



Report 2020



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How does the British press discuss language education?

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1 Introduction

With the continued and constantly growing influence of the press and media on British education and multilingualism, we decided that examining its depictions and portrayals of languages in secondary level education was an interesting and relevant topic to explore. In our proposal, we aimed to focus on ‘minority’ languages in contrast to popular modern foreign languages. However, our research question now focuses on how the British press discusses the importance of languages in general in education. This was a major change from our proposal, which focused more on the media’s portrayal of linguistic diversity. We realised after collecting our corpus of articles that it would be more relevant to explore how the importance of modern foreign languages in education is discussed and portrayed, rather than specifically linguistic diversity. We continued to look at the divide between the right and left-wing press, and how the political agendas of different publications might colour their depiction of the topics. Our hypothesis was that the more left-wing an outlet is, the more ‘supportive’ and positive the writing will be about foreign language education, and vice versa regarding right-wing outlets.

2 Literature Review

To help us define more precisely what is meant by the ‘left’ and ‘right’ wings of politics and journalism, we took great inspiration from the translated version of Bobbino’s 1994 work ‘Left and Right: The Significance of a Political Distinction’. This commentary discusses whether or not these binary terms can still be found to be relevant in the United States and the majority of Europe and, more importantly, what is meant by the terms left, right and centre at all. Bobbino emphasises the significance of the notion that left and right are not absolute terms. He explains that as current affairs occur, the meaning of said terms are subject to change with these new events. To relate this to current events, we interpreted this to be mirrored in the UK political sphere - controversial events like Brexit pushing the left to become more liberal or causing the right to become more conservative. Again, Bobbino emphasises that just because they are not static terms, does not mean they are any less useful when referring to the different figurative sides of political leanings, but rather their general relativity.

Furthermore, in this translated version, Cameron (1996) writes “Left and right do not represent two sets of fixed ideas, but rather an axis which shifts considerably from one generation to the next.” (Cameron, 1996, p.ix) This commentary was useful when we selected our corpus articles and allowed us to more easily discuss how the newspaper outlet itself may be traditionally left-wing, but the specific article implied more of a centre left rhetoric, for example.

3 Method

Our original research proposal focused on using sentiment analysis primarily to analyse the positive or negative nuances in each article. This approach assigns each individual word a score and codes it as 'negative', 'positive' or 'neutral'. While extremely helpful for producing quantifiable data points, we acknowledged in the proposal that sentiment analysis was not ideal, since it focuses on individual words out of context. The nature of the methodology posits a danger that objectively positive words (such as 'great') used in conjunction with a more negative phrase would still be flagged by the analysis as positive, skewing the results. Through our continued work and analysis, it has become clear that sentiment analysis, while still useful, cannot be our only methodology. We devised a method whereby each group member would analyse two articles each in depth and answer a set of six questions about their chosen articles created by the group. This way, the data points from the sentiment analysis can be used alongside our contextual analysis to provide a more holistic, accurate result.

In our qualitative analysis we are defining positive and negative perhaps differently to the sentiment analysis, in the sense that the data looks at the specific words used and determines whether they are positive or negative language features, but not specifically in the context of language education. This makes it a fairly vague analysis. In the qualitative data, we are defining 'negative' as the article having a negative stance on the importance of language education, for example, it speaks of the stress and anxiety language education is causing young students. We define 'positive' as an article that highlights the importance of language education and demonstrates to the reader why language education should be celebrated, and the advantages it would bring to young students.

Contrary to the plan put forward in our research proposal, the sentiment analysis took very little time. We had allowed at least 2 weeks for running the analysis, however, it became apparent that we did not need to allocate this much time. What has proven to be more difficult has been the individual readings and completing the six question templates for each article. Selecting the articles was important, as their relevance to our considerations of left and right-wing ideologies was crucial to ensuring the data was as appropriate to our research question as possible. As aforementioned, it became necessary to alter our research question slightly after collecting our corpus, as we were unable to find a wide enough range of articles supporting 'minority' languages in education as we had anticipated. Once we had collected our data, it was imperative that each member understood the context of each article and summarised its main points to the most accurate degree possible. It proved to be difficult to homogenise each group member's responses to the six-question template we provided ourselves, however we overcame this by assigning one group member the task of formalising and condensing each set of answers.

