

ROUTES INTO LANGUAGES

LANGUAGES AND INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

PAST

PRESENT

FUTURE

Key Language Initiatives to facilitate the UK Higher Education Sector's contribution to making Britain a "generous host" and "cultural inspiration" for the 2012 Olympics and for other international cultural and sporting events in London and across the UK

Debra Kelly, University of Westminster

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This report was prepared by Debra Kelly, Professor of French and Francophone Literary and Cultural Studies and Westfocus Knowledge Transfer Fellow, Department of Modern and Applied Languages, University of Westminster.

The Project Researcher was Saskia Huc-Hepher, also a member of French academic staff in the Department of Modern and Applied Languages and a freelance translator.

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More information

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HEADLINE

The 2012 London Olympics offer a unique opportunity to put in place a coherent national language strategy and policy with HE Languages Departments building on and developing the work of other Routes into Languages initiatives and, for example, the work of CILT and of the Regional Language Networks. It is also a unique opportunity to foster an inclusive and collaborative approach to such a language strategy. The HE sector, through training, research and knowledge transfer, is key to the delivery of skills for effective linguistic and intercultural exchange on the vast scale which is an essential factor for a successful Games.

High quality language services – delivered to a range of audiences and in a variety of forms – will significantly enhance the image of Britain for international visitors (from top sporting bodies to sporting and cultural tourists). Those involved will gain a sense of how highly their linguistic and cultural knowledge and skills are valued in the wider communities across the UK (whom they are to some extent ‘representing’). This in turn will make a significant contribution to the Government’s social cohesion agenda by helping to forge an evolved sense of British identity.

A national languages strategy and policy focused on the design and implementation of training in linguistic and intercultural skills at the planning stages for 2012, in the run-up to the Games, and during Games-time can be extended to other major international cultural and sporting events across the UK in the short, medium and long term, thereby ensuring a cultural, educational, economic and social legacy for 2012.

CONTEXT

It is clear that HE language departments, by the very nature of Modern Languages teaching and learning strategies and their diversity, flexibility and transferability, are well-placed to develop international cooperation, communication and understanding. The research carried out for this report defines more precisely what the nature of that contribution can be.

It is also clear that intercultural communication shares the fundamental principles and spirit of Olympism (joy of effort; educational value of good example; respect for universal fundamental ethical principles; harmonious development of man; promotion of a peaceful society; concern for the preservation of human dignity; mutual understanding; spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair-play).

There is, therefore, an opportunity for UK HE language departments to apply their knowledge and expertise to develop the national role of HE languages as a motor of economic and civic regeneration, and of personal and community development, taking as an example the planning, delivery and legacy of international events in London and across the UK, such as the 2012 Games, European City of Culture programmes, other large international sporting events, and large-scale musical and cultural events.

No previous international mega-events have been as successful as desired in achieving national standards of long-term skills development, even Sydney 2000, which is widely regarded as a successful Games, fell short and missed opportunities in this area, notably concerning social inclusiveness in, for example, the use of volunteers, and therefore in legacy.

This report builds on **past experiences** (for example, Sydney 2000, Athens 2004, on **present activities** (Liverpool City of Culture 2008, Beijing 2008), and on **future planning** (Vancouver Winter Olympics 2010) in order to suggest ways of constructing a coherent, collaborative and inclusive long-term UK language strategy.

It also considers the place of specialised language training (such as for security staff) and of intercultural communication with international audiences more generally. The report also takes as examples the training of Language Specialist Volunteers to work with the Olympic Family; 'Welcoming the World' training for front-line staff in (for example) the transport and retail sectors; and the experience of the international visitor to museums and galleries as well as to large-scale international events. It provides an overview of the significant

place of French in the modern Olympic movement and makes suggestions in this specific area for 2012.

Several of the examples taken are based on work previously carried out and currently being carried at in the Department of Modern and Applied Languages at the University of Westminster. The intention here is not to 'showcase' these particular activities, but to provide specific case-studies in order to highlight the extent to which HE languages departments are already engaged in teaching, research, training and consultancy which is readily applicable to the complex demands of staging major international events.

The report also makes a series of key recommendations concerning linguistic and intercultural training and skills for the UK public and private sectors, and for a national language strategy. It ends with a series of further recommendations concerning potential HE projects focusing on communication with international audiences.

The overall aim of linguistic and intercultural training and the deployment of those skills is that the individuals and the wider communities will become more aware of the nature and value of language learning and use, and that transferable 'meta-skills' are developed which help make people more rounded citizens, and more able to play a productive role in complex globalised contemporary societies.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Ensure an enduring legacy and long-term skills development that link linguistic and intercultural competency to national standards and qualifications. The main opportunity to motivate, inspire and excite lies in the training stage; and training bequeaths legacy.

- Recognition for the HE languages sector as an official training services provider for linguistic and intercultural skills to be sought for 2012 which can then be extended to include such status for all international cultural and sporting events in the UK;
- Delivery of a large-scale linguistic and intercultural skills training and skills policy and strategy with graded qualifications in a coherent programme to ensure long-term benefits, using well-established HE networks and expertise and notably using the Routes into Language programme as a springboard;
- Establishment of a regional/national database of Language Specialist Volunteers with linguistic and intercultural skills for large international events; such volunteers may also be used on broader community endeavours, thereby furthering social cohesion, and playing a role in other economic and civic activities;
- Creation of a large well-qualified extended workforce of general volunteers/employees for both international events and community-based projects, with transferable skills that include linguistic and intercultural expertise.

WHY USE THE HE SECTOR?

- Significant 'value-added' outcomes that derive from academic/research knowledge and expertise base; effective use of existing human and physical resources which other providers of (short-term, commercial) language services simply cannot match;
- Proven commitment to long-term development and delivery enabling long-term training and skills needs to be met;
- Track-record of delivery in all the dimensions required for such a national language policy and strategy based on the experience of teaching, research and knowledge transfer, from evaluation, training and assessment to handling large amounts of confidential data;
- Distinctive and open way of working amongst themselves and with other institutions and organisations (both public and private) which is key to successful planning and delivery on the ground and to the implementation of an enduring language and intercultural skills policy; specifically for 2012 a 'Language Planning Consortium' should be established consisting of HE languages departments and other key language providers.

The London Regional Language Network has previously provided a persuasive argument for the use of HE (and FE) institutions:

“Languages in London’s education system: a wealth of talent and expertise: London’s Higher Education Institutes and Further and Adult Education Colleges offer courses in over seventy languages from Arabic to Zulu. They serve not only the business community and international organisations, but also the communities in the capital, whose language skills are a cornerstone of personal and commercial links across the world – a key attribute of London’s diversity. There are around 11,000¹ undergraduate and postgraduate foreign language students in the twenty London HEIs that offer foreign language degrees. A recent survey² identified even greater numbers studying other language programmes, with an additional 15,000 students following optional or degree credited language courses in eleven London HEIs. Expertise in specialist and vocational language programmes and translation/interpreting courses for business, diplomatic and public services makes an important contribution, along with the language skills of bi-lingual UK students and the 65,000 international students in London’s HEIs. The capital’s universities are a key source of current and future language professionals, expertise and technology.

Many of the 400,000 students in London’s Further and Adult Education colleges are bi-lingual, and thousands take up opportunities to improve their language skills in programmes at many levels. One central London college³ enrolled over 7,000 students on part-time foreign language courses in 2003/4 – demonstrating Londoners’ desire to communicate with other communities at home and abroad. Another college⁴ has 27 teenaged native speakers studying Turkish A Level and runs beginners’ courses for the friends of the Turkish community. Similar developments are happening elsewhere in other heritage languages.

Nearly a quarter of London schoolchildren speak a language other than English at home and the vast majority of all pupils learn a second language in their school career. By 2012 today’s schoolchildren will be young adults. Imagine the impact on the perceived value and prestige of languages used at home and learned at school, if languages were at the heart of pre-Games cultural, employment-related and volunteer programmes. Imagine also the impact on visitors in 2012 of a drive to use languages as a key customer service feature for a warm welcome and access to information and services”

Jane Collis ‘London’s Language Skills: A Vision for 2012’ (available at www.rln-london.com/pdf/Olympic-briefing.pdf) (2005)

10 HEIs (SOAS; Greenwich; TVU; London Met; City, LSE; Westminster; Middlesex; Goldsmiths and Kings) were involved in the ‘languages sub-group’ led by the London RLN in the preparation of the 2012 bid.

¹ Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Records of individual enrolments at HE institutions (2002/3), The headcount covers students registered on a higher education programme that includes the study of a language as a single honours, major honours, one of a joint double, one of a triple or as a minor subject combination

² Association of University Language Centres’ (AULC) survey of degree credited and non-degree programmes 2003/4 (not included in the HESA statistics above)

³ Statistics provided by City Lit

⁴ Information provided by Westminster Kingsway College

KEY WORDS

Coherence Collaboration Consultation Effectiveness Flexibility
Inclusiveness Responsiveness

AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The recommendations made on the basis of the research and case studies carried out for the purpose of this report have several aims:

- develop key language initiatives to facilitate the UK Higher Education Sector's contribution towards making Britain, in the UK Government's words "a generous host" and "a cultural inspiration" for the 2012 Olympics, and for other international cultural and sporting events in London and across the UK;
- widen participation and interest in languages both for personal development and participation at a moment of increasing internationalisation, when learning languages and understanding cultures is strategically important to the UK and its citizens politically, socially and economically;
- contribute to a wider national multilingual policy for the public and private and sectors with long-term national benefits (based on working with, for example, the RLNs, CILT, the London Development Agency and the Learning and Skills Council London Employment and Skills Taskforce's action plan to maximise the employment and skills benefits of the 2012 Games in which languages and cultural skills are recognised for training volunteers and those in paid employment);
- contribute to the body of experience and history that constitute the heritage of the Modern Olympics, and the place of languages and culture within it;
- deliver knowledge transfer more generally between Higher Education language departments and civic and business communities, producing mutual benefits and raising HE languages' profile amongst broader publics.

2. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

METHODOLOGY

The research undertaken for this report used a variety of methods, based on qualitative data analysis procedures (i.e. familiarisation with the information obtained before establishing categories, themes and patterns). Desk research identified appropriate official reports, media reports and published academic research to be analysed. Semi-structured telephone interviews were used to interview key players in past, present and future large-scale sporting and cultural events; the interview topic guide was constructed using social sciences research methods. A semi-structured format was also used in the focus groups with international groups commissioned for this report; these were 'accidental' samples and the groups were again run in accordance with social science research methods. Emergent ideas, explanations and relationships were then tested by returning to the data collected. Further case studies used specially-commissioned reports on, for example, the training of security personnel and of language specialist volunteers. Use is also made here of the findings of original academic research into the international visitor experience not yet published.

CONTEXT

Although this report covers much more than the Olympics, the initial focus is on the Games given the scale of such an event, and of the possibilities for review and innovation that it engenders.

The modern Olympic Games are increasingly about much more than sporting excellence, and are deeply embedded in a multitude of economic, political and cultural transactions. The Games can also be invested in multiple ways with meanings of profound national symbolic significance.

Grasping the significance of the symbolic as well as implementing the practicalities will be seen to be essential for success in the course of this report.

"The London bid team's decision to include 30 young Londoner's speaking 28 first languages among the delegation that travelled to Singapore for the International Olympic Committee's host city election in July 2005 gave a strong message to the world about how the UK will connect with people across the globe through the 2012 Games. Chair Sebastian Coe said: 'London is the most cosmopolitan city in the world, constantly renewing itself, and is now home to 200 ethnic communities who speak a total of 300 languages. We want to involve all of these people in delivering our Games'" (Collis, 2007a).

No one previous event will provide a model of language provision for London 2012 which needs to develop its own linguistic and cultural identity. However,

various lessons and ideas may be drawn from, for example, Sydney 2000, Athens 2004, Beijing 2008, and in current planning for the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics.

Nonetheless, the limits of other 'models' will also become evident. For example, the political, social and economic climate of contemporary China and the impact of this on language provision for the Olympics is limiting for the application of the language strategy of these most recent Games for 2012. Planning for Vancouver 2010 will be seen to have certain aspects that are inspirational and examples of good practice, but once again it has taken root in specific conditions – the bilingual national status of Canada and its ensuing policies which will seek to capitalise on the opportunity to promote its Francophone communities.

The focus of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG) Language Services Programmes for the Olympics and Paralympics will necessarily be in the first instance on the Olympic Family (which includes the international media), as required by the Olympic Charter. Many of these services will be provided by professional bodies of translators and interpreters, some of whom will have worked at previous Olympic events.

It is obvious, therefore, that high-quality and internationally-recognised HE postgraduate translating and interpreting courses across the UK will make a readily identifiable contribution to the Games, partly due to their strong links to professional bodies (such as the Institute of Translating and Interpreting (ITI) and the Institute of Linguists (IOL)) and to employers, and partly due to the strong international reputation of their courses. The work of the Routes into Languages National Networks for Translation and for Interpreting will continue to strengthen their profile and outreach and specific planning should be put into place now to provide these high-calibre professional linguists. The need for forward-planning and for an understanding of the scale required is imperative (see details below in the research into past, present and future events). Previous Games have not always made the best use of their own national translators and interpreters.

Tourism, the Arts and Sports need to be used simultaneously to promote the UK and London, and language services need to be incorporated into all three areas both for optimum tourist appeal and community success, and for optimum 'city re-imaging'. As in Sydney, the languages of the 2012 Games will be French and English (the official languages) together with Arabic, German, Russian, and Spanish (which make up the six 'working languages' of the Olympics; with Chinese potentially assuming a new place following Beijing), and most importantly – "Multilingualism". The whole of London, and beyond, will be an extended Olympic venue.

Consequently, in addition to the training of high-level translators and interpreters, HE language departments can play a key role in building bridges between the strict requirements concerning translation and interpreting for the Olympic Family (there is no room for error in the highly-charged atmosphere that the Games engenders), and language

work for/with/by the wider communities around the Games, that include London citizens, volunteers from London and around the UK, and international visitors. HE language departments must work closely with CILT and with the Regional Languages Networks (especially, of course, the London Region which has begun work with its 'Welcoming the World' package for front-line staff) in delivering this.

GAMES AND THE CITY

It is evident that the Games are catalysts for re-imagining and re-imaging, re-constructing and re-presenting the host cities and, to some extent, the host countries. London 2012 presents the UK with the opportunity to shed its monolingual image and to project its vibrant multiculturalism and its openness to internationalism.

How is this image managing so far?

Beginning with the famous quote from John Donne that “no man is an island entire of itself, every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main....” as an inspiration for London 2012’s vision for an “Olympic cultural and educational programme that will connect with the wider world”, the website of the Official London Organising Committee of the Games (LOCOG) emphasises the need for communication:

“As an island nation, the United Kingdom is committed to using Olympic values to build bridges between our own communities and between ourselves and other nations” (www.london2012.com)

It highlights London both as being (now and in the past) a place that welcomes “people, ideas, information and goods from around the world”, and as being “notably diverse”, with three hundred languages spoken by seven million people:

“London will bring Olympic ideals to life throughout the cultural and education programme. This will include official celebrations, city-centre concerts for every taste and exuberant community events”.

Language and intercultural provision will therefore need to extend far beyond the sporting events and locations, as previously noted. At the time of writing, exclusively amongst the documentation on the LOCOG website, this information (Candidate File, Volume 3, Theme 17: Olympism and Culture) is [immediately](#) available in French. Of course, the whole website should be available in French according to the Olympic Charter, more of which later, and a section of this report will be devoted to the place and importance of French in the Olympics.

How far, then, have British attitudes really evolved since the 1948 London Olympics?

“While the International Olympic Committee rules lay down the provision of an interpreter service as a necessity for all Olympic Games, the celebration of the Games in an English-speaking country curtails this need very greatly. With the exception of the Finnish team, no interpreters were allocated individually to nations. So many of the competitors were English-speaking that they fulfilled the function for their teams at their housing centres” (Official Report, 1948)

This use of what may be termed the ‘accidental (and often self-selecting) linguist’ will be referred to at various places in this report, as it continues today throughout the private and public sectors, revealing (mis)perceptions and (mis)conceptions concerning language use and ability. The 1948 report goes on to note the “employment of student labour” for domestic and catering duties in these centres, and that this proved an added advantage since many were multi-lingual, as the reliance on team members was not in fact enough (this ‘interpreter’ service was on a purely voluntary basis, carried out by more ‘accidental linguists’).

Returning to issues concerning London’s image more generally, academic research sometimes refers to two types of city image, ‘induced’ and ‘organic’ (Gunn, 1972, quoted by Smith, 2006). The former refers to the image evoked through the strategic marketing and promotion, while the latter is developed from sources indirectly linked to the city, e.g. news reports, films, articles and other such information. The London 2012 Olympics will therefore probably be a mixture of both organic destination images (people’s well-established image of the city brought about by stereotypes old and new: on the one hand, foggy, grey, conservative.... on the other, cosmopolitan, (multi) cultural, dynamic, musical), and induced destination images (i.e. the image that LOCOG will promote: a welcoming, sporting metropolis, with a responsibility to local communities and a lasting legacy). This is coupled with the organic/induced imagery that any Olympic Games will evoke, regardless of location. However, this diametric categorisation may be flawed, in that it does not address contemporary city re-imaging, where flagship buildings or events are used strategically by destinations to communicate images via organic sources, and research findings suggest that awareness of sporting events and new complexes do indeed have a positive impact on people’s perceptions of a city (Smith, 2006a).

However, neither ‘induced’ nor ‘organic’ images guarantee urban regeneration, whether physical, social or economic (Smith, 2006b). The fortunes of the previous Olympic cities have been varied: Barcelona 1992 praised for recovery of brownfield sites; Athens 2004 criticised for development on greenfield sites on the city outskirts; Atlanta 1996 dubbed the ‘disposable Games’ (Ruthheiser, 1996) for its use of temporary, Games-time premises of no lasting benefit to the local community. As an interviewee says: “when it was here, it was here; and when it was over, it was gone” (Huc-Hepher, March 2008, Respondent 7). Interestingly it will be seen that the quality, or otherwise, of language provision at each of these events is mirrored in their use of space. So what does this teach us about the provision of language services and the resources of the HE sector?

It would be cost effective to use HE language departments as service providers with the aim of ensuring sustainable (re)generation and a lasting legacy by:

- delivering both short and long-term language training,**
- transferring the knowledge gained in this provision to future events and to a range of organisations;**
- equipping those involved with experience and improved, nationally-recognised qualifications;**
- bequeathing improved language services more generally across the UK.**

Sustainable economic regeneration could also be achieved by, for example, language acquisition leading to lasting trade relations with new foreign investors. Just as it is crucial not to waste resources on building new stadia and facilities to impress the watching international audience when the existing infrastructure is adequate, so it is crucial not to waste resources on short-term language strategies.

And a further caveat, short-lived training/employment opportunities are also likely to be commercially sponsored which can lead to other problems: “the contents of Sydney’s educational packs left school children with the impression that McDonald’s and the Games were indelibly linked” (Lenskyj, 2002, Smith, 2006b). Training and education programmes, information and packs using the UK HE ‘brand’ would avoid such commercially-induced ethical problems.

Location, Location... and Image

London and the UK have an international image as a tourist destination, a financial centre, a political model, a multicultural society, a home to cultural tradition and innovation, a sporting nation. That image is therefore multi-faceted and includes negatives as well as positives.

International events held previously in the UK have not always enjoyed sufficient pre-event planning. Although successful in several areas, as will be seen, the Manchester Commonwealth Games 2002 are singled out in subsequent reports for undertaking inadequate scoping of the event or of strategic training issues. As a result, Manchester 2002 did not have sufficient security guards, cleaners, and caterers and relied on a 'just in time' training programme (Cowan and Jackson, 2002 *Strategic Training Issues and Recommendations for the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne*). While this is not a specific language training issue, it can be assumed that there was also inadequate planning for language provision. It should be noted however, that the social and economic programme was more successful, and that there is evidence of long-term benefits in Manchester (see chapter 3 below).

The emphasis on planning cannot be over-stated. Manchester 2002 had not envisaged the use of volunteers, but when an advertisement was placed, they received 18, 000 applications. A focus on the best training for volunteers for 2012 is therefore essential – research shows that the key to motivation is in the training stage, and that enthusiastic volunteers often continue with training and education programmes. This is essential in ensuring the long-term benefits of legacy.

Major sports venues have existed in the UK's cities since the turn of the twentieth century, and research shows (unsurprisingly) that the most convincing images are those that come from the most credible sources (Smith: 2004). The UK, and especially London, can therefore exploit its existing sports heritage to add to its self-promotion strategy in the planning, delivery and legacy of the Games.

Can the same be said of the UK's existing reputation in linguistic ability and as a welcoming destination for global travellers?

We can guess the answer to this, and the statistics gathered by VisitBritain (available on its website; www.visitbritain.com) confirm that international visitors do not feel welcome here (except for the Russians incidentally. The Chinese believe that the French would be most welcoming to them which might lead to the speculation that the very pro-active work currently being carried out by the French Embassy and the Alliance Française in China (discovered in research for this report) to promote 'Francophonie' and French culture within schools and the wider community in China may be having an effect.

Work needs to start now on a new linguistic and cultural image. The CILT website (www.cilt.org.uk) also notes Britain's current image as 'polite, but unwelcoming'. The main mechanism for positive tourism impacts is 'image enhancement' (Smith 2006b). An image of London and of Britain, which can be enhanced by linguistic and intercultural training, as cosmopolitan, open and welcoming is paramount. Liverpool City of Culture 08 has been working hard on this and media reports and interviews suggest that it is paying rewards, as will be seen below (chapter 4).

Acknowledged images of a city and of a nation may have as many negative as positive connotations. There was concern amongst Manchester 2002 volunteers that the culture associated with dealing with soccer fans (despite Manchester's global sporting brand) may adversely impact on the Commonwealth Games experience, particularly in relation to customer services. This is a point reinforced by academic research into sports events concerning the UK's reputation. The former 'hooliganism' image needs to be continually displaced by a modern, cosmopolitan and tourist-friendly one. This negative image is projected to the rest of the world through the highly powerful tool of sports media coverage and needs equally powerful tools to counteract it. It is essential that the outdated image of insular and violent England be replaced by a more positive one. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the lager-drinking and loutish image is still alive abroad and linked to England in particular, with Scotland/Wales/Ireland being perceived in a far more positive light.

