The Workplace Development of Language Professionals after University: A United Kingdom Case Study

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Abstract: For students who major in world languages in undergraduate university programmes and go on to apply the resultant knowledge professionally, the imperative to continue learning about that language and about communication more generally does not stop once they graduate. However, their ability to undertake world language-related professional development can be beset with challenges, such as cost, time, finding the right training, and, vitally, securing employer support. For their part, while employers of world language graduates rely greatly on their staff's language proficiency and cross-cultural knowledge, they can fail to appreciate knowledge gaps or provide adequate ongoing training (e.g., Arthur & Beaton, 2000; British Academy, 2016; Davie, in preparation). This article assesses the world language professional development situation in one major UK employer of language graduates, a department within the national civil service. It firstly describes the steps taken to address graduate knowledge gaps through the creation of in-house learning modules in linguistics and cultural and linguistic anthropology. It then analyses trends in feedback elicited through a mixed-methods data collection approach. Finally, it discusses the effectiveness and impact of the learning and considers the implications of the study for employers and higher education.

Keywords: curriculum design, Language for Specific Purposes (LSP), linguistics, professional development, undergraduate foreign language learning

Introduction

For graduates who major in a world language at university and go on to apply the resultant knowledge professionally, the imperative to continue learning about that language and about communication more generally does not stop once their university studies are completed. However, when seeking language and culture-based professional development opportunities in the workplace they face several challenges, such as cost, time, finding the right training and—crucially—securing employer support (e.g. Arthur & Beaton, 2000; British Academy, 2016; Davie, in preparation). For many such world language professionals, the benefits of broadening and/or deepening linguistic and cultural competences[1]—for example, to better address more opaque discourse and assume greater responsibility in designing or delivering training or quality checking others' work—appear self-evident. After all, no language, topic, culture, or society stands still, and employers need a reliable and forward-looking language and culture capability to be effective.

Aspirations to broaden and deepen competence bases through professional development often depend on several contextual factors. These include an employer's desire or preparedness to support ongoing learning. Employers, of course, have different needs and objectives.

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[1] Celce-Murcia (2007), for instance, identifies the following interrelating competences: linguistic, interactional, formulaic, sociocultural, discourse, and strategic.

However, if we consider one—the United Kingdom's civil service, called Her Majesty's Government (HMG)—we can discern some of the circumstances that can influence the extent to which graduates working with world languages are able to grow or enhance their competence base. HMG is among the largest employers of people who have graduated from undergraduate university world language programmes in the United Kingdom. It has a critical need for world language proficiency and cultural capability in spheres ranging from international trade to defence and security. Correspondingly, some HMG departments incentivise the learning and use of world languages through retention payments, with less commonly taught languages attracting higher rewards. Nonetheless, graduates who majored in a non-English language and take up language positions in civil service organisations consistently leave such posts. The reasons for this are manifold. In some HMG departments world language and culture learning may be stigmatised (British Academy, 2013) or lack institutional promotion. An example of the latter is evidenced by a judgement of the United Kingdom's House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee. By 2015, as part of its oversight remit, the Committee had repeatedly criticised the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) over its "apparent decline in proficiency in foreign languages" (Foreign Affairs Committee, 2015, p. 17). In 2012, the FCDO's situation in languages other than English (LOTE) had been described as one of "crisis"; by 2014, its Permanent Under-Secretary had accepted its modest levels of desired language proficiency were "unacceptable" and required improvement (FAC, 2015, pp. 17, 18).

At the same time, a widespread privileging in HMG of generalism over specialism for promotion means that language professionals must often leave non-English language work such as translation or transcription to be promoted (British Academy, 2013). Equally, the experiences of world language graduates in a number of HMG departments also suggest that managers sometimes underestimate the difficulties of working with LOTE (personal communications). Managers who often have little-to-no knowledge of world language learning might know the tasks they want their language specialists to carry out (e.g., Kassim & Ali, 2010; Lehtonen & Karjalainen, 2008; Lenard & Pintarić 2018; Wiwczaroski, 2015). However, they often underestimate important challenges around nuance, ambiguity, indirectness, and inference, not to mention the limitations of what is learned at degree level and the resultant need for ongoing study (see variously Arthur & Beaton, 2000; Czellér & Nagy-Bodnár, 2019; Davie, in preparation; Ruggiero, 2014). A number of unsupportive contextual factors can therefore disincentivise or disenchant staff looking to ameliorate or augment their competence base, while also compromising the high-level capability in LOTE essential for the employer's operational effectiveness.

Set against this background, the present article outlines steps taken at one HMG organisation to provide professional development options for staff applying the world language competence shaped during their undergraduate studies and those with equivalent knowledge. It describes the key needs and principles that underpinned the creation and piloting of in-house learning options; discusses learner and instructor feedback; and outlines implications for employers and educators, particularly those in higher education.