Finally, it was imperative to ensure that our discussion was wholly relevant to a linguistic focus on Modern Foreign Languages in education, and their overall presentation in the newspaper articles. This was sometimes difficult, as it proved easy to become too focused on the 'left vs right' debate rather than the specific linguistic choices and which specific ideas they were used to support.

4 Findings

As previously voiced, we found it necessary to use both qualitative and quantitative methods in our analysis. We ran sentiment analysis for each article, which provided us with numerical data as a springboard, and then devised our own method of observing and analysing the articles in context.

When analysing the data that we had gathered, it was relatively easy to distinguish which articles favoured which political approach, with *BBC News* as the (for all intents and purposes) non-partisan source. We found the content expressed in the left-wing outlets, *The Independent* and *The Guardian*, favoured language learning in secondary education, which supports our hypothesis. *The Independent* suggested that children not learning other languages could be 'detrimental' to their future. It described how learning a new language is 'important' and a 'vital opportunity' for children. Additionally, *The Guardian* article focused on the negative effect not learning different languages could have on a child's future, with lexical choices such as 'suffer' and 'threat' being used, further implying that learning different languages is a positive skill. Moreover, this article discusses the idea that all children within the education system are forced down the same educational path, with no originality. Instead the educational system appears to focus on getting good grades from conventional subjects. The viewpoint that language learning is crucial for a child's prospects was seen in the study carried out by Lanvers and Coleman (2011). Out of 47 articles, 17 found that there would be economic advantages to language learning, with it allowing young people to have overall better job prospects. The qualitative data we analysed links to the quantitative data for the left-wing articles as we found, with the sentiment analysis, that these newspapers presented neutral or positive articles. Both of *The Independent* articles were deemed 'positive' by the sentiment analysis, whilst the *Guardian* articles were deemed one 'positive' and one 'neutral' (see source 2). This correlates with our hypothesis.

The content expressed in the right-wing sources, *The Daily Mail* and *The Telegraph*, suggested that language learning within the education system does not have a positive impact on students. *The Daily Mail* article is derisive of foreign language learning, patronisingly describing it as a "genteel indulgence" and stating the large number of students who did not learn a foreign

language at GCSE level is not a problem. It links to typical right-wing ideologies of nationalism and "Britishness", supporting our hypothesis that right-wing outlets are more likely to discourage foreign language learning. Additionally, this article used words such as 'fears', 'stress', 'anxious' and 'struggling' to describe pupils' attitudes towards language education. In fact, in one *Mail* article, the subheadings put words like 'anxious' and 'unwell' in quotation marks – while having the functional meaning of denoting a quote, to the untrained eye this also seems like the condescending technique used to discredit the validity of a word or phrase, subtly mocking the seriousness of the claims. *The Telegraph* article took a negative approach also, suggesting that language education in the UK is causing a decline in mental health for young people. This idea was supported through negative lexical choices like 'concerns' and 'extreme anxiety'. The nationalist view portrayed by *The Daily Mail* links back to the Lanvers and Coleman study (2011). They found that *The Telegraph* reported that in order to give life to other languages in education, the deterioration of traditional languages being taught will be costly. (The Daily Telegraph, 2010). This automatically assigns a negative connotation to new languages. These lexical choices made by the right-wing newspaper articles also correspond with our sentiment analysis findings for these articles, as all four of the *The Daily Mail* and *The Telegraph* articles were deemed 'negative' based on the negative word choices used, even without context (see Source 2).