On the other hand, participation in international football events may also be a spur to learning a language by students across a wider demographic than that currently associated with Modern Languages at undergraduate level. Alison Phipps points out the motivation of one of the students in an evening class that she joined as part of her research: "A community worker from one of the housing schemes and an ardent supporter of the local football team. He is spending his holidays at the European Cup Final in Portugal and it is football that brings him to the classes. He hasn't learned a language before" (Phipps: 2007).

Finally, however, the Manchester Games came to symbolise a modern city that was progressive and ambitious, an image that can then be used in future destination marketing and urban tourism planning activities (Smith: 2004). Its social policies were also successful, as will again be seen below.

It is clear that a broad-ranging and high-quality language service for 2012 on all levels will be an important factor in creating a positive international image. All this rests on effective and well-timed planning. As previously noted, the concept of 're-imaging' the city has become deeply embedded in the discourse around, for example, high-profile spectator sport, and sport is used by governments and private enterprise to modify the image of certain locations. We also know that this 're-imaging' has often been criticised with 'positive image effects' not necessarily being felt by the cities themselves (Smith: 2004). The 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games were criticised for prioritising image concerns at the expense of community development as has been seen.

It is clear that the London 2012 bid strived to avoid this and it is obvious that high-profile events have a more positive legacy when they are embedded in wider regeneration strategies. Nonetheless, high-profile sporting events are viewed as an exercise in 're-branding' and success depends upon the image of the destination and the image of the event staged (Chalip, Green & Hill: 2003). It is therefore essential that the image of London as a positive, open, accommodating, international and multilingual place is ensured. High-profile international events can leave a negative impression if the city image is not compatible with that of the event staged.

Importantly for London and the UK more widely, research into major sporting events and any consequently enhanced city image do not necessarily translate into increased tourist visits or 'other forms of economic development' (Ritchie and Smith: 1991). There is, in fact, a lack of published research into the efficacy of mega-events and related flagship urban initiatives, yet image change is frequently cited as a primary justification for their implementation (Smith, 2006a). There is evidence to suggest that the tourism benefits of event strategies are exaggerated, because large sports events may in fact discourage tourist activity that would otherwise have occurred.

We also know, however, that (for example) London's leading museums and galleries are all planning major Olympics-related exhibitions and events for 2012 (University of Westminster 'Museums, Galleries and the International Visitor Experience' (MGIVE) Research, see chapter 7 below). In order, therefore, to ensure that urban sports tourism creates a positive image for other potential visitors, it is important to develop several strategies simultaneously. Indeed in this "relatively underdeveloped branch of tourism", the "notion of a city that boasts a diverse range of sporting products including events, participatory activities, museums, tours, themed areas [...] is something that has yet to be fully exploited by cities" (Smith, 2006b). The case study on the international visitor experience in the UK museum and gallery sector offers an example of an HE languages department project that suggests how such a strategy can be developed that meets the linguistic and cultural needs and expectations of international visitors.

Legacy, Legacy.... Legacy

Broadly speaking, interviewees in academic research tend to think that major sports events "brighten up" urban landscapes, giving the city "the edge", making it "more fashionable", "cool" and "exciting". However, some negative attitudes are also conveyed, the most common one being the inconvenience and violence associated with sports events, and the high-cost, short-lived nature of events such as the Olympics are also often mentioned. However, even those interviewees who do not like sport tend to view such events as positive for the city and its residents, "individual attitudes are eclipsed by the overriding acceptance of the dominant shared meaning" (Smith, 2006c). Symbolic investment and association begin to make their presence felt.

There is no doubt therefore that an improved international visitor experience due to linguistic and intercultural sensitivity and capability (and the legacy of

this) is vital to public and private sectors, and to communities. While the Atlanta Games became notorious for its lack of regeneration assistance, (with its co-chair famously stating that the Olympics were a business venture and not a welfare programme), it is clear that London's bid held local communities and the Games' legacy to them at its core (see for example the London 2012 Sustainability Plan).

It is also important not to emphasise solely the impact of high-profile sporting events. An important model is provided here by the language policy currently being adopted by Liverpool City of Culture 2008. While it is recognised that the UK press has maintained an often negative stance towards the planning and financial aspects of Liverpool's mega-event, research for this report focuses on a committed language policy at work and real collaboration between organisers, local and regional government and further and higher education institutions. HE's commitment to long-term education and training is being valued in Liverpool as key to long-term success.

Finally, the notion of legacy is complex. While the symbolic dimension and energy focus on the event itself (and its lead-in), this may, in fact, last for several years, generations even, and also attracts further events to itself. Glasgow's bid for the Commonwealth Games has certainly been generated from the City of Culture success in 1990. It will therefore be 24 years later (i.e. a whole generation) that the legacy of one event is manifested in another (observation by Phipps for this report).

Communication, Communication.... Communication

As previously stated, the 'working languages' of the Olympic Movement, as set out in the *Olympic Charter*, are Arabic, English, French, German, Russian and Spanish. Following Beijing 2008, and China as a major economic power in the 21st century, Chinese might also be expected to enjoy a high-profile at future events. Social, economic and political developments mean that the range of languages that it is necessary and/or desirable to provide at any Games is constantly evolving. The provision of high-quality language services, both in depth and breadth, is key to the success of the Games and of other international events.

As Lo Bianco (2000) writes:

"The modern Olympic Games are [...] beginning to stress the democratic ideals of equality, merit, integrity and peaceful co-existence through an awareness of cultural diversity and cross-cultural communication. One demonstration of this (so that all may participate equally in this international festival) is the custom of requiring the host country to provide interpreting facilities and language services prior to and during the Games. Language services have become an essential part of the international peace-making role of the Games in that they facilitate an ease of, and accommodation in, cross – cultural communication during all aspects of the Games" (Lo Bianco, 2000).

Some, however, are more equal than others as the following research on past events will show.

3. INTERNATIONAL EVENTS PAST

The most thorough existing reporting on language planning for a high-profile international event is available in Joseph Lo Bianco's *Games Talk. Language Planning for Sydney 2000. A Legacy to the Olympic Movement* (2000). It will therefore be necessary to refer to this in some detail, but the intention here is not to rehearse the points already made there, but to consider more broadly what can be learned from past experiences of large-scale event planning across the world in recent years. It should also be noted that this report largely concerns, exactly that, language planning, it is not primarily a record of what was actually delivered, although this can be supplemented by information in, for example, the Official Report for Sydney 2000 (although that information needs also to be considered alongside other research, as will be seen).

Languages and the Games

The IOC *Charter* mandates that French and English and the language of the host city are the official languages of the Olympic Games. For London then, only English and French are official but, as in Sydney, the languages of the Games will be English, French and 'multilingualism' (Lo Bianco: 2000).

The main groups affected in varying degrees by the need for effective linguistic communication are:

Athletes; Officials and Dignitaries, including all the International Sports Federations (IFs) and their delegates and the International Olympic Committee (IOC); Spectators; Journalists.

Extended groups then include:

Transport Services; Emergency Services; Hospitality and Retail Industry; Tourism Industry (including Heritage, Museum and Gallery sector, etc) Domestic Communities and International Visitors

Language Service providers therefore need to be very clear how to cater for the differing needs of these target groups, and how to meet the specific expectations of each group. Research shows that effective communication fails when there is a mismatch between the linguistic and cultural expectations of the target group, and the way in which the provider has 'packaged' information (MGIVE, 2007 described in some detail in chapter 7 below).

The Key to Success is in the Planning Examples from Recent Commonwealth Games

2002 Manchester Commonwealth Games

The aims of the wider economic and social programme around the Games were to:

- Improve education/training in disadvantaged areas;
- Improve social cohesion through celebratory projects;
- Improve competitiveness of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

There was a strong emphasis on the public domain and a desire to maximise the positive legacy for the following Commonwealth Games in Melbourne.

Relevant projects funded, all designed to be sustainable, were:

Games Xchange - an information centre providing information to locals and visitors on events and locations;

Pre-Volunteer Programme - focusing on people from disadvantaged groups across the region who were given training before applying to be a volunteer; it also developed a database of volunteers that has since been used to provide a pool of volunteers for other sports and community events, including the London Triathlon;

Prosperity North-West – creating strategic alliances between local businesses and commonwealth countries;

Let's Celebrate – long-term social cohesion by promoting ethnic minorities through recurrent events, such as carnivals.

A tangible legacy of two accredited courses for event and sports volunteering was left, but institutions were nonetheless criticised for not devoting sufficient attention to the post-event period (Smith: 2007). It is clear that these same aims are shared for 2012. However, there seems to be little attention here to specific language planning. More positively, an 'event bureau' does continue to use volunteers at, for example, international football matches which is an important legacy.

Overall, despite some negative aspects concerning lack of planning previously alluded to, Manchester 2002 provides some possible models in which HE can be involved. Event projects – targeted volunteering schemes in particular – were shown to be useful in delivering training and support to those most in need of assistance. This was a regional and 'event-themed' regeneration scheme that did not simply rely on the direct impacts of the Games event. It is considered "an innovative event with few precedents [that met] many of the good-practice guidelines emanating from academic and government sources" (Smith: 2007). There were several schemes and funds for urban regeneration, often aimed at encouraging neighbourhood-level effects that were "event-themed rather than event-led" running from 1999 to 2004 (Smith, 2006b). This meant that the projects it funded were only "loosely linked to the Games and encouraged more diverse impacts, as tourism, educational, health, cultural and small and medium-sized enterprise (SME)

projects were pursued alongside those directly associated with sport” (Smith, 2006b). Local communities were thereby involved directly in a more sustained way which leads to more sustainable objectives.

An equivalent timescale for fixed-term London-based projects would be 2009-2014 – therefore beginning next year. Are we ready?

Using Routes into Languages networks and projects we could be, using language-planning programmes as beacons for 2012 preparation.

One of the schemes funded in Manchester (as referred to above) was the Games XChange project which developed a central Visitor Centre for the Games and was a medium through which local people, businesses and visitors to the region could gather Commonwealth Games-related, city and regional tourist information, offering an advanced and interactive experience for users. 70, 000 people visited the centre and 1.5 million the website by the end of funding in March 2005 (Smith, 2006b).

LOCOG are no doubt envisaging similar centres around the city (Oxford Circus, for example, is designated as an Olympic ‘Hub’), but have they envisaged these as staffed by multilingual employees/volunteers and are interactive services to be provided in several languages? HE language departments are ideally placed, both in terms of location and human resources, to provide such a facility.

The Games XChange project promoted attractions and venues to residents as well as visitors. Stands were set up within major supermarket chains in deprived areas of the city exhibiting information about forthcoming city and regional events. Notably, promotional work was also targeted “at the large student population in Manchester, with around 40,000 leaflets distributed to city libraries and universities” (Smith, 2006b). The legacy that the project aimed to leave was ‘information-based’ and involved “archiving the outcomes of the Manchester 2002 programme for future generations”. Once again, the HE sector is ideally place for such legacy/archive work.

As stipulated as part of its funding requirements, the project was required to last beyond the end of the Commonwealth Games. “The relationships built and lessons learned meant that Manchester has been able to offer enhanced visitor services for subsequent events, including the Champions League Final [...] in May 2003. Volunteers who had previously participated were offered the chance to assist once more, with the added incentive of the opportunity to learn some basic Italian. This assisted supporters of Milan and Juventus” (Smith, 2006b).

The project also developed new materials alongside the Commonwealth Games, one of which was the ‘Manchester Music Map’, and the guide was produced in several languages. Small-scale initiatives such as these developed in association with mega-events are critical if the momentum of an event is to be properly capitalised upon (Smith, 2006b). Once again Routes into Languages projects could be specifically

directed at producing such materials, and involving school and university students working together.

Diverse, small initiatives that are not necessarily sport-orientated provide a more sustainable basis for tourist development. The ‘Music Map’ is an example of a positive legacy left by the Commonwealth Games, despite being thematically unrelated to them. Event-themed, not event-led would seem to encapsulate usefully this stimulating and inspiring approach. However, a combination of the two is seen to be the most productive.

Research suggests that London 2012 is unlikely to have a major impact on tourism in already established sites, but it is felt that event-led tourism will have a regenerative effect on the deprived areas of East London and South London, as well as having a positive effect on existing attractions in these areas (e.g. the Millennium Dome, Woolwich Arsenal, Silvertown Aquarium, Maritime Museum) (Smith, 2006b). All these sites would benefit from improved language services, and they are all areas in which there are diverse community languages.

According to the Manchester City Council Report 2002, the Games and resultant regeneration of a dilapidated area of East Manchester into a ‘SportCity’ zone has put it ‘on the international map as a quality venue increasing the international reputation for Manchester as a vibrant, multicultural city’. Research suggests that the Games marked the start of a re-imaging/re-branding campaign rather than the culmination of one (Smith, 2006c). London 2012 can be seen as a goal, but in many ways perhaps better as a starting point and not as the finishing line.

“Events are most effective when they are used to assist, and to accelerate, the achievement of pre-existing plans and objectives. This means ensuring that events and associated initiatives are integrated into broader urban and regional regeneration programmes [...] events should be embedded within other regeneration initiatives, and not act as a substitute for them [...] It allows greater scope for sustained benefits at neighbourhood level, whilst using event associations to generate publicity for, and civic engagement with regeneration initiatives. If programmes are too event-driven, this will mean that the initiatives will inevitably falter almost immediately once an event is over” (Smith, 2006b)

There is, therefore, an issue of tension between meeting the needs of the event and appropriate strategies for the long-term, and it is therefore essential that volunteers (for example) are given a balance of both short-term event-specific training and long-term prospects. The problem of short, sharp, ‘in the tent’ training is that it is not nationally recognised. HE can be involved in both the design and implementation of short and long-term training (managing volunteers, customer service, cultural and linguistic awareness).

2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games

Two organisations, Tourism Training Victoria and Arts and Recreation Training Victoria, unsurprisingly looked closely at the lessons to be learnt from the 2000 Sydney Olympics (as have other subsequent events in Australia, for example the Brisbane Goodwill Games, 2001), and their report contains useful information on this and other previous events. Their *Strategic Training Issues and Recommendations for the 2006 Commonwealth Games* report notes that there were missed opportunities in Sydney to maximise long-term benefits to industries through better integration of ‘inside and outside the tent’ skills, even though a key focus of the industry strategy in Sydney was on long-term skill development, particularly in the tourism and hospitality industries. The Department of Education and Training (DET) played a key strategic and leadership role for the development and implementation of strategies for training in Olympic-impacted industries, focusing on tourism and hospitality, transport, and security. The majority of DET-funded training was linked to national competency standards and qualifications. As regards national training, the HE sector is, of course, a vital and credible provider and universities were involved in providing training for Melbourne 2006.

An interesting problem identified at Sydney by the authors of the report for Melbourne was that sport-related training was a National Sporting Organisation/SOCOG/International Sporting Federation responsibility and resulted in the importation of many officials from overseas (interviews carried out for this report also indicate that was the case at Athens 2004, and may possibly be the case at Vancouver 2010). There was a view in Sydney that the opportunity for long-term skill development in the sporting industries was therefore lost. If we apply this to the languages services area, there is a lesson to be learnt.

Although it is inevitable (and no doubt more effective) that some linguistic expertise from previous Games will be used in 2012 for the needs of the Olympic Family, opportunities for training at the very highest levels of translating and interpreting should not be lost and UK postgraduate translation and interpreting courses should be planning for this. Our research focuses to some extent on wider training opportunities, but it is clear that the UK’s well-established postgraduate translating and interpreting programme should be supporting high-calibre current students/early career professionals to apply for and secure key interpreting and translation posts at global events (see in chapter 6 below the on-going contribution of top French translation and interpreting schools to Olympic events past and present).

To return to Melbourne, Victoria’s current industry training plan for sport and recreation identified long-term skills shortages not only for effective delivery of the Games, but also for Melbourne’s long-term events capacity, and this was seen as an opportunity for investing in skills and gaining the optimum industry legacy. The training for 2006 was therefore specifically developed with a long-term focus on building Victoria’s events capacity. The principle of integrating

nationally-recognised training was recommended for adoption in the overall training mix for the Games. The UK should follow its example.

Consultations in Melbourne identified two distinct groups of people involved in training: a) those who would be involved as part of longer-term career/skill development; b) those who would be involved as a short-term 'one-off' experience (although some of these may become involved in other related community endeavours). It is clear that language and intercultural skills are necessary to both groups for London 2012.

When the range of 'customers' at any international event is considered, the scope of language training is clearly enormous and presents both challenges and opportunities. Before looking in more detail at language services provision at previous Olympic Games, some other types of large, international events will be considered.

Cork City of Culture 2005

The following is based on an interview with the Arts Officer for Cork City Council who was on the Board of Directors when Cork won the bid to become European City of Culture (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 12, March 2008),

The main language services provided were for the Irish language. These involved translations of programmes and some press articles, and were delivered by the Programme Team: "there was one individual in particular who had very good Irish, and that was really the main provision". [The 'accidental linguist' puts in a re-appearance].

"There wasn't a designated translation facility", but when requests for translations came in from the broader European press, these were carried out on an ad hoc basis "as and when required", sometimes by people on placements under the European programme. French and German were covered on this basis, but as far as other languages are concerned, the interviewee was not sure.

The official Cork 05 website was in English and not translated into other languages. Some of the programmes, however, were translated, for example, works by "12 poets from the new member states of the European Union" were translated.

There were no language volunteers on the streets to meet and greet international visitors, but there was an office in the city centre, which had volunteers with other languages; namely students on year-long programmes from France, Germany and Spain. However, no linguists were employed for the purpose of language services. These students were not given any formal language training, but did receive a general induction course on the city, which lasted about a week.

Frontline staff in the tourism, transport and retail industries were not given any language training. Members of the local community were involved in

volunteering, but this was not language-specific. Indeed, a key part of the event was “participation-based, culturally-driven community programming”.

The increase in international visitor numbers during the year of culture was “very positively embraced by the local community and by the hospitality sector, the cultural sector and all the sectors that were engaging with them; it was seen as a very positive aspect of it”. In Cork itself, there was an overall increase in out-of-state visitor numbers of 36% in 2005, with a consequent increase in revenue of 14.1% generated by the same segment. Ten major festivals were held in the Cork City area, attracting a total of 200, 000 people, of which approximately 60, 000 were from abroad. Tourism-related employment grew and overall direct employment increased by 3.2% from 2003 to 2005 (Moloney: 2006).

Over the course of the year, the city hosted many foreign nationals “and if translation services were required, they would have been provided” (but it is not specified how). In many cases, there was somebody in their party who would have sufficient English to provide for the rest of the group, “but if need be, we would employ somebody to provide that service”. “A lot of relationships were established between European arts organisations, cultural organisations and European local authorities, many of which are still ongoing”.

In terms of the legacy, “the city is now perceived in a different way; the profile of the city wouldn’t have been as high in advance of the event and there wouldn’t have been any direct connections between arts organisations and equivalent organisations within Europe”. There are still very direct relationships; in the week in which the interview took place, people from European theatre companies took part in a series of workshops in the city and there are artist-in-residency programmes which have developed since the year of culture, as well as the poetry exchanges mentioned above, “these are one-on-one **relationships** which have formed at a very grassroots, organic level, as opposed to through government or state agencies, but are far more interesting precisely because they are not driven by an agenda of political engagement, they are driven by an agenda of artistic and personal engagement”.

Local universities ran a number of programmes, events and seminars under the umbrella of the European Capital of Culture. Their services were also taken advantage of when translations were required. Links were set up with the universities to fulfil Cork City Council’s language needs, and these are still maintained today. For instance, Cork is currently “involved in a relationship with Shanghai”, and University College Cork is consequently being used for translation work “as need be”. At times during Cork 2005 professional language service providers were employed, and “from time to time we would use things like the Alliance Française; it was very much on an ad hoc basis”.

This would therefore appear to be a positive experience, although the language services do not appear to have had any centralised or co-ordinated organisation which may have worked for a city the size of Cork, but would clearly be unworkable in London.

Luxembourg Capital of Culture 2007

The following information is based on an interview with a representative at the Welcome Desk during the Capital of Culture (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 10, March 2008). All other staff contacted had moved onto new jobs, only two months after the event, a telling example and note in various places in this report issues concerning both the transitory nature of mega-events, and the rapid loss of institutional/organisational memory.

The official website, tourist brochures, programmes and guidebooks, etc., were all tri-lingual: French, German and English. In the city centre and the Luxembourg tourist office, there were foreign language assistants to help international visitors. There was also a language telephone line to provide tourists with information in four different languages. These services were provided by staff employed for the year of culture, not by volunteers. There is a distinction made in French between “volontaires” (paid) and “bénévoles” (unpaid); for Luxembourg 07, “volontaires” were recruited within the European volunteering framework.

The volunteers received training on the content and logistics of the European Capital of Culture, but not language training as such, as the volunteers were chosen because of their self-proclaimed (no assessment or verification was carried out) proficiency in the four required languages (French, English, German and Lëtzebuergesch). [Here comes the accidental linguist yet again...]

Local universities were involved in many cultural projects for Luxembourg 07, but were not involved in any language training or provisions. Most of the “volunteers” were students who had recently graduated.

The youth projects and the different themed festivals were particularly successful. The city also organised a bus to bring visitors across the border from Germany while the big festivals were being staged, which brought in many foreign-speaking tourists.

There were guided tours in foreign languages, but transport, retail and security sector staff were not given any language training and such skills were not expected of them.

The cultural youth initiatives are the main legacy of Luxembourg being elected European Capital of Culture.

It can be seen, therefore, that up until now the language services provision for City of Culture events has generally not been conceived on a large-scale nor on a coherent basis. Liverpool City of Culture 08 covered in chapter 4 below will present a rather different current picture, as will the indications for the Toulouse 2013 bid.

Olympic Games Talk: Language Services

Previous Olympic Games will now be considered in more detail. Of the other reports on previous events selected for inclusion here, the focus is specifically on the provision of language services.