A Possible Solution to Support Language Development for Professionals

Establishing Learner Needs

To help their colleagues in world languages better address work tasks, in 2015-2017 a group of language professionals at one (necessarily anonymous) HMG department developed and piloted a course on negotiating the expression and interpretation of stance in Russian and Mandarin Chinese. Language professionals at the department typically transcribed or translated material from, and carried out research and analysis in, one or more LOTE. Subjects covered included terrorism, military topics, serious crime, and counter-proliferation. Professionals attending the stance course had varying levels of experience, formed across 2-30+ years. Their language competence spanned Levels 3 to 4+ in translation and 2+/3 to 4+ in audio translation on the Interagency Language Round Table (ILR) framework.

The results of this trial are described elsewhere (Davie, 2022). However, one recommendation was that, to enable an appropriate learning load and tempo and more informed investigation, there was value in world language professionals in the department gaining a basic underpinning knowledge of linguistics and associated disciplines such as sociolinguistics beforehand.

In 2017, world language professionals at the same department separately conducted a needs analysis to identify important gaps in linguistic, interactional, sociocultural, and other competences among its foreign language cadre (Davie, in preparation). Interviews with 36 'insiders' (Long, 2005) well-versed in the organisation's non-English language work and representing its various language communities highlighted learning needs that had reportedly arisen due to gaps in undergraduate studies. These gaps were: stylistic understanding; slang; dysphemism/swearing and euphemism; humour; language and culture; multilingualism; and discourse analysis. Akin to the stance study, it was suggested that a basic knowledge of linguistics and anthropology would be advisable to facilitate more informed examination of these subjects (Davie, in preparation).

Meeting Needs: A Modular Pathway

In view of these studies' results and recommendations, in 2018 a small team of language professionals at the same department developed and delivered a modular pathway that incrementally built up to analysis of the seven gaps identified in the needs analysis. Members of this team typically held at least a Masters in Translation or Linguistics; four of them held PhDs in linguistic disciplines. The team had professional experience of language work in the organisation and often elsewhere spanning 1-20+ years. This meant that many of them were 'insiders' and 'domain experts' (Long, 2005). All contributions to developing the pathway were voluntary.

The pathway they developed, titled the Language Analysis Programme (LAP), was designed for professionals who had earned majors in world languages and who worked in the civil service department. It had three stages (Table 1). The first two, especially stage 2, aimed to generate a basic level of linguistic awareness to support stage 3 study while providing stronger professional development opportunities more generally through the study of linguistics and anthropology. Stage 1 included one- or two-hour introductory modules in translation and discourse analysis. Stage 2 offered a one-hour general introductory overview of linguistics as well as three-hour module workshops each on linguistic topics (e.g., syntax, morphology,

phonology/phonetics, semantics, pragmatics), associated disciplines (e.g., sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, computational linguistics, forensic linguistics, discourse analysis, translation), and cultural and linguistic anthropology. Each module included specially selected subjects from within the disciplines (e.g., context in linguistic anthropology) so as to be germane to the work tasks of the   learners, who had the same general profile as those who had attended the 2015-2017 stance training. To that same end, module workshops also incorporated examples of real-life (non-classroom) usage from a number of languages. All instruction was delivered in English, the first language of almost all learners (the others had native-level ability).

Given that very few learners had a formal background in linguistics, attendance at particular modules, such as pragmatics, was recommended before undertaking Translation II (a three-hour offering) and Discourse II (a two-day course)—both to derive optimal benefit and avoid a heavier learning load. Indeed, because the learners generally carried out translation and transcription tasks, these two modules were considered especially important: both would encourage greater understanding of the pragmatic dimensions of communication, help analysts to share their experiences and practical insights, and enable them to explore new analytical frameworks both for their work and the stage 3 offerings.

Table 1
Language Analysis Programme: Stages and Modules

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
● Language skill assessment and threshold attainment (language policy) ● The retention payment system (language policy) ● Language tools (IT) ● Departmental transcription conventions ● Discourse I ● Translation I	● Introduction to Linguistics ● Syntax ● Morphology ● Phonetics and Phonology ● Semantics ● Pragmatics ● Sociolinguistics ● Psycholinguistics ● Computational Linguistics ● Forensic Linguistics ● Cultural Anthropology ● Linguistic Anthropology ● Discourse II ● Translation II	● Stylistic understanding ● Slang ● Dysphemism/swearing and euphemism ● Humour ● Language and culture ● Multilingualism ● Discourse analysis III (stance)[2]

Participation in stage 1 sessions was deemed compulsory for all of the department's language professionals to ensure the same policy and foundational discourse understanding. Attendance at stage 2 modules, however, was optional, primarily to emphasise the importance of agency in how language professionals could opt to broaden and/or deepen their competence. These modules (Table 2) combined to form a three-month course attended together by learners from different language communities in the department. It was proposed that this format would enable participants to share varied professional and other experience to enrich group and plenary discussion. Foundational concepts in each module would be investigated without a specific foreign language in mind, with illustrations and exercises drawing on real-life (non-classroom)

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[2] For further details of a piloted version of this proposed course, see Davie (2022).

usage translated from several languages, including Arabic, Punjabi, Urdu, Russian, Chinese (Mandarin) and Swahili.[3] The modules were mostly delivered in-house by the programme's development team.

