist or ‘techno-rational’ mode of thinking that supports the ‘self-determined’ wishes of the students and in so doing ‘re-affirms’ the ‘validity’ of that

same deplored narrow and short-sighted focus. However, in contrast to senior managers, even those PLs who had been positive about their ML learning and had experienced the relevance of ML for work or leisure (e.g. PL Greenbank-no, Yellowcraig-no, Whitehill-option, Yellowcraig-option) appeared resigned to the ‘inevitable’ elimination of ML from the FE curriculum. Only two PLs (Whitehill-option and PL Blackford-yes2) suggested that there was a link between students’ lack of literacy skills and their ML learning:

Equally, many of [the FE students] are not very articulate, and if you’re not articulate in English, it makes it difficult to be articulate in another language, too... (**PL Whitehill-option**)

Some of [the students] can’t speak English; their English is so bad that to learn a foreign language is just impossible. (**PL-Blackford-yes2**)

PL Greenbank-yes saw constraints from external, impersonal factors:

Well, I think it depends on the new HN frameworks, if they’re language friendly, it would be fine and if they’re not, then it won’t and I don’t know that at present, across all the different courses. But, I mean, the general trend has been to cut out options and to focus more on vocational subjects and also, the fact that, you know, no one sees modern languages as core is a big disappointment. (**PL Greenbank-yes**)<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> **HD:** In January I had organised a presentation from the local careers adviser on the benefits of modern languages, attended by all (fifteen) curriculum group leaders. In the evaluation questionnaires they completed at the end they indicated a positive inclination towards languages whilst citing ‘technical’ difficulties for including a ML option into fulltime awards, i.e. the constraints of the SQA curriculum framework. Some of the PLs in the research interviews corroborated those claims but their comments have highlighted more complex rationales.

### **5.2.7 Summary of Programme Leader Responses**

Figure 5-1 and Figure 5-2 summarise PL responses. Despite curriculum framework constraints, the actual make-up of programmes is also dependent on ‘technical’ factors such as staff resources and ‘subjective’ factors such as staff beliefs about employer and student preferences. The consensus regarding students’ lack of literacy skills and students’ reluctance to improve them corroborates the views expressed by language tutors and senior managers.

In terms of attribution theory, the loci of resistance to greater ML uptake were perceived as stable and global external factors outwith their control, i.e. in employer demand, students’ attitude or in imposed technical constraints. In terms of self-determination theory, programme leaders tended to project themselves as introjected individuals who accepted more or less unquestioningly the external constraints and the narrow focus of students’ ‘desublimated’ desires. Only PLs in the YES-category showed any sign of consciously resisting these external pressures.

At the same time, programme leaders’ rejection that LT staff might be able to teach parts of a vocational subject through the medium of a language other than English can be interpreted as a sign that like FE students and senior managers, they are nevertheless reluctant to accept practices which ‘negate’ established norms, as Marcuse theorised. Further evidence of Marcuse’s reduction of ‘revolutionary potential’ is the acquiescence to the pervading ML apathy by the two PLs in the NO-category who had experienced the benefits of ML skills in their careers.

Figure 5-1: Summary of programme leader responses

	Commonalities	Differences		
		By ML category	By college	By individual PL
<b>Rationale for program units</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choice of units depends not just on SQA framework, but also staff skills available, staff beliefs and perceived student preferences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3/4 <b>PL-yes</b> participants are also ML specialists</li> <li><b>PL-yes</b> participants included ML units <i>despite</i> inconclusive evidence from employers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>HN Administration &amp; Information Management:</b> Programme contains ML option at Yellowcraig, but not at Redhall</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Redhall-option1</b> (Highers): most responsive programme to student demand</li> <li><b>Blackford-yes2</b> = only PL-yes participant that's not ML-specialist</li> </ul>
<b>PL perspective on student views with respect to communication and ML</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students find communication difficult and tend to dislike it</li> <li>Dislike is eased when communication tutor tries to align contents with students' vocational specialism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2/4 <b>PL-yes</b> participants believe students would rate ML as important</li> <li>Students on ML-option programmes tend to choose ML as 'soft' option</li> <li>PL-no participants believe students don't see ML skills as relevant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Greenbank / Redhall:</b> Significant proportion of foreign nationals among student population. These students tend to do better in vocational subjects than in communication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Greenbank-option:</b> Communication unit completely integrated with vocational specialism</li> <li><b>Blackford-yes2/Whitehill-yes:</b> Some students on programme don't like ML component<sup>67</sup></li> </ul>
<b>PL views on ML, including past ML experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ML tutors seen as 'non-vocational' specialists and not able to teach 'CLIL'<sup>68</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>PL-yes</b> participants had positive ML learning experiences</li> <li>2/5 <b>PL-option</b> participants 'sell' ML as enjoyable, easy and non-vocational subject</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EU programmes at <b>Greenbank, Redhall</b> and <b>Yellowcraig</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Greenbank / Yellowcraig-no</b> worked abroad and used ML</li> <li><b>Redhall-no</b> trained as bilingual secretary but has low linguistic confidence</li> </ul>

<sup>67</sup> **Hannah:** This session (2001-02) a number of students who joined the programme dislike the large ML component, and there is considerable friction within the student group. **HD:** The responses from the 'Whitehill-yes' student group (session 2000-01), were in fact quite positive. This is an important indicator of the temporary nature of social data.

<sup>68</sup> Content and Language Integrated Learning



Figure 5-2: ML experience vs. ML prognosis

PL Category →	Blackford-no	Greenbank-no	Redhall-no	Whitehill-no	Yellowcraig-no
ML experience	Negative	Positive	Mixed	Negative	Positive
ML prognosis	Doesn't know	Pessimist	Doesn't know	Pessimist	Pessimist
PL Category →	N/A	Greenbank-option	Redhall-option1/2	Whitehill-option	Yellowcraig-option
ML experience		Positive	Mixed	Mixed	Positive
ML prognosis		Pessimist	Pessimist	Pessimist	Pessimist
PL Category →	Blackford-yes2	Greenbank-yes	Redhall-yes (Sandy)	Whitehill-yes (Hannah) <sup>69</sup>	No response
ML experience	Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive	
ML prognosis	Ambiguous	Pessimist	Pessimist	Pessimist	

<sup>69</sup> **Hannah:** In the spring term of 2001, I had been undecided about the prognosis for ML uptake at Whitehill, and I had hopes that the move to the new site might be to our advantage. However, despite the undoubted success of the promotional event in September 2001 and the increase in ML evening provision, by June 2002 ML evening provision had been cut, the NC tourism programme was in difficulty, and permission to recruit for a new ML-led programme was refused. Finally, when senior management announced a redundancy threat at the end of June 2004, I became extremely pessimistic about the position of ML at Whitehill. **HD:** Hannah's pessimism was justified as ML was one of the subject areas identified as being 'under threat'. However, an outside observer might also have noticed that all curriculum areas identified included staff on conserved salaries, whose promoted posts had been removed in June 2001. The areas identified for redundancy included Information Technology, for example, as well as Media – both of which had experienced an *increase* in demand.

## 5.3 Summary of Communication Tutor Responses

Communication tutor (CT) responses are summarised in Table 5-3. For a detailed analysis of their views please refer to **Appendix IXX**. There was consensus among CT staff that students had difficulties with formal language, and that this lack of competence was linked to their lack of theoretical understanding about the structure of their own language, English. This triangulated with comments by LT staff. LTs and CTs also concurred on students' tendency to absenteeism, signalling a lack of concern attached to either subject, or a low sense of self worth.

**Table 5-3: Summary of communication tutor responses**

Singularities ↓	Blackford (optimist)	Greenbank (neutral)	Redhall (neutral)	Whitehill (pessimist)	Yellowcraig (neutral)
<b>EFL students</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EFL students find vocational subjects easier than communication</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EFL students better at coping with grammatical terms than native English-speaking students</li> </ul>
<b>Vocational relevance of ML in previous career</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with immigrants and asylum seekers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specialised librarian work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ML skills only valued in low-paid jobs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with international companies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotion of magazine in Portugal and Spain</li> </ul>
<b>Commonalities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students have difficulties with formal language</li> <li>Students lack knowledge of language structures (grammar)</li> <li>Students' absenteeism reduces success rate</li> <li>Common link between ML and communication is structural (grammatical) knowledge about language but no formalised links exist between CTs and LTs</li> </ul>					

In contrast to programme leaders, CTs were consistently able to identify the vocational relevance of ML skills in their previous careers. Although CT and LT concerns were similar, no formalised links between the two staff categories existed – even when the subjects were grouped together within the college structure. This suggests,

paradoxically, that ‘non-vocational’ staff, like their vocational counterparts, may be too narrowly focused on their own subject and professional expertise.

## **5.4 Industry Representatives: Don’t Call Us – We’ll Call You**

### **5.4.1 Assumptions in Lothian Export Questionnaire Analysis**

During June 2002, Lothian Exports<sup>70</sup> provided me with the names of a number of companies that had responded to their annual export survey (Lothian Exports, 2002). The survey contained a question asking respondents to identify barriers to export, one of which included ‘language skills’. Both the previous and the current survey evaluation had concluded that overall companies did NOT rate language skills as a major barrier. However, I believed that the assumptions made in this question might be in part responsible for this result, and my initial attempts to identify three companies who had NOT identified language skills as a barrier and three who had rated language skills as a major barrier confirmed my suspicions.

Some companies in the first category (ML=no barrier) did not in fact do any exporting. Although the questionnaire directs respondents to complete a different set of questions, these companies had inadvertently completed the ‘exporter’ set. Another company who did export had staff with language skills on site, so language skills were not a barrier to this company either. Others were dealing with many languages but had decided that

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<sup>70</sup> This is a government-funded organisation and located in West Lothian, which is statistically (!) the area with the highest proportion of companies that export. The export manager had participated in the promotional event I had organised at Whitehill College in September 2001.

‘muddling through’ in English was the best strategy. There were similar confusions amongst the reason for the responses from the second set of companies (ML=major barrier). Some companies had decided that because language skills would be a barrier not to go into exporting at all. Others had taken over businesses who had foreign contacts and were in the process of winding them up because they felt it would not be worth their while to pursue without people with language skills. Interestingly, the highest barrier to export was ‘not being able to locate an export agent’ – which arguably would be a person with language skills.

Whilst the answers provided to the question about need for language skills in export are in themselves presenting researchers with misleading information, there is an additional problem that an unspecified percentage of ‘exporters’ are in fact not (or no longer) active exporters at all. In fact, the export manager confirmed to me that there is no official requirement for exporters to register with their local chamber of commerce, as is the case in France or Germany, for example. National figures about export sales and destinations are therefore estimates based on data gathered from a limited number of larger companies who subscribe to the Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI), which is a privately run organisation. In other words, the Scottish Executive cannot be sure about the accuracy of the export related information. The inclusion of Lothian Export data in the most recent SCDI publication presented an attempt to give more accurate figures. Whether this aim has been achieved, however, is still open to question.

The background details of the three companies who agreed to participate in my study and had identified language skills as a ‘major barrier’ to export are summarised in Table 5-4. A further two companies who had **not** identified language skills a barrier are summarised in Table 5-5. The details of the sixth participating company, which had

previously commissioned language training from Whitehill College, are summarised in Table 5-6

In each company I interviewed one representative of the company, with the exception of Rosefield. Because the managing director had been called away on urgent business his personal assistant (Rosefield 1) tried to step in. However, it quickly became clear that she was not able to answer all my questions, so a helpful employee (Rosefield 2) was 'recruited' on the spot. He was an engineer who had been working on a contract involving travel to Germany and dealing with design documents written in German.

**Table 5-4: Companies who had identified language skills as a barrier to export**

Edgefield	Company manufacturing security systems. Employees: 15. Job title of interview participant: Managing Director (Female).
Rosefield	Engineering consultancy firm. Employees on site: 12. Job titles of interview participants: Personal Assistant (Female) and Engineer (Male)
Springfield	Software engineering company. Employees: 60. Job title of interview participant: Managing Director (Male)

**Table 5-5: Companies who had NOT identified language skills as a barrier to export**

Hayfield	Engineering company. Employees on site: 10. Job title of interview participant: UK Operations & Customer Support Manager (Male)
Muirfield	Pharmaceutical company involved in contract bioresearch and contract manufacturing. Employees on site: 22. Job title of interview participant: Marketing Executive (Male), native French speaker.

**Table 5-6: Company who had requested language training**

Jessfield	Circuit board manufacturing. Employees on site: 180. Job title of interview participant: Business Communication Manager (Male)
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## 5.4.2 Summary of Responses from Industry Representatives

For a detailed analysis of industry representative views please refer to **Appendix XXIII**.

Industry representatives justified their vocational decisions and choices on the basis of their personal experiences, and in that respect did not differ from student participants.

They were in principle in favour of language learning, applauding and supporting the

early language learning initiatives by government. Crucially, however, they did not seem to be aware of the authority accorded to their responses to requests for labour market information. Employers were wary of openly promoting language skills because they could not establish an explicit link with their own company's immediate and short-term needs. This appeared to be a 'rational' decision since they might be perceived as raising false expectations amongst students. They did not consider that these seemingly rational deliberations when translated into the completion of labour skill surveys could lead to powerful 'evidence' that language skills were not valued, used or needed in industry. As a result the reader may now better understand the seemingly inconsequential comments made by McKelvie from Scottish Power to the Committee for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning during Research Phase 2000 (cf. p.100):

**Paul McKelvie (Scottish Power):** [...] It is good for the business for our staff to engage in foreign language training and so on. That is hard to demonstrate, but our organisation believes it to be the case. (SP OR EL, 5 May 2000, col 798)

It is hard to make visible links between staff learning and business performance, because the changes to the person resulting from the former tend to be a much slower process.

The data from Industry Representatives is summarised in Figure 5-3.

**Figure 5-3: Summary of industry representative responses**

Commonalities	Edgefield	Hayfield	Jessfield	Muirfield	Rosefield	Springfield
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive about EU enlargement</li> <li>• In recruitment greater value placed on personal characteristics and willingness to learn than qualifications</li> <li>• Reluctant to openly support ML as core skill</li> <li>• Rate intercultural skills higher than ML competence</li> <li>• Are in favour of early ML learning</li> <li>• Concentrate on company-specific and short-term training needs</li> <li>• Unaware of how their individual replies to labour market surveys translate into local and national labour market information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small independent company</li> <li>• Currently no plans for expansion but has received enquiries from abroad, not all of whom could speak English</li> <li>• Recruitment mainly from school leaver population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small company but part of multi-national chain</li> <li>• Parent firm is in USA so English is agreed working language</li> <li>• Occasional contacts with non-English speaking foreign nationals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Largest company in sample (180 employees); part of multinational chain</li> <li>• Actively seeking to expand into areas with cheap labour supply: China and Eastern Europe</li> <li>• Respondent has conversational fluency in German</li> <li>• Some strategic recruitment of ML speakers – these tend to be foreign nationals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small company; part of national consortium</li> <li>• Respondent is French national</li> <li>• Company actively recruits ML speakers for marketing position – these tend to be filled by foreign nationals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small independent company</li> <li>• Respondent 1 is Company PA</li> <li>• Respondent 2 is engineer and has worked abroad; current work involves working with specifications written in German. However, his own ML skills are limited</li> <li>• Company has used ML speakers by 'serendipity'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small independent company but has exclusive contract with major national chain store</li> <li>• Has lived / worked abroad; is currently learning German with Open University</li> <li>• Wife is ML teacher</li> <li>• Encourages ML learning among staff but does not actively recruit ML speakers</li> </ul>

## 5.5 Discussion of Research Phases 2000-2002

The Draft Policy Guide produced by Beacco & Byram (2002) provides an opportunity to attempt a first synthesis of the evidence gathered during the data collection phase.

**RQ 1.1** How is ML study being presented in official and other public discourses? Whose interests are being promoted in the official discourses?

### **Discussion of ‘Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe’ (Draft 1) with respect to findings in this study**

Whilst there is insufficient space to deal with the above policy document in detail it is useful to highlight a number of significant points, which are of relevance to this study.

In the introduction, the authors stress that the rationale for language teaching

must be seen as the development of a unique linguistic competence (‘knowing’ languages whichever they may be) and also as education for linguistic tolerance. (Beacco & Byram, 2002: 5)

In this respect, they concur with Lo Bianco’s proposals to consider languages as a resource. Beacco & Byram also recognise that such an inclusive view will not happen of its own accord:

Plurilingualism needs to be actively promoted to counter-balance the market forces which tend to lead to linguistic homogenisation (ibid: 7)

The strength of these market forces has been highlighted in the findings of this research study. However, the authors’ claim that

... the plurilingualism of a workforce is a crucial part of human capital in a multilingual marketplace, and a condition for the free circulation of goods, information and knowledge (ibid: 7)



is based on arguments that many participants in my study might not fully understand, or even agree with.

The authors suggest a softly-softly implementation approach:

Options for implementation of policies are dependent in part on how existing structures can be modified, and the development of policy should take place in the context of the analysis of existing and alternative curricula models in both compulsory and post-compulsory education... (ibid: 20)

In this respect, the Scottish Executive would have to take account of:

- (a) the negative remarks by Easton regarding his belief about the desirability or willingness of low ability pupils to study languages (cf. p. 200) *and*
- (b) the difficulty college participants in my study had in envisaging alternative ways of teaching languages, e.g. in conjunction with communication or indeed another vocational subject.

According to Beacco & Byram,

The development of language education policies for linguistic diversity needs to be preceded by analysis of existing conditions in society and the provision of education and opportunities for language learning. (ibid: 20)

Certainly, the findings from this research study should contribute to an understanding of existing conditions within Scottish society.

- RQ 2.3** How do stakeholders in Scottish FE (ML/non-ML students, ML/non-ML staff and industry representatives) account for their views on the inclusion of a ML in Scottish FE programmes? Is there evidence of resistance to any official or other public discourses? Whose interests are being promoted in stakeholders' accounts?

### **Techno-Rational Tendencies in Programme Leaders' Curriculum Choices**

Programme leader perceptions about trend of ML uptake were in line with those of language tutors and senior managers, i.e. optimistic in the case of Blackford, pessimistic elsewhere. In the light of this, the validity of Sizer's optimistic conclusion on language statistics must again be called into question.

In the majority of cases, programme leaders had 'introjected' the external financial and curricular restrictions, and had accepted employer feedback uncritically. Like senior managers, PLs presented themselves as 'powerless' in the face of student disinterest in ML study and non-demand from employers. Yet the contrasting examples of PL Redhall-no and PL Yellowcraig-option serve to show that PLs *CAN* influence ML uptake. Arguably, by 'selling' ML as an 'easy' and 'enjoyable' option PLs implicitly, albeit unintentionally, contribute to a belief that ML study has no vocational relevance.<sup>71</sup> PLs treated students as 'customers' of their educational products whose short-term 'desires' have to be met. However, responses from industry representatives supported the conclusions reached by Finlay & Finnie (2002) that this strategy may not adequately prepare students for the evolving labour market.

Language tutors in June 2000 had expressed a belief that PLs considered language skills to be an unnecessary frill, perceived language learning as difficult, or had a general

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<sup>71</sup> The FE Network has lobbied SQA for modern language study to be compulsory on certain awards, e.g. those that have an international dimension. However, judging from PL responses it seems that unless our claims receive stronger support from employers they are unlikely to be heeded.

apathy towards ML study. Whilst the data did not fully justify these perceptions, the lack of direct demand for ML skills from employers had admittedly contributed to PL's strategy of highlighting the personal rather than vocational benefits of ML skills.

The ambiguous reaction of PLs to teach vocational specialism through the medium of another language may not only be indicative of a lack of confidence in language tutors' ability to teach this but also in FE students' ability or willingness to learn in this mode. The notion of the 'uncertain' FE learner raised by Gallacher *et al* (2000) has been a consistent finding in this study. At the same time, PLs dealing with foreign students in their programmes are in fact implicitly conceding in their responses that students *are* able to succeed in vocational subjects when it is taught in the medium of a foreign language, even when the students' command of that language is not fluent.