As will be clear by now, the transient nature of mega-events can lead to equally transient training and other programmes. This is incompatible with the notion of bequeathing a legacy, both to the city and to its citizens, and to visitors. At past events there has been insufficient use of the broad range of high-quality HE resources for language provision and training. Disproportionate reliance on the private commercial sector has led, inevitably, to inadequate long-term legacy and to the exclusion of sectors of the population, apparent both in official reports and in academic research. Where language provision does offer interesting models, only the major, powerful languages are properly represented.

“The answer to these huge issues of common speech and of just mobility in the globalised and globalising contexts of life in the world are being worked out by those who do not insist on finding a common tongue, by those who work to find tongues in common” (Phipps, 2007)

Indeed, a further area for HE input could also be effective and objective evaluation of language services. The delivery of language training and provision is often done on an ad hoc/acquaintance basis. From Atlanta to Salt Lake City, to Turin, to Sydney, to Beijing, it is clear that personal connections and recommendations count a great deal. These services are therefore not tried and tested, there are not objective procedures, but they are simply passed on internally from one Organising Committee to the next. London could do better.

The lack of long-term commitment was further revealed in the research methods employed here – it was often difficult to contact interview candidates, except for some notable key players whose expertise and knowledge base has been used in several venues, and they themselves had also often moved on to different types of work. A representative from Manchester 2002 who does still work in the Legacy Division, confirms this: “a lot of employees go from event to event – a lot of them were employed just on a short-term basis for the Games – so a lot of that [language services] information has gone with them” (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 11, March 2008). Interviewees recalled their experience at events they had been involved in with difficulty in some cases. Other respondents also alluded to this transience: “everything just disappears after the Games” ; “... and the languages policy also, when it was over, it was over” (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 7, March 2008). The Organising Committee ceases to exist after the Olympics has “left town”, so people move on and volunteer outcomes are not recorded. Anecdotal evidence perhaps, but a telling symbol of the lasting impact (or otherwise) of large-scale events perceived as prestigious at the time.

As far as Organising Committees are concerned, language training will generally be seen to be limited to Specialist Language Volunteers who work with the Olympic Family and does not stretch to the wider community/businesses/tourism. There are exceptions to this in the examples provided by Liverpool City of Culture 2008 and Vancouver Winter Olympics 2010 (and to some extent Beijing 2008), and these will be considered in further detail, but otherwise this does not seem to be the case.

There is, therefore, inconsistent language provision and language training from one city/event to the next – as can be seen in the official reports from each Olympic city for example (and referred to below), and as evidenced by, again for example, the differing approaches to language services at Cork/Liverpool/Luxembourg as European Capitals of Culture (see above, and in chapter 4 below).

To return to Olympic events, Lo Bianco (2000) reports also on **Seoul 1988** where a large number of volunteers were engaged to supply language services; **Barcelona 1992** where language operations were complex with four official languages (French, English, Spanish and Catalan, given the bilingual status of the city); and **Atlanta 1996**, whose legacy in general has been severely criticised, but whose language service had some success (notably in French). In addition to Lo Bianco's overview, there is reference in this report to Language Services in the Official Reports for all of these events.

In addition, we considered **Los Angeles 1984** and the **Turin Winter Olympics 2006**. Given the length of time that has passed since Los Angeles, detail will not be given here, although it should be noted that the 1984 Official Report contains an extensive section on 'Language Services' (chapter 20; 7 pages), which had 43 language coordinators and assistant coordinators, together with 555 volunteer interpreters. They also had a language 'Flying Squad' to assist in communication; training appears to have been provided by linguists employed in the Olympics Language Services Department (therefore we can infer not for use in the wider community). The importance of forward planning and the maintenance of services at a high and efficient level is also emphasised, and future organisers of an event of this magnitude are urged to: 'recognise the importance of accurate communications and the value of language services'.

For **Turin**, the report emphasises the importance of the "notion of the customer", but it does not refer specifically to language services even in the list of experts consulted for transport, security, ceremonies, media, etc. It is however, candid about several failings – for example, lack of diversity in food for the athletes, insufficient parking for the Olympic Family, insufficient signage. We can conclude therefore, that language provision was not high on the agenda, and from the problems with signage, that provision was patchy.

Noteworthy also is the fact that this report purports to take on board the recommendations from Athens 2004 for which our research shows very contradictory evidence concerning the quality of language services. A respondent for this research project provides some further insight into the

(poor) language services at Turin (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 8, March 2008). The language test developed for Atlanta was developed a little for Salt Lake City, and in Turin it was not required at all, as very little funding was made available for language services – they only employed somebody to deal with languages as part of the International Client Services Department nine months before the Games. The managers in International Client Services were all from Protocol backgrounds and therefore no emphasis was put on languages whatsoever. “Turin was the perfect example of the difference between somewhere like Sydney”. It was extremely difficult to convince the Turin organisers of the need to provide good language services, when confronted with attitudes like “well why do we need to have anything besides Italian and English anyway?” (Respondent 8 again). A small number of volunteers with language skills and some interpreters were provided, but these were kept to an absolute minimum. There was discontent among the broad Olympic Family in respect to the inadequate language services provided. There was also a requirement set by the Organising Committee to ensure that 60% of the professional interpreters were sourced locally, at regional level. This proved very difficult, as the professional local interpreters did not have the specific sports vocabulary and experience needed. Most of them were unable to perform the required tasks, for instance media interviews, so the organisers received many complaints and more of what we have termed here ‘accidental linguists’ emerged in the form of the athletes or trainers themselves (back to London, 1948). Perhaps English speakers are not the most notorious when it comes to languages, after all.

Seoul 1988

The Organising Committee in Seoul made a point of learning from the experience of the previous Seoul Asian Games where language services were not thought to have been of a high standard (even though only around ten languages had to be covered).

A number of reasons were cited to account for the generally inadequate language services during the Asian Games: foreign language teaching and learning methods were generally disorganised; following the selection of language personnel, education provided to polish their language skills was insufficient; and a system enabling the language service personnel to demonstrate their competence was not provided in an adequate fashion (Official Report, 1988).

For the Olympic Games, therefore, the aims were to “anticipate language services requirement by site, language and standard of services; to select competent personnel through proficiency testing; to secure outstanding language service personnel from among overseas Korean residents; and to conduct full and timely education by developing diverse training methods”. The language services were, in principle, for eight languages, English and French, plus Spanish, German, Russian, Arabic (the ‘working languages’), plus Japanese and Chinese. It was planned that for other languages, services could be extended to the extent that special personnel were available. Language services were (again) limited to athletes, officials, media and VIPs.

Language services personnel were divided into simultaneous interpreters, consecutive interpreters, interpreter-guides and translators (Official Report, 1988).

The recruitment drive, aimed at university students, government employees, staff of state corporations and military personnel, yielded large numbers claiming a good knowledge of English, with numbers for other languages much lower. Our research shows that this pattern with its emphasis on English is likely to be repeated at Beijing 2008 with 'organised volunteering' mainly from universities and public offices or public entities (it has to be added that this is thought to be because it is easier for the Chinese to 'maintain' or 'safeguard' the volunteers if they know where they have been sourced, see Beijing fieldwork below and confirmed by an interview respondent (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 5, March 2008).

Barcelona 1992

In Barcelona, the Organising Committee set up a Language Service Department four and half years before the start of the event, organised in five sectors: translation and correction of texts; interpreting; announcers, style books and sports glossaries, and language hosts. It was the first time that an Organising Committee had set up these services so well in advance, and the 1992 Official Report highlights that this foresight was shown to be more than justified.

It is to be noted that the sector dedicated to language hosts, due to its scope, developed into a separate department. Also notable here is that some volunteers used for various Olympic Family facilitation tasks in the four official languages, plus fifteen more, were from European universities taking part in the Erasmus Exchange Programme with students from the University School of Translators and Interpreters at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. Professional translators and correctors worked on all the translated texts (including stylebooks and glossaries); professional interpreters were used for all meetings of the IOC, international federation conferences, press conferences and official meetings at the International Broadcast Centre and the Olympic Village. The scale of language work was enormous – for translation, about 61.5 million words translated and corrected; in interpreting, 176 professional interpreters were used (62 from Barcelona; 19 from the rest of Spain and 95 from 18 other countries) in nine languages in addition to the four official ones for a total of 338 sessions at 42 different units.

Atlanta 1996

The View of the Official Report

The Language Services Department comprised three divisions: Translating (all documents and official publications from English into French by professional translators), some critical documents were also translated into Spanish); Interpreting and Operations (both facilitating spoken communication and using language volunteers whose contribution to the daily operations of

Language Services is noted as “significant” in the Official Report). Language-skilled volunteers also assisted translating into English all documents written in other languages. For the period of the Games, a Language Service Communication Centre was set-up to provide a central coordination for all language-related issues, integrating the three divisions into a single operation (Official Report: 1996; Lo Bianco: 2000). This recommendation was followed at Sydney. Australian research into the evaluation of multilingual communication at Atlanta was positive (Touchstone and Eggington: 1997). French translation was also provided for Info’ 96, Opening and Closing Ceremonies Speeches (including programmes, scripts, storyboards, speeches, pre-show videos, and press guides), and selected phrases displayed on scoreboards.

Notably, prospective volunteers for ‘language agent’ positions (only in the land of the FBI), had their language skills evaluated in the language laboratories at Kennesaw State University and Georgia State University, but after that the whole training programme was developed by a Language Service training coordinator in conjunction with an outside consultant, thus it was commercially provided. In June 1995, a tender was put out to more than 35 translation companies throughout the US to secure a company to provide auxiliary translation services. Inlingua, a company with an Atlanta presence was selected (Official Report: 1996). It is hard not to conclude that some of the negative image of the Atlanta Games regarding community and legacy had its roots here. In fact, our respondents present at Atlanta do not recall any university department involvement at any time.

A more positive legacy of these Games was the creation of sport-specific French and English glossaries, and volunteers, who researched terminology in publications from previous Olympics, made an important contribution. These glossaries were further worked on at Sydney 2000 (Lo Bianco: 2000). Our research shows that these have been built on and used ever since. Atlanta also made use of “state-of-the-art translation management tools”, IBM Translation Manager and FlowMark.

The work of the Translation Centre gives some idea of the extent of language work to be covered. Its main purpose was to translate the contents of the Info ’96 system including biographies, news, historical results, schedules, and other general information about the Games. The minutes of the daily chefs’ meetings were translated into French and Spanish each afternoon for same-day delivery to the chefs. Translation of weather reports was performed by the National Weather Service. The Centre also handled miscellaneous requests, regardless of language, for documents including speeches, venue announcements, and signs. The Centre’s staff were also responsible for translating 32 issues of the Olympic Village newspaper into French (Official Report: 1996). As for interpreting, in addition to the official meetings already detailed, there was an effort to have either a professional interpreter and/or ‘language agent’ available at all venues for press conferences and interviews upon request.

'Language agents' worked primarily in the Operations division whose focus was to facilitate conversation between ACOG representatives and Olympic Family members, including the international media, who did not speak a common language (Official Report: 1992). The main clients included Doping Control, Medical Services, Olympic Family, Olympic Village, Opening and Closing Ceremonies, Press Operations, Protocol, Security and Sports. 'Language agents' also assisted in press conferences, medical emergencies, and security problems by serving as communication facilitators, rather than 'information providers' (an important distinction for training purposes, and to be noted). This required a high level of language proficiency. Language agents also staffed a 24-hour language switchboard, covering 31 languages, situated in the Olympic Village. The switchboard had transfer and conference capabilities to enable communication. During the month of the Games, the switchboard received approximately 2, 600 calls. The Official Report also notes the need to deal with "cultural questions and challenges" as well as routine procedural questions (for example). While professional interpreters are, of course, used for sensitive situations, this need for intercultural awareness that exceeds language training provision is to be emphasised.

A positive aspect of the Atlanta Games was the attention paid to the use of French (see below in chapter 6 for an overview of recommendations for the place of French at London 2012). The French government provided substantial support to Language Services through various governmental and private associations, and a translator training programme, financed by the French Ministry of Youth and Sport, was active from June 1995 to August 1996. Students from the Institut Supérieur d'Interprétation et Traduction (ISIT) and the Ecole Supérieure d'Interprétation et Traduction (ESIT) were sent to Atlanta to help with translation (our research shows that these institutions have also sent students to Beijing in preparation for 2008). The French also provided assistance with sports terminology. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs financed a programme called FOCUS on French Olympic Terminology to provide native and non-native speakers of French with the opportunity to study issues and terminology unique to the Olympics Movement and to Atlanta.

It goes without saying that UK HE French departments in particular should therefore be looking to develop further their already excellent and extensive relations with appropriate French government departments. The French government took a strong interest in all activities that involved the use of French and ACOG was awarded a "Gold Medal in the French Language" by the president of the National Observatory of the French Language for both written and oral French language services provided (Official Report: 1996). This is an indication of how the French Government intends to maintain the French language in diplomacy, including sports diplomacy.

What the Volunteer Saw

The interviewee was the former Chair of Modern Languages at Georgia State University and a Volunteer German Interpreter for the Wrestling and Ping-Pong events at Atlanta (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 7, March 2008).

To his recollection there were no language volunteers on the streets to assist tourists with their language needs. Volunteers from Atlanta and abroad were recruited for the Olympic Family only. He does not recall any signage or other provisions over and above the required English and French languages.

The language training he received in his capacity as a language volunteer consisted of half a dozen bi-weekly meetings of an orientation nature in April and May of that year. There was not any language training, as such. “I suppose the assumption was that those of us who volunteered were fluent in the other language”. But they did receive information about the official Olympic terminology in the other language, the Olympic spirit and what they were and were not expected to do.

There was no test to check the standard of his German; they simply believed that he was fluent, as he claimed to be. The language training he received was not delivered by a local university or college and did not use their premises. It took place in a conference centre and was probably organised by ACOG, but may have been delivered by volunteers as well. Indeed, “one of the differences about the Atlanta Games was that there was very little public money involved. There was no Federal money, there was no State money; there was very little City or Municipal funding involved, that’s why it was such a crazy place [...] there were people selling things on the streets, but there was very little supervision. You would be hard-pressed in Atlanta now to find anything that would remind you of the infrastructures”. The whole idea behind the bid, which was organised by a local resident – a lawyer – was that it would be done with private funding.

The interviewee was already working in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages at Georgia State University when the Games were staged in Atlanta, becoming Chair of the Department the following year, but as far as he is aware, no university or languages department within a university were involved in the language training or language services at all: “I am quite sure that is true; it would have been our department, and there was no involvement in the language services. I know people in all the Atlanta universities’ language departments and I don’t recall any involvement”. He does not recall receiving any sort of diploma or accreditation at the end of his volunteering service, just a letter of thanks.

“It seems very unlikely” that other frontline sectors would have received language training; “Atlanta was a very primitive place at that time, in that respect, and it hasn’t improved much since then. The view here is if you don’t speak English, then it’s your problem”. He is not aware of any legacy being left after the Games in terms of languages, although it is now possible to find some foreign-language speakers at the larger hotels in Atlanta.

He did not do any ‘high-powered’ interpretation or translation, but worked more as a “language mediator”. Professional interpreters were hired for those services. As regards the profile of the “typical” language volunteer, they covered a “broad spectrum of people, who came from all walks of life, but who were willing and financially able to volunteer their time” and, of course, were

fluent in another language. They were not language professionals and did not receive any formal language training, “but that wasn’t required, all that was required was the ability to take an utterance – in most cases fairly non-technical – from one language and put it in another language, on a very informal level”. [Our experience of running a workshop for potential Language Specialist Volunteers (detailed in chapter 7) shows that much, much more than this is needed]

The volunteers’ travel expenses and other costs were not covered. Their post-Games outcomes were not recorded, neither were their details retained for further volunteering opportunities. There was detailed preparation for the Games generally, and no doubt official follow-ups and evaluations, but Atlanta citizens on the ground were not involved in this. For them, staging the Olympics was a fleeting affair, “when it was here, it was here; and when it was over, it was gone”. A lot of the volunteers were born and raised in a foreign country, e.g. Romania, and then had immigrated to Atlanta, bringing their language skills with them. The interviewee does not feel that taking part in the Games as a volunteer reinforced their sense of belonging to the City, or to the USA as a whole.

“I think that the whole languages aspect was a very peripheral part of the organisation and the event, and is for most Atlantans. For most people in the USA, languages are a very small part of how Americans see the world. You know like the American tourist in Italy who just continues speaking in English louder and louder, with the other person is speaking Italian back at him; that’s typical of the mindset of a lot of people here”.

The current language requirement for schoolchildren in Georgia is two years in high school, and that is all. Trying to change attitudes “is an uphill battle all the way”. There “hasn’t been that much change in terms of foreign languages” since the Olympics came to town. There were some stories in the press relating to languages at the time, but no lasting legacy has been left. Nonetheless, more positively, some students did go on to study languages at Georgia State University where he was Chair, as a result of the Games he believed.

What a member of the languages services management team saw

An experienced language services team member (Atlanta 1996; Salt Lake City 2002, Sydney 2000; consultant for Turin 2006 and Vancouver 2010) offers a view somewhere between the two (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 8, March 2008).

Initially, she was involved in the Atlanta Games as Assistant to the Chief Interpreter. She was employed there for about a year and also became involved in the languages volunteers aspect. They were aiming to recruit about 1200 language volunteers for what was “the first attempt to provide a really comprehensive, large [language] service”. The Director of Language Services devised an ambitious and “well-conceived” language programme, which was unusual, as “language, in general, is not a department that is seen

as particularly important; it's a nice-to-have, not a must-have". The Director was trying to produce something of excellence on a very low budget.

They came up with the idea of having teams of "language agents" specifically allocated to each Olympic venue. They found it incredibly difficult in Atlanta to find the people they needed as language volunteers, because the local population is far less mixed than in other North American Olympic cities, such as Vancouver or Salt Lake City. "A lot of the people who had second-language skills were first generation immigrants, working at lower-level jobs, who simply couldn't afford to volunteer", as a result they were "literally out recruiting volunteers until the week before the Games. That is not an exaggeration; we were desperate to find the people we needed". So much so that they were forced to take to the streets in their recruitment drive, targeting strangers "in clubs, restaurants and organisations". It is far more difficult recruiting for a summer Olympics Games than a winter one, as so many more languages need to be catered for: in a Winter Games they usually provide for about nine or ten key languages, while in summer it is "at least double, if not more".

At the Atlanta Games, "it was not as organised as it could have been" and therefore led to the initiation of a new approach to languages at subsequent Olympics. For example, they decided that the volunteers had to be assessed in a more formal way prior to being recruited and that you "couldn't rely on people's self-assessment" [finally...although it should also be noted that the Volunteer Respondent indicates that he was not assessed] . The Director of Language Services devised thorough procedures to evaluate potential volunteers' language proficiency, which involved designing assessment material and recording the candidates. Since that point, candidates have always been tested, even if the test itself varies a little from one event to the next. The concept of having language teams responsible for specific areas (and therefore specific Olympic events), has also been used in subsequent Games. This approach ensures that the right language specialists are allocated to the right venues; in fact in Atlanta they probably provided too many languages for the different events. They have since "condensed it down over the years".

The Director was, in a way, forced to come up with a programme, as nothing formal was left from Barcelona or LA, as far as she is aware. At the Atlanta Games, they also employed somebody who was solely responsible for training the volunteers, a Belgian woman whose job title was Director of Training for Language Services. She and another ACOG in-house interpreter helped devise the training material and the tool for Language Skills Evaluations. [this is the material on which the workshop for Language Specialist Volunteers organised for this Research Project was based; detailed in chapter 7].

These two individuals delivered the training in a conference centre, and probably ran about 100 sessions over the Pre-Games years. For the training sessions, the volunteers were split into groups of about 30, of whom there would be around five speakers of each language, so they could then work on

situational and role-play activities in their common language. The training did not involve teaching the foreign language, but focused on basic interpreting skills (e.g. note taking, speaking in the first person, having the confidence to interrupt rambling speakers, etc.) and situational role play. Some specific terminology was provided. Social events were also set up with for volunteer linguists with a common language, in which they would converse in the second language and/or practise their interpreting skills in their own time. A bi-monthly newsletter was also produced for the language specialists to provide some pertinent, yet light-hearted reinforcement to the formal single eight-hour training session, or two four-hour evening sessions. It was easier to provide for the more powerful languages like French, with back-up from the Alliance Française, than for the less mainstream ones, such as Romanian.

They were “so strapped to find people, any people, who speak the languages to the required standard” that no effort was made to target any particular minority or other groups for the language volunteering. The pre-volunteering language test eliminated about three or four candidates for each position, so it would have been difficult to narrow it down even more. Some languages were definitely under-represented as a result of the shortage of aptly capable volunteers; Asian language volunteers were a case in point. Funding restrictions meant that they did not combat this shortage by recruiting linguists from elsewhere; they simply spread the ones they did have more thinly.

The issue of ad-hoc language services and of lack of coordination and of ‘memory’, and indeed of legacy, from one event to another re-occurs again and again.

Sydney 2000

Despite the generally positive view that Sydney was a success, there are a number of less positive issues to be borne in mind. People interviewed in Sydney raised the question of effective planning and contingency management (Cowan and Jackson, 2000). Adequate time must be allowed for the marketing and promotion of training programmes to industry (especially in order to harness support). There also needs to be a clear break between planning and implementation – there was a view expressed in Sydney that one ran into the other, with planning continuing in the year of the Games.

If high-quality language provision is to be high-profile for 2012, work needs to start now – lobbying, planning, training, delivering.

It is also to be noted that despite the very positive message carried by Lo Bianco’s report, the Official Report for Sydney 2000 contains just 6 brief paragraphs on Languages Services, conveying a rather different overall message.