Table 2
Stage 2 Module Content

Module	Description
Introduction to Linguistics	• short introduction to linguistics and overview of stage 2 linguistics modules • rationale for investigating these topics • delivered 2-3 times per course iteration
Syntax	• syntactic systems • default rules for word order and sentence construction in different languages • how to spot divergence from the norm • syntactic marking of topic and focus
Morphology	• overview of inflectional and derivational morphology • how speakers create and combine lexical items • attention to morphology vis-à-vis sociolinguistic import and pragmatic force
Phonetics & Phonology	• introduction to articulatory phonetics and phonemic systems • engagement with the specific phonetic characteristics of learners' second languages (L2s) of professional interest • understanding of L2 phonemic systems
Semantics	• brief overview of meaning in communication • how language users conceptualise the world and how this varies across languages and cultures • implications for translation and language in work tasks
Pragmatics	• how communication is achieved • the role of contextual information and inferences • speech acts, implicature, pragmatic enrichment and non-literal language, and the need to understand the cultural, cognitive and social context of usage
Sociolinguistics	• briefly explores certain key concepts in the discipline, including sociolinguistic variables, standard and non-standard language, prestige, societal multilingualism, language change, and language planning
Psycholinguistics	• overview of the mental processes used in producing and understanding language • acquaints learners with language functions and the brain, how we learn language, and how language interacts with other cognitive abilities

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[3] While it was recognised that translation brings elements of crosscultural and crosslinguistic intervention by the translator, all materials were selected to exemplify the concepts being explored.

Computational Linguistics	• explores computational models of language (i.e., ones that can be unambiguously described using algorithms or mathematical equations) • describes how computers can perform useful tasks involving human languages, but also the pitfalls that can be encountered (e.g., due to ambiguity in language)
Forensic Linguistics	• introduction to what can be determined about a person from how they use language (e.g., their background, identity, habits and interests)
Cultural Anthropology	• overview of how culture shapes views of the world • explores dimensions of culture, values, culture systems, and cultural literacy • investigates how these aspects of culture affect meaning in everyday communication and how cultural assumptions may influence how we understand the communication of others
Linguistic Anthropology	• brief introduction to the place of language in social and cultural contexts, and its role in creating and maintaining cultural practices and social structures • addresses context, the idea of speech communities, and language ideologies
Translation II	• focuses on three different areas of translation: technical, strategic, and tactical • highlights the common language and translation problems encountered in these areas through representative work task examples, and discusses how experienced practitioners deal with them
Discourse II	• two-day workshop that applies discourse analysis approaches to study usage typically encountered in work tasks • sessions include discourse analysis methods, how discourse is structured, speech acts, identity, ideology and positionality, and reading between the lines • incorporates cross-cultural dimensions

Insofar as the pathway offered professional development opportunities, it was recognised that attendance might catalyse attendees to further explore subjects of professional relevance or interest, drawing on more specialist support from the LAP development team where needed. The pathway might provide important initial guidance, direction and momentum in fields where learners hitherto had no discernible starting point, and thus the opportunity to take ownership of and steer their own development. Correspondingly, the programme incorporated core principles in adult learning. Particular emphasis was placed on internal motivation (e.g., increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, quality of life) (Knowles, 1990); ownership of learning, where learners were not passive recipients of instruction (Freire, 1970); encouraging agency and open engagement in a safe learning environment (Vella, 1994); and on the applied nature of the learning, where learners could easily relate module content to their work and professional development.

Study Research Questions

To ascertain whether the modules met the language professionals' needs, a study was carried out to investigate the following research questions:

1. *Meeting needs:* Did the modules deliver against the need to foster linguistic awareness? What improvement (if any) might be anticipated in future language product? How likely were learners to apply what they had learned to their daily tasks? And what had the greatest or least application to their work?
2. *Professional development:* Would the modules help attendees to reach the next institutionally defined language proficiency level or to develop other professional skills and mind sets? Did the pathway help the instructors (most of whom also created the modules) to develop in any way?

In view of the continual loss of foreign language and culture specialists in HMG, a third question was also examined regarding motivation, namely: were there any indications of enhanced motivation among learners?

Methodology

Participants

This study incorporates data for the first two iterations of the stage 2 modules. These took place in January-April and July-October, 2019. Overall, 98 learners attended one module or more: 65 in the first iteration and 33 in the second.[4] Module workshops—typically involving up to 20 attendees—were led by one or two instructors in person at one site (Forensic Linguistics was an exception as it included a filmed talk by an academic). Module attendance figures are given in Table 3.

Table 3
Stage 2 Module Attendance and Questionnaire Response Rate

Module	Attendance			Questionnaire completion[5]	
	Iteration 1	Iteration 2	Total	Total	% of attendees
Introduction to Linguistics	59	26	85	81	95
Syntax	12	24	36	28	77
Morphology	17	14	31	26	84
Phonetics & Phonology	13	21	34	22	65
Semantics	21	16	37	25	68
Pragmatics	10	16	26	20	77
Sociolinguistics	17	17	34	24	71
Psycholinguistics	13	19	32	21	66

[4] By spring 2020, some of the third iteration modules had been delivered, giving an interim total of 132 attendees. This iteration's modules were often oversubscribed: several attracted 40+ learner applications. The programme was halted due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

[5] Questionnaire completion percentages are taken to the nearest whole number.