### **Perceptions of (Ir)Relevance**

Despite the compulsory nature of their subject, communication tutors raised similar concerns to those of language tutors, such as:

- Students' narrow vocational focus and instrumental motivation,
- Students' lack of commitment to engage in sustained learning, and
- Students' failure to recognise the subject's relevance (mitigated only by extrinsic motivation to pass communication as a core skill)

Thus it could be argued that communication tutors would have similar difficulties in sustaining uptake in their subject were it not part of the core skills requirement.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> The tendency to accommodate students' explicit preferences can be seen in the recent decision by SQA to relax the rules on core skills. Students now have to pass three out of five core skills – and there is already anecdotal evidence that the core skill most frequently 'subsumed' by other subjects is communication.

Further, CTs could point to links between literacy and language skills, validating proposals made by Lo Bianco (2001). CTs who had had experience in industry were all able to identify occasions where language skills would have been useful. Whilst at the time of the interviews in Spring 2002 communication and language had been grouped together in four out of five colleges it was interesting to note that at Blackford the link with a vocational subject (tourism) was being considered as a more successful strategy. In the light of the difficulties experienced by Sandy at Redhall where the link with tourism already existed, but also by Hannah at Whitehill where the vocational link (again with tourism) had recently been broken, it seems that neither strategy is sufficiently strong on its own to 'secure' the place of ML provision within the FE structure.

#### **Industry Representatives: Masking their Own Power**

Industry representatives were contradictory in their responses with respect to their views on ML. They seemed to attribute great value to the skill in its own right, but were reluctant to promote it openly. There was strong evidence that their strategic thinking was focused on their own needs, which were mostly short term. They did not appear to give much thought to completing questionnaires, and certainly did not seem to recognize that their own individual responses taken together would show 'conclusively' that there was no immediate need for modern language skills and that they were providing the government with evidence that industry did not value language skills.

In Foucauldian terms, the industry is masking its power - albeit unwittingly. Certainly the representatives interviewed did not seem to realise the momentous consequences of their short-term thinking.

There was also anecdotal evidence that employers had already ‘categorized’ students with lower level qualifications to certain tasks, which, in their minds, did not require the development of ML skills. Thus individuals with low educational aspirations may unwittingly be further dissuaded from stretching their potential. Promotion beyond low-level technical jobs would require the development of higher levels of literacy. If this is not deemed essential for a Higher National qualification, it is unlikely to be included in the curriculum content. This in turn reflects the quality of the educational provision available to FE students. It is clear that Graddol’s paradox encapsulates a complex range of arguments – outlined at various parts in the present study – that have not yet been contemplated by people in business and industry, or by policy makers.

- RQ 3.1** In what ways are the processes and structures in operation at professional, institutional and policy level conditioned by the specific cultural and historical context in which they operate? Whose interests are being promoted in these processes?
- RQ 3.2** In the light of evidence arising from the data analysis what are the implications for the notion that ‘English is enough’?

### **Technical Rationality in Action**

The effects of a seemingly rational decision making process on the basis of flawed statistical data have been made visible at Whitehill College. Its axing of evening ML study can be seen as a techno-rational implementation of the ministerial directive (Alexander, 2001). Subsequently I was informed that for the remainder of session 2002-03 ML staff on temporary contracts taught a significantly reduced ML provision, and that ML demand at the start of session 2003-04 had dropped significantly. College management are thus in a position to claim that the ‘explicit’ demand for language study is being met whilst at the same time fulfilling the ministerial demand (Alexander, 2001) to reduce ‘weaker units of delivery’. More damagingly, new college statistics for SFEFC will show a decline in ML uptake and could be construed by policy makers as a

sign of declining interest in ML learning within the local community. Yet the high levels of demand for evening ML study in the autumn of 2001 show that such a conclusion is not necessarily justified.

The development of events at Whitehill may be extreme but they serve to highlight the potential of long-term negative consequences in the planning of ‘vocational’ programmes on the basis of short-term and narrowly focused labour market information coupled with misleading statistical data.

### **‘Ecological’ Consequences of Marketised Education**

I return to my claim in Chapter 1 (cf. p. 43) and Chapter 3 (cf. p. 141) that in a marketised education system students believe they are being offered educational ‘goods’ to purchase, made visible through the acquirement of a qualification certificate *promised* to ‘guarantee’ them a job. By repeatedly referring to the notion of having to ‘sell’ languages to students, PLs are, inadvertently perhaps, ‘buying into’ this consumerist notion of education. Thus, languages are educational ‘goods’ that are not in demand by the ‘consumers’ and ‘clients’ of further education: students and employers. The ‘added value’ of ML study would have to be demonstrated in financial terms. Because the claim that ‘languages will get you a better job’ does not seem to have been realised in practice it is no longer accepted as a ‘truth claim’.

### ***REFLECTIONS ON RESEARCH PHASES 2000-02***

During this phase the Foucauldian and Marcusian frameworks applied to the study have become even more important than imagined at the end of 2001. For example, SM Whitehill’s curtailment of the popular language evening class provision can be seen as a

‘techno-rational’ application of the ministerial guidelines, but it also belies his earlier professed pro-language stance. Follow-ups to fortuitous meetings, i.e. with a senior staff at SFEFC (viz. selected research diary entries for 2002) resulted in clarification on the statistical data conundrum. Conversely, without the requirement imposed by my SFEU sponsors I would most certainly not have interviewed industry representatives, who turned out to be the lynch pin in my archaeological search. .

I am now able to complete my theorised Foucauldian paths of knowledge constructions, (Figure 5-4). The ministerial directive, based on short-term evidence but asking for long-term curriculum decisions, has been ‘rationally’ applied at Whitehill College with respect to language provision.

The evidence from industry representatives suggests that the information they feed into data collection on the labour market is based on short term and narrowly focused considerations. Whenever these do not include language skills, or whenever the language requirement has been satisfied (even if only in the short term), the language skill issue will not be raised as a concern. The labour market information thus produced in turn justifies the curricular decisions of programme leaders (although these choices have been shown to be influenced by additional subjectivist factors). It also indirectly supports FE students’ dominant belief that ‘English is enough’.

The findings and conclusions for Research Phase 2002 are summarised in Figure 5-5. An overall discussion and implication of the research findings follows in Chapter 6.

Figure 5-4: Theorised paths of knowledge construction (Research Phase 2002)

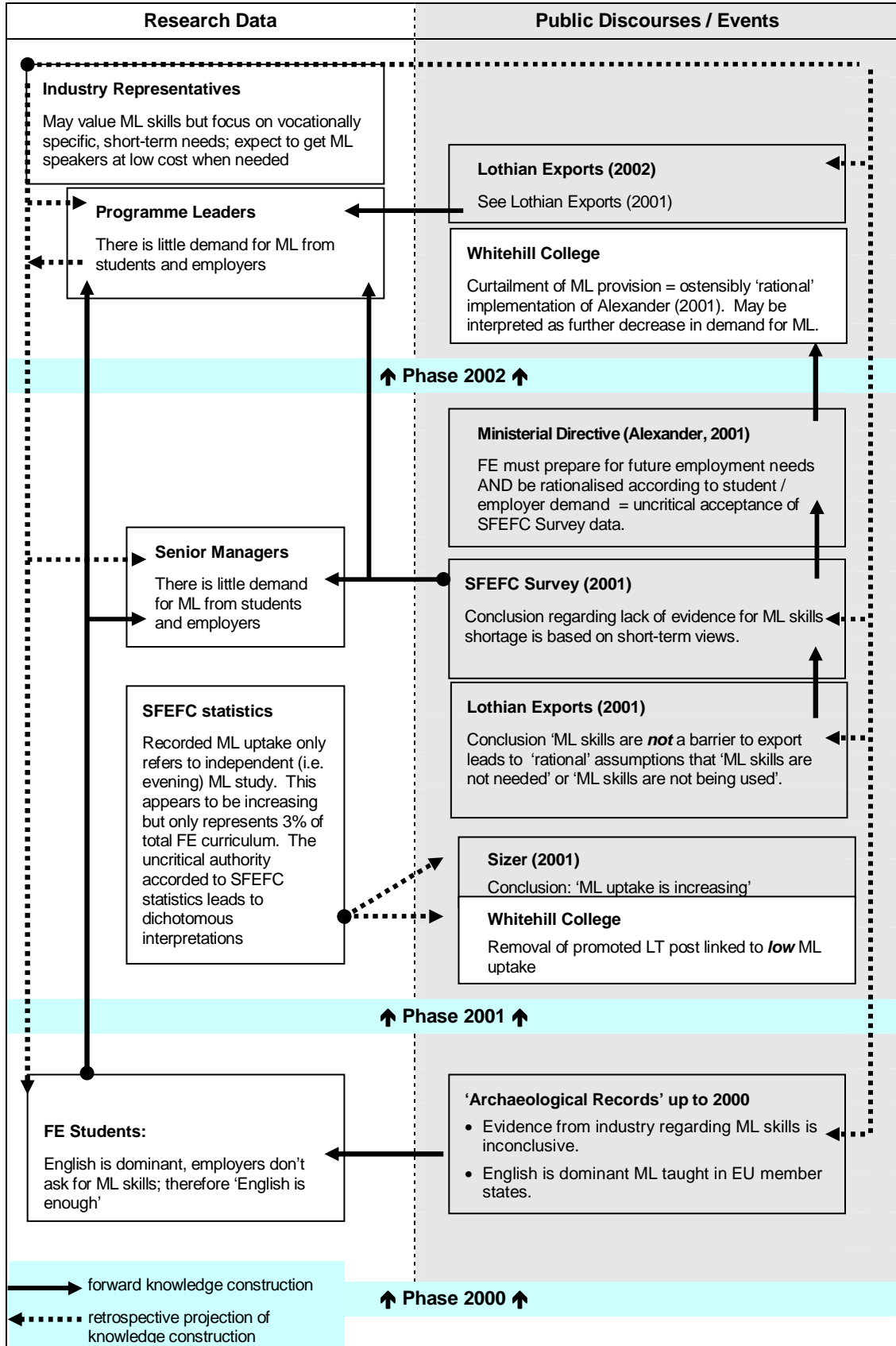




Figure 5-5: Summary of Research Phase 2002

Timeline →	Jan-Jun 2002	Jul-Dec 2002	Initial Findings
Research Question →	RQ 2.2, 2.3	RQ 1.1, 1.2	
Research Strand ↓	RQ 3.1, 3.2, 3.3	RQ 3.1, 3.2, 3.3	
<b>Data Collection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme Leaders (PL)</li> <li>• Communication Tutors (CT)</li> <li>• Industry Representatives</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PLs cite SQA framework / client demand as constraints but reveal other factors at play.</li> <li>• CT views similar to LT views but in contrast to LTs have notional backing of 'core skill' status.</li> <li>• Industry assumptions in completing labour market surveys 'hide' the use of and/or the need for ML skills.</li> </ul>
<b>Public Discourses/Events (External)</b>	<p>Lothian Exports 2002</p> <p>ML in Scottish parliamentary minutes, media, and new research (e.g. Connell, 2002; Robinson, 2002) + French/German literature</p>	<p>EU Draft Guidelines for ML Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industry Representative responses reveal misleading assumptions in Lothian Exports questionnaire regarding need/usage of ML skills in export companies.</li> <li>• EU Draft Guidelines for ML Policy include proposals for CLIL, which may meet with significant resistance from programme leaders, as well as from FE students.</li> <li>• New research by Connell (2002) and Robinson (2002) corroborate earlier findings by Beedham (2001), Salt &amp; Clarke (1998; 2001), and further support Graddol's (1998) paradox.</li> <li>• French &amp; German data show dominance of English in ML teaching pre- and post-16.</li> </ul>
<p>(Whitehill College)</p> <p>* Pivotal event</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curtailment of ML provision*</li> <li>• Redundancy threat</li> </ul>	<p>'Voluntary' departure of all full-time ML staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curtailment of ML provision at Whitehill can be seen as 'techno-rational' enactment of ministerial directive (Alexander, 2001).</li> <li>• Decrease in ML provision following departure of permanent ML staff is likely to lead to conclusion by SFEFC that there is decreased demand for ML learning.</li> </ul>
<b>Intermediate Conclusions Phase 2002</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FE programme designs dependent as much on staff resources and PL beliefs as on SQA framework and client demand or choice.</li> <li>• PLs are engaged in CLIL when dealing with EFL speakers. They accept CT efforts of 'vocalising' content but consider LTs as 'non-vocational' specialists. LTs have unwittingly reinforced this 'lower' status by 'selling' ML options as personal rather than vocational benefit.</li> <li>• CTs and LTs are dealing with similar professional issues but have not considered addressing these jointly as proposed by Lo Bianco (2001).</li> <li>• Using the Foucauldian perspective we can theorise possible paths of knowledge constructions that help to re-affirm the belief 'English is enough': the dominance of English teaching in EU member states and the assumptions made by Industry when completing labour market surveys lead to 'empirical evidence' that ML skills are not highly regarded, not in demand and/or not needed.</li> <li>• Using the Critical Theory perspective it can be argued that the uncritical authority accorded to labour market data leads to techno-rational decisions by PLs to exclude ML from their programmes. The 'rational' curtailment of ML provision at Whitehill will produce statistics suggesting that ML demand is decreasing, thereby justifying further 'rationalisation' of ML provision. At the same time, there is further evidence supporting the argument that the continued reaffirmation of 'English is enough' and any resultant reduction in ML provision may increasingly disadvantage Scottish FE students in the international labour market.</li> </ul>		



# **6 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS**

It is not the strongest of the species that survives, not the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change (Charles Darwin)

## **6.1 Will Cinderella Get to the Ball?**

### **6.1.1 Summary of Data Collection 2000-2002**

During the active research phase, which lasted from June 2000 to September 2002, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Statistical data on language study in Scottish FE were sought from the Scottish Qualification Authority later also from the Scottish Further Education Funding Council. In five FE colleges, 150 students from fourteen student groups completed open-ended questionnaires, out of which eight student groups (70 students) held follow-on group discussions. Across those same five colleges four language lecturers, four senior college managers, twelve programme leaders, and five communication lecturers were interviewed. The college data were complemented by, semi-structured interviews with seven industry representatives. During the data collection phase, a number of discourses and events occurred in the external context, which had a major bearing on the analysis of the data actively sought. Table 6-1 summarises the chronological sequence of these two concurrent strands:

**Table 6-1: Summary of research data and contextual factors**

	Data	Main Events/Discourses in External Context
<b>Spring 2000</b>	LT Perceptions on ML uptake SQA statistics	SFEFC survey of supply & demand in progress Nuffield Languages Inquiry (Nuffield, 2000)
<b>Autumn 2000</b>	Students	MAGL Report (MAGL, 2000)
<b>Spring 2001</b>	Language Tutors SFEFC statistics	Lothian Exports Survey 2001 Beedham Report Removal of promoted LT post at Whitehill College Relocation of Whitehill College
<b>Autumn 2001</b>	Senior Managers	Ministerial endorsement of MAGL Report Lo Bianco 2001 Salt & Clarke 2001 SFEFC survey findings distributed to all colleges Ministerial Letter of Guidance to SFEFC High demand for ML evening provision at Whitehill College Low demand for ML daytime provision at Whitehill College
<b>Spring 2002</b>	Programme Leaders Communication Tutors Industry Representatives	Lothian Exports Survey 2002 Connell 2002 Curtailed of ML provision at Whitehill College General redundancy threat at Whitehill College
<b>Autumn 2002</b>	French/German literature review	Robinson 2002 Resignation / voluntary redundancy of LTs at Whitehill College

## 6.1.2 Discussion of Research Aims and Associated Research Questions

The key aims of this research study were to:

1. Assess the arguments regarding the place of ML study in Scottish FE as arising from official and other public discourses.
2. Analyse the views of stakeholders in Scottish FE with respect to ML study and the ML learning experience in Scottish FE programmes.
3. Assess the influence of socio-cultural and socio-historical assumptions in the production of knowledge claims regarding the place of ML study in Scottish FE.

In the light of the evidence collected I can now begin to address these.

***Aim 1: Assess the arguments regarding the place of ML in Scottish FE as expressed in official and other public discourses***

### ***THE VOCATIONAL RELEVANCE ARGUMENT***

The two principal pro-language policy documents published in Scotland during the data collection phase, i.e. the MAGL report (December 2000) and the Lo Bianco report, (September 2001) both *argue* the vocational and the non-vocational benefits of ML competence and an appropriate ML policy. These arguments were supported openly by a number of politicians. However, from a positivist perspective these arguments are based on limited and therefore inconclusive evidence, as illustrated by Hall (2000). Similarly, the remarks by Scottish Enterprise representatives Sinclair and Baldwin (SP OR EU 17 December 2002) suggest that empirical evidence of a measurable nature would be required in order for government to give greater support to the development of language skills amongst Scotland's workforce.

The SFEFC survey into the supply of and demand for Scottish FE (SFEFC, 2001a; 2001b) can be seen as a first attempt to provide government with measurable and comprehensive information (albeit short term) about Scotland's labour market, but it did not seek to resolve the dichotomous statements about the need for language skills. There were similarly contradictory conclusions between the two Scottish-based language-specific employer surveys (University of Dundee, 1999; Beedham, 2001) and the two consecutive export company surveys from Lothian Exports (2001; 2002). Whilst the pro-language conclusions of the former are weakened by low response rates it was argued that the assumptions made by the latter may serve to hide the actual use and/or need of language skills within respondent companies in developing and maintaining export links.

The vocational argument for languages is strengthened by the combined findings of the studies investigating the flow of (legitimate) foreign workers to the UK (Salt & Clarke, 1998; 2001; Robinson, 2002) and the report examining the link between inward investment and the availability of multilingual workers with ML skills (Connell, 2002). They also support Graddol's (1998) claim regarding the paradoxical need for native speakers of English to obtain foreign language skills.

### ***TECHNO-RATIONALITY IN POLICY DIRECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION***

This study has exposed inconsistencies in ostensibly routine statistical collection procedures with respect to the uptake of certain units within the National and Higher National frameworks. The different assumptions underlying the data collection by SQA and by SFEFC had resulted in different perceptions about the nature and trend of language uptake. Whitehill College's decision to curtail its (popular) evening language provision exemplifies both the potentially negative consequences for ML provision resulting from these flaws and a 'techno-rational' implementation of ministerial guidelines (Alexander, 2001). These in turn can also be termed 'techno-rational' as they ask managers to take curricular decisions with long-term consequences on the basis of short-term findings, i.e. the SFEFC survey (SFEFC, 2001a; 2001b).

### ***WHOSE INTERESTS ARE BEING PROMOTED?***

If policy decisions continue to marginalize language provision even those who wish to engage in language learning may be denied the opportunity to do so. Does this matter in world where English is recognised to be the most frequently used global means of communication?

The proclaimed aim of the FE policies examined has been the improvement of social and economic conditions for Scotland's inhabitants. However, the evidence accumulated during this

study suggests that the assumptions made with regard to the place of language study within this overall aim have been based on misleading premises. Thus whilst the belief that ‘English is enough’ is continually re-affirmed the curricular decisions by senior managers and programme leaders, and the curricular choices by Scottish FE students based on this belief, may well prove to be to FE students’ detriment in the longer term. In other words, FE policies indirectly disadvantage the very people for whose benefit they are created because they discourage FE students from developing the linguistic and cultural skills that would enable them to compete on equal terms with their European counterparts (and other multilingual speakers) in the international labour market.

### ***MOVING BEYOND THE VOCATIONAL RATIONALE***

As Gogolin (2001; 2002) and others have been at pains to demonstrate there is now, as a direct result of *external* globalisation, a much greater linguistic diversity not just across EU as a whole but also within each individual member state, i.e. countries are also *internally* globalising. Migrant communities, which previously might have adopted the language of their chosen host country, are now, thanks to global communication networks, able and keen to retain their linguistic and cultural identity. If the linguistic questions that these communities pose for government are treated as either a ‘problem’ or as competing ‘rights’, they are unlikely to produce a society whose members are able to accommodate varying cultural orientations or ‘otherness’. If, however, languages can be imagined as a ‘resource’, as Lo Bianco (*op cit*) has advocated, we are more likely to enable competing linguistic stakeholders to arrive at a ‘Nash equilibrium’. The arguments during the debates around Scotland’s indigenous languages show that it is possible to move beyond the vocational rationale – but policy makers have yet to include *all* modern languages into such deliberations.