The Language Services role was to maintain the use of the two official languages of the IOC, French and English, within SOCOG and to provide high-quality, centralised language services to all SOCOG programmes and

the Olympic Family. The Official Report (2000) notes that during Games-time, the programme was of particular benefit to athletes and was located within SOCOG's Sport Division because of its role in sport competition. That division also had extensive interaction with major client groups, such as National Olympic Committees (NOCs; the official delegation from participating countries), International Federations (IFs; international non-governmental organisations recognised by the International Olympic Committee and responsible for administering one or more sports), and the IOC. A Chief Interpreter was appointed in 1998 and had overall responsibility for the interpreting services, including development of venue operation plans and the language combinations required for specific venues based on the sport to be hosted there and anticipated media attendance, and recruitment of both local and overseas interpreters. 88 interpreters were contracted, including 38 simultaneous interpreters (mostly recruited from overseas with extensive Olympic and international experience), and 50 consecutive interpreters, mostly sourced through the National Accreditation Authority of Translators and Interpreters, providing professional services in English, French, Spanish, Russian, German, Arabic, Mandarin, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Italian and Greek. Interpreters were scheduled for assignments across all the competing venues, the Main Press Centre (MPC), Olympic Village and the Olympic Family Hotels. Simultaneous translation was provided at some non-competition venues, Olympic Family hotels, Olympic Village, MPC and at a range of competition venues, including for example: Olympic Stadium Sydney, International Aquatic Centre, Sydney Entertainment Centre, Exhibition Halls and Convention Centre. All other competition venues were provided with consecutive interpreting.

To give an idea of scale: 2, 300 interpreting assignments were completed from 28th August to 1st October 2000. The services were scheduled across 25 competition and two non-competition venues, according to management requests, using 898 specialist volunteers (this figure is not consistent with that of Lo Bianco who notes that 1, 500 volunteers were recruited; Lo Bianco, 2000). Details of the translation services provided are not mentioned in the Official Report at all, although clearly the scale of this was vast, both pre-Games (including technical booklets of the 28 Olympic Sports; Chef's dossiers; Athlete's Handbook, etc.) and during Games-time (including flash quotes, info sheets, results, athlete biographies and historical records, scripted announcements, press releases, media updates, minutes of all IOC and IF meetings, Games Official Newspaper).

In addition to face-to-face language assistance provided by volunteers at the venues, the Multi-Lingual Switchboard (MLSB), based at the Olympic Village, provided a telephone service covering 51 languages. If a volunteer in a particular language was unavailable, the call was diverted to the Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS) at the Federal Government's Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. The MLSB received a total of 2162 calls, and 883 calls were diverted to the TIS (Official Report, 2000).

Lo Bianco's comprehensive report is available through CILT, and there is no intention of covering the same ground here. To give an overview, however,

after a contextualisation concerning the Ancient and Modern Games, the Games in Australia (Melbourne 1956), and short reviews of recent Games in Barcelona, Seoul and Atlanta, the report covers Sydney in depth under the following headings: organisation; language service; operational areas covered; planning assumptions: official languages and Sydney's demography; general services; clients; level of interpretation services; language specialists; translation; multilingual switchboard; professional interpreters; service priorities; pre-Games events: field testing the language plans. The appendices cover: the organisational chart of the language service; publications and translation unit; the volunteer linguists (the report contains profiles of these volunteer Language Specialists throughout); who speaks what (this is a list of 150 countries and their respective languages); the French programme; participants in the 2000 language planning consortium.

Highlights of Lo Bianco's detailed overview of interest for the purposes of this report and the place of HE languages are numerous and various. In 1996 at Australia's third festival of languages (The Language Expo, Brisbane), a meeting was held at which it was recognised that Sydney 2000 was an opportunity to develop a "truly multilingual policy for Sydney's hospitals, law courts, commercial and tourism operators".

It was agreed to set-up a non-profit consortium of organisations with an interest in communication issues to collaborate with the organisers of the Games and with public authorities in general.

The aim was "to assist visitors and the Australian public as well as athletes", although they were aware that the responsibility of the Games organisers was to provide for the Olympic Family. As work commenced, they became aware that "a wide-ranging communication policy might also constitute a legacy that Sydney could donate to the Olympic movement in general". The multiculturalism and language pluralism of Australia were stressed in the tender for the Games, as it was in the London bid.

One of the crucial roles of the Language Planning Consortium was to 'provide a bridge between the provisions of language services within the strict requirements of the Olympic Family and the wider community need for communication support'.

University academics in various fields from the University of New South Wales, Macquarie University and the University of Western Sydney participated consistently in the Consortium, along with (for example), Language Australia, Technical and Further Education New South Wales, SOCOG, the professional association of Interpreters and Translators, government departments of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Education and Training, Health Care Interpreters. The Consortium mobilised their human resources to include input into training content and design, standards setting, database compilation, aspects of planning and input from academic researchers into, for example, practices of Bilingual Policing in the Channel Tunnel and Multilingual Policing in Europe in general, as well as professional academic input on English and intercultural communication.

One potential very interesting aspect of planning is ‘wayfinding policy’, and this may be another area for HE contribution. As Lo Bianco notes: “Way Finding’ is an emerging discipline in that it combines insights from communication, linguistics, ergonomics, information design, psychology, graphic design, cultural anthropology, semiotics, architecture, urban planning”. A further recommendation in this report suggests that HE language departments consider a large-scale collaborative research project into Way Finding with 2012 as a focus (see chapter 8 below).

Lo Bianco provides details on precisely how the language services were organised and the operational areas covered, including in the two-year period before the Games were staged. In the detail of the delivery of the services, he also notes the provision for the Paralympic Games, noting differences where they occurred. Details include how and when Language Specialist Volunteers (LSVs) were used, and this included, for example, use at doping control and medal ceremonies. The role of the Language Specialist was to: “facilitate conversation for SOCOG FAs in their dealings with Olympic/Paralympic Family members requiring language assistance. All Language Specialists [worked] for the Games in a volunteer capacity as opposed to the professional interpreters who [provided] simultaneous and consecutive conference interpreting as paid contractors”.

The University of Western Sydney carried out all the assessment for LSVs, and they were to have a ‘paraprofessional’ level or had an equivalent National Accreditation Authority of Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) accreditation. Further training programmes were provided for these volunteers. They served in four different capacities: core venue specialists; language squad at primary venues; mobile squad (for ‘rare languages’); multilingual switchboard.

There is much to inspire in the scope of language provision, and in the use of LSVs. However, the evidence suggests that volunteers at these levels were already well-educated and successful citizens. As potentially inspiring as they are, the language volunteers used in Lo Bianco’s report (presumably to demonstrate their diverse “ages, backgrounds and interests”) are made up of a clinical pharmacist, a holder of a degree in public administration, a holder of a masters degree in theology, a retired consulate employee, a specialist in risk assessment at the ANZ bank, and a bachelor of liberal studies (Lo Bianco, 2000); all already successful members of mainstream society and, judging by their photographs, all Caucasian. A further aim for London and the UK is to provide training and skills for more disadvantaged and harder-to-reach members of society and to equip citizens in linguistic and intercultural provision at wider and more broad-ranging levels, both within official Games organisation and the wider communities (including both residents and visitors). If this is to happen in a meaningful way, training needs to begin now.

There had been some reservations about a ‘culture clash’ between the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (SOCOG) and the Technical and Further Education system in New South Wales (TAFE NSW) (with TAFE seen as a traditional, public provider of vocational training and

SOCOG a corporate, business-focused organisation). In fact, the scope of TAFE operations (a government training system similar to that which was available in the former Polytechnics in the UK) was overwhelmingly positive due to the scope of its operations, broad community commitment and the availability of both human and physical resources, which meant that the organisation was able to effectively respond to the massive scale of the training challenge posed by 3, 500 different job descriptions (Cowan and Jackson, 2000) Although this concerns all training, not just language services, the point is well-made.

LOCOG will also be similarly ‘business-focused’ given the principles of the market-driven British economy that currently governs both private and public sectors. While it is recognised that the practice of Olympic committees is to put out services to tender, and that this may well be appropriate for some aspects of the languages provision for 2012 (professional translation and interpreting services, for example), such a process clearly does not make the most effective use of existing human and physical resources, nor does it lead to long-term training and skills needs being met, nor to linguistic and intercultural expertise being embedded nationally for civic and economic benefits.

Under TAFE NSW, universities were central to training delivery across the board at Sydney. While both public and private organisations were involved in the delivery of training for the games, by far the largest contribution came from this public sector (Cowan and Jackson, 2000). The organisation’s status as Official Training Services Provider for the Olympics was again fundamental, with opportunities to use this as leverage for winning other key training contracts.

The major lesson from Sydney is that for long-term benefits, established and proven networks of collaborating providers who share knowledge, resources and expertise are essential, not short-term competitors. HE language departments, especially working with the achievements and ethos of the national Routes into Languages programme, must work hard to communicate this message to regional and national government, and to LOCOG.

Sydney had more financial resources for languages than previous Games and consequently did more: “The Australian government and the Organising Committee understood and supported languages, and that hasn’t been the case in Turin, Salt Lake or Atlanta where language services were seen as an obligation rather than a priority” (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 8, March 2008).

There were consequently more language services and more volunteers in Sydney. “It was amazing; they provided a training programme where people could sign up to do weeks and weeks of training at an outside location. It was much broader [than Atlanta]. I got the sense that they were less stringent in terms of their language evaluation and more inclusive than we were [in Atlanta]” (Respondent 10). The local Organising Committees never provide any services for spectators. “The Atlanta model was replicated in Sydney, in

that the services we provide are to accredited individuals only”, which is a consistent *modus operandi* from one Olympics to the next. The Spectators’ Services Department of the Organising Committee would be responsible for language needs of visitors, and these would usually be delivered in collaboration with local players in the tourism industry or the municipality.

The creation of a large, qualified workforce of volunteers and more permanent careers with skills that are transferable to other major events should be paramount in planning for 2012. Cowan and Jackson identify the following key issues vital to the successful implementation of training at Sydney in 2000:

- Consultative approach to identifying needs by working with industry and other stakeholders;
- Collaborative approach used in the delivery of training;
- Responsiveness and flexibility to changes and emerging needs;
- Flexibility in the design and delivery of training;
- Inclusive approach to community groups and diverse sectors of industry.

One final word for 2012. As at some other Games (Lillehammer and Nagano Winter Olympics, Atlanta 1996), the words of opening spoken by the Governor General of Australia in Sydney were in English only. French Government and Olympic officials, reportedly even the President of France, protested. So did some IOC and SOCOG officials. As noted at the beginning of this report, the symbolic is as important as the practical for the Games and for other international events.

“In the wider contexts of the multilingual phenomenon [...] bothering with languages [becomes] an economic and political issue” (Phipps, 2007)

Athens 2004

The evidence concerning the provision of language services at Athens is very contradictory. Much would suggest that Athens was not a linguistically successful event. French media reports in particular were disappointed with the level of access in French:

“In the Greek capital, signage for spectators is exclusively in English and Greek. At the event sites, only some of the signs and official announcements are in French”; “in the city and the stadiums, French is under-represented, or even completely absent” (press report, *Le Figaro*, 24 August 2004).

And in the same article, the president of the Organising Committee (ATHOC), herself a French speaker, admitted that following the agreement signed the previous year with France (all Organising Committees do this and have to undertake to observe the Olympic Charter with regards to the use of French), ATHOC had undertaken to provide more in French at Athens than at Sydney or Atlanta, but that it had to be recognised that “Athens could not rival Sydney

where all signage, both in the streets and at the Olympic sites, was entirely bilingual”.

Nonetheless, the whole of the official Athens website was available in French (and English and Greek), comprising 50, 000 pages of information and 100, 000 pages of results, as were all press communiqués and the ‘ATHENS.04’ magazine. 400 French-speaking volunteers were trained (this was part of the agreement signed in 2003 between ATHOC and the French Ambassador in Greece; www.culture.gov.fr/culture/dglf/rapport/2003) to help athletes.

The Main Press Centre (2 conference rooms) provided simultaneous interpreting in French with 50 professional interpreters. A trilingual (French, English, Greek) dictionary was published and a glossary with 5, 000 specialised sporting terms. Athens 2004 was awarded the ‘Prix de la Francophonie’.

Revealingly, a key person involved in promoting French at the Athens Games admits to criticising vehemently the official representation of French during the Games, but explains this was a somewhat contrived effort to gain media attention for the cause (Huc-Hepher, Respondent, 9, March 2008). The *Figaro* article above would suggest that the strategy was successful. More on the presence of French at Athens will be explored below in the general section on the importance of French at the Olympics (again, see chapter 6 below). Generally the language did have a presence, although as at Sydney, not in the opening ceremony, and the ATHOC president came in for severe criticism (it is hard to believe that this happened again after the Sydney row, but note previous remarks here concerning how quickly Games memory is lost).

While the French Government seems to have made every effort to ensure a good level and availability of French at Athens (even though the evidence is contradictory), the British Council were apparently unhappy with the standards of English used at the Games in the official documentation and on the website which they deemed too American (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 9, March 2008). Anecdotal evidence also suggests that signage was a real problem, with international visitors missing events because of the lack of adequate signage.

What the Volunteer Saw

An interview with an official (National Olympic Committee) volunteer at Athens for the Chinese delegation confirms the more negative side of this contradictory picture concerning language provision. Training was carried out for about 600 language assistants for two days (“a crash course of all aspects of the Olympics”) in July 2004 (the month before the Games), most of whom were Greek nationals, and focused on culture/behaviour rather than on language with participants. Volunteers were expected to already have the necessary linguistic skills and indeed were selected on that basis, together with their “education and internationalism” (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 4, February, 2008). This inevitably led to a very restricted volunteer profile.

The View from the Official Report

The Official Report gives a rather different picture: “Language services were one of the key Games services not only due to the multilingual nature of the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) participating in the Games, but also due to the diversity of language used” (Official Report, Language Services, 2004). It goes on to state that because the official languages of the Olympic Movement are French and English, and given that these Games were being hosted in a country with a native language other than English, “as opposed to previous Games, ATHOC language services had a completely different mission to those of previous Organising Committees” (And what of Barcelona? Seoul?).

The structure and organisation chosen by ATHOC was “thus different to those from previous Games”. Research on how things worked out on the ground, suggests that it was no doubt unwise not to follow some of the good practice from Sydney. The report contradicts evidence from the experience of and reporting from Barcelona, making claims for beginning the organisation of language services earlier than any other previous Games (three years before; but Barcelona started four and a half years in advance); for the first time “in the history of the Games” all Games materials were presented in three languages (Barcelona had four). The Report also indicates (as above) that “major emphasis was placed on covering the French language”; this was perhaps true ‘in-the-tent’, but the evidence above suggests that this was certainly not the case for the broader environment. The report does make special mention of the help provided by the French Government, assisted by the French Embassy in Athens, and the signature of the agreement relating to a series of measures to support the promotion of the French language at the Games. This Agreement also related to sponsorship for trainee translators from three large French language schools (ESIT, ISIT, ITI-RI, as previously noted).

A tri-lingual website and a Sports Dictionary were developed (CD-Rom and hard copy). A 15, 000 word trilingual database relating to Olympic administrative language was also produced on CD-ROM. A translation memory system was used, operating in the three languages, to contribute to more rapid translations in cases of texts with partial repetitions. During 2002 and 2003, there were nineteen paid staff, reaching 117 paid staff in Games-time, including the nine trainees from the French Support Scheme. Interpreting services were used in the pre-Olympic period for all Organising Committee activities which required them, such as in-house meetings, Press Conferences, regular meetings of the IOC Coordination Commission, Security Planning meetings, special events, World Press Operations and Board Briefings and Chef de Mission Seminars, meetings between senior government and IOC officials (Official Report, 2004).

Test events showed that the focus on French and English was “restrictive compared to actual needs”, and “the need for Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Arabic, Chinese and other languages was evident”. A shift of focus occurred to identify volunteers, staff and interpreters to cover these language needs. An 18-month “intensive campaign” was mounted to recruit Language

Specialist Volunteers and involved large cultural and educational organisations as well as foreign Associations and Embassies in Greece (although once again the evidence from the interview with a LSV gives a very different view to that of the Official Report).

This also suggests that not only had ATHOC not read Barcelona's report, it had not read Sydney's – otherwise this could have been anticipated from the outset. There was also no attempt at social inclusion – as our own evidence suggests: "The profile of Languages Services Volunteers included total fluency in at least two languages, one of which had to be English or Greek, combined with a good educational background, IT skills, and a pleasant personality with experience in dealing with people from different nationalities" (Official Report, 2004). The main bulk of volunteers were recruited through meetings with Schools, Graduate Associations, Universities, Foreign Language Institutes and Cultural Organisations. The campaign then moved to identifying individuals who could cover "less common" languages – by firstly contacting Embassies and then "national events organised by these Embassies were utilised as well as their own network of contacts to attract interested parties" (again, unlikely to lead to inclusiveness). 198 professional interpreters were used; 49 Greek, 114 citizens of European countries including Russia and 1 each from the USA, Canada, Japan, Egypt and Lebanon.

In cooperation with the largest Foreign Language Institutes and Educational Institutes [the report does not specify what these were], a joint training plan was prepared under which ATHOC Language Services staff provided training on Olympic and sports issues, while professional teachers assisted volunteers to "perfect their knowledge of the relevant language in specific fields of interest". Special training events were organised for volunteers from abroad who came to Athens a few days before the Games. Language Services were provided to all members of the Venue Teams and to the Olympic family, including the IOC and International Federation officials, media representatives, etc.

The Official Report gives a thorough account of the language services provided, included here once again to give a more precise idea of the scope of language work needed to service the Olympic Family. Despite the rather conflicting views noted here concerning language services, the Report does give a useful indication from a fairly recent event of the immense scale required, given that language needs and ways of delivering them are constantly evolving from one Games to the next.

Language Services Centres were organised at all Competition Venues, at the Olympic Village, at the Main Press Centre (MPC) and Olympic Family hotels. They were mostly staffed by volunteers, under the guidance of paid staff, a total of 61 Venue Language Services Managers and Deputy Managers. The centres with the most staff were at the Olympic Stadium (28 volunteers and 8 interpreters per shift) and at the MPC (8 volunteers and 16 interpreters per shift). The MPC had two press conference halls equipped for simultaneous interpretation, one covering 5 languages and the other 3 languages.

There were also three smaller meeting rooms, where simultaneous interpretation was available upon request.

At the Olympic Village the daily Chefs de Mission meetings had simultaneous interpretation in 5 languages – Arabic was added for the first time on a request from the Arabic-speaking National Olympic Committees. Moreover, the Ministry of Health provided 20 interpreters specialised in medical terminology, who offered their services at the Olympic Village Polyclinic, covering 6 languages and working over two shifts.

Overall Language Services volunteers covered 24 languages. During the Games “no functional or operational problems arose”, according to the Official Report. A mobile emergency unit consisting of 9 vehicles and 23 drivers operated round the clock. This unit was designed to transport interpreters and volunteers to respond to requests for “less common” languages at various Venues.

A multilingual call centre provided call-based interpretation - not information, it is stressed - in 12 languages (French, English, Arabic, Chinese, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Serbian and Spanish) 24 hours, seven days a week from the opening to the closing of the Olympic Village (30 July to 1 September 2004). There were a number of interpreters dedicated for each language, with 78 interpreters in total. A specially designed leaflet with instructions and telephone numbers per language was distributed to all NOCs, Media and Security (OGSD) and to all groups of Games participants. The multilingual call centre operated successfully (again according to the Official Report), and handled more than 1, 800 calls during the Games. Security made extensive use of the centre, as did Medical Services, Doping Control Services and the Olympic Village Venue Team. The languages with the greatest demand were Russian, Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Japanese and Korean.

Thirty staff based at ATHOC Headquarters supervised the scheduled daily work of interpreters and volunteers, coordinated the movements of the mobile emergency unit and visited Venues every day ensuring that operations ran smoothly. Eighteen trainees from the French University interpretation schools (referred to above) were employed during the Paralympic Games to interpret French – although it should be noted that the requirement for these Games is officially English only.

The Language Services section of the Official Report ends by stressing the importance of these services to the members of the Olympic Family to ensure that the Games run smoothly, but also their “psychological value”, contributing to the “warm sense of hospitality being extended”. However, if the account in the Report is to be believed, this may have been true for those ‘in-the-tent’, but it was certainly less true for the wider public and the international visitor.

Some white elephants did emerge in Athens after the Games in terms of infrastructure, but the event was generally deemed a commercial success. Some complexes fell out of use immediately after the event, but the new road

networks and the boost given to local and regional tourism and business were a positive legacy of the Games (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 9, March 2008). , the Official Report does give a useful indication of the immense scale of language requirements.

4. INTERNATIONAL EVENTS PRESENT

“Beijing huanying ni”/“Beijing Welcomes You”: Beijing 2008

It is recommended that this section be updated following the staging of the Games in August 08, and the publication of appropriate reports.

In particular it would be interesting to follow-up the success of multi-lingual information service systems that “will enable guests from all over the world to access various information services”. This is seen as enabling the Games to be organised and held smoothly, and to achieve the goal of “holding a ‘humanistic Olympic Games’ through the adoption of ‘Olympic Technologies’” (Beijing Pre-Games Training Guide, 2008).

All the evidence gathered so far indicates that most of the linguistic preparation undertaken to date focuses on the use of English; this is based both on field work, interviews and some anecdotal (but revealing) evidence.

As previously noted, a further section below focuses on the place of French at Olympic events (chapter 6), but initial insights are provided here as they provide a useful introduction to the preparations for language services more generally in Beijing. The French Government has obviously been working to ensure that the use of French is correctly observed. The following information is based on an interview with Head of Education at the Alliance Française in Beijing (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 5, March 2008). The Alliance Française in Beijing has notably been involved in training Chinese emergency medical staff (lasting about 18 months) who were then sent to France on an exchange to work with the SAMU (emergency medical services) in France. They are now continuing their language lessons while working in various hospitals. This has involved both general language courses and then work on specialist medical French. The Alliance has also given courses to members of the Olympic Committee who already had a good level of French, focusing on French sports language (lasting between 1-2 years).

The Alliance Française and the Service Culturel de l’Ambassade de France were contacted by a company contracted by BOCG to manage the language training for the Games. Language provision therefore appears to be commercially managed (this is confirmed by the field work below). The main focus is English but French has also been catered for. They have also produced a little booklet and a CD- with both general, conversational, and more specialised Olympic language training

material and vocabulary. This booklet is to be distributed to some 100 schools in Beijing. The initiative began in January, was stopped in February for the Chinese New Year, and took off again in March. The booklet promotes the French language and global “francophonie” and is accompanied by a “sensibilisation” (or cultural awareness / contextualisation) training session within the primary and secondary schools where it is being launched, often delivered by a representative from the Alliance Française or the French Embassy. They have envisaged using the booklet among the Olympic volunteers and frontline staff in the tourism industry, but, at the time of the interview (March 2008), this has not been carried out. The aim of this strategy is to offer French to Chinese school children as a viable alternative to English which can be used all over the world. Nearly all the foreign language training given to volunteers in Beijing has been in and for English.