Computational Linguistics	18	19	37	22	59
Forensic Linguistics	15	18	33	24	73
Cultural Anthropology	13	19	32	10	31
Linguistic Anthropology	19	15	34	28	95
Discourse II[6]	12	7	19	18	95
Translation II	21	36	57	47	82

Data Collection

To obtain research data, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was employed: a questionnaire-based survey, interviews, and instructor observation. It was considered that a mixed approach of this nature would provide data triangulation and highlight important indicative trends (e.g., Brown, 2009; Long, 2005; Serafini et al., 2015).[7]

Questionnaire Survey

Questionnaire-based surveying brings strengths and weaknesses. While questionnaires can enable larger cohorts to be surveyed and their uniformity can bolster reliability (Liu et al., 2011; Long, 2005), responses resting on subjective self-assessment can raise questions about data fidelity. Furthermore, factors such as personality traits, cultural background, previous learning experience, skill assessed, L2 proficiency, and the wording of research tools can influence survey accuracy (Birjandi & Bolghari, 2015; Blanche, 1988; Brantmeier et al., 2012).

The LAP development team carefully considered the merits and demerits of questionnaire-based data collection. Learners' workplace demands limited opportunities to collect quantitative data (e.g., through comparative pre- and post-instruction testing). Employing questionnaires could, however, yield some statistical information and indicative value if completed in sufficient numbers and accompanied by other data collection methods. Indeed, other studies had successfully used questionnaires within mixed-methods approaches to examine motivation and professional application (e.g. Chaudron et al, 2005; Lehtonen & Karjalainen, 2008; Zakaria et al., 2017). Furthermore, while self-assessment might be impressionistic, advanced foreign language learners *can* produce accurate evaluations; if anything, they might underestimate their capability (Blanche, 1988; Brantmeier et al., 2012).

Correspondingly, a questionnaire was issued at each module workshop for anonymous completion. Survey questions were reviewed by two LAP development team members in advance to ensure optimal question type and relevance. The questionnaire requested yes-no, Likert scale[8] and open responses in English to establish:
- whether the module met the objectives as set out;
- whether attendees were satisfied with delivery;
- what worked well or could be improved;
- how well participants understood concepts covered;
- how likely attendees were to apply any new information to their work;

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[6] Discourse II involved 12 attendees maximum per workshop.

[7] These researchers frame their discussions of data collection methods in terms of needs analysis, but offer points that apply to data collection and analysis more generally.

[8] Scores ranged from 1 – not at all (e.g., on satisfaction, extent of understanding) or highly unlikely (e.g., future use) to 10 – greatly or highly likely, as appropriate.

- where the greatest or least work application lay;
- what improvement (if any) might ensue in learners' language product; and
- whether module attendance would help learners to attain the next institutionally defined language level (and why/why not).

Table 3 shows the response rate for each module. The mean questionnaire completion rate was 74%. This was sufficiently representative to illuminate general trends. Indeed, the second lowest completion rate per module was 59%.

Interviews

Quantitative studies alone might yield limited insights for curriculum change and professional relevance (Teichler, 2016). Six weeks after the total stage 2 offering, attendees were therefore asked by email if they wished to participate in confidential one-to-one interviews to help developers to further explore course impact and relevance. Six attendees agreed and received a questionnaire which, together with subsequent interview protocols, was pre-vetted. This second questionnaire helped the interviewer (a non-instructing LAP team member and relative newcomer to the organisation) to establish initial rapport, promote candour, encourage reflection and identify follow-up questions for semi-structured interviews. Four of the six respondents agreed to attend 60-90-minute interviews face-to-face in the workplace. The resultant insights were recorded through contemporaneous and post-interview note-taking.

Although the interview sample was limited, this engagement enabled the development team to investigate trends that emerged from the initial questionnaires; explore more deeply respondents' remembered perspectives (Huhtala et al., 2019); ascertain which modules (or aspects of them) applied most to learners' work; determine whether/how interviewees had benefitted from attendance; and underline the importance of learners' voices to LAP improvement.

The resulting combination of questionnaire- and interview-based data and written and verbal instructor observations about how learners negotiated module subject matter in class (e.g. level of difficulty of assimilation, relevance to professional tasks, and so on) helped the development team to determine where to make improvements after each iteration; whether recommended changes to the first iteration had brought the desired effects; and where productive facilitation practice might be shared among developers/instructors. Significantly, it also lent further assurance regarding the defensible status (Brown, 2009)[9] of stage 2 as a platform for promoting linguistic and cultural awareness in respect of the 2017 needs analysis (Davie, in preparation) and within a professionally germane development pathway.

Results and Discussion

Data are provided in three forms: basic statistics from questionnaire responses, insights from interviews and instructor observations. Anonymous participant quotations about the modules and broader LAP are also given to illuminate specific points or nuances. Discussion of the results is structured around the core, often intertwining, research questions relating to learner needs and professional development, as well as to motivation.