BBC News is the closest to objectively neutral, as it does not transparently push left or right-wing ideologies. Within the article, *The BBC* uses negative vocabulary when describing language within the education system - lexicon like 'concerns', 'declining' and 'deeply worrying'. However, the words are in reference to the decline in language learning among students as well as the detrimental impact this may have on their future. This implies that the article is slightly more in favour of modern foreign languages in the secondary education system. This is supported by words like 'ambition', 'improvement' and 'excel', which further stress the importance of language learning. It is interesting to note that the most objectively neutral outlet made use of a negative lexicon to support its generally positive stance, which is perhaps an example of how it behaves as an outlet with no clear political leaning.

When looking at "News, Discourse and Ideology" (Van Dijk, 2009), Bell discusses how the news can 'mis-report' or 'mis-represent events' (Van Dijk, 2009, p.195). This would be due to their political stance being left or right-wing. Despite this being portrayed as a misguidance, it can simply be viewed as a way a media outlet depicts its political stance through their ideologies surrounding foreign languages. The use of facts and statistics to back up either the promotion of said discussion can then answer the question of whether misrepresentation has occurred, or whether the statistics used were in favour of the overall argument. This discussion is the reason why we used the question found in Sources 3a-j; it was intended to see which outlets use which statistics, if any. Interestingly, *The Daily Mail* did not make use of any statistics in one of its articles, whereas *The Independent* and *The Guardian* articles, both at least centre-left, did. On

top of this, *The Guardian* used statistics that illustrated the proportion of pupils sitting modern language GCSEs at the end of Key Stage 4 falling from 76% in 2002 to 47% in 2017. Despite the objective statistics describing a negative statement, its use reinforces the narrative that the government must take action, and the overall point that foreign language is crucial for those in education, corresponding with left-wing ideology. This is an example of where our qualitative analysis is crucial; the problem with sentiment analysis persists as being too isolated from context to give a full picture or accurate analysis. If we were to take the negative statistic at face value, it would be incorrectly interpreted, as it is used to feed into the positive left-wing narrative surrounding the importance of foreign languages in education.

5 Discussion

In the course of our analysis we have encountered an issue regarding the presentation of our quantitative data. Because of our use of sentiment analysis, a method that does not necessarily have multiple statistics and obvious themes exemplified by numbers, it has been difficult to translate this into charts and graphs that appropriately represent everything we have found. However, using qualitative data we have analysed ourselves makes the experiment more detailed than if we were basing our findings purely on statistics, considering the register we are analysing is more context themed. Therefore, our basic graphs are imperative when used in conjunction with our qualitative findings to produce a complete, detailed analysis of the data.

In short, our hypothesis was almost entirely supported by our findings. At the very beginning of our proposal we expected the right-wing outlets to support a more conservative position; that is, taking a more nationalistic approach and appearing less in favour of foreign languages in secondary education than the left-wing outlets. We hypothesised that left-wing outlets would generally be in support of foreign language learning, according to the traditionally left-wing ideals of multiculturalism and encouraged diversity.

The Daily Mail and *The Guardian* are the most 'extreme' when it comes to political stances. These are therefore crucial for our analysis, since they show the most obvious discrepancies between the left and the right. It should be noted, however, that even the outlets we designated as centre-left or centre-right followed our hypothesis; designating the *BBC* as a neutral source, *The Telegraph* was our centre-right outlet and *The Independent* was centre-left. To a lesser degree, our qualitative analysis showed that *The Independent* article was generally more positive, and vice versa. While our contextual and cultural knowledge led us to expect our hypothesis to be supported, it is encouraging to find that effectively all of our analysis proves the theory.

Throughout the entire analysis and discussion, one must be aware of the broader factors that contribute to our findings, and the sociopolitical implications of the articles. Newspapers are an informational medium, but the relationship between the content and its audience is almost symbiotic. The current political climate in the UK has been deeply affected by Brexit, which has arguably pushed both media and public opinion to extreme ends of the spectrum regarding multiculturalism and linguistic diversity. It would be remiss to ignore the impact that such a global socio-political event will have had on the media, press and public opinion; these all will have contributed to the motivations of news outlets to run specific articles with certain statistics to support their points. While we specifically did not factor in Brexit into our proposal or research aims, as we did not want to base our entire discussion of media representation around current politics, it is important to feature it here when discussing broader factors.