***2: Analyse the views of stakeholders in Scottish FE with respect to ML study and the ML learning experience in Scottish FE programmes.***

***STUDENTS***

Students displayed a strong instrumental tendency, often combined with intrinsic motivation, for the college programme chosen. In this sense they started out as seemingly ‘self-determining’ individuals. Having decided to come to college to fulfil their ‘self-volitional’ dream implies that they had internalised (to varying degrees) the external regulation imposed upon them to gain a qualification in order to realise their imagined future. Within these programmes students’ extrinsic motivation varied between subjects, and both communication and ML tended to be perceived as subjects required by ‘external regulation’ with an external locus of causality and little student identification. This tendency was less marked in the older age group, and it was theorised that this was as a result of having physically experienced the need for the development of such skills. This is consistent with students’ displayed preference for experiential learning and the dislike of theoretical learning. In this sense the student data replicate the findings of McPake *et al* (1999). Students did not perceive significant demand from employers for language skills, and those travelling abroad usually found that they were able to get by using English. Students accepted these external contexts as stable and global.

***LANGUAGE TUTORS AND COMMUNICATION TUTORS***

Language tutors appeared to be largely at odds with the external regulations imposed upon them. These had demonstrably weakened their *position* within the college hierarchy and had rendered their *professional existence* largely dependent upon other college staff. Only within the limited confines of managing ML provision did language tutors show some introjection with externally imposed goals. Those language staff who also had programme leader responsibility had used their position of authority to devise programmes with compulsory language components, *despite* the apparent lack of demand from employers. Those in non-promoted posts tried to address both



students' personal needs (e.g. reduction of language anxiety) with the requirement to pass external assessments

Communication Tutors faced similar problems to language tutors in many respects, even though their subject enjoyed greater status as an officially recognised core skill. Like language tutors, they felt frustrated at the perceived lack of awareness regarding the vocational relevance of their subject and the disregard for the 'ecological' consequences resulting from this neglect. At the same time, both staff categories worked in isolation from one another, even when they were 'structurally' placed in the same curriculum department at college. In other words, both language and communication tutors acted within the same narrow, subject-specific perspective as the vocational specialists.

### ***PROGRAMME LEADERS AND SENIOR MANAGERS***

Programme Leaders (PLs) showed greater acceptance of external regulation. They tended to justify individual programme designs on the basis of externally determined global constraints, i.e. funding regulations and curriculum frameworks. However, their responses revealed the application of more specific factors such as the availability/capability of staff to teach certain subjects, which in turn implies a different 'strategic compliance' to the one proposed by Shain & Gleeson (1999). Programme leaders' differing degrees of identification were also visible in their responsiveness to customer (student) preferences or client (employer) demand. Nevertheless, even when they were ostensibly convinced of both the vocational and social rationales for ML learning, many programme leaders seemed to have introjected the expertise accorded to employer views and the authority accorded to student views into their personal value system. In this sense they were ostensibly making 'rational' programme design choices, although this often resulted in 'zero-sum' decisions with regard to language provision.

Like programme leaders, senior managers had integrated external regulations, according greater authority to (explicit) student preferences and (perceived) employer demand. They were content to support the zero-sum decisions of programme leaders even when they claimed to be aware of the wider benefits that ML skills could afford. In this sense they came closer to earlier findings by Doughty (1997; 1999b) with respect to cost-benefit analysis than to those by Cloonan *et al* (1999). Implementation of funding regulations outweighed considerations of Bottery's (1998) 'ecological' consequences.

Amongst *all* education professionals interviewed there was hesitation with regard to practices that would 'negate' established norms as evidenced by their apparent difficulty to conceive of different ways of learning and teaching. In this sense, they too are acting 'techno-rationally'.

### ***INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES***

Both policy and stakeholder discourses pointed to industry representatives as key informants whose knowledge is being considered as both 'authoritative' and 'expert'. Yet the interviews revealed that employers' views were very narrowly focused on short-term and company specific needs. Whilst employers' responses reflected the non-language concern expressed by students, programme leaders and senior managers, they also indicated the existence of language-related issues.

Any language skill needs, however, were often handled in an ad hoc fashion. Nevertheless, because employers had been able to resolve the language skills gap, there was an implied 'techno-rational' assumption that the 'human resources' with the necessary skills would always be available. There was no 'ecological' concern about future implications for native speakers of English from their ambiguous commitment to ML. Further, the information employers would

provide in general skills survey was arguably loaded with another ‘techno-rational’ assumption, that by supplying researchers with the ‘facts and figures’ relevant to their own firm’s specific short-term needs, those in political power would be able to deduce the medium- and long-term needs of business and industry in general.

***3: Assess the influence of socio-cultural and socio-historical assumptions in the production of knowledge claims regarding the place of ML study in Scottish FE***

Social constructionists argue that the way we construct our common-sense understanding of the world is influenced by the socio-historical and socio-cultural contexts. In Chapter 1 (pp. 42-44) I have argued that Scottish educational policy makers privilege ‘quantifiable’ over ‘qualitative’ knowledge, and that this is a tendency discernable in other countries governed by capitalist principles. I have also argued that the social controls in operation in such societies help reproduce existing systems and eliminate oppositional standpoints, thereby preventing individuals from becoming truly ‘self-determining’ (Marcuse, 1964). Finally, I have claimed that a society that is favourably disposed towards the learning of other languages (and their cultures) is better able to deal with the uncertainty and risks accompanying the forces of globalisation (pp. 58-60), even when the dominant language happens to be the principal means of global communication (Graddol, 1998). It was therefore necessary to include an analysis of the discourses (written documents and events) in the external context into the methodological framework. This multi-level strategy did indeed prove pivotal in gaining a deeper understanding of the influences on participant FE stakeholders’ attitudes and beliefs.

From the Foucauldian perspective, the analysis of key documents and events during the time span in which stakeholder views were sought has enabled the visualisation of theorised knowledge construction paths regarding the formulation of beliefs with regard to the need for

language skills in the Scottish labour market. The analysis has exposed the short-term and narrowly focused nature of employer survey findings as well as failings in statistical collection on language units. The identified flaws have highlighted the subjectivist nature of ostensibly 'objective' data, as well as the potentially negative long-term consequences of ostensibly rational 'zero-sum' choices.

From the Critical Theorist perspective, I have argued that with regard to language provision these zero-sum choices will be to the detriment of Scottish FE students. Whilst the available evidence does not provide *quantifiable proof* to that effect I contend that such quantification will not be possible until the situation actually exists. In other words, only if over the coming years it becomes evident that more and more jobs are held by bi- or multilingual speakers there will eventually be quantifiable proof that monolinguals have been disadvantaged. However, until such time labour market research conducted in the present mode will likely continue to obscure the language skills gap.

The circular argument will persist unless policy makers attempt to visualise a different future from the one that is determined by the immediate past, that is to say by the articulated short-term and narrowly focused needs/desires of employers and students. Only if policy makers consider that the future *will be* multilingual and multicultural can they begin to ask whether the sole accommodation of students' (and employers') articulated needs and desires will serve their as yet *non-articulated* and *unconscious* needs and wishes in the long term.

At present, from the evidence on the flow of foreign workers (Salt & Clarke, 1998, 2001; Robinson, 2002) and the location of inward investment (Connell, 2002), we can do no more than argue that these are *potentially* quantifiable indicators of an increasingly multilingual labour

market. We can also argue that the intention to attract more workers from abroad to settle in Scotland (Harris, 2002) is likely to result in a greater diversity of language ‘resources’ amongst the Scottish population; further, that these resources should be maintained and cultivated, *alongside the development of English language skills*, to increase Scotland’s international trade and entrepreneurial potential. However, only if these claims are accepted can we proceed to make the case that the current strategies with regard to language study in Scottish FE are inappropriate. Only if we accept that we will indeed be ‘citizens of a multilingual world’ can we claim that the present strategies for language learning will not lead to a more equal and just society.

### **6.1.3 Implications for policy and practice**

#### ***FOR THE SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE***

If the Scottish Executive were to accept the findings of this investigation they could take a number of simple ‘technical’ steps to encourage language study in the short term, e.g.:

- increase the subject weighting for language instruction
- revise SQA frameworks to allow *ab-initio* study of one or more languages as part of *any* vocational qualification
- increase the amount of language/cultural study required for qualifications that purport to be ‘European’ or ‘international’

Whilst they might also consider financial incentives to encourage uptake of higher-level ML qualifications they should be aware that this would only lead to behavioural changes in the short term and need further support to achieve a long term change in attitude.

As the final pages of this study are being written (December 2004), the Scottish Executive has just published a policy document with highly significant implications for the status of language study, 'Curriculum for Excellence' (Scottish Executive, 2004a). The policy is aimed at the compulsory sector but could have both positive and negative knock-on effects on post-compulsory schooling, and on language provision in particular. For example, the proposed collaboration between different subject specialists in order to enhance student learning is consistent with the recommendations of this study but the proposal to introduce scope for greater pupil choice at an earlier age is likely to result in a less varied provision, and may even lead to a further decline of communicative competence.

If an understanding of 'work' as a concept is to be one of the guiding principles of the proposed curriculum it would have to be defined much more inclusively. It could be broadened so that it encompasses more than the 'techno-rational' consideration work as 'paid employment'; it could explore, for example, the relationship between work and leisure, work at home and work in an office or factory.

Whilst my findings suggest that an education system overly reliant on employer-led information will not actually result in a curriculum that prepares its participants for the 'skills of tomorrow' it does not necessarily follow that an education-led economy will be more successful. Work experience and education should continually re-inform each other. Critical Theorists tell us that all partners need to come together in order to arrive at a consensus (Habermas, 1984, 1987) but that any agreement needs to be re-evaluated periodically in the light of changing contexts.

***FOR EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS AND FE STUDENTS***

School and college staff in FE need to be informed through professional development sessions on the implications of misleading labour market information. Language professionals in schools and FE colleges should consider responding to the current consultation document on school and FE collaboration published by the Scottish Executive (Scottish Executive, 2003b) as the proposals may impact directly on the extent and nature of language provision in both sectors.

Successful school-based initiatives currently underway, such as the partial integration of language skills into the primary curriculum at Walker Road Primary School, or the 'Partners in Excellence' project, which has used information technology to increase senior pupils' contact with foreign language speakers, should be brought to the attention of FE staff. Conversely, the soon to be published outcomes from current post-school initiatives such as the 'Language Ambassador' scheme and the Multilingual Forum should be made available to school staff. Dialogue with relevant language stakeholders (i.e. English, heritage, community, 'foreign', and sign languages) should be initiated and sustained to identify ways in which language skills play a part in the development of national priorities. These interactions should not only aim expose the power and pervasiveness of language but also try to realise its positive potential.

There should be mechanisms for programme leaders, communication and language lecturers to meet to discuss how the vocational, literacy and language skills of students could be tackled together as they progress through their programme(s) of study, for example through pilot projects. Further, the unequal power relations with regard to English in any student exchanges or work placements abroad need to be recognized. Whilst the use of English as an international language should rightly be celebrated, both

the need and the desirability to see it as a useful ‘partner’ rather than a ‘master’ in such negotiations has to be fostered.

FE students need to consider that their vocational aspirations may take them onto unknown and unknowable paths that may well involve interactions with non-native speakers of English, whatever their choice of career. Nevertheless, as ‘uncertain’ learners they will need the support of others with ‘ecological’ awareness to help them develop the knowledge and skills to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to Scotland’s economy.

#### **6.1.4 Limitations and Cautions**

The college data was collected in five colleges, all located within the central belt of Scotland. Because of the relatively large amount of qualitative data analysis of the same within the specified limits has suffered somewhat in depth. Although the findings exposed similar trends in each institution due to normative regulations, it also became clear that individuals within each organisation had personal power to effect changes. Thus it is not possible, or even desirable, to make sweeping generalisations from these findings.

However, the employment of research collaborators in the student data collection, the multi-strategy methodology and prolonged engagement with the sector raise the study’s credibility and trustworthiness. This is further enhanced through the continued ‘archaeological’ scanning of the external context during the whole of the research phase. Although at the time of completing the writing up of this thesis (December 2004) the



chances for a major policy shift on language provision appear as distant as ever, I remain confident that the imperatives I have identified for such a change will become more evident and pressing in times to come.

### **6.1.5 Implications for Knowledge Claims**

It seems reasonable to assume that readers with a positive view on ML relevance are likely to receive my thinking with enthusiasm. This may not necessarily be because I have argued my point convincingly but because from their standpoints and knowledge base the views I have expressed are acceptable. On the other hand, readers with a negative view on ML relevance are likely to approach my findings and my analysis with some scepticism. They too, will have interpreted my data from within their own knowledge constructions and standpoints. Others may merge their understandings with those of my own deliberations to create new meanings, accepting certain of my conclusions and rejecting others. Finally, my own understandings of the findings may change and evolve over time, so I may find myself re-evaluating my arguments (and others') at a later stage.

## 6.2 Final Reflections

La lutte elle-même vers les sommets suffit à remplir un coeur d'homme.  
(Albert Camus, *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*)

### ***ON MY OWN PERFORMANCE***

This research was conducted in a highly turbulent environment, and I am thrilled, despite various setbacks and deviations, to have achieved my aim to gain a deeper insight into the reasons behind the current state and status of modern languages in Scottish further education. Even though the data collection did not go according to plan I felt capable of dealing with the changes as they arrived. I also improved my ability to re-read my own work in a critical light. At the same time I have realised that leaps in understanding more often than not happen as a result of interactions with others. Thus whilst large amount of time was spent writing up my findings in solitude I also made explicit efforts to engage professional colleagues and conference participants between 2002 and 2004 (Doughty 2002a, 2002b, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2003d, 2004) in my interpretation of the data. The questions posed by them as well as those by my research supervisor caused me to re-evaluate my arguments and to sharpen certain points.

### ***ON MY LEARNING ABOUT THE RESEARCH SITES***

The decision to go into a number of research sites may have brought challenges but I believe these were worthwhile. I have been able to gain some insight into the ways in which decisions with long-term consequences are arrived at, and the way in which these decisions may be almost imperceptibly influenced by socio-cultural and socio-historical

values. At the same time, I have come to realise that despite normative constraints, in this case curriculum and finance regulators, there is nevertheless still scope for individuals to effect change on their external context congruent with their beliefs. This personal power for manoeuvre may be limited but it does exist and gives rise to both hope and despair.

### ***ON CONDUCTING FURTHER RESEARCH ON THIS TOPIC***

If I were to conduct another pilot study in a turbulent environment I would again monitor contextual factors closely. Depending on the nature of the inquiry, however, I might devise more straightforward data collection methods, and reduce the number of research sites. In a follow-up study to this one I would examine a particular aspect in greater depth. For example, I would like to analyse the views of those who have made the ‘transition’ from anti- to pro-language stance, or the role the media plays in shaping peoples’ views. But that is for another time...

*Like Sisyphus I have pushed my sphere to the top and, like Camus’ protagonist, even as I know that I will need to struggle up the hill again I feel content.*



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<sup>73</sup> A pseudonym to protect the anonymity of the college.

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# 7 APPENDICES

## Research Phase 2000

Appendix I	Selection of research diary entries for 2000
Appendix II	Letter to student participants
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## APPENDIX I: SELECTION OF RESEARCH DIARY ENTRIES (2000)

- 9 Feb Bought research diary – might as well start to get some practice before the actual research collection begins. Not sure if I want to just do a single case study on my own college or include perspectives from other colleges. There's an FE Network meeting on 3 March – will ask if anyone's willing to be involved... also notify College Board of Studies – maybe give a presentation...
- 7 Mar Need to start thinking about EYL 2001...will speak to students to get some ideas.
- 25 Apr Rethinking my research again after some reading on motivation during the Easter break – what I'm really after is identifying **barriers** to language uptake – but what kinds of barriers, and where are they located – I want perspectives from different levels: policy (SQA, HMI), FE professionals (programme leaders) and students, and try to get some statistics on ML uptake, if possible at institutional level...
- 14 May Nuffield Language Inquiry has generated both a pro- and anti-language perspective, it all hinges on whether the argument of the vocational usefulness of a ML skill is accepted or not, so no breakthrough there... except one on 11 May written by a senior lecturer at Dublin City University (Williams 2000:4). He dismisses the utilitarian (i.e. vocational) and educational rationale for teaching languages and argues for a two-strand "linguistic and psychological" argument, anchored in social justice, on the basis of which "a strong case can be made that every young person should be entitled to the opportunity to learn one or more foreign languages". I can see that the argument of entitlement offers a potential compromise between the polarised positions of compulsory language learning and evident language learning reluctance by students, but I worry that the actual interpretation by many FE students would be 'it's an option which I don't have to bother with'...
- 10 Jun The most popular coach tours are the cheap ones who offer the most sights to see on route but you don't actually get to visit any – consumerism in education – fast-track courses - *edutainment*
- 20 Jun Worked on research proposal over the weekend and into Monday. I've included references to Foucault and to social constructionism because I feel they are important for the social context I will be monitoring over the next year or so – but not sure how I will bring this out in the analysis...  
Discussed possibility of teaching one of tourism subjects using CLIL with students – got a favourable response.
- 3 Jul Got ML stats from SQA – they've been very helpful!
- Aug-00 Attended several talks at the Edinburgh Book Festival, including one by David Crystal on language death – he counters some language myths, e.g. we're NOT moving towards monolingualism, monolingualism would NOT alleviate all political conflicts (viz. Northern Ireland etc.), and language death DOES matter... – but wonder how many FE students actually still hold to one or more of these myths???
- 5 Sep Keeping in mind social constructionist principle I'm including questions on past language learning experiences in student questionnaires and group discussion schedules.
- 20 Sep Received positive feedback from proposed questionnaires and group discussion schedules, but will make some adjustments following my trial run at the college.
- Oct-00 Wonder whether Bragg's series on Radio 4, 'The Routes of English' (BBC 2000a, 2000b), is a counterpoint to Nuffield, or even EYL 2001? Certainly a celebration of English!
- 4 Nov Alex, Chris, Leigh, and Sandy all taking a lot longer than I thought getting questionnaires / tapes back to me... I'm taking a lot longer getting my interview schedules together for staff – should be okay by December but there's no way I'll be able to get 3 data sets this session – I'll be lucky if I get one set from each staff category...
- 15 Dec The MAGL Report was launched on 12 December (wonder if someone in MAGL read the Williams article in May?). The papers have seized upon the notion of 'entitlement' and interpreted it as 'language opt-out clause' – and I think many FE students would probably agree...  
FE Network steering group meeting was today. Now that we've got some SQA statistics confirming our suspicions about ML decline we want to write a letter to Jack McConnell (Education Minister) on the crisis of ML in FE, seeing that 2001 is the European Year of Languages!  
I've finally received all student data sets. Can start doing some preliminary analysis during the Christmas break – what joy!

## **APPENDIX II: LETTER TO STUDENT PARTICIPANTS**

### **Research Project: Modern Languages in Scottish Further Education**

Dear Student

Thank you for taking part in this research study.

In this research project I would like to find out the views of people in Scottish further education with respect to the study of modern foreign languages. At this stage I am particularly interested as to why some students take up a modern language, and why some others do not.

I am doing this research as part of a doctoral thesis, but I hope that my findings will also be helpful to other people who work in Scottish Further Education such as lecturers and policy makers.

Your views are very important (you are not being tested!) so please try to answer the questions as fully and honestly as possible and feel free to add any comments that are of special interest or concern to you by attaching a separate page.

**Please return the completed questionnaire to the designated staff member.**

Thank you again for your cooperation. Your responses are really very crucial to this research.

Wishing you all the best with your studies, whatever they may be.

Hannah Doughty

[Whitehill] College

### APPENDIX III: QUESTIONNAIRE – STUDENT GROUPS WITH NO ML COMPONENT

#### Section A: Some background data

Code: Gender: M F

Age:	16-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60+
------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-----

Name of the Course you are studying

Did you learn or know any modern language(s) before coming to college? Yes No

If yes, please give details of which language(s), length of study, and your most recent qualification/grade, if applicable:

Have you ever had occasion to use a modern language outwith school/college? Yes No

If yes, please give some details:

Does anyone in your family speak a modern language? Yes No

If yes, please give some details:

#### Section B: Your views on college and modern languages

Why did you choose to study this course?

