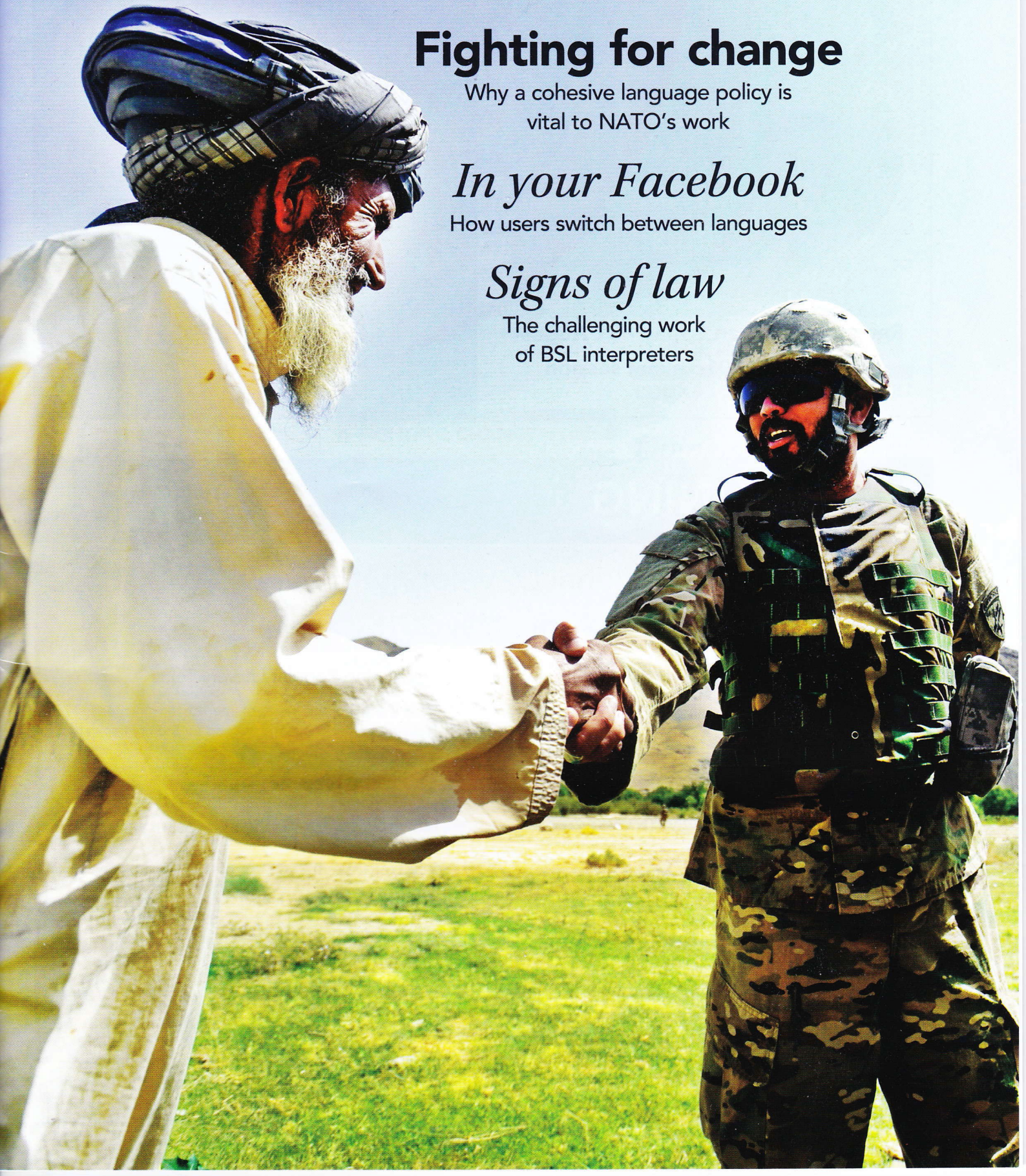
CHARTEREDINSTITUTEOFLINGUISTS 54/2 APRIL/MAY 2015

# The Linguist



## Fighting for change

Why a cohesive language policy is vital to NATO's work

## *In your Facebook*

How users switch between languages

## *Signs of law*

The challenging work of BSL interpreters

# The Linguist


## The Linguist

*The Linguist*, formerly *The Incorporated Linguist*, is the official journal of the Chartered Institute of Linguists.