The political stance of newspapers and language features they use are crucial when observing how they portray language education. However, it is also important to factor in how prominent the outlet itself is in the public eye. It must be noted that generally right-wing newspapers such as *The Daily Mail* are more popular in the UK than left-wing newspapers such as *The Guardian* (The Independent, 2016). In a YouGov article entitled “British press most right-wing in Europe” (YouGov, 2016) a graph is included of different categories within the media and their political leanings within each category. The graph shows that all categories of British press are further right than left-wing. This means that, potentially, more UK citizens are likely to be influenced by right-wing newspapers than left, and therefore the view of language education as less important will reach more people, possibly causing support for modern foreign languages in secondary education to decline.

Regardless of each outlet’s political stance, we found that the articles in general demonstrated a slight preference for a negative approach when it came to quantitative data. All four of *The Daily Mail* and *Telegraph* articles made use of a negative lexicon. *The Guardian* and *The Independent* provided three positive and one neutral readings, and the *BBC* articles were also both neutral, resulting in three positive, three neutral, and four negative articles. From our limited corpus, we could justify the statement that language education is presented more negatively than positively in the media, political stances aside.

6 Conclusion

We can conclude, after looking at both qualitative and quantitative data, that the more left-wing the newspaper, the more positive their attitude and therefore language choice about the importance of language education, which supports our hypothesis. In our research, this has been

made apparent through said outlets focusing on positive developments in language education and urging readers to see the importance of learning a new language for themselves. The more right-wing the outlet, the more negative their approach to language education. This has been expressed through right-wing articles focusing on how language negatively affects the mental health of students and suggesting that it is unnecessary or frivolous to learn new languages as a native English speaker. These political views are represented and supported through the lexical choices in the articles, and the positive and negative words used to encourage the audience to share the same opinions about language education. It must be noted that since we were by design unable to look at every newspaper, or even a particularly large quantity of articles from the selected outlets, it is impossible to make a generalisation regarding language use in all UK media. We can say, however, that our analysis showed that the political leaning of a newspaper affected their lexical choice in regard to language education.