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[9] In his discussion of needs analysis as a means of providing information important to producing a 'defensible curriculum', Brown (2009: 269) defines the latter as "one that satisfies the language learning and teaching requirements of the students and teachers within the context of particular institution(s) involved."

Meeting Learner Needs

It was important to demonstrate the modules' professional relevance to meet learner needs (e.g., Davie, in preparation; Doyle, 2019; Kassim & Ali, 2010; Kember et al., 2008; Lehtonen & Karjalainen, 2008; Long, 2005; Ruggiero, 2014). Showing the pertinence of theories to the workplace and knowledge economy helps learners to understand them; lends authenticity; stimulates; and motivates (Kember et al., 2008). Table 4 suggests broad satisfaction regarding meeting session objectives, instructor delivery, and grasp of concepts and content, implying an increase in linguistic and/or anthropological awareness. Of no less importance, however, are positive scores for anticipated improvement in product quality and applicability to everyday work: 6.7 and 6.9 out of 10 respectively in Iteration One, and 7.3 and 7.4 respectively in Iteration Two. These are satisfactory scores for a newly piloted course and mirror the overall positive impressions gained by instructors. Although based on initial data, they suggest relevant content and validate the recommendations to enhance professionals' linguistic awareness in the two prior departmental studies.

Table 4
Mean Scores for Meeting Objectives, Delivery, Comprehension, Product Enhancement, and Applicability

Criterion	Iteration 1, out of 10	Iteration 2, out of 10
Did the modules meet their objectives?	8.5	8.6
Learner satisfaction with delivery	8.5	8.8
Did learners understand concepts?	8.1	8.4
Will learning be used in daily work?	6.9	7.4
Will learning help improve product quality?	6.7	7.3

In terms of the greatest application to the participants' daily work, questionnaire results pointed to a better understanding of context and speaker relationships; recognising, diagnosing, managing and taking different approaches to translation problems; understanding different language systems (e.g., syntax, morphology); appreciating different frameworks or approaches to analysing communication; gaining greater insight for quality checking (QCing) others' work; now being able to explain linguistic, non-linguistic and cultural elements of communication in feedback, training and mentoring; and anchoring for reflective thinking. Learner comments included:

- "I feel like semantics coupled with discourse analysis are essential to my translation and QCing." (Semantics)
- "I feel able to apply some of the knowledge in my day-to-day work which was the aim!" (Discourse II)
- "Very strong on the so-what – it is very clear how syntax will help me be a better linguist." (Syntax)
- "[Translation II] will help me think more deeply about how I do translation and how I formulate feedback when I'm QCing other people's work."

Interviews also revealed positive impressions. Interviewees observed, for example, that the Cultural Anthropology module gave "a better insight into how L2 speakers think and act,"

while the Sociolinguistics module was "great for [understanding] individuals socially, understanding their relationships and power dynamics, as well as understanding colloquial speech, different accents, etc."

Perceived value and preferred emphases in learning can, of course, vary (e.g., Enkin & Correa, 2018; Lenard & Pintarić, 2018; Marina et al., 2019). It is not entirely surprising then that some facets of the learning were not seen as applicable to day-to-day working by some participants: for instance, knowing about bilingualism, the science of the brain and first language acquisition in Psycholinguistics; examining ideology in Discourse II; studying hypernymy and metaphor in Semantics; and rituals and rites of passage in Cultural Anthropology. These observations reminded those developing and/or delivering modules that direct *and* indirect real-world and professional relevance needed to be clear to learners: some subjects and concepts might not appear immediately pertinent to work tasks; however, they may constitute important foundational knowledge en route to exploring other professionally germane questions. Indeed, perceptions of direct and indirect relevance might explain scoring differences for Morphology or Semantics, for instance, when compared with Sociolinguistics and Translation II (Table 5).

The fact that there was upward movement in overall accumulated scoring across iterations, even if preliminary, is encouraging: the instructors informed attendees that feedback was important for improving an experimental programme. Survey results and instructor observations about what had worked well in the first iteration. The use of examples, confidence in presenter knowledge, a discursive engagement style, the use of handouts where appropriate, and discussion of application to the day job as well as suggested improvements (e.g., providing more illustrations of usage, wider use of handouts, and/or preliminary reading across the modules) were shared among the developers/instructors to encourage the incorporation of productive practice into the second iteration. Attention was equally paid to what learners in first iteration had found challenging and how any difficulties might be mitigated, for example, in understanding high and low contexts in communication about Cultural Anthropology, language processing in Psycholinguistics, and phonemes vs. allophones in Phonology.