**Editor** Miranda Moore
*Email: linguist.editor@ciol.org.uk*
**Sales** Deborah Butler
*Tel: +44 (0) 20 7940 3100; Email: deborah.butler@ciol.org.uk*





*The Chartered Institute of Linguists: Dunstan House, 14a St Cross Street, London EC1N 8XA; info@ciol.org.uk; +44 (0) 20 7940 3100; www.ciol.org.uk*





*Printed by Hastings Printing Company, St Leonards-on-Sea. Published six times a year and distributed free of charge to all members. Annual subscription £44 post free. Overseas subscription £59 (airmail Europe), £63 (airmail rest of world).*

ISSN 0268-5965

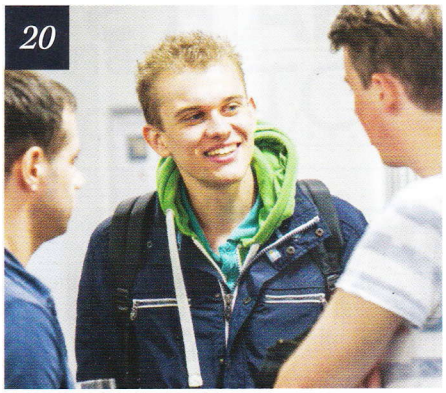
*The Linguist is online at http://thelinguist.uberflip.com*
*Subscribe at www.ciol.org.uk > Journal*

*Apply to become a CIOL member at www.ciol.org.uk > Membership*



16

© Shutterstock


20

Saint Louis University Madrid Campus International Students, 22/10/10 via Flickr (CC BY-ND 2.0)

## News & editorial


**INSIDE PARLIAMENT . . . . . 6**
Assessing the UK's diplomatic capacity

**A BETTER PROGNOSIS . . . . 7**
Improving interpreting in healthcare


## Features


**A FIGHTING CHANCE . . . . . 8**
Forging a cohesive language policy for NATO

**A HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTE IN 6 OBJECTS . . 10**
Series continues with a look at *The Linguist*

**POSING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS . . . . . 11**
The complex challenges of translating surveys

**SIGNS OF HOPE IN COURT . 14**
Why a better understanding of legal British Sign Language interpreting is vital

**THE LAW OF JAPAN . . . . . 16**
Insights from a Japanese legal translator

**SCHOOLS A CLASS APART . 18**
Charting the rise of the supplementary school

**GO INTERNATIONAL . . . . . 20**
Encouraging UK students to study abroad

**FACEBOOK WOSSUP? . . . . 22**
Why do social media users switch languages?

**INTO MIDDLE EARTH . . . . 24**
Comparing translations of *The Hobbit*


## Reviews


**BOOKS . . . . . 27**


## Opinion & comment


**LETTERS . . . . . 28**

**WORKING FOR EUROPE . . 29**
An EU translator's first year in the role

**THE GRADUATE . . . . . 30**
Why life as an au pair isn't all about work


## Institute matters


**THE EDUCATION BUSINESS . 31**
Matthias Postel discusses his work for IoLET

**DIVISIONS & SOCIETIES . . 32**

**ADMISSIONS . . . . . 33**

**A LIFE WITH LANGUAGES . 34**
As told by long-standing member Peter South


FRONT COVER PRT Zabul visits Arghandab River. DoD photo by Senior Airman Grovert Fuentes-Contreras, US Air Force, 19/7/11 via Flickr (CC BY 2.0)

# Schools a class apart

*What are the challenges for the UK's 5,000 supplementary schools, asks* **Miranda Moore**

According to the latest figures, 13% of pupils in schools in England and Wales have a first language other than English.[1] The figures for native English speakers with an additional home language may be even higher, with 20% of young participants in a recent survey claiming to have another main language at home. Given Britain's 'language skills crisis', with successive reports[2] highlighting the fall-out for business, trade and diplomacy, the importance of supporting these 'community languages' has never been greater.

The number of supplementary schools teaching language and culture, mainly to children with one or both parents from a non-English-speaking country, has swelled to 5,000 nationwide, according to some estimates, covering at least 53 languages. Yet community language learning continues to take place largely outside mainstream education.

The establishment of the National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education in 2007 heralded a shift in attitudes and a more unified approach. But despite initial Government funding, the NRC is now an independent charity, and supplementary provision remains ad hoc, including schools run by embassies, groups set up by parents and community volunteers, partnerships with mainstream schools, and church-run institutions. The majority are fully or partly funded by a local authority and/or attendance fees. Frequency of classes, number of hours offered, class/school size and facilities vary widely. Access is often dependent on location, with most schools situated in London, South Yorkshire, the Midlands and parts of the North West (where language communities are concentrated); and on parents' ability to pay (a 2010 survey[3] found that, at fee-paying schools, tuition costs veer from £50 to £555 a year).