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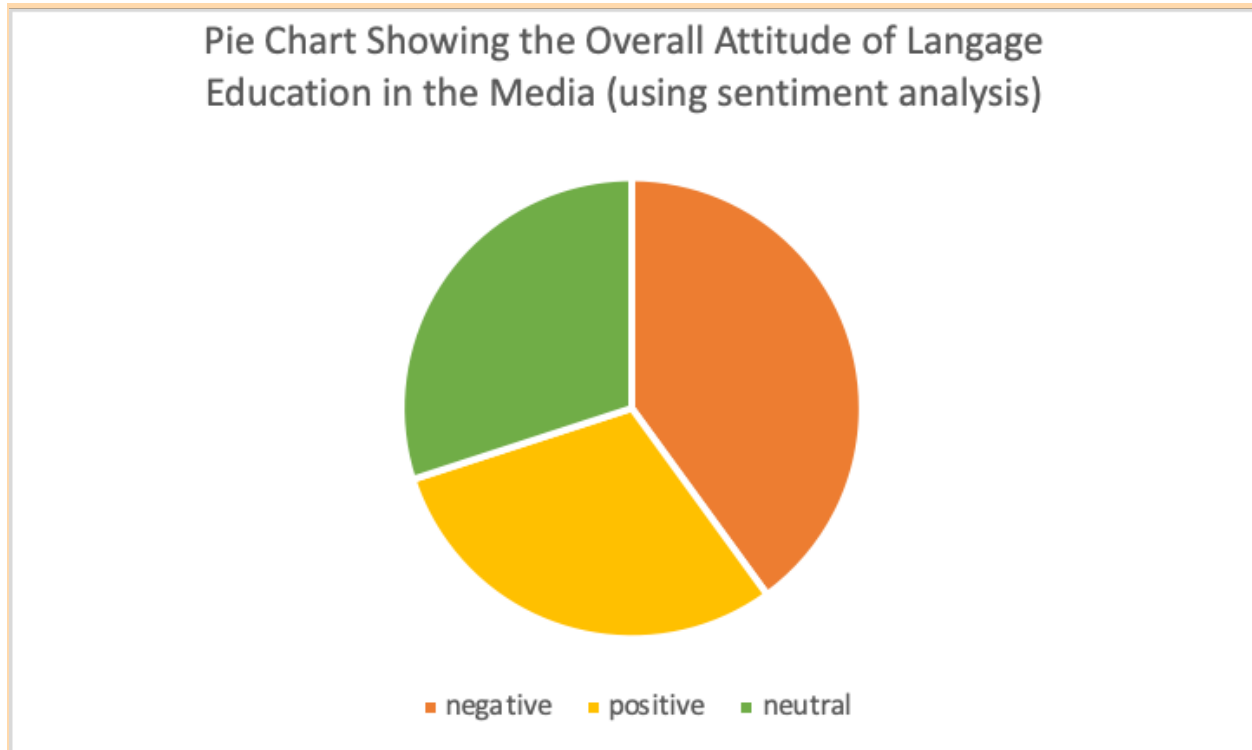
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8 Appendix

Source 1



Source 2

Newspaper	negative	positive	neutral
daily mail	2		
independent		2	
guardian		1	1
telegraph	2		
bbc			2

Source 3a)

Telegraph 1

1. Is the article left or wing or central leaning?

The Telegraph is fairly left wing; the article encourages the discussion of the learning of foreign languages, which could be interpreted as a negative in the first place.

2. What is the main point that is being put across – how does this link to the political leaning?

The main body of text discusses how learning languages can cause severe anxiety. Mental health can be used as an excuse to get out of education as the lessons are causing more harm than not.

3. Quotations IN the article – are they in support of the point of the article (the political leaning)?

Evidence from Rob Campbell: “it can be common that the weaker subject of theirs is languages’.
Quote of ‘DfE’ spokesman: ‘learning a foreign language helps broaden a pupil’s horizon’ consequently making language learning seem positive as we need it to communicate with others worldwide.

4. Does the article make use of statistics/numerical data – if so, does that data support the overall point?

Despite the article discussing the learning of foreign languages as a positive thing, they still highlight how it is very stressful for young people and can be detrimental to their health. Evidence shows that learning a language at GCSE has risen from 40 to 46%.

5. How does the content of the article link to our wider discussion of education and language diversity?

The article links to our topic question because it discusses the need for foreign languages as a positive, as we would expect a left-leaning article to do. However in conjunction with education it portrays it as quite negative and hard for children, which we would find interesting and may be picked up on the sentiment analysis

6. words used to describe the articles views on language education

There is also language used such as ‘concerns’, ‘extreme anxiety’, ‘weaker’ and ‘drastic drop’, all in relation to language education. This shows how the article is against language education in the UK fearing it is causing a decline in mental health for young people.

Source 3b)

The BBC 1

1. The BBC itself is central. However with 5 quotes to one favouring learning languages, it suggests it is more in favour.

2. The government's opinion focuses on language such as 'disastrous', but this is in conjunction with talking about the decline of language, implying they believe the loss of language is a bad thing

3. Quote from Jean Coussins: "In the 21st Century speaking only English, is as much of a disadvantage as speaking no English at all" - shows how the article is inherently leaning towards not learning language as being a bad thing.