Table 5

Ratings for Anticipated Product Enhancement and Applicability to Daily Work

Module	Rating, 1-10 per and across iterations					
	Improve Quality of Work			Apply in Daily Work		
	One	Two	Mean	One	Two	Mean
Introduction to Linguistics	6.1	7.0	6.5	6.3	6.8	6.5
Syntax	6.6	8.3	7.4	6.4	8.3	7.3
Morphology	5.1	6.5	5.8	5.8	6.7	6.2
Phonetics and phonology	6.0	7.4	6.7	6.7	7.7	7.2
Semantics	6.4	6.7	6.5	6.3	6.7	6.5
Pragmatics	7.9	6.9	7.4	7.6	7.0	7.3
Sociolinguistics	7.6	7.6	7.6	8.1	7.7	7.9
Psycholinguistics	6.0	8.6	7.3	6.6	8.5	7.5
Computational Linguistics	6.3	6.1	6.2	6.6	6.9	6.7
Forensic Linguistics	5.9	7.5	6.7	5.9	7.6	6.7
Cultural Anthropology	7.7	6.0	6.8	7.6	6.0	6.8
Linguistic Anthropology	8.0	6.9	7.4	7.8	7.5	7.6

Discourse II	7.1	8.0	7.5	7.2	8.7	7.9
Translation II	7.8	8.0	7.9	7.9	8.0	7.9
Mean	**6.7**	**7.3**	**6.9**	**6.9**	**7.4**	**7.1**

Professional Development

Questionnaire respondents were asked whether attending the modules would help them to advance to the next departmental language proficiency level (the higher the level, the greater competence demonstrated in tackling more difficult discourse and responsibility given in training and quality checking others' work). The scores in Table 6 show mixed reactions. In general terms, among the stated positions, more intimated than not that the modules would aid development, with the margin growing considerably after the second iteration (11.5% margin between yes/no after the first iteration, 34.2% for the second). Indeed, after the second iteration more than half (56.8%) saw benefit. Notably, however, after each iteration roughly one reply in five was unsure. This is not entirely surprising: the programme explored very new territory for most and learners therefore had no direct precedent on which to base judgements about its professional development value relative to the organisation's language proficiency framework.

Language proficiency level progression did not apply to everyone, however. Some respondents had already reached the highest level; others had no wish to advance; others still simply attended modules to learn about the various subjects.

Table 6
Anticipated Benefit for L2 Skill Level Progression: Mean Scores

Iteration	Yes	No	Unsure
One	45.2	33.7	21.1
Two	56.8	22.6	19.8
Mean	**51**	**28.1**	**20.4**

Other professional development benefits perceived by respondents also emerged. The programme fostered an ethos of knowledge-sharing and continued learning among the learners. However, it also gave developers/instructors the opportunity to further explore topics of interest and bring greater value to the department through building on and sharing their pre-entry (mostly post-graduate) experience in ways that might otherwise not have occurred. Furthermore, by the developers/instructors' extending their pre-employment learning into their professional activities in this way, the department in question also became part of a larger learning and advancement process. Continuity from higher education into employment enabled developers/instructors to deepen and broaden their learning, and share the results to their and the employer's benefit in a way that recruitment processes did not foresee.

Finally, not all professional development benefits were captured by the development team's data collection efforts. One unanticipated boon emerged when attendees later reported being able to better navigate other instruction. Two learners, for example, were able to understand external training on modality due to stage 2 module attendance, while another reported:

> I've chosen to do an MA in Translation. To prepare, I've started reading about translation theory. There are no works on translation theory that I have yet seen

which do not demand a knowledge of the specialist terminology of language and of translation. I've been able to launch straight into that specialist literature only because I got a grounding in the terminology from the Language Analysis Programme.

Motivation

Motivating learners through the provision of adult learning professional development opportunities was essential. Unsurprisingly, however, realising this ambition was complex. Learner motivation is not only multifaceted and variable (Al-Hoorie, 2017; Arthur & Beaton, 2000; Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017; Liu et al., 2011; Wang, 2010), but can also be influenced by conscious and unconscious factors (Al-Hoorie, 2017; Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017) and micro- and macro-level contexts and circumstances (Dewaele, 2009; Galishnikova, 2014). Motivation is not fixed, but rather can change as learners reassess their ambitions and preferences as they learn (Dewaele, 2009; Galishnikova, 2014; Huhtala et al., 2019). Moreover, learners can experience the same learning context and content, and judge relevance, differently due to distinct goals, perspectives and life experiences (Dewaele, 2009; Enkin & Correa, 2018; Kember et al. 2008; Lenard & Pintarič, 2018; Marina et al., 2019).[10]

Due to the institutional challenges outlined in the Introduction, and because the LAP development team knew module attendees were informed colleagues with clear work- and development-related objectives and established world language learning histories,[11] it was important to understand learner motivation. Module developers thus paid particular attention to the content's professional relatability and those instructing shared their impressions about professional relevance through verbal and written feedback. Importantly, therefore, module content was linked, both individually and in combination, to learner work tasks to avoid demotivation through excessive focus on "purely abstract theory" (Kember et al., 2008, p. 255). Materials used to explain the LAP and in module content clearly laid out the workshops' aims and value. Content developers utilised as much in-house transcription and translation material as possible and incorporated anonymised feedback from previous attendees. Finally, workshop instructors provided a shared forum for learners and instructors alike to share their experiences and related perspectives as professionals.