Some friends ask you what it's like being at college. What would you say?

Which subject on the course do you find most interesting?

Please say why:

How important is the Communication element in the course to you? Please say why

Would you have liked to study a language as part of this course? Yes No

Please say why (not):

Tick the 3 activities you think are most similar to learning a modern language:

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> riding a bike     | <input type="checkbox"/> learning to walk       | <input type="checkbox"/> learning words in a play          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> playing chess     | <input type="checkbox"/> learning to swim       | <input type="checkbox"/> learning mathematical formulas    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> playing the piano | <input type="checkbox"/> learning to play cards | <input type="checkbox"/> learning dates for a history exam |

Now try to give a reason for your answers:

If you can think of a better comparison please note it here:

#### Section C. Your plans for the future

Do you intend to study a modern language after this course, or in the near future? Yes No

Please explain why (not)

**How likely** do you think it is that you may use a modern language after you've finished your course or your studies?

Under what kind of circumstances do you think you might **have to** learn a modern language?

Under what kind of circumstances do you think you might **want to** learn a modern language?

**Please use the space below (or continue overleaf) to jot down any final thoughts after your discussion.**



## APPENDIX IV: QUESTIONNAIRE – STUDENT GROUPS WITH OPTIONAL ML COMPONENT

### Section A: Some background data

Code: Gender: M F

Age:	16-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60+
------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-----

<p>Name of the Course you are studying</p> <p>Option(s) available to you on this course:</p> <p>Please state which option you chose:</p> <p>Did you learn or know any modern language(s) before coming to college? <input type="checkbox"/>Yes <input type="checkbox"/>No</p> <p>If yes, please give details of which language(s), length of study, and your most recent qualification/grade, if applicable:</p> <p>Have you ever had occasion to use a modern language outwith school/college? <input type="checkbox"/>Yes <input type="checkbox"/>No</p> <p>If yes, please give some details:</p> <p>Does anyone in your family speak a modern language? <input type="checkbox"/>Yes <input type="checkbox"/>No</p> <p>If yes, please give some details:</p>
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### Section B: Your views on college and modern languages

<p>Why did you choose to study this course?</p> <p>Some friends ask you what it's like being at college. What would you say?</p> <p>Which subject on the course do you find most interesting?</p> <p>Please say why:</p> <p>How important is the Communication element in the course to you? Please say why</p>
---

Tick the 3 activities you think are most similar to learning a modern language:

<input type="checkbox"/> riding a bike	<input type="checkbox"/> learning to walk	<input type="checkbox"/> learning words in a play
<input type="checkbox"/> playing chess	<input type="checkbox"/> learning to swim	<input type="checkbox"/> learning mathematical formulas
<input type="checkbox"/> playing the piano	<input type="checkbox"/> learning to play cards	<input type="checkbox"/> learning dates for a history exam

Now try to give a reason for your answers:

If you can think of a better comparison please note it here:

If you chose a modern language option:

<p>Your friends wonder whether they would enjoy learning a modern language. What advice would you give them?</p> <p>How important is the modern language element in the course to you? Please say why.</p> <p>What sort of activities do you particularly enjoy in the modern language class – and which don't you enjoy so much? Try you explain why</p>
---

<p>If you did not choose a modern language option:</p> <p>Why did you decide not to choose a modern language option?</p> <p>Why did you choose the option you did?</p>
--

### Section C. Your plans for the future

<p>If you chose a modern language option:</p> <p>What do you think you will be able to do in the modern language(s) at the end of the course?</p> <p>At this point in time, do you think you will continue studying languages after this course? <input type="checkbox"/>Yes <input type="checkbox"/>No</p> <p>If yes, please say how:</p> <p>If no, please say why not:</p> <p>In what ways, if any, do you think you will use the language(s) after you've finished your course or your studies?</p>
--

<p>If you did not choose a modern language option:</p> <p>Do you intend to study a modern language after this course, or in the near future? <input type="checkbox"/>Yes <input type="checkbox"/>No</p> <p>Please explain why (not)</p> <p><b>How likely</b> do you think it is that you may use a modern language after you've finished your course or your studies?</p> <p>Under what kind of circumstances do you think you might <b>have to</b> learn a modern language?</p> <p>Under what kind of circumstances do you think you might <b>want to</b> learn a modern language?</p>
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**Please use the space below (or continue overleaf) to jot down any final thoughts after your discussion.**

## APPENDIX V: QUESTIONNAIRE – STUDENT GROUPS WITH COMPULSORY ML COMPONENT

### Section A: Some background data

Code:            Gender: M F

Age: 

16-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60+
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Name of the Course you are studying

Modern languages studied as part of this course:

Did you learn or know any modern language(s) before coming to college? Yes No

If yes, please give details of which language(s), length of study, and your most recent qualification/grade, if applicable:

Have you ever had occasion to use a modern language outwith school/college? Yes No

If yes, please give some details:

Does anyone in your family speak a modern language? Yes No

If yes, please give some details:

### Section B: Your views on college and modern languages

Why did you choose to study this course?

Some friends ask you what it's like being at college. What would you say?

Which subject on the course do you find most interesting?

Please say why:

How important is the Communication element in the course to you? Please say why

How important is the Modern Language element in the course to you? Please say why

Your friends wonder whether they would enjoy learning a modern language. What advice would you give them?

What sort of activities do you particularly enjoy in the modern language class – and which don't you enjoy so much? Try you explain why

#### Tick the 3 activities you think are most similar to learning a modern language:

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> riding a bike     | <input type="checkbox"/> learning to walk       | <input type="checkbox"/> learning words in a play          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> playing chess     | <input type="checkbox"/> learning to swim       | <input type="checkbox"/> learning mathematical formulas    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> playing the piano | <input type="checkbox"/> learning to play cards | <input type="checkbox"/> learning dates for a history exam |

Now try to give a reason for your answers:

If you can think of a better comparison please note it here:

### Section C. Your plans for the future

What do you think you will be able to do in the modern language(s) at the end of the course?

At this point in time, do you think you will continue studying languages after this course? Yes No

If yes, please say how:

If no, please say why not:

In what ways, if any, do you think you will use the language(s) after you've finished your course or your studies?

**Please use the space below (or continue overleaf) to jot down any final thoughts *after your discussion*.**

## APPENDIX VI: GUIDELINES FOR ADMINISTRATION OF QUESTIONNAIRES /FOLLOW-UP GROUP DISCUSSION

### Research: Modern Languages in Scottish Further Education

#### Note to staff administering questionnaire and leading follow-up group discussion (recorded)

Thank you for helping me in my research. In this research project I would like to find out the views of people in Scottish further education with respect to the study of modern foreign languages. At this stage I am particularly interested as to why some students take up a modern language, and why some others do not. Because views can sometimes change over time, I will ask students for their views again towards the end of the study year. I am doing this research as part of a doctoral thesis, but I hope that my findings will also be helpful to other people who work in Scottish Further Education such as lecturers and policy makers.

The students will be asked to complete a questionnaire and then to discuss some of the items on the questionnaire in more depth. The important thing to keep in mind during the discussion is that I'm interested in the students' views so your role will be mainly as 'moderator' of the discussion, trying to elicit views – without volunteering any opinions yourself. You should however, put some ideas up for discussion – I've included these in the instructions overleaf. As your class may have got some students who perhaps are favourable to modern languages, and some others who are not, please try to get views from both groups. **Please allow 1 hour in total for the two activities.**

After the discussion, please write up, on a separate paper, some notes on how you felt the discussion went, add any other comments regarding the students' views, and send/e-mail these to me separately. Please send to both my college and 'private' e-mail as sometimes the college server is down and messages don't get through.

Thank you again for your co-operation.

Hannah Doughty, Head of Languages, Whitehill College, Tel , Fax, and College e-mail: , Private e-mail:

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Hand out **introductory letter**. Go over letter with students (read out). Hand out **Questionnaire**: Assign a Code Letter to each student and ask students to mark this on their questionnaire. Allow enough time for everyone to complete the questionnaire. This may take 15-25 minutes.

Preparation for Discussion (to be recorded). You will need:

Microphone with a long lead – Tape recorder + blank 90-minute tape – sticky labels for student identification. Each student gets a sticky label with their code letter written on it so you can call it out before they speak. ! Before you start the discussion, please make sure that the tape recorder and microphone are switched on! **Have a short test run to make sure the equipment is working properly.**

#### Points to raise during the Discussion:

##### Section A:

What was language learning like at school? (If anyone's used the language outwith school/college) How did you feel about using another language? How confident were you? // (If it was abroad) How did it feel being in a different country? What were the people like? If you were abroad but did not speak the language how did you feel about that? (If anyone has family members who speak a modern language) Do you think that this has had any influence on what you think about learning a modern language?

##### Section B:

What are some of the favourite subjects? – why do you like them? How important is the Communication element in the course to you – why? What activities are like language learning – why? Has anybody thought of a better comparison – which one(s) – why? In what ways is language learning unlike any of the activities mentioned?

##### Section C:

Is anybody thinking about studying a language after this course – why (not)? Do you think the need for people with language skills will increase or not – why(not)? (If yes) – how do you feel about claims that:

- English will increasingly become the international language of business and commerce.
- If everybody spoke one language there would be substantial savings in translation.
- If everybody spoke one language there would be less misunderstandings.

(If no) – how do you feel about claims that:

- The number of people speaking English as a 1<sup>st</sup> language is declining so that in the near future the majority of people speaking English will in fact be bi- or multi-lingual.
- Given current population trends, speakers of Spanish, Hindu, Arabic and Chinese (as a 1<sup>st</sup> language) will be similar to or greater in number than speakers of English, so maybe there will be a shift away from English as a world language.
- Service industries are increasing which includes contact with foreign speakers (e.g. international call centres) so English-only speakers will be at a disadvantage.

#### At the end of the discussion

Ask the students to write down some final thoughts on the questionnaire. Then, while the students are still watching, collect the questionnaires and put them together with the tape in the envelope provided and post it to the address overleaf.

**APPENDIX VII: SAMPLE OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES**

**Blackford-no1 (NC Access to Health & Life Sciences)**

ID	study	college	subject	Comm.	ML=3	?ML?	later	ML use likely?	how
Af44-bn1	intrinsic	great	intrinsic	Imp /confid	piano, maths	no	no	no	if emigrate
Bf34-bn1	work	pos-neg	intrinsic	V imp	piano, swim, dates	yes	yes	prob no	if work abroad
Cf44-bn1	work	pos	intrinsic	V imp	N/C	no	no	no	if work abroad
Df34-bn1	work	pos-neg	intrinsic	V imp	words, maths, dates	no	no	no	if – comm. O
Ef24-bn1	work	pos-neg	intrinsic	V imp	words, maths, dates	yes	yes	hope to emigrate	if emigrate
Ff34-bn1	work	pos-neg	intrinsic	Imp	piano, words, maths	no	no	no	if travel
Gf34-bn1	int/work	pos-neg	intrinsic	Imp	piano, words, maths	no	no	possibly	no comment
Hm24-bn1	work	good	intrinsic	V imp	walk, cards, words	no	no	no	if emigrate
Jm29-bn1	work	good	intrinsic	Imp	words, maths, dates	yes	yes	no	if emigrate
Kf29-bn1	intrinsic	> school	intrinsic	V imp	piano, maths, dates	no	no	possibly	if emigrate
Lf44-bn1	intrinsic	pos-neg	work	V imp / tutor	piano, walk	yes	no	yes	if emigrate

**Redhall-option (French Higher)**

ID	study	college	subject	comm	ML=3	ML rec	ML imp	like	hate	end	later	how
Af19-ro	work	> school	intrinsic	N/C	bike, piano, words	IF	very-ML in job	talk, write= easy	grammar	talk/write fluently	study at uni	job, holiday, live abroad
Bf19-ro	work	> school	intrinsic	N/C	bike, piano, maths	IF	very-ML in job	grammar	listening	N/C	N/C	N/C
Cf19-ro	work	> school	intrinsic	N/U	unique	pos-neg	very-ML in job	R=easy	speak, listen	work in France	AH + perhaps uni	job, holiday
Dm19-ro	intrinsic	good, freedom, support	intrinsic	rel, self confid, ML	piano, swim, words	IF	quite, contact, ML structure	new vocab	speak, introvert	speak/u-stand v accurate	A' or at uni	travel, stay
Em24-ro	f-phile	pos-neg	similar to ML	N/U	piano, cards, maths	live in country	personal challenge	speak, grammar	listen	continue, + more MLs	more ML H's	travel, read lit
Fm24-ro	f-phile	pos-neg	integrative	(ML) speaking imp	piano, cards, words	Yes, but mates	world job market	numbers game	N/C	ready for uni	study at uni	work, life
Gm24-ro	f-phile	very helpful	integrative	self improvement	piano, walk, swim	best you can do	very	all	nothing	go wherever I want	by myself	emigrate
Hm24-ro	f-phile	> school	intrinsic	N/U	words, maths, dates	enjoyable + useful	quite, p-chall, voc rel	all	nothing	ready for uni + holiday	at uni	emigrate teach
If39-ro	work	alright now	self-efficacy	N/U	chess, piano, swim	enjoyable	nice to be fluent	F+ E	no help with E	help for tourism	Russian & Chinese	own business
Jf60-ro	work	enjoy learning	only do French	N/U	dates	Yes, but age	need for job	invigorating	N/C	holiday, for visitors	German	travel, G inlaws, work

**APPENDIX VIII: SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT FOLLOW-ON GROUP DISCUSSION**

**Whitehill-yes**

**Section A:**

	B	C	E	F	H	I	M	N	R
<p>What was language learning like at school?</p> <p><b>E</b> it was interesting but a lot harder in school than in college – more people in classes (some nodding in agreement)</p> <p><b>N</b> our T too busy getting others to do work so we couldn't do the work</p> <p><b>I</b> at school we had songs – funny way of remembering – but here it's like learning asking hours but there you've got like songs and phrases to remember it by</p>			x			x		x	
<p>(If anyone's used the language outwith school/college) How did you feel about using another language? How confident were you?</p> <p><b>M</b> on holiday in France, felt strange because you didn't know whether you were getting it right</p> <p><b>B</b> Spanish learnt it to go on holiday – self taught – very basic, found dialect difficult, but rewarding as well because we were able to talk to some local people – could understand us eventually</p> <p><b>E</b> went to work experience at Edinburgh Airport – these German people slagged my head off – I was too short etc. – finally told them [in German] 'actually I'm only her for work experience' and they just turned around and then they left.</p> <p><b>I</b> when we had our German exchange students I tried to speak German to them but it doesn't work</p>	x		x			x	x		
<p>(If it was abroad) How did it feel being in a different country? – What were the people like? – If you were abroad but did not speak the language how did you feel about that?</p> <p><b>M</b> people were friendly but not knowing as much then I felt they thought Scottish people were stupid</p> <p><b>B</b> helpful – e.g. to explain numbers we used our fingers – (culture?) - well it's a different language so I couldn't really tell</p> <p><b>M</b> the French would enter (into conversation?) with most of the Sc. people</p>	x					X	x		
<p>(If anyone has family members who speak a foreign language) Do you think that this has had any influence on what you think about learning a foreign language?</p> <p><b>B</b> my father speaks German, my brother is learning Spanish (Hispanic), needs to because he's soccer coach in US and Spanish is one of the major languages in America. My sister lives in New York and everywhere you go it's written in Spanish. I thought about learning Spanish but I decided for Italian</p> <p><b>E</b> my aunt is Spanish – she has Spanish nights (I don't go – she's older); walks round the house all day speaking Spanish; don't know what she's saying – she's weird.</p>	x		x						
	3		3			4	1	1	

**Initial thoughts:**

Some of the younger students felt that that learning a ML at college was better than at school because classes were smaller and the people in class actually wanted to learn a ML. Teachers at school might sometimes spend more time on discipline than on teaching. B's comments regarding the widespread use of Spanish and the increased need to learn this language in the USA, was significant. E's comments about her 'weird' Spanish aunt highlights that exposure to a different culture is not always a positive experience. M seems to express a certain lack of self-confidence regarding the use of his French.

**Section B:**

	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>R</b>
<p>What is language learning like at college ... different from school?</p> <p><b>E</b> less people in the class, teacher can spend more time with you. [laugh]</p> <p><b>B</b> you learning languages at a better pace so it's not so slow that it's boring but not too fast so that you're struggling – quite a nice pace I think.</p> <p><b>I</b> don't like my Spanish teacher but I like the language. She's not treating you like a person. [is it affecting your ability to learn the language?] No.</p> <p><b>N</b> it's better because the people in the classes are there because they want to learn the language. Also, at school we didn't get a choice of which language. [F and H talking in background, having a laugh]</p>	x		x			x		x	
<p>How important is the language element to you?</p> <p><b>I</b> very because all of us want to do something with travel &amp; tourism industry and with a language.</p> <p><b>B</b> really important because it'll determine which job you will be able to get depending on your actual skills – actually being able to speak the language. ... I want to live abroad, may be if I was staying here and you know, just greeting visitors, it might not be quite as important as actually living in the country where you're actually immersed in the culture.</p> <p><b>F</b> important to make visitors feel welcome – greet them in their own language – understand them</p>	x			x		x			
<p>How important is the communication element?</p> <p><b>I</b> a little bit, not much, will teach me how to speak proper</p> <p><b>N</b> important because if you're struggling you cannot speak properly your normal language.</p> <p><b>B</b> vitally important [quotes from q'aire]. After all, it's part of our job being able to communicate</p> <p><b>H</b> it comes quite naturally anyway – for most people that is [is it teaching you anything new?] [laughs] don't know, wait till I get further in the course [NB: This was his last day of attendance]</p>	x				x			x	
<p>What activities are like language learning – how?</p> <p><b>E</b> bit like maths, you keep practising and revising and eventually you get there.</p> <p><b>N</b> you've got all these bits to remember like in a play – stuff like that</p> <p><b>I</b> [quotes q'aire] they are unusual activities to learn</p> <p><b>B</b> [quotes q'aire]</p> <p><b>H</b> something you don't know so it's something you have to do from scratch and memorise it.</p> <p><b>M</b> once you learn it you're always gonna have it – you might not always remember it but it'll always be there in some form</p> <p><b>F</b> [swim] at first it's hard to stay afloat but once you get there it gets easier; [chess] getting the moves right = getting the words right; quite complex</p> <p><b>C</b> [quotes q'aire]</p>	x		x		x	x	x	x	
	4	1	2	2	2	4	1	3	

**Initial thoughts:**

There are again comments about a better language learning experience at college (although not always towards the teacher). There is a strong instrumental orientation for learning a ML although it appears to arise out of an intrinsic desire to work abroad. The comments made under the other 2 headings did not reveal much additional information than the questionnaire.