Quote from Baroness Coussins: "One of the myths we need to bust is that languages are just for the top set" The article is guided towards a more central leaning with a quote from Geoff Barton discussing the importance of realism with "It is hard to see how schools could fulfil an objective to ensure all young people learn a language from ages five to 18".

4. Numerical data: 'fall of between 30% and 50% since 2013 in the amount of people taking language GCSEs in some areas of England' 'Number of German GCSEs fall from 57,806 to 39,941' 'A-level's from 5,055 to 2,785 according to the Department for Education' '75% of the world's population does not speak English'

5. The content of the article links to our wider discussion because it discusses the lack of linguistic diversity in education and the desperate need for an incline.

6. *The BBC* uses negative vocabulary when describing language education: 'concerns', 'declining' and 'deeply worrying'. However, this is all in conjunction with concerns in the amount of people learning languages declining and the detrimental impact on their future showing that the article is positive. This is supported by language use like 'ambition', 'improvement' and 'excel', further supporting the point learning languages is important.

Source 3c)

The Daily Mail 1

1. This article pushes an extremely Anglocentric viewpoint.
2. The article argues that foreign people already speak English for the most part, so it is unnecessary for English native speakers to learn any other language. The argument relates to right-wing ideologies of patriotism and nationalism, and assumes that the majority of the readers will be English, rightly so, given the socioeconomic status and demographic for *The Daily Mail* listed by YouGov and PAMCo.
3. The article has no quotations as it is an opinion piece and does not use other evidence to back up its points.
4. It does not make use of statistics or numerical data apart from the number of students who did not learn a foreign language at GCSE level.
5. The article is derisive of foreign language learning, patronisingly describing it as a "genteel indulgence" and says that the large number of students who didn't do a foreign language at GCSE level is not a problem. It links to typical right-wing ideologies of nationalism and "Britishness", and since *The Daily Mail* is stereotypically right-wing, supports our hypothesis that right-wing outlets are more likely to discourage foreign language learning.
6. Use of vocabulary such as 'minority', in conjunction with what languages you would be learning and that learning a language where you would only be able to speak to a small amount of people would not be helpful. There is also the use of language such as 'problem' and 'horrendous', all contextually backing up the overall point of the article showing that it is against language education in the UK.

Source 3d)

The Independent 1

1. The independent is regarded to be centre or centre-left.
2. **The main aspect is** noticing other subjects are thriving and the clear decline in language learning alongside focusing on how this student's futures are affected.

3. Support is highlighted that there should be a revival.

- Wendy Piatt director general of the Russell Group of research-intensive universities states 'language learning available is 'inadequate to meet the needs of our universities, economy and society.'

4. Makes use of stats. Showing a clear decline of language learning which supports the overall point.

- 'Fewer than one in four youngsters (22.7 per cent) now sits French, with the numbers falling from 341,604 students in 2002 to 177,618. This year alone, there was a further 5.9 per cent fall. German has slumped from 130,976 to 70,619.'

5. The British press has reflected the decline and praises the education system in subjects but not for language learning.

6. Uses language such as 'useful languages' and 'arming shortage' in regard to the amount of young learners and their ability to speak other languages. With vocabulary such as 'world of opportunities' and 'status' we can see how this article has the same viewpoint as *The BBC* article on dwindling language skills. Not having the ability to speak other languages is detrimental to trading and building relationships with other countries.

Source 3e)

The Guardian 1

1. Left wing.

2. Language learning is decreasing due to too harshly marked exams.

3. In support, Suzanne O'Farrell states: "We can't have confidence in the grading of MFL at GCSE whilst this harsh grading exists. A pupil should have the right to expect that they will not be judged more harshly in languages than in other subjects."

4. The proportion of pupils sitting modern language GCSEs at the end of key stage 4 fell from 76% in 2002 to 47% in 2017.

5. The Government should take action – similar to Independent article. It suggests that the press have noticed the decline and the surrounding/subsequent issues and reflect how this should change.