Questionnaire results, instructor observations and interview feedback suggest that the modules had a largely positive effect on both learner motivation and morale. Benefits included enjoyment; increasing breadth of knowledge; the merits of a professional mindset; and inspiring some participants to learn more and share what they had assimilated with their own language communities (e.g., Russian, Urdu).

Kember et al.'s (2008) linking of relevance to motivation finds many echoes here, as does Wang's (2010) emphasis on the value of instructors "creating an encouraging and flexible learning environment where students can reflect on their expectations of their 'language' learning and develop a strong sense of self-efficacy" (pp. 610-11).[12] Indeed, stimulated by the modules, several participants created their own language-specific mini-workshops and discussion sessions, with the LAP development team (including those involved uniquely in instructing)

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[10] For useful summaries of research on motivation and foreign language learning, see Al-Hoorie (2017) and Gardner (2020).

[11] For more details, see Davie (in preparation).

[12] Wang cites a point originally made by Wen (1997) here.

acting as supportive consultants to answer questions and advise about accurately and productively sharing any newly acquired knowledge. Spin-off sessions were created on, among other things, beginning and ending conversations in Russian, Chinese use of emojis, Chinese phonetics, and Persian syntax. The modules therefore appear to have engendered learner reflection that in turn inspired a sense of ownership and agency. That the *conscientização* ('conscientisation') of learners as agents (Freire, 1970) stimulated deeper language-specific discussion of subjects germane to everyday work tasks was especially encouraging. One learner noted:

> Subsequent research has increased my understanding of how [topic and focus] are used in my language, which has helped me identify where information in a sentence is likely to be new or old. Not only has this improved my understanding of the syntax of colloquial sentences—which can be quite a challenge, especially when taken out of context—it has given me ideas of how we can improve our own language use. I am running a session in December with other linguists from my area where we'll look at some real-life examples of topic and focus placement and discuss how best to interpret these.

Given the above feedback and initiatives, the modules thus appear not only to have promoted a culture of deeper investigation into various aspects of language use, but also to have generated and consolidated a greater sense of professional agency—first through the modules and then through subsequent knowledge-sharing. No less importantly, for some attendees the modules also fostered a sense of professional identity and esteem:

- "If the Language Analysis Programme is a means of showing the rest of the business [organisation] the importance of language and linguists, then I am all for it!"
- "The Language Analysis Programme increases the status of language in the business and improves wider attitudes to it – gives linguists recognition and support, offers linguist professionalisation."

For these participants the technical complexity of non-English language analysis and its credibility as a professional discipline—as opposed to a skill or "job" (see Canning (2009)—required that professional language work be viewed with respect. The pathway and its modules encouraged this sense of self-worth, identity, and recognition, while prompting wider knowledge-sharing.[13] A heightened sense of morale was certainly appreciable among the broader language community directly as a result of the programme.

Implications

Although this study involved participants at one HMG department whose professional tasks do not represent the entirety of civil service language duties (e.g., they typically use receptive skills), there are potential implications for other employers and language professionals, as well as for higher and other education sectors.

The first concerns the participants' professional requirements, development, and status. The stage 2 modules did not constitute the entirety of language training available to the participants, nor were they unique in promoting agency and empowerment (contractor

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[13] With such initial small-scale studies care must be taken not to overstate. However, the pathway seems to have tapped into the perspectives and motivations of many busy learners who were very selective about how they invested their time.

maintenance training was also in use, for example). However, given that there was no instruction offering the same analytical scaffolding in linguistics and anthropology, the modules appear to have both delivered on the needs and recommendations outlined in Davie (2022; in preparation) and successfully acquainted learners with key concepts pertinent to their professional tasks and context, namely, results on professional applicability (Tables 4, 5), product improvement (Tables 4, 5), and reaching the next rung on the organisation's language proficiency ladder (Table 6).

Equally, the modules not only stimulated learner reflection and discussion of their applied benefits, they brought other outcomes. They:

- motivated some attendees to share what they had learned in spin-off sessions;
- helped developers/instructors to enhance their own knowledge base;
- provided a demonstrable investment in the language community, one informed and directed by insights from within that body;
- fostered professional identity among (mainly) language graduates;
- underlined the specialist nature of language work to managers through associated briefings (not discussed here).

While the modules were not the finished article, in these respects the survey outcomes suggest that the pathway provided a much more encouraging and stimulating professional landscape, if not ecology, for language professionals than that described in the Introduction.

Allied to the question of intradepartmental implications is one of broader applicability among employers. Whether and to what extents the study's results would be replicated among employees of other organisations remains to be seen. However, the imperatives driving the work of other public and private sector organisations suggest at least some relevance. The UK now faces the social, political and economic challenges of a post-Brexit environment and the government has aspirations for an influential *Global Britain*. Additionally, UK businesses continue to place high value both on foreign language ability and international cultural awareness, yet remain dissatisfied with secondary/high school leaver and undergraduate knowledge in these domains: both were among the three lowest places in employer satisfaction rates out of 15 graduate applicant work-relevant skills in 2017 (CBI/Pearson, 2017, p. 93; these categories also attracted poor ratings in their 2015 report).[14] While there are undoubtedly areas of divergence as well as overlap across job types, it is not unreasonable to posit that much of the foundational ground covered in the LAP stage 2 modules could find wider applicability beyond the department in question. Firstly, the LAP translates generic calls for better capability in language and culture into more specific questions for learners to explore in line with their and the UK's capability needs in cross-cultural communication, for example, into narrower questions of sociolinguistics, pragmatics[15] and the interaction between language and culture ('languaculture') that Agar (1996) so adroitly describes. Secondly, it does so while drawing attention to real-life (non-classroom) interaction, leaving room for professionals to undertake deeper and/or more specific investigation, either in stage 3 (if/when developed) or as more locally defined by others (e.g., the spin-offs).

