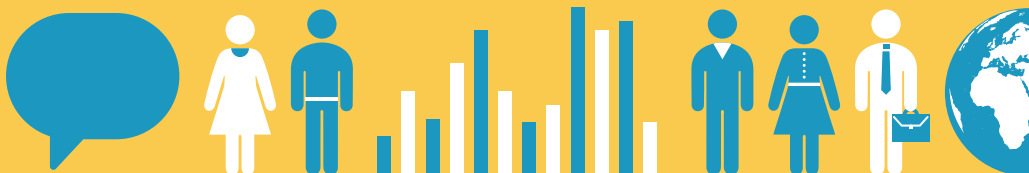


# 01 ABOUT BORN GLOBAL



## Acknowledgements

The project has benefited from the energy and commitment of its Principal Researcher, Bernardette Holmes, and of its Chair, Richard Hardie, Senior Adviser to UBS in the UK.

Born Global was overseen by a high level Steering Group convened by the British Academy:

- **Richard Hardie**, Senior Adviser to UBS in the UK (Chair)
- **Rob Wall**, Head of Education and Employment, Confederation of British Industry (CBI)
- **Nick Chambers**, Director of the Education and Employers Taskforce
- **Sir Peter Job**, Formerly Director of Reuters (CEO), Schroders, Royal Dutch Shell and Deutsche Bank
- **Dr. Adam Marshall**, Director of Policy and External Affairs, British Chambers of Commerce
- **Professor Rosamond Mitchell**, Chair in Applied Linguistics at the University of Southampton
- **Professor Sir Adam Roberts FBA**, Former President of the British Academy
- **Professor Michael Worton**, Former Vice-Provost (International) of University College London

## Principal Researcher

Bernardette Holmes MBE

## British Academy Staff

Joseph Buckley

## This booklet provides information on Born Global – a British Academy project on languages and employability.

All the quantitative evidence from Born Global is published in full on our website and each data set is accompanied by a booklet with background information and a summary of key findings.

A report on the implications of our findings for higher education, **Born Global: Implications for Higher Education** is also available.

### About this project

Born Global is a British Academy project on language skills for employability, trade and business.

The context of Born Global is complex. The changing demographic of the UK population means we live in an increasingly multilingual society. The make-up of businesses in the UK is also changing. In an increasingly global labour market and with more mobility in the workforce, the world is more interconnected than ever. The Government's ambitious agenda for UK exports reflects this. Despite these changes, the context has also seen long term decline in take-up of languages at GCSE, A-Level and university. Yet there have also been positive developments. Languages are now compulsory at KS2 and will be one of 5 compulsory GCSE subjects in the new

English Baccalaureate. Institution Wide Language Programmes (IWLP) at universities across the UK have seen a significant rise in student numbers.

Meanwhile, recurrent reports and surveys on employer attitudes and needs have indicated high levels of unmet employer demand for language skills themselves, as well as transferable skills developed through language study.

The British Academy set out to develop a deeper understanding of the language needs for employment, employer attitudes to languages and how languages are used in the workplace for different purposes, by employees of different levels of skill and accountability. Alongside analysis of existing British Cohort Study data, the British Academy commissioned a range of new research, both quantitative and qualitative, including a nationally representative survey of SMEs, and a survey of the Education and Employers Taskforce's *Inspiring the Future Network* members.

We are making the survey data publicly available in the hope that it will be used by a range of stakeholders and inform, inter alia, government language policy development and future developments in Higher Education language curricula and assessment.

# Context

## Language learning in the UK

For over a decade, language learning in the UK has been in decline.