6. This article uses highly negative emotive language throughout such as: 'threat' 'tough' 'killing' 'harshly' 'excessive difficulty' 'severely' 'disadvantaged'. The above words are all focused around the use of language within the education setting, showing this article has a highly negative portrayal.

Source 3f)

The Guardian 2

Questions

1. Is the article left or wing or central leaning?

This article is left wing.

2. What is the main point that is being put across – how does this link to the political leaning?

'As soon as students enter school at 11 it's made clear to them that the overriding reason they are in school is to acquire GCSEs and how vital it is to start preparing for them – exams that are five distant years away, almost another third of their life.' Children are pushed into 'mainstream' subjects as opposed to subjects that they like, suggesting a left-wing idea as children now have no individuality regarding subjects.

3. Quotations IN the article – are they in support of the point of the article (the political leaning)?

- 'I would not disagree with the sentiments expressed in your article'
- 'shackled to the requirement to deliver the government's eye-rollingly tedious programme for healthy, upright living'
- 'perverse persnicketies of many of the tasks pupils are required to undertake'

4. Does the article make use of statistics/numerical data – if so, does that data support the overall point?

No.

5. How does the content of the article link to our wider discussion of education and language diversity?

There is not a lot of variation anymore as student is forced down the same path. No originality and therefore not a lot of language diversity as schools are more focused on getting good results from 'mainstream' subjects in which their teachers are most specialised in because that gets them the results.

Question 6- This article uses a range of negatively emotive language. Examples of such words used are: 'killing' 'decline' 'suffer' 'dreary' 'threat' 'depressing'. Even though this article is explaining how bad language education is suffering, it does not give any examples as to why language education is positive!

Source 3g)

BBC News 2

Questions

1. Is the article left or wing or central leaning?

The BBC is meant to be central leaning but I think it is more right wing than left wing.

2. What is the main point that is being put across – how does this link to the political leaning?

'In Northern Ireland, learning a second language is not a statutory part of the primary school curriculum. In England and Scotland, by contrast, primary school pupils are expected to learn a foreign language.'

'But they also said teaching foreign languages was not a priority for schools'

'authors to conclude that there was "a lack of equity in provision for children" across the country.'

There should be more languages taught in schools because lots of students and teachers say that it is important and valuable to a child's education. But that is not happening as schools do teach languages just not as often as they should.

3. Quotations IN the article – are they in support of the point of the article (the political leaning)?

Yes they do support the point of the article in explaining that education of different languages is important and crucial.

· The report's authors said the development of language skills was "vital for economic prosperity, social cohesion and the acceptance of diverse cultural identities".

· Language learning was "conducive to economic growth and that can enhance the lives and future employability of children and young people".

4. Does the article make use of statistics/numerical data – if so, does that data support the overall point?

‘Across the European Union (EU) more than 80% of primary pupils learn an additional language’. The authors surveyed language learning at over 100 schools.

5. How does the content of the article link to our wider discussion of education and language diversity?

It offers facts as to which countries include a foreign language within the education system. It also highlights the diversity that some languages offer and explains the benefits to learning a different language when at school for children.

Question 6- This article uses language throughout that is positive towards language within education. Words such as ‘compulsory’ ‘popular’ ‘important’ ‘valuable’ ‘enhance’, implying by using such positive language choice throughout, the article is attempting to allow the reader to understand the positive aspect to using languages within education.

Source 3h)

The Independent 2

1. Is the article left or wing or central leaning?

This article is slightly left

2. What is the main point that is being put across – how does this link to the political leaning?

The article is really favouring education of languages, and not just the most taught languages such as French and German. They believe that Arabic should be a more important language for children to learn than French, as well as Mandarin. Spanish remains the most important language to learn. They call for policymakers to introduce a broader range of languages into children’s education

3. Quotations IN the article – are they in support of the point of the article (the political leaning)?

Quotes explaining how crucial it is for more languages to be taught and how we will benefit economically and culturally:

“language skills are just as important for a young aspiring footballer as they are for someone who wants to enter the world of international commerce”

States that it doesn’t matter what job you want or how wealthy you are, or how much contact you have or will have with foreign countries, it is an important skill to have.