The Alliance and the French Embassy had been approached to produce a similar booklet for the hospitality industry and the Beijing police force but given that the Olympics is only a few months away, it is likely that this initiative has been left too late (The medical one took several months to produce). Several private sector French corporations were prepared to sponsor the initiative, namely Accor and Carrefour.

Funding for the French language training is from various sources: the French Embassy (100% for the schools initiative), the Chinese Health Service with the French Embassy (for the medical language training programme), BOCC Budget (for the training of their staff).

The Alliance Française is also working with two classes of Chinese journalists with beginners French language training but given the time constraints, this will have to be a general language course with a slight emphasis on interviews and sports terminology (funded by the Embassy and designed by the Alliance).

The general language volunteers encountered by the Head of Education at the Alliance have been extremely proficient in English, often with four years of Higher Education in English behind them and often chosen precisely because of their language competence. Many potential volunteers were turned down because their English was deemed unsatisfactory. Several thousand volunteers have been recruited however, drawing from the city's large student body and from the human resources available in the city's [state] corporations, so there was no difficulty in finding high-calibre candidates (but this is again likely to lead to a restricted volunteer profile). There has been no specific targeting of minority groups for the volunteering but volunteers have themselves been involved in delivering language training to local residents, including the elderly and members of the general public with prior knowledge of foreign languages. Most of this training has been in English as a foreign language (EFL). BOCCG is having to turn hundreds of potential volunteers away, because there are simply too many of them- as everyone wants to be a part of the Games.

The Alliance's Head of Education has noticed a drive to try to cater for the language needs of foreign nationals to Beijing. These include taxi drivers who all have a map of the city in English in their vehicles and who have been taught to "meet and greet" Westerners in English but that is the extent of such training. They are not able to hold a conversation in English. There are also language assistants on the streets of the main tourist sites in Beijing wearing badges to show what languages they can offer, and who will approach foreign nationals to provide them with assistance. A second respondent for Beijing confirms that signage in English in the city has improved significantly and is substantial (Hu-Heher, Respondent 5, March 2008).

The only lesson to be offered so far from the Beijing Games is that preparations were not made well enough in advance “what has surprised me is that more projects haven't been set-up in advance [...] it's already rather late and that's a pity [...] I'm told that everything got started late at Athens” (Respondent 5 as above). The consequences of this are noted above.

With regards to legacy, the Alliance hopes to raise awareness within the Chinese education system that French is a viable second language alongside English, with more and more French Lycées opening in Beijing.

Much of the above is confirmed by the results of field work, research and interviews undertaken specifically for the purposes of this research project as will be detailed below, and also by the report of a case study based on a training programme in English for Beijing Security Personnel at the University of Westminster which ran from 2002 to 2006, and again commissioned specifically for this project, included below in chapter 7.

Beijing 2008 Fieldwork Report Dr Gerda Wielander, Principal Lecturer in Chinese History and Culture, University of Westminster

The following report is based on research carried out in Beijing between 13-18 December 2007. The report falls into three parts: (1) general observations in Beijing, (2) interviews with Olympic volunteers and people involved in training volunteers, (3) work with two focus groups.

1. General Observations

The observations below are based on impressions gained in Beijing during the five days of the fieldwork trip, interviews and more informal discussions with members of the public, the sampling of available literature on Olympic volunteer training and impressions gained from regular reading of the Volunteers sub-page of the Chinese Olympics website.

The moment one arrives at Beijing International Airport (at the time still the old terminal) there is no escaping the huge focus on the Olympics. The five Olympic mascots Beibei, Jingjing, Huanhuan, Yingying and Nini are ubiquitous reminders that the Olympic Games are hosted in Beijing in 2008 (the names are formed by duplicating each syllable of the sentence “Beijing huanying ni” which translates as “Beijing Welcomes You”).

The highway leading into Beijing from the airport runs parallel to the new high-speed train that will take the visitors to and from the airport come August 2008. In December it was still decidedly under construction, as were many other sites, although the previous week had seen the opening of the “Bird’s Nest” stadium in a northern suburb of Beijing. A new underground linking it to the centre of town was opened during the same week. On this underground line, television screens are installed which explain the rules of various Olympic sports, including measurements of courts, racquets etc., in individual sports.

The visitor is made to believe that the whole of Beijing is preparing for the Olympics. This does not just mean city planners and the Olympic Committee, but the whole of the Beijing population. One of the very ambitious aims of the Beijing Government is that the whole of Beijing will speak English by August 2008. The prevailing message is that from primary school children to senior citizens, everybody is engaged in this endeavour and special classes are offered through the workplace or neighbourhood committees. They are taken up quite readily, but as far as could be ascertained the biggest takers are indeed senior citizens, or otherwise people who have enough free time on their hands.

The teaching of English ties in with a greater programme of volunteer training. There are a number of different types of volunteers for the Beijing Olympic Games. While language volunteers are primarily selected to help with the Olympic Family, all types of volunteers need some type of language training as part of their preparation, whether they are involved in security, sports venues or recycling.

It would appear that there are different “levels of sophistication” among the volunteers depending on their level of education as well as their level of English. At the lowest levels there are senior citizens (mostly women the researcher was told) whose special task it is to direct visitors in need to the nearest public facility. They will have just enough English to carry out this task. (Thinking this through one can only imagine that directions to the nearest loo will be the standard response to all inquiries by foreigners. Unless these particular toilet-volunteers are identified as such – and how this would be done would need careful thought – a number of misunderstandings could arise from these exchanges).

The focus of all language training for the wider public is on English, although more than twenty languages will be provided as part of the language volunteers’ programme. These special language volunteers come from the main universities in Beijing, although it needs to be pointed out that volunteers will only cover a small fraction of necessary language provision. The vast majority will be covered by commercial providers. Universities are therefore involved, but not in the best ways suggested by our research.

In the two main bookshops visited, there is plenty on offer about the Olympics. Beijing’s largest bookshop has one special table with books on the Olympic Games, many of which are translations of foreign language books on either

particular aspects of the Games, the Olympic spirit, the economics of the Olympics, etc. In Beijing's Foreign Languages Book Shop, two shelves are dedicated to books teaching English for particular professions in the context of the Olympics. Here is a selection of the titles found there: *Sports English*, *Insurance*, *E for Nurses*, *Practical English for Shopping Guides* (sic), *Tourism*, *English for Tourist Sites*, *IT-Telco Technical Professions*, *Follow Me to the World of Olympic Sports*, *A Tour of Olympic Culture*, *Business and Service Communication*, *English for Shopping/Tourism/Fashion/Beauty/Love*, *English for Secretaries*, *Business*, *Soap Operas*, *Hotel Business*, *Flight Attendants*, *Winners' English*, *Olympic English*, *English for Sales People*, *Taxi Drivers*, *Financial Services*, *Customer Reception*, *Transport*, *Public Servants*, *Community and Family*, *Ceremonial English*, etc.

A particularly interesting little booklet called "Beijing Pointers" (the title of the Chinese/English version) is available in eight languages. It contains a relatively comprehensive collection of useful phrases for foreigners to use around Beijing in August 2008. Apart from all imaginable sports vocabulary it also includes more general practical questions and phrases as well as practical information at the end of the book. The book contains the phrases in English and their Chinese translation in characters only. Therefore the foreign visitor cannot even attempt a pronunciation and can only "point" at the phrase, hence "Beijing Pointers". It is an ingenious idea, however, how the local Beijinger without command of English will answer the question is another matter entirely. Presumably the idea is that the Chinese speaker will in turn identify an appropriate answer within the book to which he in turn can "point". The book exists in English, French, German, Spanish, Arabic, Japanese and Korean.

Conversations with students in their final year and postgraduate students revealed that the enthusiasm to be a volunteer is solidly confined to students in the early part of their university career. The spirit among the more mature students is much more reserved bordering on the cynical. The general tenor is that they would never be able to afford to be a volunteer as they have to find jobs and earn money (a spirit not unlike the one expressed by many of the researcher's Westminster students in their year two coursework on the topic of volunteering for the Olympics). As two students in one of Beijing's shopping malls put it: "The young students and the old people can volunteer, we are about to graduate, we need to find work to repay our student loans!" It would appear that the Chinese government is most successful in harnessing the general enthusiasm of the younger student population and channelling it into a cause beneficial to the Games.

Nonetheless, the volunteers programme is oversubscribed. Volunteers have to go through a rigorous selection process (more in next section) and have to give up holidays to take part in training. The best are also sent abroad for language training. Volunteers' activities have already started with 'Volunteer Points' all over the city. At these help points, student volunteers educate the general public in various matters and questions regarding the Games, including issues of waste disposal and recycling (see www.beijing2008cn/volunteers). Volunteers therefore fulfil a dual role: in the

run up to the Olympics they 'educate' the Beijing public, while during the Games itself they help foreign visitors.

Summary and Application for London

There is no doubt that a lot of enthusiasm and "can do" mentality is driving the general language preparation for the Beijing Olympics. Not all of it entirely convinces. When it comes to preparing for the general public of visitors, the focus of the preparations is almost entirely on English. The assumption appears to be that the majority of people travelling to China in August 2008 will speak English. Based on this premise, London 2012 would not need any language preparation or policy at all outside that required by the Olympic Charter. Support for the Games is very high among the whole of the population. Not heard a single critical voice was heard; even those who were cynical about volunteering felt that the Games as such were a good thing for China. However, it would be rather risky to voice open disapproval to a foreigner. A certain matter of fact acceptance of a number of measures that may be put in place during the Games was also sensed. One rumour has it that Beijing's working population will be ordered to go on holiday for the duration of the Games to ease congestion on the road and improve air quality.

2. Interviews with Volunteers and People involved in training volunteers

Interviewee 1, Beijing Media and Communications University (Head of Volunteers Programme)

The interview with Interviewee 1 was conducted in the presence of the Dean of the Media School, who did not appear to speak much English. He himself said very little, although he responded to a couple of questions that the interviewee had difficulty with. There was a third person present to take pictures. The interview was conducted in English, at the gentle insistence of the interviewee, who is clearly the showcase of the Communication University's volunteers' programme which she is heading up. Therefore, the presence of the Dean and the fact that she herself heads up the Volunteers Programme at this university should be borne in mind.

The interviewee explained that the selection of volunteers started as early as April 2007, with a second round of tests held in October 2007. The initial 1050 applicants were reduced to 500 in the April tests and further reduced to 300 in the October tests. Those who were selected will sign a contract with the Beijing Olympic Committee Organising Committee (BOCOG) and work for five weeks in the summer of 2008 (carrying through to the Paralympics). This means that they have to give up their summer holidays, but will also be missing some of the lessons in September which they will have to make up. Some will get paid for their work, others will not. (It was not clear on what this depended, possibly on the venue/organisation they will end up working for.) Volunteers from this university will work for BOCOG and the European Broadcasting Organisations as secretaries and language assistants.

The university can provide volunteers in over 20 languages, at two levels of proficiency, a simple level and a high level. Professional translators will be

used for very sophisticated needs according to the Dean. He also conceded that the student language volunteers only covered a small fraction of the volunteers; the majority will be provided by commercial providers. Within the languages there exists a hierarchy. Top priority is given to English, followed by Russian, French, German, Spanish, Japanese and Korean in the second tier. The third tier is made up of Arabic, Portuguese, and Indian languages. The volunteers programme targets only students of these languages. No students of minority background appear to be targeted. (China has Russian and Korean speaking minorities amongst others).

In response to a question concerning what motivates students to sign up to be a volunteer, the researcher was told that there was no need to motivate students, they were driven by national pride and were full of enthusiasm to the extent that they were willing to pay for some of their expenses incurred by being a volunteer (like transport costs). They all receive a certificate at the end of their stint which they expect will help them on their CV; she had to concede however that enthusiasm was greater among the younger students.

The fact that mostly younger students are targeted means that in languages other than English (which is taught at school) volunteers have a maximum of two years of learning under their belt which will make for only relatively basic skills.

When selecting volunteers the interviewee explained that the “right spirit” was more important than skills. (This statement is reminiscent of the debates around being “red” or “expert” in Mao’s times!) In addition, appearance seems to play an important role, the researcher was told, and is one of the first criteria when it comes to selecting volunteers.

Motivation and enthusiasm is further imparted to the selected students through lectures by representatives of BOCOG which seem to be delivered on a regular basis. This is possibly being organised along similar lines as other official social organisations which branch out and reach into each ‘unit’ or neighbourhood having the dual function of “educating” as well as enforcing rules and regulations.

The impression gained from this interview and from the Dean’s attitude was that the higher officials do not really get involved in this, that possibly each university has to have a volunteers programme, a ‘recommendation’ that is heeded and verbally supported, but that it is left to the students themselves to run it and get on with it in conjunction with the BOCOG representatives.

Interviewee 2: Beijing University Volunteer

Like interviewee 1, the second interviewee was a young woman. The interview with her was conducted very informally at a café on the Beida campus.

She is in her first year at the university, transferred here from Qinghua Middle School (the birthplace of the Red Guards). She passed all the tests and the

interview to be accepted as a volunteer. She has very good spoken English, but will not be a language volunteer (she majors in Japanese) but a traffic volunteer. She was not given a choice in this; she was allocated to the Bird's Nest, but the majority of her colleagues will be working in the Ping Pong Stadium which was built on the Beida Campus. (Many campus sports facilities are being refurbished or rebuilt to be used in the Games).

She explained that a whole class has to declare interest in becoming volunteers or nobody can. However, afterwards the numbers are reduced through tests. She will also have more tests prior to the Games. In her interview she was asked whether she had volunteered before, what she knew about the Olympic Games, etc. She also confirmed that there are many more applicants than successful candidates. This despite the fact that once accepted, volunteers have meetings on a daily basis. During the Olympics they will have to work ten hours a day without pay although food will be provided. According to interviewee 2 this is considered an honour and she said that many of her classmates had applied to study in Beijing just so that they could get the chance to be a volunteer.

Volunteers receive training in the history of Beijing, the history of China, the history of the Games and also in basic first aid as well as skills needed for their particular area of volunteering.

Students will miss classes for the Olympics which they need to make up for in their spare time. Teachers will be available for this (on a voluntary basis). She said that her Japanese teacher was also a Volunteer and had to go through the same selection process, however language volunteers had to sit harder tests. She confirmed that a representative of BOCOG was on each campus to organise the volunteers.

Interviewee 3: Director of Olympic Volunteers Programme at BFLU (Beijing Foreign Languages University)

Interviewee 3 said that they had just drafted a project outline in collaboration with an Australian University concerning Olympic Volunteers (research for this project suggests that this may be the University of Western Sydney who provided language specialist volunteer training for Sydney 2000).

At BFLU they teach 22 languages and provide volunteers in all of them. Interviewee 3 stated that most students want to be volunteers and cites the reasons usually given, e.g. historic opportunity, chance to show the world that China is not backward any more, that China is a major world player, etc. He also confirmed that volunteers go through a series of tests, and that tests for language volunteers are harder than for other volunteers. If successful they will work, for example, for news organisations, as interpreters for post-match

interviews, or as guides at the venues (i.e. for the Olympic Family and 'in-the-tent')

Volunteers receive intensive training which is coordinated by BOCOG, including an induction to the venues, rules of individual games etc. They have to give weeks of their time for free, as do teachers and organisers (see previous comments which confirm this). While being a volunteer may increase future job prospects for those involved, it is primarily an honour to do something for the country at such a crucial event in China's revival.

Volunteers do not receive any special language training beyond the expertise they are considered to already possess as part of their specialty. They will therefore already know how to interact politely and culturally appropriately with foreign guests. Our research shows, however, that if this university is now working with an Australian university (no doubt already involved in Olympic training) following the project outline referred to above, this is likely to change.

According to interviewee 3 English is the dominant language, although other languages are equally important even though they have smaller numbers of volunteers assigned to them.

Commercial companies also provide language training and volunteers, but at this stage it is not clear how the universities and the commercial providers will be coordinated. Ultimately all these decisions are up to and will be made by BOCOG.

Summary and Application

Within the universities too the focus of language provision appears to be on English; while a variety of other languages will be provided by volunteers, their level of proficiency is questionable considering that it is primarily young students of foreign languages that are being targeted. No concerted effort seems to be made to enlist the help of relevant minority populations. (In any case minority policy in the PRC aims at eradicating minority languages.) Foreign students do seem to be targeted through separate tests. It is the researcher's impression that any serious language provision in languages other than English will have to come from commercial providers rather than universities for the 2008 Games.

The very particular political climate of China needs to be borne in mind to understand the context and delivery of the volunteer programme. It is BOCOG rather than the universities that organise and co-ordinate training and deployment of the volunteers; the impression is that universities have to accommodate the needs of BOCOG and deal with the knock-on effects on teaching and holidays, rather than being pro-actively engaged in the running of the volunteers programme.

In terms of possible application of the Beijing experience for London 2012, the impression is that there is very little that can be 'exported'. Due to the very different political and linguistic context in which the Olympic Games will be

held in 2012, there appears to be very little potential for learning from Beijing's university volunteers and the training in general. The more interesting example may be the commercial providers and the employment of foreign residents in Beijing during the Games. Universities in London will no doubt have to compete with commercial providers in 2012 to a greater or lesser extent depending on the impact of this report and other recommendations made.

3. Focus Groups

As will be seen later in this report in the dedicated section on focus group work carried out for the purposes of the this project (see chapter 7), the aim of focus group work was to ascertain the linguistic and cultural needs and expectations of international visitors who have/or who may travel to large-scale cultural and sporting events. This method is based on that used successfully in the Museums, Galleries and the International Visitor Experience Project (MGIVE) which showed that the results of surveys/focus groups carried out in the native language and in the country of origin may differ significantly from those obtained through the more usual feedback system of on-site surveys in English.

One trial focus group was carried out in Beijing in an 'accidental' informal setting, and the other was a properly constituted and organised focus group, although also with an 'accidental' sample.

3.1 Beijing Police Dinner

The researcher was invited by a former University of Westminster student to a reunion dinner with some of her students of the Police Academy. There were about twelve people gathered around the table (too many for a properly set-up focus group). In addition, in China there usually exists a certain hierarchy on a dining table with an acknowledged 'leader' (generally the oldest male, or the person paying for the dinner) to whom people tend to refer, again against all the rules of good focus group organisation.

The information gathered can be summarised as follows. If travelling to London they would want information at their port of arrival (airport) and in their accommodation. They would like information in Chinese on the competitions, the sites, events, other places of interest, public transport. They particularly emphasised the necessity of information on habits and customs, the 'do's and don'ts' as they do not want to commit terrible faux pas. The general consensus that information on shopping was a necessity. No consensus was reached as to whether information on where to get Chinese food was important. The assumption was that the quality of the Chinese food would be bad anyway and besides they were there to try new things. They emphasised that Chinese liked to travel and go for outings in large groups; they thought this might have implications on the ability to accommodate them in restaurants etc. (This is a very important cultural point, and was a finding of the MGIVE project).

Some of them had travelled abroad, in particular a person who had been to the Commonwealth Games in Australia. These were all professionals within the police and fire department. They were not very well informed about the volunteers programme; some of them were quite interested in becoming volunteers, but because of their line of work they were barred from volunteering as they would be needed in their professional capacity during the Games.

3.2 Focus Group

The properly constituted focus group consisted of four women, and was put together with the help of a former student of the researcher from Cambridge who has been living in Beijing for the last year. They were all working; two of them had their own businesses (one had just sold her restaurant about to embark on a new business venture, another runs a company trading medical supplies), two were employed (one in her father's business). Three were in their 20s, one in her late 40s. One is contemplating a post-graduate degree abroad. All of them were lively, interested and very forthcoming with thoughts and ideas.

The summary below follows the order of the questions as agreed for the project's focus group work (available in the Appendices).

None of them had travelled abroad, but they had some experience of travelling within China, albeit not to big events.

If they were to come to London in 2012 they would ideally bring a friend who is familiar with the city. Their research would start in China on the internet regarding customs, prices, hotels, environment, places of interest and universities. They would also contact family/friends (this term is used quite loosely in Chinese, the researcher now qualifies as such a friend) in London. They would also prepare by learning some basic English. They would prefer to travel on an organised trip with a travel company, certainly when it is the first time to a new place. This also applies within China.

Once in London, they would hope to find information at the airport and at the hotels. They would also find it useful to obtain information in Chinese at the places where you can pick up local free newspapers, possibly in the form of a free newspaper.

When it comes to travel they would first of all chose a place to stay according to convenience in terms of travel. They would buy maps, including maps of public transport which they would like to have in Chinese and English.

The map of London Underground confused them profusely (this is again a very important general point concerning maps and intercultural communication; it appeared in the MGIVE project concerning museum and gallery floor maps and it appears elsewhere in the focus group work for this report). They felt they would not need all this much information and felt it would be more helpful to have a simplified tube map that only showed the

main lines and stations visitors to the Olympic Games are likely to use and leave out all the rest. They felt very strongly that numbers for each line would be easier than names like Victoria, Piccadilly etc. (again, an important point and see the observation made elsewhere in this report concerning the (inter)discipline of 'Wayfinding'; see chapter 8). It took the focus group exactly two seconds to understand the concept of the Oyster Card. A similar scheme exists in Beijing and the Octopus has been in use in Hong Kong for much longer than Oyster in London.

The focus group felt less strongly about the need for Chinese information at the venues as the rules of the sports should be known and places like canteens or toilets could easily be identified through international symbols (this is assuming that they are used, of course; MGIVE research showed that, for example, not all London museum and galleries use these consistently). Obviously, if there was Chinese information provided they would feel more at home, or at least it would all be considered less of an obstacle. While printed material at the airport is fine, they felt that at the venues Chinese speaking volunteers would be extremely welcome. While the internet was their first choice for information prior to arrival, once in London, the internet ranked less highly in terms of source of information. It was felt that something that could be taken along or picked up at certain points, i.e. printed material was better.

The focus group felt very strongly that there was no need for particular information on Chinese food. They said that they would go for something different, that they were not going to London to find what is already familiar, but to find new things, to experiment as this was all part of the experience. They wanted to eat all sorts of different things and would go in search for the specialties and particularities of the place they visited.