## APPENDIX IX: SELECTION OF RESEARCH DIARY ENTRIES (2001)

- 10 Jan The last two questionnaire sets have arrived, but Sandy has used the draft questionnaire with one of the groups – looks interesting, though – half of the students in the group are actually non-native speakers of English!
- 22 Jan Attend launch of EYL 2001. Professor Sizer, Chief Executive of SFEFC was there – maybe FE Network should send a letter to Sizer, too, not just McConnell, and raise awareness of ML decline?
- 8 Feb Visit to IBM at Greenock – very impressive... IT and Languages award, which uses CLIL, apparently very successful. I will put in a question about CLIL to programme leaders...
- 20 Jan I've been in touch with the Export Manager of Lothian Exports; he's agreed to participate in the promotional event in September and has also identified a suitable employer that I can approach.
- 23 Jan FE Network meets and we draft letters to Education Minister McConnell and to Professor Sizer.
- 5 Apr LT interviews completed – lack of senior management support a recurrent theme.
- 18 Apr Series of articles on the role of English in the 'Guardian'. Two of the writers, Jenkins & Seidlhofer (2001), report on the development of a so-called 'Euro-English' evolving through usage of language by non-native speakers in European institutions = linguistic evolution in progress!
- 21 Apr FE Network steering group meets with SQA: They will support the development of new language led HN awards, and want to press ahead with the development of new HN units that fit the new HN framework.
- 27 Apr New college structure is out. I've lost the promoted LT post because SUMs count for ML is too low. More significantly, however, ML has been separated from tourism, and I know that a high percentage of the Tourism SUMs is actually ML study.
- 3 May Reply from Prof Sizer – apparently ML trend is up !?! Need to contact SFEFC and get more detailed figures. But I also think I need to include senior managers in my data collection! I mean, what do SMs really think?
- Jun-01 Attend SCILT conference 'Policy and Practice: Twelve Months on' – includes talk by Do Coyle about CLIL who gives me some advice on how to get started (I can forget about the support mechanisms though!)
- 19 Jun Presented SQA and SFEFC statistics to FE Network Annual Conference.
- 29 Jun After talk with research supervisor I have decided to write up a thesis in the 'narrative' style
- 20 Aug The new term at the new site begins with total pandemonium. Appointed Group Manager resigned at the start of the holidays - So we've got no rooms booked for any communication and language classes, nor the NC tourism, which I'm now still supposed to lead seeing there's no-one else able to do it!
- 25 Aug I've been successful in my application for research funding from SFEU, but award conditional upon collection of more labour market information and some comparative figures from France and Germany. However, I'm worried about the NC Tourism group; I sense tensions within the group but with the constant room changes there isn't time to develop feelings of group cohesion.
- 9 Sep **PS:** Quote by Marcuse (1964: 256) has relevance for 9/11:  
*However, underneath the popular base is the substratum of the outcasts and outsiders... They exist outside the democratic process... Their opposition hits the system from without and is therefore not deflected by the system; it is an elementary force, which violates the rules of the game and, in doing so, reveals that it is a rigged game.*
- 26 Sep The Language and Career Fair was an unqualified success. Over 400 students attended and the feedback is overwhelmingly positive. The new Group Leader agrees that we should take advantage of this golden opportunity to develop a new language-led award. (NB: McConnell announces full endorsement of MAGL)
- 9 Oct I've enrolled for a 9-week evening course in Critical Theory. First lesson makes me ponder over one particular phrase: 'We live in our own blind spot, in the darkness of the lived moment'. So perhaps not being able to make sense of my data means I'm in my own blind spot just now. But will it be any clearer later?
- Oct-01 Bragg's radio series 'Routes of English' (BBC 2001) also picks up on the notion of 'Euro-English'. Something to watch out for?
- 9 Nov Leigh and I are appointed to write the new HN units, which are to fit in with the newly published National Language Standards.
- Nov-01 I'm becoming more pro-active: I'm now the FE rep on the Executive of the Scottish Association for Language Teaching, and have approached the COALA group (Cultural Organisations and Local Authorities) to attend their meetings.  
  
NC Tourism course is disintegrating. Group Leader thinks it's a combination of constant room changes and interpersonal conflicts between 'able' and 'slow' learners – well, that may be true but the unsettled period at the start of the session may have exacerbated the situation.
- 15 Dec I've finished the Critical Theory course. Have identified authors / texts of potential relevance but will need Christmas holidays to finish transcribing LT data, and return to Critical Theory stuff later.



## **APPENDIX X: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – LANGUAGE TUTORS**

### **Current Position of ML provision**

Range of students studying ML,

Comparison of daytime / evening provision, e.g. uptake levels and orientation of student motivation

Changes in level of ML provision

Differences in type of ML provision (NC /NQ vs. HN)

### **Management of ML provision**

Strategies for dealing with students' range of prior ML knowledge and experience

Planning of ML provision (Who makes decision on inclusion of ML options)

European funding

Marketing of ML provision (access to students)

### **ML learning and teaching at own college**

Student perceptions of difficulty / images associated with ML

Student perceptions of ML importance

Conditions for success in ML study

Students' preferred / disliked ML activities by

Difference to ML learning at school

Views on ML curriculum and assessment

### **Professional development**

What kinds of professional development do you think best support language teaching in FE?

What kind of support for professional development is available for ML teachers in FE?

What kind of professional development have you undertaken recently? Did institution support this (financially)? What were the benefits, if any?

### **Prognosis for ML uptake at own college (Why)**

**APPENDIX XI: LETTER TO SENIOR MANAGERS**



**Scottish Centre for Information on  
Language Teaching and Research**

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Tel: 01786 466290 Fax: 01786 466291  
Email: [c.w.gregory@stir.ac.uk](mailto:c.w.gregory@stir.ac.uk)*

*Director: Professor Richard Johnstone*

[Address]

27 August 2001

Dear .....

One of my doctoral students, Hannah Doughty from [Whitehill] College, is currently doing research to identify possible barriers and opportunities for uptake of modern language study in Scottish Further Education.

Hannah has already collected evidence from students and from language tutors in a number of colleges, including your own. In light of the imminent government response to the Action Group on Languages, we both feel that senior management of FE colleges may wish to add their voice to an important and timely issue.

I would be grateful if you would agree to be interviewed by Hannah, at a mutually convenient time and place. The interview will last about 45 minutes. For research purposes, it would be preferable that your discussion should be recorded to allow for subsequent processing, but I can assure you that all information arising from the interview will be confidential and that your contribution will be kept anonymous in the research report.

To facilitate the arrangement of the meeting, it would be helpful if you would complete the attached reply slip in the s.a.e. provided or by e-mail to [\[hdoughty@whitehill.ac.uk\]](mailto:hdoughty@whitehill.ac.uk)

If you have any queries before proceeding, you can contact my assistant, Lottie Gregory, by telephone on 01786 466290, or by e-mail to [c.w.gregory@stir.ac.uk](mailto:c.w.gregory@stir.ac.uk). You can contact Hannah on 0000000 (direct dial 000000) or by e-mail as above.

I am confident that Hannah's research will contribute greatly to our understanding of the role that modern languages may play in Scottish Further Education, and both Hannah and I will be extremely grateful if you are able to add your voice to this important debate.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Richard Johnstone

Director, Scottish CILT

\*If you are not the appropriate person we should have contacted please pass on the correct name to Hannah by phone or e-mail. Thank you for your help in this matter.

## **APPENDIX XII: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – SENIOR MANAGERS)**

### **Current Position of ML provision**

Current intake  
Perception of ML trend  
Range of students

### **External Factors on ML provision**

Curriculum frameworks  
Funding  
– any others?

### **Internal Factors on ML provision**

Location of ML provision  
Esteem by vocational specialists  
Staffing  
Professional development  
ML policy

### **Links**

Schools  
Community  
Industry  
Abroad  
Labour market information

### **Past ML learning experience**

School / post-school  
Views on method and context of ML learning

### **Support for professional development of ML staff**

### **Prognosis for ML uptake at own college (why)**

## APPENDIX XIII: ANALYSIS – SENIOR MANAGER RESPONSES

### Senior Managers: Servant of Two Masters

Interviews with senior managers took place in the autumn of 2001 (Blackford, Redhall and Whitehill) and in the spring of 2002 (Yellowcraig). The interviews were designed to explore the degree to which the perception by language tutors regarding the (lack of) senior management support for ML provision could be verified, and to identify other possible factors affecting ML uptake, such as managerialist thinking (Randle & Brady, 1998; Hodgkinson, 1998). As before, the responses have been regrouped under the appropriate heading where appropriate. Below are the details of each senior manager's (SM) position at the college, together with their length of service. As two of the four SM participants are male the masculine pronoun is used throughout.

**Table 7-1: Background details of senior managers**

Participant Code	Position at College	Subject specialism	Length of time at college <sup>74</sup>
<b>SM Blackford</b>	Director of Curriculum Development	Communication	22 years, SM for 4 years
<b>SM Redhall</b>	Depute Principal <sup>75</sup>	Languages	29 years, SM for 16 years
<b>SM Whitehill</b>	Principal & Chief Executive	Accountancy	6 months <sup>76</sup>
<b>SM Yellowcraig</b>	Director of Curriculum & Quality	Sport & Leisure	20 years, SM for 2 years

### Current position of ML provision

All SM responses substantiated those given by their respective LTs with respect to the diverse student range and the increase of school leavers. SM Blackford and Yellowcraig commented on the rise of Spanish, like Alex and Leigh had earlier done respectively. SM Redhall and Yellowcraig referred to the tension between students' different motivational orientations and narrow funding requirements, another point raised by LT staff. SM Redhall identified one additional factor not previously raised – the competition between the various ML providers:

There are a lot of providers in modern languages in adult education at any one level... There is an argument for providers to get together and agree what provision should be – but it's very difficult as there is different funding, different fee structures; and so it's difficult to get classes above Higher. (**SM Redhall**)

SM Yellowcraig identified the issue of dependency on programme leaders, but his perception that evening provision dominated directly contradicted Leigh's earlier claim that evening provision was simply 'the icing on the cake':

There's a big evening class input in languages and that is probably the biggest lot of our students (**SM Yellowcraig**)

<sup>74</sup> HD: It may just be a coincidence but the responses of the two most recently appointed senior managers (SM Whitehill and Yellowcraig) did merit closer attention (cf. pp 290 and 291)

<sup>75</sup> At the start of the interview it transpired that the SM Redhall actually did not have direct responsibility for languages within the college, but had previously held a senior lecturer position for modern languages (including EFL and ESL) at the college. He was then promoted to Head of Department and later Assistant Principal, before moving into his present post.

<sup>76</sup> SM Whitehill had held a senior management position at another Scottish FE college for seven year prior to his current appointment.

SM Whitehill seemed surprised at the level of interest in ML and implied that this phenomenon was a temporary abnormality and therefore not yet worthy of managerial support:

Better than I thought it would have been, Hannah [...] because I was speaking to a colleague from another college last night at an event I was at. They were telling me they had had a very strong language department but they were in fact telling me that it's completely dead there. So I think that it's not as strong as I would like to see it but certainly better, perhaps, than the average; but still, lots to do... if there is the continuing demand, which clearly there is – and I think you and your colleagues were all equally taken aback by the demand as we were – but if that continues, but the framework does not support that, then we will look at that and make sure that the environment in the college is enabling that. (SM Whitehill)<sup>77</sup>

Both Leigh and Hannah had indicated that they had worked hard to promote languages, yet neither SM Yellowcraig nor SM Whitehill made any reference to these efforts. In the case of SM Whitehill, it could be argued, of course, that he was too new in the job to know, although he clearly was aware that Hannah had planned the promotional September event. SM Yellowcraig, however, had been in college for a longer time than Leigh, so should have been aware of Leigh's efforts since taking up office. This omission suggests that both managers believed that the level of ML uptake was entirely dependent on student demand, irrespective of any promotional efforts. By contrast, both SM Blackford and SM Redhall referred to small successes in ML uptake, which they directly linked to the efforts of language staff. It is not clear whether their affinity to LT staff is linked to the fact that they both have teaching experience in communication-related subjects, in contrast to the other two.

## External factors on ML provision

### *Probe 1: EU funding and SQA design rules*

This probe related directly to the issue raised by language tutors both in Hall & Bankowska's study, and by LT participants in my own research; i.e. the claim that European funding was strategically manipulated to serve non-linguistic means. SMs at Blackford, Redhall, and Yellowcraig claimed to have been very active in EU funding activities involving student exchanges, but admitted that this had not necessarily result in greater ML interest. Indeed, SM Yellowcraig believed that exchanges might even contribute to greater ML complacency because of the foreign students' competence in English.

When the students come the other way around and they discover that 16-year-old Finnish girls or Finnish boys have got in some respects very good English, so they're quite happy to speak English. So I don't think it has had a real change in the way that we deliver languages or that it has been taken up by various academic schools within the college. (SM Yellowcraig)

By saying that Finnish students are “happy” to speak English, SM Yellowcraig implies that the use of English is voluntary on their part, and that therefore the use of English is a consensual agreement between native and non-native speakers of the language. By starting the following

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<sup>77</sup>**Hannah:** SM Whitehill seems to be issuing a veiled message to me in my role of ‘advocate’ for languages: “You may think it looks good just now, Hannah, but the language uptake is not on a firm footing. Elsewhere languages have disappeared from the college altogether.” By saying “I think you and your colleagues were all equally taken aback by the demand as we were” he is (a) implying that college managers had not expected the increase to happen and considered it an unwelcome development and (b) trying to make me ‘admit’ that I (and the other language staff at Whitehill) had not expected the increase either and were not prepared for it.

statement with the word “So...” he not only gives his assessment of the situation (there has been no increase in ML uptake) he also implies that the non-learning of any Finnish is justified as a *rational* consequence of the Finnish students’ apparent willingness to use English.

According to SM Yellowcraig change in attitude would have to be driven from the employer side. He was sceptical about the proposed new HN design rules and did not think that there was much concern about the issue of ML uptake within the revised framework:

The thing that might change that, the business sector, commercial sector, industrial sector, create demand because of international opportunities that they see, and the demand is put by those businesses, externally. I don’t see it as being a demand that will be coming internally...I’m not sure that even the new Higher National will get as far ahead as is proposed... I don’t think that anybody other than the language specialists will be looking at languages... (SM Yellowcraig)

SM Redhall concurred with Alex (Blackford) that a trip abroad could be “a life changing experience” but pointed to the cost implications for the college, thereby echoing the issues raised by Cloonan & Turner (2000) and supporting Doughty’s (1997, 1999a) concerns that the cost of the European initiatives for links abroad outweigh the less tangible long-term benefits for the few students that participate:

So there are long-term benefits but they don’t necessarily help the college...European projects are very worthwhile but it’s a lot of trouble to do them, plus the college has got to come up with matched funding and pay insurance... the college is supportive but disappointed that only few students actually participate... (SM Redhall)

Although he had stated early on in the interview that his remit did not include languages, it was clear that SM Redhall was still very much concerned about issues of language uptake and tried to keep abreast of developments. He believed that a more proactive approach from FE practitioners might be able to effect a change:

SALT<sup>78</sup> is an influential body but] they are quite schools-orientated at the moment; I don’t hear a strong FE voice.<sup>79</sup> (SM Redhall)

SM Blackford suggested that EU funding might be more effective if it supported the teaching of additional units to the full programme. At the same time, this was not realistic because there would be resistance from the student body:

You know, if you look at the students who come in, they have, in the main, a very clear focus of what they want to do, which is to learn to be a chef, or to learn to be a computing person, and they don’t necessarily see any language as being something that would add value to that experience... (SM Blackford)

In other words, he implies that students do not see the *relevance* of ML learning, which is congruent with student evidence. He then goes on to reveal that he used to teach communication, where he had encountered a similar resistance:

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<sup>78</sup> SALT = Scottish Association of Language Teachers, consisting mainly of secondary school representatives, but there is also one representative from FE, HE and local authority respectively.

<sup>79</sup> **Hannah:** Shortly after that interview I became the FE representative on the SALT Executive, an indication that I was becoming more pro-active in my approach to ML provision in Scottish FE.

“I used to say, having taught Engineering students, having to teach them English, that ‘what’s that got to do with engineering?’ will be engraved on my tombstone!”

This remark, too, is congruent with the negative comments about communication from some groups, and particularly the all male group (Blackford-no2).

SM Blackford also pointed to resistance by vocational specialists:

Programmes of study... tend to be... fairly tightly prescribed, in terms of the caps that’s on the amount of taught delivery that can be offered and whenever you try to kind of infiltrate that by bringing in another subject... one of the things that you can come up against, is a degree of resistance amongst particularly the vocational specialist areas...  
(**SM Blackford**)

The use of the word ‘infiltrate’ suggests that the attempt to include ‘non-relevant’ subjects would be considered subversive, whereby the ‘purity’ of the vocational domain is being sullied, or the students’ minds are being ‘subverted’ from the straight vocational path. It is clearly a zero sum situation:

If you bring in another taught subject, there is a cost there, something else has to go.  
(**SM Blackford**)

SM Whitehill, for his part, was looking towards the Scottish Executive to give a lead in signalling the value of ML learning:

I’m not sure that European funding is necessarily a good vehicle to develop language training. I think what we need to do is to look at the way that the programmes are put together in Scotland, and remember, we’ve got a very tight framework and much of that is set by the Scottish Executive – and equally, I think, we need to get some influence from the Scottish Executive on language delivery in FE. (**SM Whitehill**)

SM Whitehill went further by suggesting that changes in delivery methods would be required although he claimed that he arguing the case for ML where possible:

It’s only when we’ve changed the way that we deliver that we can then impact on the framework, and we can look for the right kind of accreditation for languages. But I think, obviously, you know, the dual approach would have some benefits, so I think that certainly for my part, you know, where I can influence that I certainly do so quite actively, because I’m a very strong proponent of, of language training.<sup>80</sup> (**SM Whitehill**)

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<sup>80</sup>**Hannah** In contrast to his earlier warning about language provision, SM Whitehill here is trying to convey himself as being on my side

***Probe 2: Subject Weighting***<sup>81</sup>

SM Whitehill expressed some cautious optimism that the low weighting for languages might be raised but both Redhall and Yellowcraig did not believe that there would be any changes. Both SM Whitehill and SM Redhall proposed less tutor contact time as a solution.

***Probe 3: Other External Factors***

When asked about other external factors that might influence ML uptake at college both SM Blackford and Redhall raised the concept of ‘attitude’. SM Blackford felt that it might be possible to attract a different clientele to FE that would be positive about ML learning.

I think that is a reflection of the attitude of the majority of our students. [...] I would like us see developing a programme which specifically targets those students who want to take forward their language studies... (SM Blackford)

SM Redhall believed that the attitude problem extended to society in general. His comments about the difficulty of ML learning again reflected Alex (Blackford) views. He also cited an example where bilingual speakers were more sought after than monolingual speakers:

There is one external issue that’s very difficult to crack – the public attitude to modern languages [...] I don’t think there is a recognition in this country how difficult it is to learn a language... Many employers, xenophobic as some of them may be – we’ve had, for example, young Danish people on job placements here; it’s not an exchange, unfortunately – they come and are put into placements here and quite a few of the employers have said “We really would have liked to employ that guy, sorry he’s going back to Denmark.” Now our people aren’t competing at that level, generally speaking. (SM Redhall)

Both SM Yellowcraig and Whitehill corroborated students’ views that the high competence in English of foreign nationals caused native speakers of English to be ‘embarrassed’ and simultaneously contributed to ‘complacency’ about ML learning. Both highlighted potential impacts on the economy:

MOST of the people that come from France or Germany and so on will have a pretty reasonable command of language to allow them to get through. I think we’ve come to rely on that, and I think it would be, at least in terms of customer service, better if staff could have a smattering of a language. (SM Yellowcraig)<sup>82</sup>

So we have felt that we don’t necessarily need to learn languages to be able to maximise on the tourism industry. I think that’s a false premise. So I think those things, sort of entertainment, media, mobility of the population, certainly across Europe, but increasingly across the globe and the impact of tourism, and tourism as the value base for the local economy, those are the things that make an impact. (SM Whitehill)<sup>83</sup>

<sup>81</sup> There seemed to be different interpretations on the state of the investigation between the managers. By the time of the Redhall interview the funding review appeared to be in the finishing stages (21 September 2001). However, according to Whitehill, the process was very much underway (28 September 2001) whereas by the time of the Yellowcraig interview (April 2002) the process seemed to have just started.

<sup>82</sup> **HD:** In view of his earlier remark, is SM Yellowcraig here simply trying to be a more ‘supportive’ interviewee?

<sup>83</sup> **Hannah:** Why then did SM Whitehill separate languages from tourism in the restructure?



## Internal factors on ML provision

### *Probe 1: Location of ML provision; esteem by vocational specialists*

In all four colleges, language provision had been affected by academic restructures at one time or other. At Blackford, Whitehill and Yellowcraig the best ‘fit’ was seen with Communication, i.e. NOT with a vocational specialism. SM Blackford also stressed similarities in the delivery requirements of the two subjects, i.e. the ‘servicing’ element.