Indeed, a signal aspect of the stage 2 offerings was that they were professionally relatable: they did not help learners to acquire *any* knowledge of linguistics, but aided them in analysing questions surrounding usage relevant to professional tasks (Davie, in preparation;

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[14] Foreign language dissatisfaction in 2017 was 47%, while "international cultural awareness" was 39%. Details of the 2015 ratings can be found in CBI (2015, p. 58).

[15] On the importance of pragmatic awareness, see Amaya (2008), Correa (2014), Roever (2009), Sykes & Cohen (2018) and Zhou (2020).

Ruggiero, 2014; Vella, 1994; see also Enkin & Correa (2018); Kember et al. (2008)). The modules helped learners to develop awareness of questions that held both immediate professional application (using knowledge of a given linguistic subject to understand specific aspects of L2 usage outside of the classroom) and deferred (acquiring and combining building blocks to later examine more complex questions). In this sense they engendered the kind of critical analytic ability in linguistic and cultural study that the Quality Assurance Agency for UK Higher Education (QAA 2019) considers desirable in UK foreign language degree programmes and which, when applied within a work context, supports professional practice and helps to meet ongoing learner needs (Davie, in preparation; Doyle, 2019; Ruggiero, 2014):

- "The Language Analysis Programme fills a gap for the transition between language study to language in the workplace."
- The stage 2 modules were "good for developing more of an understanding of the field of linguistics and its different strands in greater depth, especially from a language background. They especially seemed useful for people who had had more of a literary focus when studying their language, for instance at university."

Whether the LAP or similar initiatives can forge a place within a university-level world language programme as a way of fostering such professionally related critical thinking is another matter. The results of the study, albeit indicative, suggest that exploring linguistics, anthropology and associated disciplines can help world language undergraduates or post-graduates develop a deeper knowledge of aspects of their language(s) and cultures of interest. They additionally suggest that such learning could support graduates' future professional activity and development—here, in translation and transcription, although there is undoubtedly complementarity with other elements of Languages for Specific Purposes programmes (e.g., Ruggiero, 2014; Zhou, 2020). However, there are challenges to overcome. Firstly, there are obstacles in academia to negotiate (e.g., faculty preferences, lack of preparedness, political interests). Secondly, although linguistics options are available to some foreign language undergraduates in UK higher education (QAA, 2019; Wyburd, 2011), access appears limited, uneven and, where available, sometimes lacking complementarity with foreign language courses.[16] Thirdly, to create programmes that merge elements of linguistics, anthropology, specific purposes instruction and foreign language studies requires a constructive ecology involving developers, instructors, researchers and employers with time and resources. Calls for holistic approaches to foreign language learning embracing UK educators and employers have been made, namely, the British Academy's (2013) proposal that language scholarship be considered "a long-term investment" instead of the concern of immediate employers alone (p. 10). However, the necessary strategic measures and required investment have yet to emerge.

Conclusion

There is still a long way to go before language analysis, translation and interpreting are seen as a technical profession with equal status and career prospects and appropriate development opportunities in HMG (and no doubt elsewhere). However, the Language Analysis Programme—even if in its initial phase—has provided some valuable insights in those directions and on how to further invest in language graduates.

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[16] This leaves aside joint degree offerings in foreign languages and linguistics.

Although the study is small in scale and its results indicative, the creation and piloting of modules in linguistics and anthropology showed promise for the HMG department in question and for its language professionals. Feedback collated after two iterations of the programme in 2019 suggests that attendance helped learners and instructors to develop their knowledge base in linguistics and culture in a way that was relevant to their everyday work and context, and enhanced critical thinking capability. Additionally, participation in modules also appears to have had a positive motivational effect, with some learners proceeding to share what they had assimilated with other colleagues. Not only did they respond positively to a demonstrable investment in their departmental language community, but they also ensured that further learning continued to be informed by insights from within that body.

Participation and discussion in a constructive environment generated new professional development options, provided new avenues to help learners attain the next institutionally defined language proficiency level and enhanced a sense of status and identity. This is encouraging, and it is to be hoped that, where deemed appropriate, the ethos and approach of the Language Analysis Programme might offer some value to others as they shape their own learning initiatives. Equally, it is to be hoped that foreign language educators, particularly in higher education, will also find instructive points for reflection, especially regarding the relevance and value of complementary learning in foreign languages, linguistics and anthropology, and the creation and optimisation of synergies with employers.

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