When asked what they would bring along from China, they all said they would bring medication for the most common ailments. In this context it also became apparent that information on what to do in an emergency was crucial. It was suggested that there should be a dedicated help-line through which to reach Chinese speaking volunteers/helpers in case of an accident/emergency. This idea was developed further by suggesting installing special telephones that were free to use and only dialled special numbers for such purposes (note that previous events have used such call centres for the Olympic Family, but not for the broader international publics; incidentally these centres bring their own problems for volunteers who can feel isolated, as will be seen).

Talking about waste disposal and recycling they were not particularly fazed by the idea. They suggested colour coding and the use of internationally recognised symbols.

Conclusions from the focus group(s)

It was very interesting to hear that both groups were adamant that once abroad Chinese would go for difference rather than familiarity, especially when it comes to food. There was anxiety about committing cultural faux pas, but overall there was a heartening spirit of 'we're all just humans and want to have some fun' in the way the hypothetical trip to London was approached.

A number of interesting points and suggestions came out of the focus group, especially. the idea regarding a simplified tube map, a free newspaper containing relevant information in Chinese, and dedicated Chinese speaking help-lines for emergencies. However, none of these ideas are 'culturally specific' to the Chinese in fact. They show a practical mind and would probably be welcome by other cultures and languages too. The most culturally specific element that came out of the focus group(s) is the Chinese tendency to travel in large groups which does have certain implications for catering and accommodation (the MGIVE project findings suggest that this is also an issue for certain elements of Arab culture, particularly for visitors from the Gulf States).

The members of the focus group were all sophisticated urbanites. While it is probable that Chinese visitors to London will come from this demographic group, the researcher urges caution in generalising the results from the focus group. What became clear in just the two groups that the researcher had a chance to talk to is that there is no easy consensus, and that differences in attitude exist among the sexes and age groups and quite possibly between different regions and religions. There isn't 'the' Chinese visitor. More research would be needed to identify specific audience groups if specifically-targeted information was needed by organisations [as will be seen in chapter 7, MGIVE research that identifying the target audience and its specific needs is essential to an enhanced visitor experience].

And to return to UK Events Present:

Liverpool City of Culture 08

Despite recurrent critical media reports concerning the organisation, delivery and costs of aspects of the City of Culture programme (for example the BBC's 'File on Four' report May 2008), the place of languages and of FE and HE's contribution in Liverpool is of considerable interest for the considerations of this project.

The Liverpool Culture Company established its 08 Welcome Programme with the aim of ensuring that the City region (Liverpool and Merseyside) captures the long-term benefits of the additional 1.7 million visitors expected to visit during the European Capital of Culture Year (08 Welcome Update Document). The overall aim is to make Liverpool – and the wider Merseyside region – “the most welcoming destination in Europe”.

The programme aims also to maximise the potential for engaging residents through the 08 Volunteering Programme, and finally to improve employment opportunities, especially for hard-to-reach groups and people not currently involved in work. The Head of Welcome for the Culture Company also has responsibility for the City's International Relations team. The key features of the programme are:

- Volunteering programme to engage and involve local citizens in presenting a welcoming face to the City and at key events; also to use volunteering as a way to build skills and confidence on the part of some previously excluded groups;
- Improved training for key front line staff in the tourist, retail and transport services [compare London Regional Languages Network 'Welcoming the World' programme]; improved coordination and focus of existing training provision, for example links to Welcome Host and Train to Gain;
- Specially-designed free Customer Service Programme for businesses to sign up to, administered centrally by the Liverpool Culture Company; includes customer feedback report, display material and information about support and improvement programmes such as training;
- Partnerships with a range of organisations including Transport, Police, Tourism and Regeneration, as well as front-line customer service businesses.

An important aspect of the Liverpool programme is the involvement of FE and HE as detailed below.

As far as Volunteering is concerned, this is considered a strong, visible image of a key aspect of the Welcome Programme, and as offering 'value-added' to events in terms of information for customers, while also giving volunteers a number of benefits. The Volunteer programme is linked to a range of other engagement and social inclusion programmes in the City, including the Skills for Life agenda. Skills for Life in the Capital of Culture is a new programme developed in partnership with Liverpool Community College. The pilot programme was successfully delivered at the beginning of 2006 and then extended to other sites across the city. In addition, plans are being developed to embed the Welcome element into other college training courses, for example the tourism NVQ.

Those involved in the 08 Customer Service Programme believe it is the first of its kind to be introduced in a UK city, allowing the Liverpool Culture Company (LCC) to provide businesses with free and valuable information as to how their customers *feel* about the service and allowing an understanding of the perception of Welcome throughout Merseyside to be built up. [Once again, compare the results of the MGIVE project below in chapter 7].

Training for engaging front-line staff has been developed in partnership with the City's Academy of Excellence, making use of existing funding. Training sessions are delivered by Academy staff and also 08 Welcome staff. The training makes a link between personal knowledge and behaviour and the perception of welcome. The Academy model also enables the training of trainers in other organisations to deliver the programme. It has worked especially well for Merseyside Travel (delivered to over 700 staff) and for Merseyside Police. Closer linking has also been made with the employment and jobs agenda with the Shop for Jobs initiative designed to tackle

recruitment issues building up in the City Centre as major projects approach completion.

As far as languages are concerned, there are a number of positive examples in the Liverpool model. Liverpool's demographic includes both an indigenous population that includes Welsh, Scots, Irish, and immigrants including especially Chinese, Poles, Greeks, and those of Caribbean and African descent. The city enjoys a global reputation both for music and sport (football, horse racing). In 2007, the LCC began to address language issues and to see how the city could capitalise on the '08 Year' both in the short term and as a lasting legacy.

The Head of Liverpool Welcome (and also a key member of the LCC) believes that the comprehensive language awareness programme is 'trailblazing' (Baxter, 2007), targeting everyone in the service and tourism sectors, as well as the business community and the population at large.

As well as the Merseyside Partnership (which has subsidised language courses, see below), Mersey Travel and Merseyside Police, Liverpool Welcome specifically works with a wide range of academic institutions that deliver language training, and has close links with the Regional Language Networks (RLN), based in Salford.

The international courses have been set up with Mersey Travel (running local suburban trains and ferries) and a book has been published in seven languages, which provides phrases and greetings for taxi drivers, restaurants and bar staff, etc. [compare Beijing for English and French only; compare also the French survival kits and 'passports' produced for Athens 2004 – the 'passport' was developed from the survival kit, mass produced in this short form and distributed in the thousands to the public and key workers in the city, giving them basic vocabulary to 'get by' in French]. There are also language packs.

The Mersey Partnership provides details about the language providers in the universities and colleges that are part of the programme. These include Southport College (whose head drew up a language strategy in 2007 for the Capital of Culture year and sent it to the Liverpool Culture Company). Other institutions involved include St Helen's College, Liverpool Community College, the University of Liverpool, and John Moore's University (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 3, February 2008). The Head of Southport College sums it up:

"We agreed that it needed a number of people involved in education to get it moving, along with those who provide and require language skills", (Baxter: 2007).

It is not difficult to conclude, therefore, that a key to the success of the Liverpool language strategy is that it was initiated by, and is being implemented by FE and HE providers working in collaboration with local and regional government.

Clearly, the courses offered for front-line staff are at a basic level focusing on first contact and aimed at dealing with queries concerning food and drink, accommodation, directions, in the core European languages. However, this initial exposure can also reap further benefits. Each course (involving ten people at a time) is subsidised through the Mersey Partnership with a grant of £400 from the Liverpool 08 Culture budget for the initial 'taster' period of three weeks. If individuals wish to continue, normal fees apply.

The Head of Southport College has been impressed with the uptake (Baxter: 2008). The incentive has appealed to SMEs, and attention has been focused on employers' skills requirements. The head of tourism development for the Mersey Partnership Agency is convinced that the language training initiative has much wider potential for the region than just the 08 period.

What has happened in Liverpool, therefore, is that agencies beyond the linguistic community have been convinced by the importance and value (in all senses of the word) of language skills. The Partnership's strategy involves translation, information, basic language skills and a visitor guide (available at www.visitliverpool.com).

Their aim is to show that there is a real need and use for language skills throughout the city. It is also clear that these 'taster courses' are just that – the real aim is to encourage staff to go ahead and learn more. At Mersey Travel, the Welcome International course is only one day long and all staff (nearly 1, 000) are encouraged to take advantage of a course structured specifically for the transport sector. There is also a "08 On the Move" brochure which is linked with the courses to help confidence with talking to visitors. Staff are then encouraged to take courses at local colleges (even though it may be for 'personal use'). The intention is to put Merseyside's tourism and travel sector 'on the world map'. (Baxter: 2008). A free language-learning programme for staff to learn a language in their own time has a waiting list.

Most of the language agenda for Liverpool has been the result of a special Language Forum set up by the head of Liverpool Welcome and the team at the LCC. This Forum includes the director of the RLN for the North West area who, having begun mapping the existing language skills base in the region against key private sector groups, was keen to help develop the language agenda for the Capital of Culture (Baxter: 2008).

Using this model, there is a very tangible opportunity in London, for example, for FE and HE to build on the London (and other) RLN's 'Welcoming the World' programme (see chapter 7 below) and on the achievements of the national Routes into Language Programmes.

The key in Liverpool is that the 08 Volunteer programme has captured the imagination of many people. The head of Liverpool Welcome assesses it in this way:

"There is a great passion for Liverpool internationally and an equal passion amongst the citizens of Liverpool for the world. We are in this

language programme for the long-run and indications are that, even only a few weeks into the 08 culture year, our visitors like the city's approach" (Baxter: 2008).

And he is amongst those whose imagination has been captured:

"We are hoping that businesses and individuals will all the see the benefits of [...] falling in love with languages again – and I mean I'm somebody myself who did A-level German and French, and some French at university, and I do international work now, so I ought to put my money where my mouth is" (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 3, February 2008).

The leader of Liverpool council and deputy chairman of the Liverpool Culture Company adds:

"The 08 Volunteers will play a crucial role in ensuring that the year runs as smoothly as possible; whether helping out behind the scenes at major events, or welcoming visitors as they arrive at the new cruise-liner terminal. The volunteer programme will also provide an important legacy to 2008 by giving people the opportunity to develop new skills which they can use in other areas, including the job market" (Baxter: 2008).

Importantly, all targets for volunteers have been exceeded, including that for Black and Minority Ethnic communities that make up 15% of volunteers from a population that is about 6% - more than double the proportion. Volunteers have been used in the build-up to 2008 to support the City's events, especially those sports and cultural organisations that do not have their own volunteers (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 3, February 2008).

There has been a concerted effort in Liverpool to get industry to be much more aware of the opportunities that arise due to the growing number of international visitors and to raise the profile of people who have language skills. As the head of Liverpool Welcome 08 says: "what we wanted to do is this – put a much more consistent level of awareness and better access to training on top of that – and that's where the language initiative plugged in" (Respondent 3 as above). Enabled by funding from the Regional Development Agency, he sees the four courses in French, Spanish, German and Italian, as "one of our biggest successes". Businesses have "jumped at" the subsidised training described above. Introduced on European Languages Day in 2007, there is also a 'language badge' scheme [also being used in Beijing as has been seen] indicating those who can help visitors in those four languages, plus Polish, Chinese and Japanese, and there are plans for Arabic later in the year. The limits of this are candidly admitted: "those who purport to be able to help a visitor out" (see previous cautionary remarks concerning the 'accidental (self-selecting) linguist').

A further step of the language initiative being considered is a type of 'buddy-scheme' for smaller attractions that may not have the facilities or the finance for translation by professional contractors. By paying a small amount of money, students could then undertake some translation work on a project

basis. This seems another potential project to be fostered under the Routes scheme, especially under an employability initiative (with the usual caveats applying that these are not professionally-qualified translators with ITI recognition, of course).

Wimbledon 2008

Although the Official Wimbledon Championships Website: (http://www.wimbledon.org/en_GB/index.html) and documentation is all solely in English, the recently reopened (2006) Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum, which won the Visit London Large Visitor Attraction of the Year Award 2006, has borne foreign language provisions in mind:

“The entire experience is complemented by a superb audio guide, which is offered as part of the entry price and available in eight languages - English, Japanese, Mandarin, Spanish, Russian, French, German and Italian. There are also special audio tours for the partially sighted and, for use by the deaf, handheld sets which give interpretation in UK sign language”. See: http://aeltc.wimbledon.org/en_GB/about/museum/news_museumopens.html

There are also pre-bookable guided tours of the courts available:

“This memorable behind-the-scenes look at Wimbledon is also available to groups in a variety of languages including English, French, German, Spanish and Italian. When booked in advance, the group tours are offered at any time of day and can be tailored to suit specific requirements and interests. Admission to the Museum is included in the tour price (for both groups and individual) so visitors can experience the fascinating interactive exhibitions, films and admire the Championship Trophies either before or after their tour of the grounds”. http://aeltc.wimbledon.org/en_GB/about/museum/museum_tours.html

This is promising, but the fact that the initial information/publicity is not available in the foreign languages above, means that many prospective international visitors may be missing out. As is often the case, the self-professing ‘mission statement’ of institutions regarding language provision proves to be rather different in practice. Even if organisations think they are doing it well, it can always be done better using research into effective communication with differing types of audiences (see chapter 7 below).

5. INTERNATIONAL EVENTS FUTURE

Vancouver Winter Olympics 2010

Like Beijing, but in a much more positive way both for depth and breadth in linguistic and intercultural communication, Vancouver represents a very particular social and cultural model, being an officially bi-lingual city. This time however, it is anticipated that there is much to learn from the planning for 2012, and from attitudes towards language planning. Vancouver is also obviously seen as an extremely important showcase for the use of French.

As far back as 2005, VANOC clarified its objectives in terms of official languages and identifying how Francophone communities would collaborate with the Organising Committee to support these objectives. (www.vancouver2010.com). A meeting in December that year acknowledged that Francophone communities from every Canadian province could have the opportunity to contribute in a unique way to the Games, particularly British Columbia's community which resides in the host province. VANOC's plans include culture, ceremonies, education programmes, communications and job opportunities (volunteers and paid employees). The aim is that Francophone and Acadian communities across Canada work together to ensure visibility and a maximum number of opportunities for the host country's large 'Francophone family' at the 2010 Games.

Fondation Dialogue (The Canadian Foundation for Cultural Dialogue) has been identified to act as the catalyst to support VANOC in realising its official languages mission which is to promote Canada's linguistic duality and to ensure that the Games reflect the cultural diversity of the country. Here, as in other Vancouver promotional material, the UK can learn much by thinking in terms of its broader multicultural and multilingual communities and the two-way opportunities that large-scale events present to 'welcome the world', not only in the two official languages, but in a much broader range of languages.

The National Action Plan (February 2007) already drawn up for the contribution of 'Francophonie' to the Winter Olympics in Vancouver and produced by the Fondation Dialogue has much to inspire. Entitled 'Une Grande Occasion', it plays on the double meaning of the great/huge opportunity/occasion that it celebrates. While it certainly needs to be borne in mind that this Plan concerns only the two official languages of Canada in a desire to promote the country's bilingualism, its ambition to exceed the necessary obligations is admirable.

Being involved in the language strategy is seen as a means of taking ownership of the Games, and of making the public feel part of their envisaged success story and their legacy, not only for the Francophone community of British Columbia, but for Canadians generally. The Plan includes sections on: the action plan at a national level; education and young people; sport, leisure and physical activities; art and culture; business and tourism; coordination and communication. For the purposes of this project, a key member of Fondation

Dialogue also completed a questionnaire (based on the general interview topic guide used here) and provided a copy of this National Plan.

As in Sydney, various language associations have joined forces for the 'greater good' of the Games with a view to planning and delivering a coherent and comprehensive language strategy to deliver positive and long-term outcomes for Canada. The general aim is to present to the world an image of a 'contemporary, positive, dynamic, creative, multicultural and open' Francophone community. It deliberately targets young people, and a more general aim is to consolidate links with the international Francophone community.

These aspirations could be applied to the UK languages strategy. Although we are not officially a bi-lingual nation, we are unofficially a multilingual one (despite the stereotypes), and this is an opportunity/occasion to show it. As part of its legacy, Fondation Dialogue's language strategy aims to gain greater recognition of the country's bilingualism. This could be applied equally convincingly to the UK's multilingual population.

The Plan stresses the importance of communication and coordination to ensure the realisation of concrete language initiatives, for example: creating a Francophone 'village' and activities; events on the Olympic Torch relay route involving communities on the way; promoting the Olympic spirit in schools; the creation of a 'virtual relay', a virtual torch-bearing itinerary in different primary and secondary schools [this could be used very effectively in the UK also, involving the whole of the UK and different ethnic and cultural landscapes]; involving young journalists (for press, TV and radio) in coverage of the Games [another excellent idea for the UK, using multilingual young journalists reporting on the Games in community languages and in mainstream modern foreign languages, perhaps aimed at international visitors].

In short, around the Games, several other social and cultural events are planned around exhibitions, shows, food, art, history, music, etc., in order to provide a high-quality Francophone cultural experience. This is an illustration of smaller 'event-themed' rather than 'event-led' initiatives described at the beginning of this report as a successful enhancement of mega-events. Replacing 'Francophone' by 'Multicultural', London will also be staging numerous events of this kind, and at various levels, from the LDA to local communities with, for example, The Cultural Olympiad launching towards the end of September 2008. HE could make a significant contribution to language provision at events of this kind, helping to promote the myriad cultural aspects of the city in an effective way.

Vancouver aims to recruit 3, 000 bi-lingual volunteers from all age groups and ethnic and social backgrounds [in contrast to Sydney or Athens, and to be compared with Liverpool] with the opportunity for further language training for the second of their languages (either French or English). Another exciting initiative is for a Francophone athlete to 'sponsor' a group of volunteers which

could be adapted in the UK with a wider range of languages for volunteers from a variety of ethnic/multilingual communities.

In general, the Plan will promote the exchange of ideas on the place of sport, leisure and physical activities in the development of 'Francophonie', as well as showcase the diversity of Canadian arts and culture; for the UK, once again read 'Multiculturalism'. All of this is considered very important for the domestic and international tourism markets given increased media attention before and during the Games. The Francophone 'Cultural Olympiad' has a high profile in the National Plan, and incorporates both 'high' and 'popular' culture, and is planned to begin this year, 2008, and run until the Games begin in 2010. Considerable attention is given to potential tourism benefits, not least the use of the international media to publicise what Canada has to offer the international visitor.

The hallmark of the Plan is its inclusiveness, aiming to ensure all sectors of the Francophone community from individuals to businesses, from micro- to macro-levels; for the UK, again read Multicultural. The key is coordination and communication for the greatest impact. Based on a bilingual policy, the Plan has clearly defined strategies for language initiatives, including marketing and promotion. To deliver the best language strategy, the emphasis is on collaboration, not competition, and on a 'want to do/can do/will do' attitude.

An interview with the Director of Human Resources and Official Languages for this project confirms that all signs and announcements will be in French and English (which falls under her responsibility). Further language services for officials, athletes and dignitaries in the six languages of the Games fall under the organisation of International Client Services (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 2, February 2008). VANOC is also working directly with the tourism industry, and the City of Vancouver will offer online information and a phone line for visitors to get information translated for them at tourist kiosks and stations. Tourism VC plans also to have 'ambassadors' on the streets to help international visitors. Such ambassadors are already used in summer in Vancouver, and the programme will be extended and expanded during Games-time. With an inclusive recruitment strategy for volunteers for the Games aimed at, for example, inner city populations, the disabled and aboriginal people, the Games are seen as an opportunity to showcase the city's diversity and skills.

For the 'official' level, the emphasis seems to be on using people with existing language skills, rather than on training. The time required to improve language and the fast-paced environment of Games planning is evoked in relation to this (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 2, February, 2008). The importance of forward planning with reference to language provision must constantly be stressed. The problem of people finding time for language improvement is also an important issue to be addressed. HE in the UK should consider the development of teaching material for use on different media platforms to support language learning where/when/how is most convenient.

VANOC are also developing an official training package very similar to the Liverpool 08 Welcome and a 'Service Excellence' module of training. However, an awareness of the limitations of this approach is evident, as the interview evidence suggests: "we just have to be careful though because when we teach people to say a few sentences or a welcome – all this in the language – people then expect that you will speak the language – it can work against you, but sometimes it's appropriate to use it, but then you have to switch back right away, so it can work...." (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 2, February, 2008).

There is also an awareness that not all the language skills may be found nationally, although priority will be given to Canadians. Even amongst this often inspirational planning and these very active ideas, there are less positive aspects which London and the UK could manage better. Staff working for VANOC (about 750) speak around 34 different languages and are being used at the moment on an ad-hoc basis, although they are not trained linguists. The same use was/is being made of in-house foreign-language speaking staff at Cork Capital of Culture in 2005, Luxembourg 2007 and even at Liverpool 2008 [there is a common (mis)perception within organisations that because a member of staff 'speaks the language', they are linguists and/or have intercultural communication skills; the MGIVE project revealed the extent to which leading UK galleries and museums can rely on in-house staff, with poor consequences for the foreign language material that they produce; the 'accidental linguist' puts in yet another appearance].

On completion of their language training / volunteering, the Sydney language specialists are thought by the interviewee to have been awarded some form of accreditation. In the other cities, however, only a letter of thanks was sent. In Vancouver, they "have been exploring trying to see if there are opportunities to partner interpreter training and one of the ideas would be for it to culminate in some sort of certificate of completion that would mean something" (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 8, March 2008). This idea has been welcomed, but the funding aspect is still uncertain. Indeed, in Canada, there is a shortage of community interpreters, so it would make sense to make the most of the language volunteers who are "a pool of individuals who are obviously enthusiastic and energetic, but who have also been whittled down to a group whom we know have a certain number of skills". "There is a lot of opportunity to look at partnering, because a lot of their work would have been removed by us actually finding them [i.e. potential community interpreters] and then if they could provide a little bit of funding and expertise in terms of some extra training, it's great for us too, because then we have one more thing to offer that volunteer". In effect, they could use this as a selling point to engage more volunteers: "not only is this a great Olympics experience, but we would also love to help turn this into a future career".