### GCSE

In 2002, 76% of pupils took a language at GCSE. Following the decision in 2003 to make languages optional at Key Stage 4 this had fallen to 49% by 2014, from around 500,000 students to around 300,000. French and German have seen the biggest drop whilst Spanish has seen a moderate increase and 'other languages' including Arabic and Mandarin have seen slight increases.<sup>1</sup>

**Children in Kensington are four times more likely to be enrolled for a language GCSE than children in Middlesbrough.**

There is a gender and socio-economic divide: 56% of the 2014 cohort were girls, and the number of GCSE entries in independent schools, free schools and converter academies is higher than the average. Children in Kensington are four times more likely to be enrolled for a language GCSE than children in Middlesbrough.<sup>2</sup>

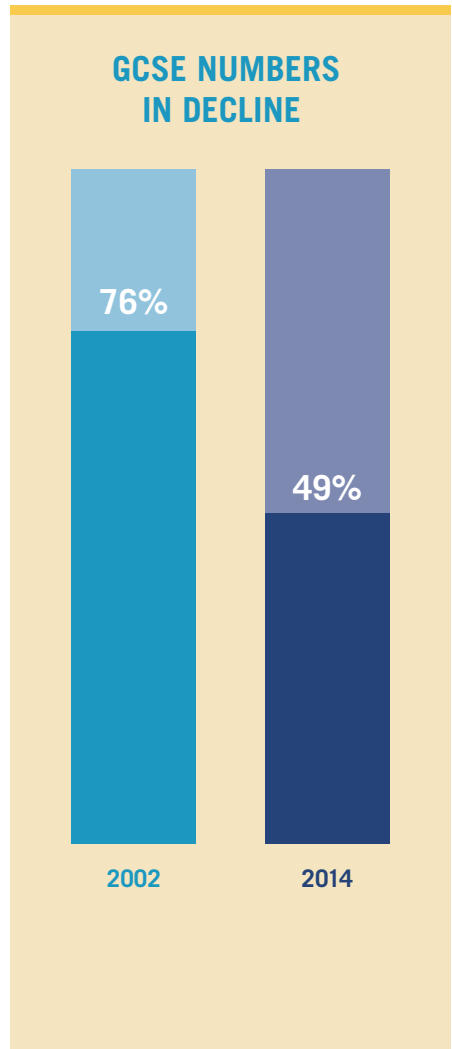
### A-Level

The Language Trends report 2015 describes the decline in A-level entries "Over the 18 years from 1996 to 2014, entries for French and German have declined by 60 per cent, while in the same period entries for Spanish have increased by 62 per cent and entries for other languages more than doubled... Recent falls in French and German have been particularly severe: nine and ten per cent respectively between 2012 and 2013, followed by an eight per cent decline for French and a further two per cent decline for German between 2013 and 2014."<sup>3</sup>

The gender divide is felt even more keenly at A-level with girls making up 64% of entrants and boys 36%.

### University

HEFCE data shows that enrolments for undergraduate language degrees have declined by 36% between 2003 and 2014 with post-1992 institutions suffering a 55% decrease over the same period. This decline has even caused entire language departments at some universities to close and many have reduced the variety of language programmes available.





## A-LEVEL NUMBERS

### The positives

However, there are some positive recent developments.

**The figures for students in Institution Wide Language Programmes (IWLP) has more than doubled in a decade and is estimated at over 60,000.**

Languages were made compulsory in the National Curriculum at Key Stage 2 in September 2014.

A Modern Language is one of 5 core subjects which form part of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) school performance measure and this has already had a positive effect on GCSE numbers. Students who start year 7 in September 2015 will take the EBacc subjects when they reach their GCSEs in 2020. This will mean that around 90% of all pupils will study a language to GCSE.<sup>4</sup>

The figures for university students in Institution Wide Language Programmes (IWLP) has more than doubled in a decade and is estimated at over 60,000.

## Linguistic profile of the UK population

According to the 2011 census, 7.7% of the population of England and Wales has a first language other than English. 15% of pupils in state-funded secondary and 19% in state-funded primaries in England speak a first language other than English. In London alone school children speak over 300 languages with estimates for Manchester and Birmingham at 200 and 108 respectively. Yet according to a Guardian/ICM poll of young people in Great Britain, only a third of bilingual students had taken a qualification in their mother tongue.