At the time of interview only Redhall and Yellowcraig offered EFL provision. In both instances ML and EFL areas had been split from one another, but at Redhall there was an intention to move the two areas back together, on the basis of the common element of ‘language learning’. Here both subjects were kept separate from ‘communication’ provision.<sup>84</sup>

With the exception of SM Blackford, influence of, SMs were reluctant to attribute any decline of ML study to the influence to vocational specialists. Keeping in mind student comments, SM Redhall and SM Whitehill could claim with some justification that a major cause lay in FE students’ negative school experiences:

I do hear in other places that they’ve stopped doing languages because students have rebelled. It’s not the most popular subject area in a lot of secondary schools, I mean a lot of kids coming from school with quite a negative attitude to foreign languages... (SM Redhall)

### *Probe 2: Staffing and professional development; ML policy*

All SMs stressed that the professional development opportunities were available to all staff although they had to acknowledge that staff employed on temporary contracts would not necessarily be able to take advantage of this support. SM Whitehill and SM Yellowcraig saw the temporary employment status as a strength factor, enabling flexibility in provision.<sup>85</sup>

The advantage of part-time staff is that you can flex more, as you know, and if you suddenly get massive demand for Bulgarian, or something like that, then you have the capacity of bringing people in (SM Whitehill)

There are quite a number of part-time staff, particularly for evening provision; and in order to provide the range that we do, it’s quite important that we have flexibility [...] The advantages for the college are down to flexibility so that if there is no recruitment in a particular language we don’t have a member of staff who is then sitting with an empty timetable when it becomes clearly a cost to the college (SM Yellowcraig)

Here staff are treated like inanimate resources, or tools, a prime example of ‘new managerialism’. The primary concern is efficiency and ability to meet student demand. There is no evidence of concern about wider or more long-term economic issues.

<sup>84</sup> Leigh had indicated that EFL provision was ‘moving back’ to languages but when asked if further restructures were planned the SM Yellowcraig denied knowledge of such a move: “I hope not!”

<sup>85</sup> There would be an opportunity here to investigate the professional qualifications of modern language staff in a few years’ time. Already SM Yellowcraig indicated that the Finnish tutor was “simply a Finnish national, but she is not participating in certificated work, she is helping with basic conversational language.”

**Probe 3: ML policy**

None of the colleges had a modern language policy, but it was felt that this was not necessary or that it might be viewed as favouritism towards languages:

If I had a view, my view is that fewer policies are better than many policies... (SM Blackford)

In a way we might be hesitant about having a policy for a subject area because we don't have a policy for childcare provision etc. (SM Redhall)

SM Yellowcraig felt that it might make sense to have a language teaching policy amongst language staff:

I don't think there would be anything to discourage them from having a policy or an understanding of what they are doing in teaching areas within the college... (SM Yellowcraig)

SM Whitehill implied that he would be willing to discuss the issue:

No – do you think we should have one? [Perhaps that could be discussed?] I'm very open to that, very open to that, yeah, but there isn't one at the moment. (SM Whitehill)

It is clear from the comments that there is no concern about this lack of policy, another indication that ML study is viewed in curricular terms, and that potential economic implications have not been considered.

**Links with external organisations****Probes: Links with schools, community, industry and abroad; labour market information**

The aim during this part of the interview was to gauge the extent to which colleges had *proactively* attempted to increase uptake of ML study. In all cases, there had been some attempts, with Blackford probably being the most successful in terms of links with business. According to SM Blackford language training for business and industry was “a very thriving part”.<sup>86</sup> However, this provision was handled separately from college provision and there seemed to be few links between the commercially and publicly funded parts of the college. Further, SM Blackford admitted that he had not actually analysed the labour market information with respect to demand for languages:

We do get labour market information on a regular basis, but I've never looked at it specifically for languages, although I would be surprised if our commercial arm hadn't done that. I'm fairly sure they would have...<sup>87</sup>

As at Redhall and Yellowcraig there was no evidence that links with other countries had impacted positively on interest in or uptake of, modern languages. Curriculum constraints were again cited as reasons as well as lack of time by staff to fully consider the issue. SM Blackford, like Alex, saw opportunities in the development of links with schools, and like SM Redhall suspected that FE was indirectly suffering as a result of negative language learning experience in

<sup>86</sup> This was more positive than the view expressed by Alex some six months earlier

<sup>87</sup> **HD:** With hindsight, I should have probed more in depth here. For example, what did LMI actually indicate in terms of demand? SM Blackford was obviously content that there was commercial demand out there yet not concerned that there was little demand from students.

the secondary sector. Because of the remote location of the college, there had been moves to develop outreach provision. While there had been some interest in language learning (as mentioned by Alex), SM Blackford indicated that this might not necessarily be sustainable.

According to SM Redhall establishing links with business at his college had proved difficult and had been limited. SM Whitehill was pessimistic about the prospects of building up sustainable language training for business but also admitted that not enough use had been made of local labour market information, which might radically affect college provision. He was sceptical about links with schools or marketing languages within the adult community, although he saw an opportunity to ‘graft on’ language learning to the priority issues of literacy and numeracy. He anticipated potential increased demand in community languages but felt that this was not of immediate concern for FE provision.

At Yellowcraig, too, the SM did not show confidence in external links. Whilst the college had lots of links with business, only a very small percentage had involved language training. SM Yellowcraig felt that it was up to language specialists to ‘prove’ to businesses that languages would increase their performance or competitiveness. European funded exchanges were declining because of increased administrative burden, but the SM appeared to suggest that without controls there had been abuse of the funding:

I think [links abroad] are probably in decline. There are a number of reasons for that. I think, many of the programmes that were started were ESF type provision and a lot of staff are finding it difficult to comply with the demands. There always has to be an end product, produce a video or something to do with it and that itself has become a barrier. Without those things, unfortunately, people just perceive these things just as a wee holiday, and they’ll all be having a good old time. So I think there’s been some damage done. The perception that they are on holiday... (SM Yellowcraig)

### **Past language learning experience**

All participants had had prior experience of language learning and there was evidence to suggest that this might be ‘colouring’ their current views on ML learning. For example, both SM Blackford, who had previously been a communication tutor, and SM Redhall, who had previously taught ML, emphasised the lack of literacy skills amongst today’s students in English, and advocated the teaching of basic grammar terms to remedy this. They differed slightly, however, in their interpretation of student perceptions on the (ir)relevance of language skills. As indicated earlier, the comments from the two most recently appointed senior managers, SM Whitehill and Yellowcraig, merited a more detailed analysis.

#### ***SM WHITEHILL***

SM Whitehill contrasted his two quite different experiences of ML learning. Whilst he had “loved” the grammatical approach taken at school he claimed that the intensive immersion course taken in Portuguese had been more effective for retention of the language, although he had initially resisted the communicative methodology employed:

If you were in the A-stream you did Latin and Greek, and you had no choice, right? I loved Latin and Greek; I mean absolutely loved it ...I thrived with that because I’m very – I’m the kind of person who needs to understand something. [...] [Learning Portuguese] was a MUCH harder learning experience for me – because I didn’t understand it [...] and I hated it at first, I’ll be quite honest with you, absolutely hated it [...] However, having said that [...] I would probably guess I have retained more of that [...] because I was forced to DO it, because I was actually forced to SPEAK it... (SM Whitehill)

Whilst his motivation for Latin and Greek could be said to be intrinsic, it seems that this stemmed simply from an inherent satisfaction of being able to understand how the structure of the language worked, not because he considered the subject ‘useful’. By contrast, his motivation for Portuguese seems to be externally regulated. He resisted the experiential teaching methodology because it appeared alien to him and only continued because he had accepted that he *had to* learn the language. Although he had performed well in languages, he questioned the rationale for their inclusion in the curriculum, both in schools, and in FE:

Why is language in the school curriculum? [...] I think it was far more about enriching the curriculum than it was about enriching the learner [...] why are we offering languages in an FE college? Are we offering them because we believe we should? Which is all very laudable, but is it right? Are we offering them because we know there is a huge demand out there? Or are we offering them because people are using languages to add value to other skills they have? All of these things require a different approach ...  
(**SM Whitehill**)

SM Whitehill’s statements at the start of the quote imply that he believes his language instruction did not develop him as a person and only served to make the curriculum look good academically and from this personal experience he has formed the belief, which he is clearly proclaiming, that the curriculum should be more responsive to student choice. This kind of reasoning seems rational and appears to give power to the student. However, by prioritising the articulated short-term student *demands* he is in fact neglecting to give due regard to the long-term *needs* of students, indeed he is absolving himself from this responsibility. By implication, he is treating students as ‘buyers’ of education, thereby relegating staff to mere ‘service providers’, as evidence by his earlier remarks about being able to ‘flex’ if an unexpected demand arose. In this sense, his reasoning can be termed to be ‘techno-rational’: the curriculum should reflect explicit, and therefore measurable, demand.

### **SM YELLOWCRAIG**

For SM Yellowcraig, the grammatical approach to language learning at school had been a negative experience. He was ambivalent about the current teaching methodology in schools as well but admitted he was generalising from limited evidence:

I’m not convinced we’ve made any great moves in schools and I’m only basing it on what I’ve seen my children are doing in schools. (**SM Yellowcraig**)

Similarly, he appeared to accept as ‘truth’ the one Finnish student’s claim that Finnish might be replaced with English in the not too distant future:

Anna, she said that she reckoned that Finnish, as a language, would be redundant in about thirty years’ time – mainly because of Microsoft and the Internet [...] The only other language [English] will compete with is Chinese, because there is over a billion of them there and they’ve got their own Internet, or intranet or other. So everything else will be based on an anglicised version.

His over-simplified vision links the ‘survival chances’ of languages directly to global communication technology. Whilst some sociologists have referred to the link between spread of English and communication technologies (cf. Giddens, 1999), SM Yellowcraig ignores the fact that although the ownership of many communication channels may be in English-speaking hands, the content of it is increasingly localised. However, his arguments align more closely with those put forward by Marcuse when he puts down the lack of interest in language learning with the lack of ‘eroticism’ and the need for ‘engagement’:

We were in Disney and [my son's] decision-making went along the lines of: When we were standing queuing for something, was this a whiz-bang ride? And if it wasn't a whiz-bang ride he didn't want to know; and I have a sense that the learning of languages is not a whiz-bang ride [...] I think we are in an environment where people want quick fixes and early gratification, and sometimes a lot of these things like languages are hard work. They require you to study and get involved in it **(SM Yellowcraig)**

Here it is the students who think 'techno-rational'. SM Yellowcraig again refers to the example of the Finnish girl's strategy of direct experiential learning as a potential means to get people 'involved':

They have that concept in Finland that they need to go out and learn from other people. [...] So [Anna] spent a month with me. The following year she was in Paris for six weeks, and that is how she gets all her skills... I think there's a chance at least you'll engage people with that process. **(SM Yellowcraig)**

Here he does not consider the social preconditions, for we have to assume that Anna was financially able to support herself during these trips. Whilst he applauded this experiential learning, SM Yellowcraig did not consider the barriers, financial as well as emotional, of 'uncertain' FE learners (Gallacher *et al* 2000). In this sense, he too, absolves himself from the responsibility of encouraging students to learn a language. Languages here are considered a process not a subject, but a process that is resisted by students because it requires serious involvement. However, there is no need for concern since English will be the dominant language.

### **Prognosis for ML uptake at own college**

There appeared to be some correlation between SM past views on ML learning and their prognosis for ML uptake at the college. The two 'non-vocational' subject specialists, who also had been very positive about their language learning, SM Blackford and SM Redhall tended to be more optimistic in their outlook. The two vocational specialists, whose experience of ML learning had been more mixed, were also more pessimistic in their outlook. However, all participants were cautious in their predictions.

For example, whilst SM Blackford response started by reiterating similar optimism to that expressed by Alex, he then wondered whether this optimism was actually justified in the light of past attempts promoting ML:

I'm thinking back to the number of times we've seen, you know, HND Social Sciences with Languages, or HND Marketing with Languages; and they haven't been terribly successful. So maybe what we need to do is look at what's happened before, begin to get a feel for where it went wrong, because if it's just gone, something has happened and then begin to address the problem. But I think it may be the kind of sector you're involved in. **(SM Blackford)**

In contrast to Sandy, SM Redhall saw opportunities in more appropriate marketing of languages, which echoed the initiatives at Blackford:

I'm not convinced that our marketing has been as good as it could have been. There's things like other sort of niches there, but, maybe the tourism IS one. There's also just where you advertise... I mean I keep seeing them popping in the kind of place where you might think you would find language students like the programmes for Scottish Opera and things like that, and the Filmhouse. Now people like that are often dead keen on Italian because they like opera or they're dead keen on French because they like the cinema. **(SM Redhall)**

SM Yellowcraig's justified his 'indecision' on students' desires for 'quick fixes' and 'early gratification', which reflect Marcuse's notion of the 'desublimated' individual. SM Whitehill was more guarded in his reply. He said he *wanted* ML to grow, which at first glance sounds optimistic but he qualified this remark by adding his uncertainty about *how* this could be achieved – despite not seeing any barriers to such growth:

My prognosis is that I want to see it grow, and I want to see it extend as well. No, I don't foresee barriers. No, barrier is the wrong word. My hesitation, if there is any – is that I don't quite know HOW. It's not that I don't want it to happen, I'm not yet sure HOW we're going to make it happen – but I'm confident that we will. (SM Whitehill)<sup>88</sup>

### **Language Study as a Problem**

At various points during the four interviews each SM referred to the language issue as a 'difficulty' or a 'problem'. For example, all SMs thought it was difficult to offer large number of language options for small number of students, or to square demand for uncertificated language classes with the SFEFC requirement for certification. Other 'difficulties' included the attempt to increase ML uptake from the community, to change societal attitudes to language learning, to obtain information about ML skills from labour market intelligence and the position of ML as a subject in general, since it was in some way 'dependent' on programme leaders. Some SMs also referred to the 'difficulty' of languages themselves, e.g. Finnish (SM Yellowcraig), Portuguese (SM Whitehill) and language learning generally (SM Redhall).

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<sup>88</sup> **HD:** In the light of later events, these comments must be taken as coming from a 'collaborative' respondent.

**APPENDIX XIV: SELECTION OF RESEARCH DIARY ENTRIES (2002)**

- 15 Jan There's a shock announcement that college has taken on too many students and will need to cut all 'non-essential' provision. Yep, that means all ML evening classes will have to stop!
- 25 Jan 'Word of Mouth' (BBC 2002a) also picked up on Euro-English (viz. research diary April and October 2001) - definitely something to watch out for!
- 14 Apr Looking over student/ LT data – not much mention of local employers –they must somehow hold the key. Surely, if demand from them were more up front, we'd not be in the pickle we're in now.
- 16 Apr Response received from SE ELLD Further and Adult Education Division:  
 There is no modern languages policy within FE. Indeed there is no FE curriculum as such. Programmes are put in place and designed according to employer and market/community needs and to articulate with the Higher Still provision in schools. There are some colleges - Redhall for example - who have a strong track record and who specialise in languages and it may be worthwhile speaking directly to XX there, who has overall responsibility.  
 This is a circular argument – no wonder we're not getting anywhere!!!
- 5 May Shock message from Group Leader: course proposal for ML programmes have been refused. This is ominous.
- 18 Jun The specifications for the new HN language units, which Leigh and I wrote, have received very positive feedback from the FE Network.<sup>89</sup>
- 21 Jun First presentation of my research at the SCOTLANG conference, entitled 'Narrative Reporting'. It seems to have gone well, generated lots of questions.
- 24 Jun Official announcement that a number of college staff will need to go but number of staff / curriculum areas affected won't be announced till start of new term.
- July SQA evaluation of the HNC/HND design framework has been published on the net (SQA 2002). As far as I am concerned, the author is heavily biased.
- 9 Aug Radio 4 'Word of Mouth' (BBC 2002a) has an interesting item on the changing 'ownership' of English and possible consequences for the 'linguistic changes'.
- 24 Aug Redundancy announcement made today: 13 staff have to go – ML is one of the affected areas. That was expected, but some of the other areas were a surprise: guidance, media and IT (a cynic would comment that people on conserved salaries resulting from the 2001 restructure were the actual targets).
- 9 Oct Two Radio 4 programmes presented by Esler today. In first one, (BBC 2002b) argues that linguistic diversity on a par with biological diversity (like critical theorists). The second programme was a studio debate on the importance of language competence (BBB 2002c) but no earth shattering revelations.
- 20 Oct Yesterday watched 'A Beautiful Mind' then today surfed Internet and discovered conference held in Aberystwyth in July-02 where Harung mentions something about Nash – which ties in with Reith 2002 lectures on 'A Question of Trust'. My mind begins to spin – Giddens, Marcuse, Habermas, Foucault – Huxley, Moore's *Utopia* vs. Bacon's *Nova Atlantis*. Can I expand my initial analytical framework? I'll need to go back to the beginning...
- 30 Oct TV programme on BBC4: Planet English – How English won the Language War – profiles efforts of British Council to promote English (Foucault probably would have had a field day)
- 31 Oct Short article (Harris, 2002: 11) about Scotland's population decline and the consideration of incentive measures to attract and keep people from other countries – should that not involve a consideration for ML (cf. Gogolin)?
- 2 Nov Gave presentation to SALT conference today. One FE rep in the audience came up to me afterwards to say that "It's good someone is looking at this".
- 20 Dec Bragg – after four radio series he's on TV with his "The Adventure of English" (ITV, December 2002). Just seems to consist of lists of words but Bragg seems to show a streak of 'linguistic imperialism' if you ask me!

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<sup>89</sup> Ironically, because many vocational specialists raised similar concerns to those of language tutors, SQA in early 2003 relaxed its framework guidelines although the issue about the levelling of HN units has yet to be resolved.

**APPENDIX XV: LETTER TO PROGRAMME LEADERS**



**Scottish Centre for Information on  
Language Teaching and Research**

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*Director: Professor Richard Johnstone*

[Address]

8 April 2002

Dear ...

One of my doctoral students, Hannah Doughty from [Whitehill] College, is currently doing research to identify possible barriers and opportunities for uptake of modern language study in Scottish Further Education.

Hannah has already collected evidence from students and from language tutors in a number of colleges, including your own. She is now intending to collect the views of those responsible for the design of selected full-time programmes where modern languages may or may not be included. Your name was given to us as the person in charge of HNC AIM at [Yellowcraig] College.

I would be grateful if you would agree to be interviewed by Hannah, at a mutually convenient time and place. The interview will last about 35-45 minutes. For research purposes, it would be preferable that your discussion should be recorded to allow for subsequent processing, but I can assure you that all information arising from the interview will be confidential and that your contribution will be kept anonymous in the research report.

To facilitate the arrangement of the meeting, it would be helpful if you would complete the attached reply slip in the s.a.e. provided or by e-mail [[hdoughty@whitehill.ac.uk](mailto:hdoughty@whitehill.ac.uk)]

If you have any queries before proceeding, you can contact Hannah on 00000 direct dial) or by her e-mail address above.

I am confident that Hannah's research will contribute greatly to our understanding of the role that modern languages may play in Scottish Further Education, and both Hannah and I will be extremely grateful if you are able to add your voice to this important debate.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Richard Johnstone

Director, Scottish CILT

\*If you are not the appropriate person we should have contacted please pass on the correct name to Hannah by phone or e-mail. Thank you for your help in this matter.



## **APPENDIX XVI: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – PROGRAMME LEADERS**

### **Rationale for program units**

### **Student views on communication**

### **Views on modern languages**

Rationale for ML inclusion/exclusion

Contacts abroad

EU funding

Contribution of ML staff to program design

### **Vocational relevance of modern languages (if tutor had career other than teaching)**

Could you see any area in your profession where ML skills would have been useful, or might be useful now or in the near future?

### **Past ML learning experience**

School / post-school

Views on method and context of ML learning

Influence of global English

### **Professional development**

What kinds of professional development do you think best support communication teaching in FE?

What kind of support for professional development is available for CTs in FE?

What kind of professional development have you undertaken recently? Did institution support this (financially)? What were the benefits, if any?

How does your professional organisation support teaching in FE? What other support could/should it provide?

Do MLs feature at all?