Magnus Albert, 7, whose mother is Danish, is lucky: he is able to travel to the Danish Church in Regent's Park for lessons once a fortnight. Although it costs just £50 a year, it is still a major commitment for the family. 'We're there for two hours and it's a two hour journey there and back, so it's a big chunk of time,' says his father, Matt, who has also taken classes at the church.

Inspiring the children to go back week after week is a major challenge. Motivation is key, so it's important that Saturday schools are significantly different from mainstream education. Magnus is in an advanced class of 7- to 9-year-olds. 'We do lots of activities. We do games in Danish, like hangman. That's my favourite,' he says. 'But the thing I like about it is, in breaks, you get cake.'

At Deutsche Samstags Schule (DSS) Islington, German bakeries – on sale during the morning session – are also a big draw. Formed in 1989 by a group of German parents, it now has two sites, in Islington and Hackney, teaching 240 children aged 4-17. 'With our teachers, their first instruction is that the classes have to be fun,' says Managing Director Cathrin Cordes. 'The older ones have rival activities, like football clubs, so if it's not fun, no one's going to come.' In fact, the school – one of 22 German Saturday schools across the country – has a high retention rate.

I visit during Karneval. Every session starts with a communal song, but today there is an accordian player, the children are in fancy dress, and later there will be a procession around the playground, ending with teachers throwing sweets. For most of the children, this is their only experience of such cultural traditions, which are an important part of the school calendar.

A major objective for supplementary schools is to teach children not only the

*"The older ones have rival activities, like football clubs, so if it's not fun, no one's going to come"*


© Miranda Moore

**CELEBRATING CULTURE**

*Karneval at the Deutsche Samstags Schule Islington (right); and Elisabeth, 9, who has been going to the school since she was four, studies in Karneval fancy dress (above)*

language but also the culture of their parents' country, and many also offer traditional music and dance. Another key aim is to enable them to meet other children who share a similar linguistic and cultural heritage.

Julia Fahrenkamp has been bringing her children, aged 7 and 9, here since 2010. I find her chatting with a group of parents over coffee and *Kuchen*. 'There has to be a strong reason for doing something on a Saturday morning because I'm exhausted by the end of the week. But this is important for the children. It's good for them to meet other children who are German, and to do German things,' she says, to nods from the other mums. 'For me, it's about the culture. I don't want them to feel that they're the only ones.'

The children have two 45-minute sessions, focusing on drama, singing, crafts and creative activites in the early years, and moving on to books, drama and topics of interest as they move through the school. Most stay on to prepare for a GCSE, usually aged 12 or 13, but fewer do the A-level. 'To do it in two hours, 32 weeks a year, they need to work really hard at home,' explains Cordes.

Maya, 17, has been at the school since she was six and took an AS-level two years ago. 'I didn't always see the benefits of speaking another language,' she admits. 'But coming to the school has always had its perks: its singing and its food. I like the whole atmosphere; it's so friendly and the singing is lovely.' She is now preparing for German A-level and values the opportunities that offers.

Accreditation is an important issue for supplementary schools and something that more are beginning to offer, despite the challenges of finding exam centres where the children can sit the examinations. 'It gives them a huge burst of confidence. It is a fantastic achievement for them because it's a formal acknowledgement. They suddenly appear as German learners for the first time,' says teacher Charlotte Schulze, Chair of the VDSS Association of German Saturday Schools UK. 'It might even have an impact on their interest in taking up other modern foreign languages at GCSE. If they've already got German, they realise they can do it.'

Studies have shown that attending a supplementary school can increase confidence and attainment in other areas of a young person's education,[4] yet DSS has more than 200 children on its waiting list. 'The sad thing is that we will only be able to take a small fraction of these,' says Schulze. And it is likely that many other children are not accessing provision: according to one survey,[5] at any given time, 3-8% of pupils aged 5-16 have contact with a supplementary school, although 13% have a home language other than English.

'The existence of many of these schools is extremely fragile and dependent on the person who is running them,' says Schulze. 'I know of one school that has been successfully teaching children up to GCSE for 15 years and the person running it is retiring and can't find a replacement.' Funding is often at the heart of the issue, as many administrative and support staff work for minimal pay or as volunteers.

As VDSS Chair, Schulze is hoping to develop a more sustainable model. Although there is clearly work to be done, 1.1 million children in the UK are currently benefiting from classes at supplementary schools – and that is something worth celebrating.

Notes

1 'Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics', 2014, DfEd

2 See, e.g, The British Academy, 2013, 'Languages: The state of the nation'

3 'Impact of Supplementary Schools on Pupils' Attainment', DCSF, 2010, LMU

4 See, e.g Evans, D, 2008, 'Evidencing Impact and Quality of Supplementary Education in Barnet', ContinYou, London Borough of Barnet

5 DCSF 2010 *op. cit.*