**Of the 95% of micro organisations, 76% were sole traders, with no other full-time employees. Sole traders accounted for 17% of employment overall and 6% of turnover.**

## Changing business landscape of the UK

Business statistics published for 2015 show that there were 5.4 million private sector businesses operating in the UK.<sup>5</sup>



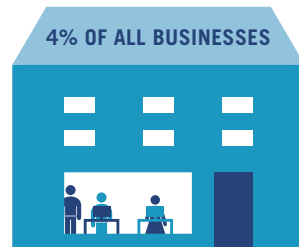
**99.9% of businesses were small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), employing between 0–249 people. SMEs accounted for 60% of employment and 47% of annual turnover.**



**Medium-sized businesses employing between 50–249 people made up a further 1% of businesses, and accounted for 12% of employment and 15% of turnover.**



**95% of businesses (5.1 million) were micro businesses, employing 0–9 people. Micro-businesses accounted for 33% of employment and 18% of turnover.**



**Small businesses employing 10–49 people made up 4% of all businesses and accounted for 15% of employment and 15% of turnover.**

## 40% OF EMPLOYMENT



Large businesses employing 250+ employees, while making up only 0.1% of businesses in the UK, accounted for 40% of employment and 53% of turnover.

The latest statistics from the **Annual Business Survey (ABS)** reveal that 15.2% of businesses in the Non-Financial Business Economy in Great Britain, i.e. a total of 310,800, engaged in international trade in 2014.<sup>6</sup>

Lord Young (2015) observes that firms that are trading online within the domestic market can become '**inadvertent exporters**', by overseas customers accessing their website and becoming *their* customers.<sup>7</sup>

**More than eight in ten exported to EU markets in 2013, 57% to the Middle East and Africa and 51% to non-EU Europe.**

According to a British Chambers of Commerce survey, the share of businesses actively exporting goods and services from the UK is on the rise. Of the exporters who responded, more than eight in ten exported to EU markets in 2013, 57% to the Middle East and Africa and 51% to non-EU Europe. Brazil, Russia, UAE and India were cited as having future potential.<sup>8</sup>

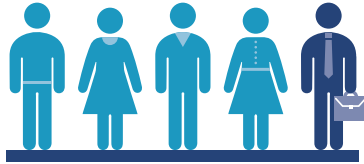
It is in this context that the UK government recently announced its aspiration to export £1 trillion of goods and services by 2020.<sup>9</sup>

## Where were people employed?

According to the employment statistics above, in 2015:



One in three was working for a micro business with up to 9 co-workers.



Almost one person in every five was operating as a sole proprietor/trader.



Three in ten were working for a small- or medium-sized enterprise employing between 10 and 249 employees.



Four in ten were working for a large organisation with more than 250 employees. These include multinationals and are more likely to be involved in international trade.

### National surveys show unmet demand for language skills and other related skills

National surveys have repeatedly shown employer concern over the lack of language skills amongst current and prospective employees. They also reveal deficits in other related skills such as team-working and communication skills.

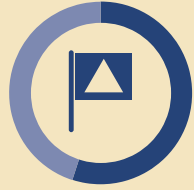
**15% of employers found language skills difficult to obtain from applicants.**

#### UKCES Skills Survey

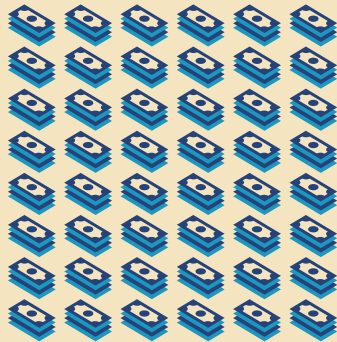
In the UKCES Skills Survey 2015, 15% of employers found language skills difficult to obtain among applicants. Further to this, employers cited skills shortages in problem-solving, time-management and prioritisation, customer relations and persuading and influencing i.e. the transferable skill-set gained through language learning and international experience.<sup>10</sup>

#### British Chambers of Commerce

An international trade survey conducted by the British Chambers of Commerce in 2013 found that 62% of non-exporters cite language as



WHEN DECIDING WHEN AND WHERE TO EXPORT, 62% OF NON-EXPORTERS CITE LANGUAGE BARRIERS AND 55% CULTURAL BARRIERS.