Prognosis for ML uptake at own college (why)

**APPENDIX XVII: SUMMARY OF PROGRAMME LEADER RESPONSES**

	<b>Black-no1</b>	<b>Green-no</b>	<b>Red-no</b>	<b>Yellow-no</b>	<b>White-no</b>
Rationale for program units	SQA, university	Market research	Historical; staff recommendation	SQA; staffing	SQA; staff skills
S on C	Find it difficult; don't like it	Dislike at start, see rel at end	Don't like	Don't like	Hate it
S-views on ML	No demand	No demand	No demand	Not interested	Not interested
FL speakers?	No	Yes – easier to pass vocational subjects than C	No	No	No
ML relevance	Perhaps but programme too tight for options	Yes, but programme too tight	No demand from employers	Yes, should be part of being 'educated'	No demand from employers in short term
Past ML experience	Anxious	Great, ML skills when working abroad	Trained as bilingual secretary but not good at ML	Worked abroad	Try to use on holiday
CPD	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
ML Prognosis	Don't know	Don't know (good staff)	Don't know	Pessimist	Don't know
	<b>Green-option</b>	<b>Red-option1</b>	<b>Red-option2</b>	<b>Yell-option</b>	<b>White-option</b>
Rationale for program units	SQA; HE, longer term choices	S-likes, staff skills (and likes)	N/A (Highers)	SQA, staff skills, S-likes	SQA, staff skills
S on C	Integrated - so problems minor	It depends on the teacher	N/A	Difficult	Difficult
S-views on ML	'easy' option	'light relief'	H-FL low uptake	Mixed views	Very keen
FL speakers?	Yes – but only isolated cases	Yes – easier to pass vocational subjects than C	Yes – easier to pass vocational subjects than C	No	Seldom – but did better than native English
ML relevance	Yes- longer term	No	N/A	Yes - for work abroad	TIC: Japanese, others speak E
Past ML experience	Prefer current methodology	Didn't like it – terrified of T	?	Enjoyed it	1yr at uni – use G on holi
CPD	Yes	No	?	Yes	Yes
ML Prognosis	Don't know	Pessimist	Pessimist	Don't know	Pessimist
	<b>Black-yes2</b>	<b>Green-yes</b>	<b>Red-yes Sandy</b>	<b>Yellow-yes</b>	<b>W-yes Hanna</b>
Rationale for program units	SQA, staff belief	SQA, staff belief	SQA, staff belief	No response	SQA, staff belief
S on C	Difficult	Difficult	-		Difficult
S-views on ML	Mixed views	Important	Important		Mixed views
FL speakers?	No	No	Yes – better at ML		No
ML relevance	Yes, but daughter lost job with G skill	Yes, but little employer demand	Yes		Yes, but little employer demand
Past ML experience	Favourable	ML specialist	ML specialist Lived abroad		ML specialist Lived abroad
CPD	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
ML Prognosis	Optimist	Uncertain	Pessimist		Pessimist

## **APPENDIX XVIII: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – COMMUNICATION TUTORS**

### **Student Views on Communication**

Support for students  
Students' strength and weaknesses in communication  
Requirements for achievement

### **Teaching and learning of communication at own college**

Student perceptions of difficulty  
Student perceptions of importance  
Strategies for success in communication  
Students' preferred / disliked activities  
Views on curriculum and assessment (e.g. time)  
Non-native students

### **Links between English and modern languages**

#### **Vocational relevance of modern languages (if tutor had career other than teaching)**

Could you see any area in your profession where ML skills would have been useful, or might be useful now or in the near future?

#### **Past ML learning experience**

School / post-school  
Views on method and context of ML learning  
Influence of global English

#### **Professional development**

What kinds of professional development do you think best support communication teaching in FE?  
What kind of support for professional development is available for CTs in FE?  
What kind of professional development have you undertaken recently? Did institution support this (financially)? What were the benefits, if any?  
How does your professional organisation support teaching in FE? What other support could/should it provide?

#### **Prognosis for ML uptake at own college (why)**

## APPENDIX IXX: ANALYSIS – COMMUNICATION TUTOR RESPONSES

### Communication Tutors: Plus ça change plus c'est la même chose

One communication tutor (CT) in each participating college was interviewed between February and May 2002. Table 7-2 gives details of the programmes on which CTs taught, their qualifications, other subject specialisms and non-teaching work experience.

**Table 7-2: Background details of communication tutors**

	Programme	Qualifications	Other subjects taught	Non-teaching work
<b>CT Blackford</b>	Blackford-yes2	MA Honours	History	Civil Service
<b>CT Greenbank</b>	Greenbank-yes	MA Honours	Librarianship	Librarian
<b>CT Redhall</b>	Redhall-option1	PGCE	-	-
<b>CT Whitehill</b>	Whitehill-yes	in final year of BA	-	Administration
<b>CT Yellowcraig</b>	Yellowcraig-yes <sup>90</sup>	BA, TESL, PG Diploma	Psychology, History of Art	Publishing

Two of the CTs interviewed were newly qualified, the others had long teaching experience. CT Yellowcraig was a trained EFL tutor and had previously worked abroad in Greece and Portugal. As only one of the CTs interviewed was male the feminine pronoun will be used throughout. Again, responses to questions have been grouped together where appropriate.

### Student views on Communication

#### *Probes: Support for students, students' strengths & weaknesses in the subject, requirements for achievement*

Despite the differences in their biographical details CT responses reflected similar professional concerns such as the failure by many students, but particularly the younger ones, to see the relevance of developing their communication skills from their current level of competence. Students were often only externally motivated to complete the unit because of its core skill status. Mature students who had been out in the workplace were more likely to recognise the importance of the skill. The responses triangulate with the evidence from the other college staff participants.

In contrast to LTs, all communication tutors claimed to have in place various forms of learning support, either available in the form of self-study packs, a central study facilities, or even individual help sessions.<sup>91</sup> CTs also concurred that students usually coped well with the oral part of the unit but had difficulties with formal language, both in oral and written form. Students did not necessarily enjoy elements that they were good at, however, and CT Whitehill felt that this might be due to lack of self esteem. CT Yellowcraig claimed that students took a dislike to any element that seemed beyond their immediate capabilities.

<sup>90</sup> I was able to collect data from the corresponding student group but not the programme leader

<sup>91</sup> This is not to imply that language tutors did not support their learners on an informal basis. However, one can infer that the support systems for communication were more established in a formal sense, i.e. laid out in official college literature.

[Students] were particularly good when they had to hold meetings [as part of the course] [...] They seem to find it really easy to do the meetings...they go into it confident and they come out of it confident... Formal language they find difficult and therefore dislike it... this is a 1500-word report... and they seem to find that quite difficult, that amount of words; but they also have difficulty using formal structures... (CT Yellowcraig)

While tutors professed to have all the necessary resources available to help students achieve, including access to additional tuition, they found that students tended to employ ‘avoidance’ strategies when encountering difficulties by not attending classes. In terms of motivation, these are again strategies which invite guaranteed failure that can however be attributed to external factors, and are indicators of a low sense of self-worth (Dörnyei 1998: 120). Like the language tutors, CTs felt that commitment to their subject was crucial and at the same time lacking in students. Here again, the age factor as an indicator of experiential knowledge gained was seen as a stable correlating predictor to the extent to which the subject was perceived as relevant.

## Improvement of communication skills

### *Probes: time, assessments, strategies, non-native students*

CTs believed that, if students attended regularly, there was sufficient time to develop students’ skills. Strategies for improvement mainly involved repeated practice.<sup>92</sup> At the same time, all CTs indicated that lack of structural knowledge of English was a barrier for students in developing communication skills. Again this factor was seen as internal to students, both stable and global.

Having also taught English to foreign students CT Yellowcraig had had first hand experience of how knowledge of language structures facilitates language learning and admitted that her own grammar knowledge had in fact been as a result of EFL teaching. CT Redhall, on the other hand, had experience of teaching foreign students within her own classes, and found that they sometimes struggled, corroborating the evidence given by programme leaders:

If students come from abroad, other countries, to do Business Studies or Business Administration, they may well cope with accounting or economics and all these subjects ... where they’re being assessed mainly on their knowledge, fine. But where we have to assess the actual communication skills, and they’re not meeting the standards, that can then cause a problem and we don’t have the time in 40 hours to get them up to the standard... sometimes we have to direct them to language support and come back to try the assessments... (CT Redhall)

These comments are consistent with PLs’ admission of lenience in their assessment of language related errors in vocational examinations. If one considers that the level of assessment for communication on the FE programmes in question is the equivalent of a ‘Higher’, this suggests that the knowledge of English by some non-native students may actually be fairly low. Yet these students are apparently sufficiently self-confident to engage in learning the content of their vocational subject through another language.

## Links between English and modern languages

For most CTs the obvious link between the two subjects was language structure, although for CT Yellowcraig it was also very much about building student confidence:

<sup>92</sup> **Hannah:** The communication unit was much less dominated by assessment than language units - only three assessments – the equivalent language unit has seven!

Communication is pretty much a language class... and if [students] are just... building their confidence in something else, then they should be able to build on their confidence in communication... (CT Yellowcraig)

However, despite these identified links there had been no attempt by either side, in any one of the colleges to meet and discuss common issues.

Like programme leaders, when asked about the possibility of CLIL (content and language integrated learning) the three CTs who taught other vocational subjects – Blackford (history), Greenbank (librarianship) and Yellowcraig (psychology, history of theatre) – had difficulty understanding this notion, because, like the programme leaders earlier, they perceived LTs as ‘non-vocational’ specialists – even though CTs had admitted to their own efforts of ‘vocationalising’ their subject to make it more acceptable to students.

## Views on ML relevance

### **NB: (if tutor had a career other than teaching)**

Although they could not perceive a link between vocational subject and language learning all CTs who had had another career prior to teaching could, in contrast to PLs earlier, more readily identify situations where ML competence was either required or would have been beneficial. This difference in stance towards ML had also been noted between senior managers with a language-related background and those with a vocational specialism. One can thus theorise that people with a preference for language-related subjects are more easily sensitised to situations where inter-cultural communication is of benefit.

During the discussion, CT Redhall made a generalising statement about the way ML skills were ‘sidelined’ or their benefits devalued, which clearly emanated from two instances of personal experience:

[My daughter] studied Law and French; she has not yet been asked to use that French... I have a colleague who has a daughter who did a degree in Modern Languages, in English and Spanish, who is now going into teaching. She could not find a job in Scotland where she could use her languages. Jobs in tourism, yes – but jobs in tourism don’t pay... People want receptionists with a degree in language but they’re only paying, you know, a small salary... (CT Redhall)

The statement corroborates the findings of Wallace (1993) where the majority of graduates with pure or mixed language degrees had been disappointed to find that in most instances their ML skills were not appreciated or underused.

## Past ML experiences

All CTs had learnt one or more languages at school and most had had experienced traditional grammar-based methodology. Like SM Whitehill, CTs Blackford, Greenbank and Redhall felt they had thrived on this although they felt a lack of confidence in oral performance. CTs Whitehill and Yellowcraig were more negative about their ML learning at school. However, all CTs were now confident in using their language skills, despite their perceived limitations.

## Professional development

CT views on professional development were similar to those expressed by PLs. CTs Blackford, Whitehill and Yellowcraig appeared interested in support whilst CT Redhall felt she did not require further training:

I presented at one of the workshops so in terms of support – I’ve not been looking for support. I consider myself fairly experienced but I know another, a newer colleague who might welcome the support. **(CT Redhall)**

CT Greenbank was decidedly negative:

Quite often, the development days and so on are pretty dreary... often it seems far removed from the real problems that you experience in the classroom. The kind of support I would really like is something approaching, say, a 33% reduction in my class contact... that is what would give me the time to actually improve my skills and improve materials and think about something... **(CT Greenbank)**

Again, there appeared to be no professional association for CTs similar to that of SALT.

## Prognosis for ML uptake at own college

Only two CTs felt able to venture a prognosis. This could be interpreted as professing an affinity with LT staff but in fact is more likely due to the lack of formalised links between the two staff categories, even when the areas were located in the same curricular department. CT Redhall had noticed a drop in language staff but was not sure whether this also indicated a decrease in uptake. CT Greenbank did not wish to comment and CT Yellowcraig felt she was not in a position to answer because she had only recently started teaching at the college.

CT Whitehill believed that language provision would decrease because young people did not see much relevance in the subject and made curriculum choices accordingly. She linked this to her perception of stable societal attitudes of [linguistic?] superiority and the illusionary expectations of students about their future line of work:

I think that a lot of people from [Whitehill region] are very parochial and I don’t think that they really understand that when you go to other countries, it is polite to at least try and work in their language. Even the tourism group still had a slight arrogance that comes from that – they’re thinking sun, sand and sangria, you know, how can I achieve that or something incredibly glamorous where all they do is tiptoe up and down an airline aisle dispensing drinks... **(CT Whitehill)**

CT Blackford, on the other hand, corroborated the views of Alex and SM Blackford, i.e. that the outlook for languages at their college was good:

I think [language uptake] is on the increase. It’s certainly being encouraged. It’s a growth area. They’re moving out of the communication section into the tourism section this year... and I’ve just heard there seems to be a big increase in enrolments for evening classes. There’s a big demand, a growing demand for languages. **(CT Blackford)**

Thus, Blackford appears as the exception to the rule albeit a fragile one, if one considers the responses by Alex and SM Blackford in greater detail. At the same time, we can see how the ‘conditional’ optimism by Alex and SM Blackford may have imperceptibly led to a much greater confidence in the positive ML prognosis by other staff.

**APPENDIX XX: LETTER TO INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES**



**Scottish Centre for Information on  
Language Teaching and Research**

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Email: c.w.gregory@stir.ac.uk*

*Director: Professor Richard Johnstone*

18 May 2001

Dear ...

One of my doctoral students, Hannah Doughty from [Whitehill] College, is currently doing research to identify possible barriers and opportunities for uptake of modern language study in Scottish Further Education.

She has already collected evidence from students and from language tutors in a number of colleges, including [Whitehill] College. In light of the recent government response to the Action Group on Languages, we both feel that employers of SMEs may wish to add their voice to this important and timely issue. As a result we have been in touch with Lothian Exports and are trying to build on the data they collected during their 2002 export survey.

I would therefore be grateful if you would agree to be interviewed by Hannah, at a mutually convenient time and place. I expect this to last about 45 minutes. For research purposes, your discussion will be recorded but I can assure you that your contribution will be kept anonymous in the research report.

To facilitate the arrangement of the meeting, it would be helpful if you would complete the attached reply slip in the s.a.e. provided or by e-mail [hdoughty@whitehill.ac.uk](mailto:hdoughty@whitehill.ac.uk)

If you have any queries before proceeding, you can contact Hannah on 00000 direct dial) or by her e-mail address above.

I am confident that Hannah's research will contribute greatly to our understanding of the role that modern languages may play in Scottish Further Education, and both Hannah and I will be extremely grateful if you are able to add your voice to this important debate.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Richard Johnstone  
Director, Scottish CILT



## **APPENDIX XXI: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES**

### **Perceived threats and opportunities in the new enlarged Europe**

Please tell me a little bit more about the products that the company manufactures or the service that the company provides.

What opportunities or threats does the new Europe offer to your business? To what degree will your business be affected by the new Europe?

What sort of planning are you engaged in?

What were some of the reasons for considering exporting the product/service. (When)

What were the target countries selected – why? What do you know about these markets?

How did you go about developing your export markets? What support did you have – from whom – how effective?

Who is involved in export in the company? In what ways? What difficulties experienced – why/by whom? To what degree were you able to overcome these?

What opportunities perceived – why? To what degree were you able to exploit them?

Plans for the future (short-, medium-, long-term) – what difficulties/opportunities do you foresee? Why?

### **Recruitment criteria**

Knowledge, skills, qualities looked for in prospective employees

How familiar are you with HNC/D qualifications delivered at your local FE college, and what is your perception of its quality?

Total number of Employees - % from local or other FE college

### **Awareness of / views on decline of ML study within FE**

Modern Language uptake by students in FE has been declining over the last few years, to the point where it may disappear altogether from full time courses. To what degree are you concerned about this –why (not)?

In which vocational areas, if any, should there be a compulsory language element? Do you believe that good communication skills in English will be enough – why (not)?

If you require employees with language skills, would you go employ native ML speakers or try and find native English speakers with ML skills – why?

Would you be willing to participate in a promotional event through a statement/action of support?

### **Awareness of contribution to labour market statistics**

Have you ever participated in labour market surveys? Have you ever raised the question of language skills in any of them? Why (not)?

## APPENDIX XXII: SAMPLE OF NVIVO NODE SEARCH REPORT

NVivo revision 2.0.161 Licensee: Hannah Doughty

Project: Eddie User: H Doughty Date: 03/03/03 - 12:00:42  
DOCUMENT CODING REPORT

Document: E-Springfield  
Created: 02/01/2003 - 11:06:17  
Modified: 27/12/2004 - 10:54:38  
Description:

Employers Springfield Software Engineering

Nodes in Set: All Nodes  
Node 1 of 128 employment mobility  
Passage 1 of 1 Section 0, Para 54, 718 chars.

Node 2 of 128 encouragement  
Passage 1 of 1 Section 0, Para 95, 1065 chars.

Node 3 of 128 hard work  
Passage 1 of 1 Section 0, Para 28, 189 chars.

Node 4 of 128 idealism  
Passage 1 of 1 Section 0, Para 99, 226 chars.

Node 5 of 128 ML motivation  
Passage 1 of 7 Section 0, Para 40, 638 chars.  
Passage 2 of 7 Section 0, Para 43, 301 chars.  
Passage 3 of 7 Section 0, Para 48, 239 chars.  
Passage 4 of 7 Section 0, Para 50, 913 chars.  
Passage 5 of 7 Section 0, Para 56, 300 chars.  
Passage 6 of 7 Section 0, Para 91, 596 chars.  
Passage 7 of 7 Section 0, Para 105, 258 chars.

Node 6 of 128 ML need  
Passage 1 of 6 Section 0, Para 14, 447 chars.  
Passage 2 of 6 Section 0, Para 16, 377 chars.  
Passage 3 of 6 Section 0, Para 40, 159 chars.  
Passage 4 of 6 Section 0, Para 43, 634 chars.  
Passage 5 of 6 Section 0, Para 54, 718 chars.  
Passage 6 of 6 Section 0, Para 91, 596 chars.

Node 7 of 128 ML usage  
Passage 1 of 1 Section 0, Paras 16 to 18, 663 chars.

Node 8 of 128 non-natives  
Passage 1 of 4 Section 0, Para 26, 250 chars.  
Passage 2 of 4 Section 0, Para 38, 108 chars.  
Passage 3 of 4 Section 0, Para 43, 406 chars.  
Passage 4 of 4 Section 0, Para 58, 654 chars.

Node 9 of 128 power  
Passage 1 of 1 Section 0, Paras 103 to 104, 518 chars.

Node 10 of 128 qualifications  
Passage 1 of 1 Section 0, Para 24, 441 chars.

Node 11 of 128 relevance  
Passage 1 of 1 Section 0, Paras 63 to 64, 200 chars.

Node 12 of 128 strategic vision  
Passage 1 of 3 Section 0, Para 5, 788 chars.  
Passage 2 of 3 Section 0, Para 7, 255 chars.  
Passage 3 of 3 Section 0, Para 71, 775 chars.

Node 13 of 128 surveys

Passage 1 of 1 Section 0, Para 31, 248 chars.  
  
 Node 14 of 128 (3 2 1) /ML issues/ML learning/cultural  
 Passage 1 of 4 Section 0, Para 60, 599 chars.  
 Passage 2 of 4 Section 0, Para 62, 1958 chars.  
 Passage 3 of 4 Section 0, Para 67, 778 chars.  
 Passage 4 of 4 Section 0, Paras 74 to 76, 1367 chars.  
  
 Node 15 of 128 (3 2 3) /ML issues/ML learning/assumptions  
 Passage 1 of 3 Section 0, Para 50, 566 chars.  
 Passage 2 of 3 Section 0, Para 52, 177 chars.  
 Passage 3 of 3 Section 0, Para 56, 300 chars.  
  
 Node 16 of 128 (3 2 4) /ML issues/ML learning/barrier  
 Passage 1 of 4 Section 0, Para 14, 447 chars.  
 Passage 2 of 4 Section 0, Para 58, 547 chars.  
 Passage 3 of 4 Section 0, Para 87, 1265 chars.  
 Passage 4 of 4 Section 0, Para 97, 1545 chars.  
  