In Vancouver, for the first time ever, they will introduce some more general training for the volunteers. This will focus on culture and protocol, and will involve everyone from International Client Services (not just the language volunteers, who represent about one third from that department). The training will ensure "a certain level of cultural awareness" and will begin with large

groups, funnelling down to smaller more specialised groups later. This was done well in Turin according to the interviewee, where training in “protocol, etiquette, cultural awareness and IR” for all the ICS staff and volunteers was provided (this despite the other negative attitudes towards language provision as previously noted). Nevertheless, the somewhat traditional, hands-off approach to the training was criticised, with a more interactive style being preferred for Vancouver.

Our experience of running a Language Specialist Volunteer workshop using the previous Olympics training manual demonstrated that more training in intercultural skills and awareness is very greatly needed indeed (see detailed information on this in chapter 7 below).

As regards recruiting the volunteers at Vancouver, the VANOC Language Services team have been working closely with the department called ‘Workforce’ (formerly Volunteers Services), “who does the general call for volunteers” and then follows the Language Services guidelines in terms of candidates’ required skills sets and which organisations to target with presentations, etc., as well as other language-specific organisations, like the Alliance Française. They have stressed the importance of asking applicants to self-assess their language proficiency on the first application form: “it’s very important to be involved in [drafting] the application, because usually it’s some computer programmer putting it together; we want it to be much more defined, so that the best people come to us initially” (Respondent 8 again).

The Organising Committee ceases to exist after the Olympics has left town, so people move on and volunteer outcomes are consequently not recorded, “everything just disappears after the Games”; but it would be a good idea to do so. There needs to be more research generally into languages at the Olympics, for instance, it would be interesting to compare the language assessment tool devised by them with a more established form of evaluation, like perhaps the European language self-assessment tool. More research work needs to be done in this area: “a lot of knowledge that could be gathered is all just seeping away”. The lack of an enduring ‘Games memory’ has previously been noted in this report.

The legacy that the Vancouver Language Services team would like to leave is “some sort of additional training for volunteers, but it is dependent on finding a partner”. It would also be a good idea to ensure that some young blood is brought into professional interpreting management. “I am worried for future games, because so many of the guys working at a very, very high level, like the G8s and Olympic Games are getting older” (now in their 70s). A strategic recruitment policy is needed in this area; “it’s an important legacy for the Olympics in general, not for Vancouver” (Respondent 8 again).

Finally, regarding the general atmosphere in Vancouver, people are very excited. Everyone “is very organised, very ahead of the Games”. Canada is a bilingual country, so “there is an official languages component that has been pulled out and recognised [...] a new component, which puts some focus on spectators and general guests at the Games, because we [at VANOC] don’t

do that". "I feel really good about the Games, because I've never seen a Committee this organised, this far out", especially after the interviewee's experience in Turin and recently in Rio, at the PanAm Games, where aspects of the language services that had already been planned in Vancouver, were being addressed only four weeks prior to the event.

The Run-up to London 2012 – in London and around the UK

Are we ready to talk to the world?

"The Games are expected to deliver a £2 billion boost to Britain's international visitor economy. Games-related and Games-motivated tourism will mean over half a million extra visitors in London alone in 2012, but a 'halo effect' of global media coverage means that most of the growth will be achieved in the four years following the Games.

[...]

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has conducted a survey entitled 'Welcome Legacy: Tourism for the 2012 Games'. The February 2007 interim summary of responses made several references to the importance of languages for marketing purposes to enhance the UK's 'welcome' and opportunities to harness linguistic diversity in the hospitality and tourism sector. The survey also mentioned the possibility of a visitor attraction focused on the languages of London" (Collis, 2007)

Our research suggests that few public or private sector institutions (based on the experience of the museum and gallery sector) have any real idea how to communicate effectively with international audiences, let alone use languages for marketing purposes.

Lessons learnt from the more general research on the context of the Olympics so far emphasise:

- (a) not underestimating the power of the media and mass communication when promoting language strategy;
- (b) the need for an emphasis on research and transfer of knowledge;
- (c) an imaginative approach to language training within a progressive accreditation system;
- (d) involving and valuing the local community;
- (e) language providers of all kinds working together 'for the greater good'.

A further main lesson to be learnt is to start working on strategies as early as possible, as soon as the IOC begins drawing up contracts with the host organising committee. LOCOG should recruit a Director of Languages as

soon as possible. The following observations come from an extremely experienced Olympics language services trainer interviewed for this project:

“The International Community are already beginning to ask questions such as ‘Who’s in London? What’s happening in London?’ [...] “London is not behind yet, but they need someone helming the ship now”; “they need to be made aware of this study so that the person can come on board and have the benefit of what you’ve learned. If you bring that person in too late, they can get forgotten about and be disregarded” (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 8, March 2008]

In addition, as the Olympics is a mega-event, with mass(ive) communication at its heart, this mass approach must be integrated into any language strategy.

Respondent 8 also suggests that the success of Sydney’s language policy was largely down to the media tycoon promoting it:

“In Sydney, the Government – which was a major financial contributor – saw the Games as Australia’s big view to the world” and “after the Games, Australia was on the map [...] they saw being open and welcoming, and being able to connect in a variety of languages as key in presenting Australia to the rest of the world”.

There was an ethics of languages being important that filtered through more generally, and hiring Jonathon Pepper – well-known in the Australian TV industry and well-versed in PR – also helped to convey the message. Despite his own linguistic shortcomings, he recognised the power of languages in creating an image for Australia, and knew how to obtain the funds to promote them. He was the public face of language services and “that was huge”:

“When you’re jockeying with the Head of Press or the Head of Media Relations, you need somebody who can go into a meeting and be recognised and fight for budgets. A more traditional head of languages from a linguistic background would go in there and have a much more intellectual and probably more informed approach in terms of the content, but would not carry the same weight as a ‘big guy from the TV Channel’” (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 8, March 2008).

London needs a high-profile Languages Champion – but one who understands and appreciates the high-quality education sector contribution, and not solely that of commercial language services if legacy is to be sustained, as has been made clear.

London and rest of the UK are also now uniquely placed to learn from past international events and to take full advantage of the multicultural diversity of its local communities and of its business communities.

Inspired by London’s successful bid for the 2012 Games, Birmingham, Manchester and Sheffield, for example, all continue to bid for sport events,

each also intent on positioning itself to host training camps for athletes preparing for 2012 (Smith, 2006c). Language provision could also be put in place at these camps, serving both as a trial run for the linguists and as part of the training, and as a means of making the overall strategy less centralised in London and the South East.

Providing more comprehensive language services at international football matches in the run-up to the Games would also do this, and such provisions could then be used nationally at the Olympic football events to be staged all over the country. Some language provision is already in place for large European football matches (in Manchester, for example), but this could be developed much more extensively. There will also be a number of 'test events' in London from now until 2012 with which HE departments could get involved.

Birmingham staged the European Indoor Athletics Championships in 2007, and intends to bid for the 2022 Commonwealth Games. The latest West Midlands Regional Development Strategy views sport as a tool for addressing social exclusion and inequality within the city, rather than an external marketing tool. The lessons of legacy are being learned. The momentum in Manchester also continues, e.g. 'Sporting Capital of the UK', 'Festival of Sport 2006', and hosting the Paralympic World Cup Games in 2006 and 2007.

The Games are an immense opportunity and occasion, as Vancouver has identified.

Are we really ready to talk to the world?

6. THE PLACE OF FRENCH: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

Special attention needs to be focused on the use and place of French at Olympic events. The level of scrutiny that the French Government exercises on the host city's Organising Committee is always high-level and intense. French media reporting on both the 1908 and 1948 London Olympic Games maintained a very negative tone (the weather, the poor organisation, the lack of interest amongst the British public...) As a disappointed competitor for the 2012 Games, France's eye will be a critical one.

As previously noted, the report made to the French Parliament before the Athens Games in 2004 makes clear that since 1994, France has been trying to rectify the way in which French had been used in preceding Olympic events.

These attempts had borne fruit at Atlanta in 1996, Nagano (Winter) in 1998, Sydney in 2000 and Salt Lake City (Winter) in 2002 (www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/dglf) and (with some contradictory views, as previously noted) at Athens in 2004.

France makes available about a million euros a year, for three years, dedicated to the linguistic preparation of the Games, and this is seen as an absolutely necessary effort to continue to promote the French language (and is actually only a small percentage of the overall cost of the Games).

It is also clear that the French Government is currently working to promote the French language throughout China, taking Beijing 2008 as a focus. This is an inter-ministerial task – Sport, Foreign Affairs, Culture and Communication – together with the French National Committee for Sport and the Olympics (CNOSF), the National Institute for Sport and Physical Education (INSEP) and (importantly for this report) Interpreting and Translation Schools. Sport is therefore considered an extremely important vehicle for the promotion of the French language.

Article 27 of the Olympic Charter states that the two official languages of the International Olympic Committee are French and English, with French taking precedence in case of dispute. The French Government is very active in promoting the French language through Olympic events, seeing it as an opportunity to secure and develop its international profile. It now also envisages increasingly co-opting other Francophone countries in this endeavour – and this again is coming to fruition for Beijing as will be seen.

French at Sydney 2000..... And some lessons for London

The report on the use of French at Sydney is especially detailed: (http://dglf.culture.fr/culture/dglf/JOlympiques/sydney_rapportAM.htm).

The DGLF (Délégation générale de la langue française) is a public organisation (with around 30 staff) attached, since 1996, to the French Ministry of Culture and Communication and it has also produced detailed

reports on, for example, Salt Lake City and Turin. The following information is based on the report made by a member of DGLF to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Culture and Communication, and Youth and Sport. As has been noted and as the following information shows, the degree of scrutiny that the French Government gives to the use of French is extremely high. LOCOG needs to be fully aware of the seriousness with which this is viewed (a glance at the LOCOG website at the moment, suggests that this has not yet come to their attention).

Reference is made to the press reports concerning the opening ceremony – but assurance given that the overall reality of the presence of French at Sydney was very different to that suggested by the initial blunder, that the Charter's principles were respected and that the use of French was particularly satisfactory. This success is attributed to the cooperation between SOCOG, the French Embassy in Sydney and the SOCOG language services, with the director of the latter making the use of both French and English a personal mission.

Nearly all the Organising Committee's documents were produced in the two languages, as were all documents concerned with the ceremonial aspects of the Games. French took order precedence in the spoken word. The quality of French was deemed to be especially good, with all the announcers being native speakers and chosen for clear diction. In addition to them, there were 60 members of the language services and 100 volunteers just for French. However, although the overall presence of French was good, there was an unequal use of the language across sites and events – and it was therefore perceived differently by various audiences. This issue of perception – and of the visibility or otherwise of French – recurs again and again in the DGLF account.

The presence of French in the Olympic Village was considered to be very visible where signage was bilingual (including in restaurants, the shopping centre and all communal spaces) and in the press centre. The daily Olympic Village newspaper appeared in both languages, but (once again – see the research here on Athens) ticketing was only in English ('forgotten' in the list of documents to be translated.....).

To give an idea of scale – more than a million words were translated into French from December 1998 onwards. But again, given that all publics do not see all the sites, perceptions differed. For the general public it was very apparent in the dense signage in all public spaces around Darling Harbour, the centre of Sydney, the Olympic Park, and on the outskirts of the city which accommodated a very large number of visitors. It is clear from what precedes that from the space of the Village to the medal ceremonies, French was very present for the athletes. For journalists at Sydney, French was also very much in evidence (intranet, press centre, etc).

However, for the French and Francophone public not at the Games, the presence of French was considered much less visible. During the opening and closing ceremonies, and sometimes during the medal ceremonies French could be heard on the television – but the cameras rarely showed the sign-

boards, and the commentators spoke over the announcers. In this respect, the website was especially disappointing since it was not properly updated (more on this later). Although the announcements for competitions and the presentation of teams and competitors was carried out in both languages (with French spoken first), as they were for the medal ceremonies, the messages in English were often more complete. Sports commentaries were only in English, and again a special recommendation is made concerning this problem for future events.

Of the 989 language volunteers recruited, 111 were specifically for French (with 140 more having knowledge of French) and they worked with the Olympic delegations and journalists. For press conferences, simultaneous interpreting was carried out in French, 14 interpreters out of a total of 120 were for French.

The presence of French in new media varied. The intranet was entirely bilingual, and updated daily for both French and English equally. This contained, for example, 15, 000 biographies of athletes and Olympic teams, and all the results as they came out. This was especially useful for journalists and was also much used in the Olympic Village by the athletes and those around them. This presented an enormous amount of work for the translation services which was clearly much welcomed. However, although the SOCOG internet site had several pages in French, it was far from being available totally in French, and was more interesting to consult before the Games than during or afterwards as the French information was not kept up to date. Journalists ended up referring to the English site, bypassing the French one altogether as it was not reliable enough (and note once again – the LOCOG site is still currently totally monolingual).

During the opening and closing ceremonies, French and English versions of the speeches appeared on the screens, but during the competitions, the boards giving the names of the athletes and the results were only in English. This discrepancy between the written and the spoken word contributed to the differing perceptions of the use of French depending on different sites and events (for example, French was particularly present in Darling Harbour for sports such as judo and fencing). However, when sports commentaries were prominent, French was much less visible (the examples given are canoeing/kayaking and athletics, even though the results were given in both languages on sign boards). This was worsened in sports requiring large, open spaces without few announcements and signage, such as horse-riding.

As for other Olympic events, a detailed agreement was signed between SOCOG and the French Government services (with France providing technical and financial support for the presence of French, including the website and sports lexicons). Once again (36) students from ISIT and ESIT were used to aid the translation and interpreting services. Members of SOCOG were given a training course in 'French sports language' which has been running since 1995 at the University Michel de Montaigne in Bordeaux. The Alliance Française also gave courses from September 1997 onwards to around 300 SOCOG members and several hundred volunteers, and

developed a French-teaching programme entitled 'En 2000 à Sydney'. It also acted as a central meeting point for teachers and the francophone communities. This is recommended for future Games.

What could have been done better? The DGLF report draws the attention of succeeding events to the following since a few simple things would have made the presence of French even better: the use of French on the tickets ('forgotten'; also 'forgotten' at Athens, as previously noted; on the boards used for the names of athletes, their nationalities and the results; ditto for the intranet; and for the internet; announcements should contain the same amount of information in both languages. The issue concerning the website arose because the contract with the company selected to deliver this did not contain enough precision on what should be provided in French – and it is recommended that this is dealt with carefully for future Games in advance of any contract being signed.

There should be more visible sports commentaries in French (this area of communication is not covered by the Olympic Charter and therefore not the responsibility of the Organising Committee, but of the International Federations) – the suggestion is that the French sports federations should examine with the international federations how this could be done bilingually. This is seen as an area to be tackled quickly.

As far as the report by the DGLF is concerned, the objective for future Games should be to maintain a comparable level of French as at Sydney, but to have 'greater visibility'. Priorities concerning the amount of documents to be available in French should be reviewed (very labour intensive and not necessarily high profile) with a view to making the use of French as visible as possible. The fact that this emphasis on outward perception is now being considered as possibly more important than the fundamental documentation is of interest when considering what the HE languages sector's contribution to the use of French could be. As is the issue of developing and maintaining the website – this is both high profile and visible, for the French language and also possibly for HE languages' contribution.

The report also identifies that the question of audience also needs to be prioritised – athletes, spectators, international press, the French-speaking world – and that the use of French using new technologies needs further addressing.

It is also recognised that there needs to be more coordination to transmit the experience of language services from one Games to another (research for this report also reveals that this is patchy, although certain personnel do convey an 'institutional memory', as is clear from our interviews, it remains 'hit and miss').

Finally, although the experience of French at Sydney is largely positive, the DGLF feel that the presence of French at the Olympics remains 'fragile' – everything needs to be negotiated each time and with each host city. The

French Government needs to continue to provide political and financial support in order to ensure that the Olympic Charter is upheld, with organisation put into place as soon as the host city is announced. The Olympics remains one of the most effective methods for disseminating the use of French around the world – and this opportunity is taken very seriously.

More on French at Athens 2004.... And more lessons for London

The power of French (or rather the lack of French) was demonstrated at Athens when the representatives of Cameroon, Benin, Niger, Burkina Faso and Congo walked out on a meeting of the international delegations when there was no interpreting service available in French and, when asked for, no translation could be provided.

An interview with a key participant involved in the promotion of French at Athens gives a valuable insight into how the use of French was implemented (Head of Promoting the French Language at the French Institute in Athens/Responsible for French Cooperation in Higher Education at the Ministry of Culture for Athens 2004). This is a personal account of involvement in the promotion of French for the Athens Games from 2001-2004, but the interviewee no longer represents the French Interior Ministry or the government in any way (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 9, March 2008).

The French Institute took part in training the language volunteers and managerial staff; recruitment; translation of the website; the setting up of cultural events; overseeing the signage (there was signage in French at some parts of the venue; again the evidence is very contradictory, see the section on Athens 2004 above), etc. at both the Athens Olympics and Paralympics (importantly the French were very involved with the delivery of French language provision for this event also, although there is no official requirement for any language other than English). They worked in partnership with the Greek government, the IOC, ATHOC and the local authorities in Athens. Although they were representing the French government, the fact that they were promoting the French language meant that they were supported and financed by the OIF (Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie) almost from the outset. They thus played an intermediary role between different Francophone players in the Games, such as Switzerland and Canada.

This drive to promote the French language at the Athens games was propelled by two factors: firstly, the Olympics offers a chance like no other to “talk” to the world, or to “sell your city to the world”, which Athens did – but primarily in English (the Olympic logo was significantly in English); secondly, and subsequently (since marketing and commerce are dominated by English), it was an opportunity for the Greeks to promote their own national language; French was therefore to some extent forced into third position (instead of first, as the Charter stipulates) and thus an enormous self-promotion strategy had to be undertaken.

The French language and culture strategy (based as much on “francophilie” as “francophonie”) also left a legacy, particularly on the Greek education system. Greek Universities now collaborate closely

with France and co-diplomas have been introduced. An important point is that the number of HE students studying French has increased as a result of the Athens 2004 French language policy, as have numbers of secondary-school students, since 2003. The French Institute provided language training for Greek secondary-school teachers so that they could promote the language during and after the Games. Greece has also now become a full member of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), rather than an associate, as it was prior to the Games.

During the Games, a French newspaper was given to French language volunteers, as were French 'survival kits'; French publications were sold in bookshops and even a pop-song was released in French for the event, which was aired on Greek radio. However, as our other research suggests, ATHOC did not always live up to the French language challenge; indeed, the official Olympic Family guide for the Games was only produced in English. Likewise, the ticketing was only in Greek and English, again flouting the language stipulations of the Olympic Charter (which again substantiates the contradictory views presented in this report in the section on Athens 2004 above).

ATHOC recruited volunteers to cover "almost all languages" (sic), both nationally and internationally (i.e. Greek emigrants who had learnt a second language in the host country). Training was given to all volunteers, and the French Institute took part in assessing the proficiency levels of potential volunteers. They designed tests and teaching methods. The Greeks are "very keen" on language certificates and diplomas, so many of the French language volunteers already had some qualifications. The typical French language volunteer was of A2 / B1 European standard. Training was also delivered to ATHOC managerial staff. They launched a big recruitment campaign to find local French speakers, this involved French festivals, requesting leave for French-speaking staff employed in local businesses, etc. The French Institute did not deliver language training to the French-speaking volunteers, as they were thought not to need it. Frontline staff, such as the fire brigade, police officers and security guards, as well as the event organisers, were given French lessons, however. These task-specific language courses were delivered in two three-week blocks to groups of around 20 students at a time, who were released from their functions every morning during the training period and were "very enthusiastic about learning another language". They also offered refresher courses to ATHOC staff in the evenings, on their work premises.

There were student volunteers at the Games, but HE institutions were not involved in the provision of French language training. The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki published a glossary and other language learning tools which it sold at Athens 2004. This was not thought to have been an enormous success because they did not manage to unite both the funding and expertise in a coordinated strategy, as the French Institute did. They "did not have the know-how of the French Institute in terms of teaching languages within a cultural framework".

The interviewee himself was responsible for proof-reading the French translation of the first 20,000 pages of the ATHOC website. For the subsequent 20,000 pages, the Institute employed somebody to guarantee accuracy and authenticity. A young Franco-Greek volunteer worked on real-time translation into French on the official website for the duration of the Games (an extremely demanding task requiring someone with a very real sense of mission it should be stressed).

Many cultural events were organised to promote the French language during the pre-Games and Games-time periods. For instance, Francophone festivals, shows and exhibitions were held in the city, a cultural events programme and guidebook were produced in French and there were kiosks with French-speaking volunteers – as distinct from the Olympics language volunteers – were provided in different tourist sites throughout the city to help francophone visitors. A film, financed by the French government and the OIF, was also made to promote French; entitled ‘Le Français rallume la flamme’ [French Relights the Flame], it was aired on all the Greek TV channels, in either long or short form. A bilingual website with language games aimed at Greek schoolchildren was created in an attempt to spark their interest in French at a young age, thus increasing the likelihood of them wishing to take it further, later in life. The language strategy was, therefore, not compartmentalised; it combined all sorts of cultural forms, from dance to literature, with the promotion of the French language implicitly conveyed through the given medium.

The French language volunteers were given a certificate on completion of their service. No follow up of volunteers was carried out, and their outputs were not recorded. However, a record of most of them was made for the Institute’s archives.

The interviewee felt that it is important that other Francophone countries are involved in the policy, not just France, who is “happy to lead”, but not “fight the battle single-handedly”. Intergovernmental, OIF and IOC communication channels supporting French need to be kept open. Preparations for Beijing suggests that the wider Francophone world is indeed involved in French language strategy for 2008. Generally, according to the interviewee, people were impressed by the presence of French in the run-up and during the Games. The French Survival Kit that they developed was mass produced in a short “French Passport” form, many thousands of copies of which were distributed to the public and keyworkers in the city, giving them some basic vocabulary to “get by” in French.

The main lesson to be learnt from Athens, according to this interviewee, is (once again) to start working on strategies as early as possible, as soon as the IOC begins drawing up contracts with the host organising committee. In addition since, as previously noted, the Olympics is a mega-event with mass(ive) communication at its heart, this mass approach must be integrated into any language strategy. Finally, a further legacy was to have more French language provisions for Francophone visitors in Athens’ museums [in relation

to this issue of language provision for the cultural (as well as sporting) international visitor, see the report on MGIVE project in chapter 7 below]. For the Francophone cause, Athens 2004 was “never seen as an end, but a beginning”. So what of the future?