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a barrier, and 55% cultural factors, when deciding if, when and where to export.<sup>11</sup>

**62% of non-exporters cite language as a barrier, and 55% cultural factors, when deciding if, when and where to export.**

#### [CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Survey 2015](#)

The CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Survey has repeatedly shown employer concern over the deficit in language skills. The 2015 edition found that a majority of businesses remain concerned about the preparation of school leavers in important areas including business and customer awareness (66%), self-management (61%) and foreign language skills (60%).

Close to half of businesses (45%) recognise foreign language skills among their employees as beneficial, particularly in helping build relations with clients, customers and suppliers (36%). While a focus on foreign language skills is not seen by many businesses as a top priority area for action in education, their practical value is increasingly recognised.<sup>12</sup>

**While a focus on foreign language skills is not seen by many businesses as a top priority area for action in education, their practical value is increasingly recognised.**

#### [Lack of language skills costing the UK economy](#)

Research for UK Trade and Investment by Professor James Foreman-Peck of Cardiff University has concluded that a lack of foreign language skills is costing the UK up to £48bn a year, or 3.5% of GDP, and that poor language skills act like a 'tax on growth' on small- to medium-size exporters.<sup>13</sup>

## About the Born Global Evidence

- *SME Omnibus Survey*  
In Autumn 2014, the British Academy commissioned a bespoke survey of 410 UK SMEs. The sample was nationally representative, in terms of sector, size and location
- *Languages at Work Survey*  
In October 2014, the British Academy, in collaboration with the Education and Employers Task Force, carried out a survey of 1,300 people working across a range of different sectors and professions to find out the nature and extent of the use of languages other than English in general employment. The people surveyed were members of the *Inspiring the Future Network*, which is a free service managed by the Education and Employers Task Force which has been set up to connect state-funded primary and secondary schools and colleges in England with employers. Crucially those surveyed had already stated that they did use languages in their work
- *Bringing Languages to Life*  
An in-depth look at 10 respondents to the *Languages at Work* survey
- *Study of a cohort of Institution Wide Language Programme (IWLP) students at LSE*  
The British Academy commissioned LSE to follow a cohort of IWLP students in the academic year 2014–2015 to document and analyse their motivations, attitudes, and progress
- *British Cohort Study analysis*  
In 2014, the British Academy commissioned the Education and Employers Taskforce

to analyse the British Cohort Study (BCS) longitudinal data set to see if language study was linked to labour market advantages such as wage premiums, employment outcomes and job satisfaction. Though the data is from 2000 and relates to a cohort born in England, Scotland and Wales in 1970, this is the only “birth” cohort study that carries information about individuals from birth and follows the members until adulthood, which allows a comprehensive study of their backgrounds and labour market entry.

## An Open Resource for All

Born Global is an open and inclusive resource for the languages community to use to make the case for continued investment in their disciplines.

To demonstrate how the Born Global evidence can be used, the British Academy, as an institution with an interest particularly in Higher Education, has itself produced a short report about the implications for Higher Education. The Academy invites and encourages individuals and organisations to do the same for their own areas.

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### Endnotes

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13. Foreman-Peck, James and Wang, Yi (2014) The costs to the UK of language deficiencies as a barrier to UK engagement in exporting: A Report to UK Trade & Investment, Cardiff University.

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In 2011, the British Academy launched a new programme, with funding from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, targeting deficits in languages and quantitative skills. The programme of work reflects the Academy's longstanding concerns about deficits in these areas of the humanities and social sciences, as well as in UK education and research. Through the programme, the Academy funds research and relevant initiatives, and seeks to influence policy in these areas.

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