 Node 17 of 128 (3 2 11) /ML issues/ML learning/travel  
 Passage 1 of 2 Section 0, Para 87, 1265 chars.  
 Passage 2 of 2 Section 0, Para 95, 1065 chars.  
  
 Node 18 of 128 (3 8) /ML issues/universal language  
 Passage 1 of 1 Section 0, Para 103, 249 chars.  
  
 Node 19 of 128 (8 1) /English/dominance  
 Passage 1 of 8 Section 0, Para 16, 770 chars.  
 Passage 2 of 8 Section 0, Para 20, 364 chars.  
 Passage 3 of 8 Section 0, Paras 28 to 29, 835 chars.  
 Passage 4 of 8 Section 0, Para 40, 1051 chars.  
 Passage 5 of 8 Section 0, Paras 43 to 44, 1352 chars.  
 Passage 6 of 8 Section 0, Para 50, 566 chars.  
 Passage 7 of 8 Section 0, Para 58, 281 chars.  
 Passage 8 of 8 Section 0, Para 107, 823 chars.  
  
 Node 20 of 128 (8 4) /English/complacency  
 Passage 1 of 4 Section 0, Para 16, 770 chars.  
 Passage 2 of 4 Section 0, Para 18, 327 chars.  
 Passage 3 of 4 Section 0, Para 52, 177 chars.  
 Passage 4 of 4 Section 0, Para 107, 823 chars.  
  
 Node 21 of 128 (8 6) /English/resistance  
 Passage 1 of 1 Section 0, Para 20, 232 chars.  
  
 Node 22 of 128 (8 7) /English/competence  
 Passage 1 of 2 Section 0, Para 101, 202 chars.  
 Passage 2 of 2 Section 0, Para 103, 96 chars.

No other nodes in this set  
 code this document.

## APPENDIX XXIII: ANALYSIS – INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSES

### Perceived threats and opportunities in the new enlarged Europe

This probe was used at the start of each interview to assess to what degree companies might be positively or negatively disposed to a substantial increase in the member states of the European Union, and potential threats in terms of increased competition. Rosefield 1 and 2, who had no recruitment remit, understandably felt they could not comment on this. All other interviewees however responded positively to this question, claiming to see only opportunities. Here again, it turned out that even the question regarding the number of employees was misleading. Although Hayfield and Muirfield were classified as small companies they were in fact part of a bigger parent company with global dealings. Thus international dealings were already commonplace. However, whereas Hayfield's parent company was American with English as the officially recognised working language, Muirfield was British-owned and frequently used French and German as part of their day-to-day business.

Jessfield, the biggest company, and also part of an international chain, was already actively engaged in trying to set up new sites abroad where labour costs would be cheaper, such as in Eastern Europe and China. Jessfield noticeably employed what might be called 'gardening' metaphors for a highly industrialised industry, which I have highlighted in the quote below:

We use high cost areas like Scotland and Coventry... essentially use these **plants** as a **nursery plant** but actually have the serious manufacturing taking place in either Hungary or we looked at Czechoslovakia... a lot of that **growth** in the early stages was **green field** development, so we would build a factory and we would recruit people locally for the **plant**. (Jessfield)

While the term 'nursery' would normally imply a place of 'nurture' for either young plants or children, here it was used for the development of technological products. Similarly, the image of a 'green field' seems incongruous with the building of a factory. The outcome of this action (building a factory) is envisaged to be of benefit to the local people living near these new sites, by providing them with (new) job opportunities. There might, however, be a corresponding loss of work opportunities here in Scotland if the company decided to move all of its manufacturing bases out of the country to these new sites. We can imagine a further scenario whereby Hungarian and Czechoslovakian manufacturing workers come to seek work within the UK and compete directly with native workers for a finite number of jobs. Both scenarios have the potential of creating resentment between the indigenous and foreign communities. This is naturally arising situation when there is competition for a finite number of jobs, but where perceived 'newcomers' might be preferred because of their greater range of skills the intensity of resentment is heightened. None of the industry participants considered such long-term and far-reaching scenarios, however, at any time in the interview. They were very clearly focused on their immediate, company-specific, short-term needs<sup>93</sup>.

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<sup>93</sup> HD: In this sense, their responses resemble those of the student participants. It is in this combination of short-term, inwardly focused concerns that the 'blind spot' of economic forecasting is located.

## Recruitment criteria

### *Probe: What knowledge, skills, and qualities do you look for in employees?*

In their responses, programme leaders had justified their programme design by reference to employer demand and student preferences. Industry participants, on the other hand indicated that qualifications *per se* were less important than the personal disposition the candidate would bring with him/her – which none of the PL respondents had even vaguely considered. Edgefield, Muirfield and Springfield all considered ‘willingness to learn new skills’ as crucial employability factors. For Hayfield and Jessfield ‘organisational fit’ was a decisive selection criterion. In other words, the type of person looked for is one who can ‘introject’ or ideally ‘identify with’ unfamiliar demands and environments.

However, when pressed further, it also became clear that recruitment was targeted at specific education sectors. For example, Edgefield recruited directly from school, as they wanted to train staff directly for their field. In the other companies, the majority of staff held vocationally specific degrees. Only Jessfield recruited from the FE sector, and specifically when seeking to fill positions at technicians’ level. Indeed, his remarks suggest that people with certain qualifications may be pigeonholed into certain positions:

The graduate entry... these people typically won't end up on the tools... From my experience, the ONC, HNC, HND develops people who are technically very capable; therefore they end up on the floor.

The assumption seems to be that students who stop their education or training at FE level are more praxis inclined, and indeed the student data in this study support this belief. In this sense, FE students’ natural inclinations for practical-based activities appear to be satisfied, and thus their short-term thinking vindicated.

Students’ views with respect to language skills also seems justified as only Muirfield indicated that job adverts for their company would include the requirement of a modern language skill. Although at Jessfield language competence might be taken into consideration where candidates were of a similar standard a language skill would normally only be required beyond the FE level qualification:

So at the technical level... I think it is possible for people to have a successful career in technology without the need to engage in any kind of language skill development at all  
**(Jessfield)**

Here Jessfield is assuming that the worker will (and wants to) stay put in his or her native country, a conclusion corroborated by the findings of Davies *et al* (2002). Yet, as I have argued earlier, the employer may move the technician’s job to another location, outside the country. The technician is then faced with (a) long-term unemployment or (b) retraining for another position. However, if the retraining is again at the ‘technician’ level the worker may find his/her post again under threat a few years’ down the line. The third option, moving to the location where the job is would be denied to him/her not just by virtue of his/her unwillingness to move, but also by his/her lack of language skills. In other words, because his/her concentration on acquiring ‘immediately practical’ but in effect specific and therefore limited skills, the ‘technician’ will appear to the prospective employer as possessing neither ‘willingness to learn’ nor ‘flexibility’. By considering only the short-term goals and dismissing ML skills as irrelevant the technician has unwittingly renounced his/her right as EU citizens to move freely within its member states. At the same time employers like Jessfield, by proclaiming that people with FE skills can get by without ML skills, are directly, albeit unwittingly, helping to both create and sustain the belief that ‘English is enough’.

The 'superiority' accorded to vocational qualifications in advertisements, however, according to Hayfield, could even hide the necessity for mobility of employment:

When they're looking for people, [language skills] aren't a barrier, but I think for the person who takes that position, they would find it's a certain barrier... I know our customers send their engineers to Germany, Italy, France, wherever the work is and the employees don't have a choice. It's a case of, you're going there or you don't have a job... maybe three, six months at a time... (Hayfield)

Thus when the discussion moved directly to the potential use of modern languages as part of everyday and current work experience, the two engineering representatives both indicated that *in retrospect* language skills would have been a useful inclusion in vocational training:

You'd probably find if you ask, probably say eighty percent of [engineers] would have liked to have a language skill when they were at college... (Hayfield)

I think every HNC, HND degree across the board should have language content in it because you're never going to know when you're going to be dealing with people abroad... (Rosefield 2)

Edgefield, who had declared no intention of exporting, nevertheless quite strongly believed in the relevance of language skills in work:

I think it's quite right [to learn languages] in business studies and marketing – very, very useful to have a language... even PA work, you know, with a language, I mean you get a much better job if you've got a language (Edgefield).

### ***CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING AND LANGUAGE SKILLS***

All interviewees specifically highlighted the need for *cultural* understanding, which Jessfield and Springfield argued could be acquired independently of language skills:

Now, what I've found is that it is possible to get inside the culture of an area without being able to speak the language... (Jessfield)

I think language is important but I think equally, possibly more important possibly, is cultural understanding... (Springfield)

However, as the conversation progressed they revealed themselves to be keen language learners; Jessfield had increased his knowledge of German and Hungarian by formal and informal means, Springfield had earlier lived abroad and recently enrolled on an Open University language course. It could be argued, therefore, that their language learning had sensitised them to the importance of cultural understanding, even in situations where they did not speak the language. However, they then dismissed the importance of language learning *per se* because there was no direct or 'visible' link between the outcome (empathy for another culture) and the potential cause (having skills in a non-related language). Thus they had come to the 'rational' conclusion that ML skills were not needed in the development of cultural skills. However, it is difficult to imagine that an individual who is in regular contact with people from a different cultural background during his formative years would not also pick up some words or even phrases from the language belonging to that culture. Conversely, one may consider to what degree an individual who is never exposed to another language during his/her formative years and is then able to empathise with another people from a different culture who also happen to speak another language.

### ***LINGUISTIC DEPENDENCY***

Hall & Bankowska (1994) had argued that employers would not value FE graduates' level of language skills, and Muirfield confirmed this assumption:

People really who we would expect to have language skills, we would expect them to have quite good language skills. You get involved in discussions that are not the kind you'd expect someone who can just get by in a language to be able to cope with. **(Muirfield)**.

There was evidence that reliance on native speakers was the favoured strategy where modern language skills were required, or try and find ad hoc solutions to short term language problems:

We would expect them to have quite good language skills. That's why, for instance, I'm a French native speaker and my previous manager was a native German speaker **(Muirfield)**.

There is a company who we use as a managing contractor and the chap was actually born in California so he speaks really good English; but his father was German so he's actually been doing all the translations for us **(Rosefield 2)**

In all of the incidents cited ML skills were in demand and it was foreign nationals who provided the skills, corroborating evidence by Connell (2002). In my justification for adopting a pro-language stance I considered the learning of English, or any other language a non-zero sum activity, and the consensual use of English a state of 'Nash equilibrium'. I also argued that the use of English by non-native speakers created a manufactured risk of linguistic dependency for English-only speakers, and the responses by Hayfield, Jessfield, Muirfield and Rosefield were all testimony to that potential.

### ***LINGUISTIC COMPLACENCY***

Despite participants' professed goodwill towards ML skills, reliance on English was a common coping strategy that seemed an acceptable solution, even for the French national at Muirfield:

On the other hand, the handicap is not quite balanced because obviously English is more and more the universal business language... **(Muirfield)**.

All representatives referred to the lack of drive or 'laziness' to learn a modern language in the face of increasing English dominance:

Do you think that we're a lazy nation? I do. I think we expect everybody to speak English **(Edgefield)**.

I think English-speaking people are lazy. They tend to be where everything's in English, which from our company background, with being an American company they have the same attitude **(Hayfield)**

So I'm not saying that I particularly like that but that's what I'm seeing – that we're becoming lazier, we're doing virtually nothing about languages ... **(Jessfield)**

As I argued earlier, Springfield implied that complacency by native English speakers and eagerness to learn English by foreign nationals had increased domination of English by default:

Way back, when I originally started here with [Company X]– that was one of the things they were looking for... was people who had some language but it was virtually impossible to find... I mean, we actually set out to train people but it's a hard slog, particularly when they would go across to Switzerland and all the Swiss would speak English to them, so what was the point? (**Springfield**).

### ***LINGUISTIC RESISTANCE OR LINGUISTIC IMPERIALISM?***

Jessfield, on the other hand, indicated that the learning of English might lead to what Philippon (1992) had termed 'linguistic imperialism':

The pressure seems to be applied on the countries where English isn't the first language [...] on their employees, on the students to make sure that they have absolute mastery of English (**Jessfield**).

In this respect, France was singled out by four of the respondents as a place where people were either not able or not willing to speak English. Hayfield's attribution was the most specific and he did not attempt to put a judgement on the resistance ("In France as well, they'd maybe be reluctant to speak English in some cases..."). Whilst Rosefield-2 was positive in his initial assessment ("There's certain areas in the world where they're very proud of their language. Parisians in particular") he also implied a form of domination similar to that which English-only speakers are frequently accused of ("so it's the type of thing where, well, if you want to come here, learn our language"). Springfield's attribution was global and he also betrayed a slight exasperation at the resistance offered to the 'established norm' ("It's not a difficulty to get by in English...I mean France is entirely different..."). Muirfield, who was a French national himself, was surprisingly similarly ambiguous about the perceived global tendency of French people's linguistic resistance ("French people tend to be the most difficult in terms of being reluctant to speak English"). On both Foucault's and Marcuse's terms the linguistic resistance put up by the French towards the dominance of English would be justified, but the responses by Rosefield and Muirfield show that resistance to dominance may be interpreted as a reverse attempt to dominate. We have thus ostensibly arrived at a stalemate situation.

As I reasoned in Chapter 2., the Nash equilibrium of 'English as a consensual language' is essentially unstable and easily disturbed. However, in my argument I located the cause of the disturbance not in the spontaneous refusal of non-native English speakers 'to play the game' but in the initial impetus for this refusal – the perception by the participating players that the native English speaker, who had been put into a privileged position by default, was in effect violating one of the unspoken rules of the game: to submit oneself to the process of learning another language. Thus whilst the consensus to use English may have been on *economic* grounds the refusal to use it is based on *ethical* considerations.

Whilst Rosefield's comments support the premises of this argument, it seems at first glance odd that Muirfield in his role as 'non-native' speaker should side with his opponent. This is where Foucault's framework can take us no further but Critical Theory can. According to the Marcusean premise, Muirfield has been seduced by the promises of the 'consensus on English'. By integrating himself into the 'English-only' speaking community he has, by his own admission, gained competitive advantage through his bilingualism. In other words, his reason for his continued use of English is predominantly on *economic* grounds.

Marcuse would contend, however, that Muirfield has in fact adopted the same narrow view as the English-only speaker because he is unable to conceive a refusal on *ethical* grounds. In



Habermas's terms he has applied a *technical* interest to an essentially *hermeneutic* problem, which revolves around people trying to reach a common understanding. This tendency to believe that in the realm of 'technology' only 'technological' rules apply is the 'techno-rational' myth or 'one-dimensionality' Marcuse (1964) highlighted.

### ***LACK OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE***

All participants except Edgefield raised concern about the level of communication skills *in English* amongst colleagues or employees:

I mean the amount of people who I see who can't communicate in English very well in business to business presentations... (**Hayfield**)

There is an embarrassment about converting our English into something which is universally understood... There's just no appreciation of any of that stuff at all (**Jessfield**).

I find that I know more about English grammar than some English native speakers... you receive letters every now and then from job applicants or even from clients or suppliers and I'm appalled by the grammar sometimes (**Muirfield**)

When they come out of university and they think, I've got a degree and I'm just going to walk into a job and then for the first two years they're in that job, they really, really struggle with general communication skills (**Rosefield 2**).

I think some people would argue that we would be better teaching our own kids how to spell and speak good English and concentrate on that, rather than worrying about their ability in foreign languages... (**Springfield**)

These comments validate the concerns expressed by communication tutors but also implicitly 'condemn' the relaxed view taken by programme leaders earlier. Arguably, the emphasis on vocational learning has resulted in the loss of intercommunicative skills. Thus, programme leaders' well-intentioned strategy to accommodate students' conscious and articulated preferences can be seen to be directly working against their non-articulated and unconscious long-term need to build competences that will prepare them for the world of work.

## Views on the importance of ML study

There was strong support for starting language learning early, similar to that voiced during Phase 2000 (Chapter 3) by a number of student participants:

I've got young children and to me, something that I would push them into is language because I think it opens up such a wide opportunity for them... (**Hayfield**).

My personal view is that having seven-, eight- and nine-year olds getting an introduction to the language would probably, in the longer term, solve many of the concerns that I have (**Jessfield**).

At what age do you actually start learning languages in this country? ... the earlier you start, really, the better chance you stand (**Muirfield**)

Well, I think it would be easier if you were doing it in primary school, then it's not as daunting as in secondary school (**Rosefield 2**)

Like Stephen MSP, the responses given above suggest an implicit belief that this simple 'technological' measure would be sufficient to turn around ingrained negative attitudes to language learning. The respondents did not consider that through their earlier statements they were unwittingly contributing to the destruction of the very aims of early language learning. Edgefield was even incredulous that language uptake should currently face a crisis:

Is it just because it's the colleges? I mean, universities do a lot of languages, don't they? (**Edgefield**)

Up to this point in the interviews participants had made generalising statements arising from personal experience. However, when asked to consider openly stating their support for ML skills participants retreated to a pro-language stance on a *personal* basis only:

Personally ... I think everyone – languages – a second language is a good thing to have for anyone. (**Hayfield**)

Personally, ... I think there is considerable value [in learning a foreign language] and I can see real advantages that have come to this organisation by being able to develop these relationships with people... (**Jessfield**)

On a personal level – yes; ... I mean the last thing you want to do is put any barrier to anybody who wants to do it (**Springfield**).

Although concern was expressed in principle about the potential disappearance of modern languages from the FE curriculum there was reluctance to voice open support:

I would but then on the other hand, obviously, if I wasn't going to participate further by employing somebody – (**Edgefield**)

The question of whether we would, you know, openly support a move like that – I can't answer that for the organisation... (**Jessfield**)

Absolutely; but with the reservations that I mentioned already – that it's difficult to come up with a reason that you could convince any youngster or oldster for that matter that this was going to make a hell of a difference, you know (**Springfield**).

The respondents could not perceive giving support to an initiative that did not link explicitly with their own company's short-term needs, as is evident by the comments from Edgefield and Springfield:

I mean, obviously it would concern me once we got fully up to speed with doing some overseas work – yes, because you do get yourself in situations when you do need to speak another language. But it doesn't concern me at the moment... (**Edgefield**)

Local businesses are essentially selfish in that they'll do things if they believe that it will help their own business. If a business sees a need to do something then they do it... if we were exporting to a number of companies, I'm sure we'd be much more an advocate right now of saying to you as a college, you've got to have some sort of facility that we can send our people along to... (**Springfield**)

These statements, however, make another 'techno-rational' assumption – that the modern language provision will always be available, independently of employers' explicit demand for language skills.

### **Contribution to labour market statistics**

Within the discussions one factor had emerged as a potentially significant contributor to the reconfirmation of the notion that 'English is enough': The short-term and egocentric strategic thinking of businesses. Towards the end of the interviews another potentially significant factor was identified: the lack of awareness with respect to the 'ecological' consequences on FE provision resulting from the techno-rational assumptions when responding to skill surveys.

When asked about their contribution to skill surveys a number of interviewees were ambiguous and vague in their recollections:

I'm sure we have. Mm hmm, I'm sure we have in the past, yes. (**Edgefield**)

I seem to remember I filled in some forms – yes – in the last couple of years – I can't be more specific than that because, well, I get surveys every week obviously, I try to fill in everything but some of them go through the net. (**Muirfield**)

We get lots of surveys in. Some we complete, some we bin... I don't recall getting anything specifically to do with languages though. (**Springfield**)

Foucault's framework now helps us to conceive how employers' tendency to 'techno-rationality' continues to hide the need for language skills. Their narrow and short-term focus leads employers to refrain from explicitly demanding language skills unless their need starkly and consistently manifests itself to them and impinges on their company's economic performance. FE colleges, responding to local demand, will tend to reduce their language provision. When the need for language skills does arise employers will seek quick-fix solutions and, perceiving a lack of this skills amongst the native workforce, recruit abroad. Having thus filled the language skills gap employers are likely to continue to refrain from explicit demand and thereby encourage FE colleges to further decrease language provision.