4. Does the article make use of statistics/numerical data – if so, does that data support the overall point?

Lots of numerical data showing the lack of ability to speak languages fluently, with French being the only language in double figures (15%), there’s also an intention to increase the number of diplomats trained in Arabic to 40%.

5. How does the content of the article link to our wider discussion of education and language diversity?

It is important to expand the amount of taught languages in schools. We need to step back from French German and Spanish and introduce some more languages into the education system.

6. words used to describe the articles views on language education

‘important’ ‘vital’ ‘opportunity’ ‘crucially’ ‘alarming’ ‘priority’ are among the words used to describe language education in this article. The main theme being how vital it is that language education is taken seriously and not just with the staple languages of French German and Spanish, but with languages such as Arabic and mandarin also.

Source 3i)

The Telegraph 2

1. Is the article left or wing or central leaning?

Central leaning

2. What is the main point that is being put across – how does this link to the political leaning?

Children are getting out of language lessons with sick notes etc due to the stress caused by the subject. Not just stress reasons, but also ‘why do we need to learn a language when we will never go to that country’?

3. Quotations IN the article – are they in support of the point of the article (the political leaning)?

Rob Campbell is quoted about sick notes being an ‘increasingly common occurrence’ there is not much bias shown rather just giving quotes and factual information.

4. Does the article make use of statistics/numerical data – if so, does that data support the overall point?

Students taking a language at GCSE has risen from 40% to 46% since the introduction of Ebacc.

5. How does the content of the article link to our wider discussion of education and language diversity?

It shows language education is found to be stressful and pointless by students and parent. English being the most important language is a strong viewpoint for a lot of people demonstrating lack of linguistic diversity in education.

6. ‘stressful’ ‘considerable pressure’ ‘encourage’ ‘wellbeing’ ‘particularly opposed’ such words are used to demonstrate that children are stressed about learning new languages and don’t understand the cultural benefits, but the government are encouraging the education of languages, giving a fairly neutral stance.

Source 3j)

The Daily Mail 2

1. is the article left or right wing or central leaning?

The article appears right-wing.

2. what is the main point that is being put across - how does this link to the political leaning?

The article states students are dropping modern foreign languages at the secondary level because of the stress they experience from them. It leans slightly right-wing as it appears to focus on disregarding the mental health 'excuse' for children dropping foreign languages. It can be seen to support the teaching of MFLs, which we hypothesise is a more traditionally left-wing idea.

3. quotations IN the article - are they in support of the point of the article (the political leaning)?

They support the idea students dropping languages due to their mental health is not sustainable or generally acceptable. The last quote in the article comments on globalization and the importance of foreign languages in education. The article appears to conflict on two right-wing ideologies: nationalism, and protecting the British identity, and the importance of education.

Rob Campbell (chief exec of Morris Education Trust) has seen “increasingly common occurrences” of effect on mental health, but he says languages aren’t the only culprit.

4. does the article make use of statistics/numerical data - if so, does that data support the overall point?

The article uses no numerical data to support its point.

5. How does the content of the article link to our wider discussion of education and language diversity?

It condemns students who do not keep up their secondary language education due to anxiety/stress and uses quotations. It links to our discussion of MFL education at a secondary level; it discusses an approach to them that could be politically charged.

Pupils are being harmed by language education and its not worth the stress. Living in a leafy catchment area really minimises your chances of needing another language anyway, privileged children don’t need any language other than English.

6. Words used to describe the articles opinion of language education

The article uses words such as ‘fears’ ‘stress’ ‘anxious’ ‘struggling’ to describe pupils attitudes towards language education, overall giving language education a negative context as it is bringing students this stress and anxiety. The article doesn’t stick up for language education, instead it states the negative views of some students and parents.