French at Beijing 2008..... Any More Lessons for London?

The agreement between the French Government and BOCOG concerning the observance of the Olympic Charter and its French language requirements was signed on 26 November 2007, and was given to the President of IOC in the presence of both the Chinese and French Presidents – an indication of the importance attached to it at the highest levels. It concerned translation, signage and the 40 translators and journalists required to assure the promotion of French at the Games. There is to be a large-scale Francophone event on the 9th August 2008 within the official programme of the Games. Not only France, but Belgium, Switzerland, Canada, Monaco, Burundi, Madagascar and Senegal are involved in the promotion of French at Beijing. The role of the Alliance Française in Beijing has also been previously considered above.

The symbolic power of any language strategy adopted in London should not be forgotten and it is far more complex than it at first appears. Challenging the hegemony of English is important for many nations, not just France, and an open, dynamic attitude to world languages at the London Games would enhance the UK’s image politically, economically and culturally.

7. THE PLACE OF LANGUAGE TRAINING AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

(a) Training Language Specialist Volunteers

The main focus here is on a pilot workshop for language specialist volunteers organised by the Department of Modern and Applied Languages at the University of Westminster and based on the training manual used/to be used at past/future Summer and Winter Olympics.

1. Context: the Scope of Volunteering

“Volunteers are needed to help facilitate events and by training individuals and giving them direct experience of employment, new skills and confidence can be nurtured” (Smith, 2006a)

“Languages, both generally and in the context of tourism, have come to be understood as functional necessities that may solve some of the myriad problems of intercultural communication and the mastery of which will provide basic skills, increase economic profit and personal pleasure” (Phipps, 2007)

The importance of a well-organised volunteering programme for large-scale events is now well-recognised. Language specialist volunteers with linguistic skills at varying levels, and whose services can be used in a variety of ways and in a variety of circumstances, are key to the success of such a programme. They should be placed at the heart of 2012 planning for the training and use of a volunteer workforce – but to do this successfully is complex and demanding, and needs extensive and timely planning and preparation.

For the Lillehammer (Norway, 1994) Winter Olympics, for example, 79% of volunteers surveyed felt that they had “enhanced their skills”. Sydney spent 50 million dollars on recruiting, training and accrediting (with, in addition, the practicalities of food, uniforms and transport) 62, 000 volunteers, and offered them all free tickets to the closing ceremony as thanks. They also closed the city’s business centre for half a day to stage a volunteer parade (Smith, 2006a). At Athens 2004, the President of ACOG described the volunteers as “the heart, face and soul” of the Games” (at a special event held at the headquarters of Athens 2004 to honour the volunteers, May 2004; see, for example, the article concerning the event on www.sailing.org - Official Website of the International Sailing Federation). Reference was also made there to the “first Olympic record”, that of individual volunteer applications for

the Games exceeding the 160, 000 mark at the conclusion of the volunteer recruitment programme and before the Games, “a remarkable improvement on the corresponding figure for Sydney”. This may have been due to the enthusiasm generated by the Olympic Games ‘returning’ to Greece, the country in which the Games were born and the city in which they were first revived. Athens had an international volunteer workforce (Greek-Canadians, Greek-Americans, Greek-Lebanese, etc., in addition to local volunteers, and also used foreign nationals with no Greek background). The Athens 2004 target for volunteers was 60, 000, a similar number to that expected at Beijing (Atlanta used about the same number; Sydney 47, 000).

The profile of the Language Specialist Volunteers as presented in Lo Bianco’s (2000) report has already been discussed. An interviewee’s account suggests that regarding the profile of the “typical” language volunteer at Sydney 2000, it was “difficult to judge their economic background, but ethnically it is usually quite diverse, as this often goes hand in hand with second language skills” (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 8, March 2008). At the Sydney Games, the impression was that there were “just more volunteers generally”. For example, at the Main Press Centre in Salt Lake City, there would never be more than two volunteers for each language, while at Sydney there were four or five. This “is good and bad. In volunteer management it is sometimes better to have fewer highly-skilled and highly-motivated volunteers than many volunteers, even if they are highly-skilled and motivated, because as a Language Services Manager you are really reacting to requests. So, in between requests you have to figure out how to keep those people interested” (Respondent 8). For instance, if there are people who are only called upon two or three times all day, “they end up leaving or becoming angry and frustrated”. At the Sydney Games, in their efforts to provide a comprehensive language service to the broad Olympic family, they in fact exceeded demand, which was very hard to deal with from a managerial perspective.

In order to resolve this potential problem of being over-staffed with language volunteers at a given time or place, in Salt Lake City they introduced a “combo” system. For instance, a language specialist based in the Olympic Family lounge might be required to provide general welcoming or seating assistance, as opposed to interpreting assistance, when this was not in demand, “so that they would feel their time was being well-spent”. This approach was a real success from the perspective of the managers and the volunteers, who felt valued and needed (Respondent 8).

As has already been noted in the fieldwork carried out in Beijing for the purposes of this report (chapter 4), Chinese university students have been specifically targeted for 2008 (although the success of this is, of course, still to be measured). Reference to the Specialist Volunteer Programme in Beijing can be found, for example, at www.chinaview.cn: “A number of first class universities located in Beijing such as Peking University, Tsinghua University, etc., have been chosen as the strategic partners for the recruitment and training of the specialist volunteers. English language, journalism, communications and public relations students are being targeted”. It will also be interesting to note how far China mobilises its considerable diaspora

communities to bring international perspectives, intercultural understanding and language skills to the Beijing Games (following, or not, the example of Athens).

The LOCOG website has not been updated since 2006 when the 100, 000 mark was reached for volunteers registering (checked for this report June 2008).

It is essential that volunteers feel valued and are appropriately rewarded – in this area, as in all areas, there is evidence of good and bad practice. Lessons learnt from Atlanta 1996 included the experience of language volunteers working in the call centre/language line. It is important that volunteers feel involved actively and centrally to events on the ground and not left ‘stuck’ in some isolated call centre manning the phone lines for long periods at a time. This needs to be borne to mind when planning future language services provisions, and will certainly be reviewed again prior to Vancouver 2010 (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 8, 2008).

One element of the drive to recruit and train volunteers includes the issue of socio-economic inclusiveness, as highlighted elsewhere in this report:

“Volunteers are often enthusiasts who have volunteered before, and tend not to be marginalised members of local communities. A more targeted approach focused on the most disadvantaged (and least skilled) helps to achieve genuine regenerative benefits for urban areas” (Smith, 2006a).

For the 2002 Commonwealth Games, Manchester managed to involve disengaged members of the local community, with a: “flexible training programme [...] that offered participants the chance to volunteer for the games and to obtain a nationally recognised qualification”, and in addition to access the sports facilities prior to the Games. The legacy was thus two-fold, skills-based and social, and in keeping with the Government’s national regenerative objectives to enhance the quality of life of local people, including their health and culture and sports opportunities (Smith, 2006a). The promotion of healthy living is another of the official sustainability targets of London 2012, especially amongst disadvantaged communities (London 2012 Sustainability Plan, November 2007, ‘Towards one Planet’).

However, there remains the highly pertinent point concerning the discrepancy between those who are most likely to volunteer for Games events and those who need the most training. The Routes into Languages widening participation brief is essential here.

Some Olympic cities have provided vocational training to minority/disadvantaged groups and for school leavers. Sydney is again an example, where 12, 000 Aboriginal and non-English-speaking workers were given construction training funded by the industry (although there is also evidence to suggest that the jobs created in the construction industry, for example, for large events are not necessarily as good and numerous as they are claimed to be: Smith, 2006a).

It seems pertinent here to be reminded (for details see the section on Sydney 2000 in chapter 3 above) that all volunteer training for Sydney was undertaken by the Olympic agencies through TAFE NSW – 45, 000 volunteers for the Olympics and 15, 000 for the Paralympics – with Volunteering NSW playing an advisory role. Volunteer training had three ‘pillars’: 1. Orientation; 2. Venue; 3. Job-specific, and the Sydney Pioneer Volunteer programme was a further successful strategy. A core group of volunteers was set up in 1996 to be involved in a broad range of volunteer issues and to lead other volunteers (Cowan and Jackson, 2000). The volunteer services were largest in the general area of spectator services and a key point is that the training was built around a consistent approach that was identical for both the paid and the volunteer workforce: orientation to the Games, its values and what was expected of workers; site orientation – which involved venue and venue management familiarisation; job-specific training to equip people with particular skills.

As far as targeting the more disadvantaged sectors of society, a very important aspect are these types of ‘Pre-Volunteer Programmes’ which can motivate those less likely to volunteer with the necessary skills and confidence to participate. Manchester 2002 Commonwealth Games again successfully implemented this idea and “allowed disadvantaged volunteers to gain qualifications in event management” while the ‘Let’s Celebrate’ project helped to support and manage cultural festivals in the North-West, thus “helping the region to secure valuable tourism attractions for many years to come” [for example, the ‘tallest piece of sculpture in the UK’ was also built for the event] (Smith, 2006a).

Volunteering is an aid to personal and career development and offers a way of gaining relevant and interesting experience. UK universities now offer volunteering/community volunteering opportunities through their Volunteering Units, and students are already extremely well-placed to take advantage of the further opportunities provided by large-scale cultural and sporting events taking place in their town/city/region. Students can therefore already be well aware of the benefits of volunteering which include:

- Gaining access to training and skills development;
- Learning transferable skills including leadership and teamwork, written and oral communication, initiative, motivation, multitasking, prioritising and flexibility;
- Contributing something back to the community;
- Acquiring career-focused work experience;
- Using new skills in a professional environment;
- Broadening horizons and a chance to meet and work with people from a diverse background;
- Gaining insight into a particular career choice

(taken from the University of Westminster Community Volunteering Unit ‘Student Volunteering Handbook’)

2. Talking 'outside-the-tent': Training Language Volunteers for the Extended Venue

"Tourism provides a particularly concentrated and significant occasion for intercultural communication, and for potential mixing of different social groupings [...] [It] might allow us to practice social bondedness differently, and to remind ourselves, in times of an increasing but not all pervasive capital, of the social miracles that attend struggles to come to terms with our need to assert but also abandon ourselves in the sharing of life. Such is the lesson of the intercultural life of exchange. Such is the reason that tourism matters" (Phipps, 2007)

Volunteering is also a way of "getting the city on side" as the Head of Liverpool Welcome 08 explains with reference to the Volunteer Programme, and essentially it is how the volunteers are used that is the key to success:

"the sort of things that we've developed within the volunteer programme have been quite sought after. My colleague who delivers the programme has given talks in the North-East to regional development agencies who are thinking of developing volunteer programmes themselves in the run-up to 2012 – not least because we've done things differently. The [Manchester] Commonwealth Games model was a training-led model, and there's nothing wrong with that, but I always think that if you're on a database, and if it's for 2012, it's still a long time away. Now, it will come round very quickly, but it's still four years on a database and if you do a training qualification, you're ready and you're interested" (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 7, February 2008).

Liverpool 08 has therefore used volunteers for events that would have been happening in 2008 anyway, even without the City of Culture, but which perhaps would not have taken place on such a large-scale. As the interviewee continues: "we've grown our capacity to deal with and also to link volunteers in a range of big and small community and cultural organisations, and that's probably the big strength that we've had" (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 7, February 2008).

The linguistic needs of the Liverpool 08 Programme which aims to deliver a good experience for a wide range of visitors over a variety of cultural and sporting events is therefore rather different to those required by the highly specialised needs of the Olympic Family (as previously noted in the studies on previous Games above, for example, and as we will see below when specialised language training is analysed). However, as has also been previously stressed, the whole of London and beyond will be an extended Olympic venue with a myriad of both event-driven and event-themed activities which will require a skilled volunteer workforce, ideally with a range of linguistic and intercultural skills. In this area, therefore, the broader 2012 aims will therefore not be dissimilar to those of Liverpool 08:

- Improve information about what [Liverpool] offers to potential visitors, and where to go and how to find it when they are here;

- A programme to drive up and make more consistent the standards of service in the city's hotels, bars and attractions;
- Develop a volunteer programme to support [08] events and to involve local people in activities to make events and the city more welcoming and friendly.

The Liverpool 08 'Volunteering FAQs' fact sheet further stresses that: "Volunteers will come from a range of backgrounds. We aim to ensure that every volunteer is given appropriate training so we are developing a menu of training opportunities to accommodate your needs", and the list of the roles available is wide and varied including: "meeters and greeters; motivators; administrators; child welfare (lost children); translators and interpreters; ushers; drivers; stage hands; sports specialists; announcers; graphic artists; photographers; site assistants".

All of whom provide enhanced quality and flexibility if they have intercultural and linguistic skills, of course.

Looking to the future as well as to the present, the first ever Youth Olympics to be held in Singapore in 2010 has a website with a registration form for prospective volunteers with an overview of areas that "need the magic touch" of volunteers, and applicants can choose their preferred role: "sports – 'runners'/marshals; admin); culture and education – project managers and event facilitators; events assistants; admin; junior/assistant ambassadors; venues and facilities – marshals; safety; spectator interaction; administrative areas – HR; marketing and ticketing; media and digital media; communications".

No mention is made specifically of language skills and services, however. Once again, not all event organising committees study closely enough previous experiences in depth from the very beginning of preparations and planning.

3. Talking 'in-the-tent': Training Language Specialist Volunteers Pilot Workshop

The training for Language Specialist Volunteers is intensive, and the time commitment is extensive. Selection is competitive for those who will work with the Olympic Family. At Atlanta 1996, for example, over 3, 000 candidates were interviewed. There, the language evaluation consisted of three increasingly difficult sections of recorded oral exercises, including an evaluation of speaking skills and memory recollection. The evaluations were conducted in the language laboratories at Kennesaw State University and Georgia State University (in total 3, 787 evaluations were administered – 75% for Language Services purposes and the remaining 25% for other ACOG functional areas (Atlanta Official Report, 1996); it should be remembered at this point, however, that HE departments were not involved in training after this testing stage which is not recommended in the report here as evidenced by our previous findings detailed above – this does not to ensure a

sustainable legacy; in fact using commercial services only works against legacy). At Atlanta, the training programme was developed by a Language Services coordinator in conjunction with an outside consultant. Training assumed an advanced or expert level of language ability in English and at least one other language and focused on the appropriate usage of these language skills in a variety of situations such as press conferences and medical emergencies.

The language training included a mandatory six-hour primary training session, with at least two additional three-hour workshops. During primary training, basic job responsibilities were described, interaction with other departments was explained, and techniques and ethics of consecutive interpreting were presented. The workshops were smaller sessions during which volunteers participated in role-playing, memory retention, and note-taking exercises.

Can HE language departments deliver such training? The simple and obvious answer is “Yes” – to a greater extent and with an enhanced quality of language services provision than at previous events, and all delivered cost-effectively due to the human resources, facilities and wide-ranging expertise at their disposal.

The following two-hour pilot programme for Language Specialist Volunteers was run for this project in June 2008. It was based on the ‘Team 2002 Job Specific Training for International Client Services/Language Specialist’ for Salt Lake 2002 Winter Olympics and Paralympics, provided by ‘AchieveGlobal’, the Official Training Service of the 2002 Olympic Winter Games. This training manual was supplied to us by a key language services trainer for several Olympic events and an interviewee for this project. It was based on training first delivered at Atlanta in 1996, used also at Turin Winter Olympics in 2006, and it will form the basis for training at Vancouver Winter Olympics in 2010. The role-playing activities were devised by one of our lecturers specifically for the workshop.

Although the official training manual proved useful, the experience left us with significant reservations concerning the emphases of the manual and the end of this section makes several recommendations on how HE language departments could considerably enhance the training for Language Specialist Volunteers to date.

4. Participants and Range of Languages:

17 students who were either just completing their second or final year of study took part. The Modern Languages students were ‘targeted’ to the extent that they might justifiably be expected to be interested in the workshop, but they were not ‘selected’ by us. Students from elsewhere in the University were suggested to us by the Community Volunteering Unit, but again were not ‘selected’. All those who expressed an interest were invited to join us. This

could be said, then, to represent a body of people who might well respond to such a call for volunteers. Very significantly, the male/female ratio was approximately 50:50, unusual for Modern Languages and quite possibly due to the workshop being sport-related (and, of course, important to the Routes into Languages agenda more generally).

There were 14 Modern Foreign Language students from the Department of Modern and Applied Languages at the University of Westminster, the majority of whom had undertaken some consecutive interpreting training as part of the applied professional language skills strand of their undergraduate degree. The module covers consecutive conferencing interpreting (note-based); ad hoc liaison interpreting and sight translation (where a short written document is read and summarised from memory). Basic interpreting techniques are also incorporated: memory/note-taking skills and exercises; codes of ethics (very similar to that used in the workshop based on the training manual), and some theory. They were a mixture of native and non-native English speakers (see details of language competence below).

There were also 3 students who came via the University's Community Volunteering Unit, and who were not native English speakers, had no specific linguistic training themselves (but who were clearly 'language learners') and who were studying Law, Business, and TESOL. It was particularly interesting to observe their experience, and they participated to a very successful degree once equipped with some basic guidelines.

5 Staff participants were all from the Department of Modern and Applied Languages: Arabic Specialist; Chinese Specialist; 2 French Specialists and an Intercultural Studies Specialist.

A range of 17 languages were spoken by the students (at greater/lesser competency levels): Arabic (both Modern Standard acquired as a foreign language and Quranic acquired by non-native speakers as a heritage language) and Arabe Choa (a Muslim trade language used in Cameroon and related to the Shuwa Arabic of Chad); Bengali; Catalan; Chinese (Mandarin); Czech; Dutch; English; Farsi; French; German; Polish; Portuguese; Russian; Japanese; Spanish; Urdu (please note that the coincidence of 17 students and 17 languages is random; this is not related to the mother tongue for each student, but refers to the range of languages that they speak. All students had two languages; some as many as six; the average was three).

With this combination of languages, we were able to perform the role play activities described below in Arabic; French; German; Spanish and Russian.

5. Content of the Workshop

5.1 The Role of the Language Specialist Volunteer

After welcomes, an explanation of the Routes into Languages Programme in general and of the 'Languages and International Events' Research Project in particular, each participant presented themselves and their range of languages. The first part of the workshop was then dedicated to a brief

overview of the role of the Language Specialist Volunteer abridged from the training manual for the Salt Lake Winter Olympics and Paralympics 2002.

Every Team 2002 Member was expected to be Committed; Helpful; Adaptable; Respectful; Gracious; (and) Enjoy! (CHARGE). The introductory section of the manual also includes a section on 'knowing your limits' and a description of interpreting situations in Functional Areas (press operations; doping controls; ceremonies/sport production; sport/competition management; medical services; to a lesser extent: accreditation; event services; ticketing; transportations).

5.2 Code of Ethics for Interpreters

The Code of Ethics for Interpreters was then dealt with in some detail, covering:

Conduct; Confidentiality; Reliability; Accuracy; Competence; Impartiality; Skills Development; Solidarity.

According to the practice developed in the manual, to resolve challenges Language Specialists use WARMTH – Willing to Help; Acknowledge and Assure; Restate to Clarify; Meet the Need; Thank.

The details of the Code needed to be assimilated quickly by students in order to carry out the following task.

5.3 Scenarios

"A collection of situations you may encounter working at your venue. Isolate the issue or concern in each situation and draw up a list of options that are open to you for each scenario. Then decide what you would do and why. Think about how WARMTH will help you in those situations".

In 3 groups, the students discussed and provided answers/feedback on 3 each of the following scenarios taken from the training manual:

Scenario 1: A volunteer you are working with from another area is not confident about his job and wants you to do it because "you speak their language".

Scenario 2: A team official you are interpreting for in the accreditation tent seems to be lying about his position to get into the venue.

Scenario 3: An athlete speaking your language asks you if you could keep a package in your bag and give it to her when she asks for it again.

Scenario 4: A member of the press you talked to earlier in the day during an interview gives you a souvenir badge [changed from 'pin' in the original), then asks you what an athlete said in the Doping Control Station.

Scenario 5 A team manager asks for your phone number, in case his team needs you in an emergency.

Scenario 6: An athlete who has been chosen for doping control receives a can of beer from his manager and the Doping Control Escort does not seem to notice.

Scenario 7: A staff member who speaks your language poorly is interpreting during an assignment you were given by your manager and insists that you are not needed.

Scenario 8: Three people – a member of the press, an athlete, and a staff member you don't know – approach you at the same time for assistance.

Scenario 9: A television crew asks you if you could be their interpreter for an interview they are doing in a quiet area in the venue after the Mixed Zone and offers you \$100 to do the job.

6. The Students' Experience

After students gave their 'answers' and additional comments on the experience of their discussions, the 'official answers' (with 3 'options' provided in each case, together with a useful 'key point' explanation of why a particular response was correct which gives valuable insights into the workings of Olympic venues) were given and also discussed.

We were extremely impressed with the students' ability to assimilate the information that they had been given in a very short space of time on the code of conduct for interpreters. They gave considered, mature answers, and were unerringly 'correct' in the way in which they would have dealt with the situations outlined.

The salient points of this experience from the students' discussions were how very difficult it is for interpreters to remain neutral and impartial. We considered that a very high level of training would be required for volunteers to carry their roles out effectively in a very intense atmosphere. We also felt that a great deal more intercultural knowledge is required than is available in the present training manual (barely any). These points are dealt with in more depth at the end of this section.

7. Interpreting Situations Role-Playing

In groups of three and in the languages specified above, we moved to a set of role-plays that had been elaborated by one of the French specialists who teaches a module at undergraduate level module that comprises an introduction to interpreting techniques (see above on the section outlining the student participants for more details on what this contains). Please note also below our observations on how much richer and more demanding the students found the material devised 'in-house' when compared to the training manual.

1. Spectator Enquiry

Role 1. Spectator (foreign national); Role 2. Olympic Venue Official (British); Role 3 Olympics Language Specialist Volunteer

Scenario: A non-English speaking spectator has just fallen victim to a pick-pocketing incident. They have lost their money and travel documents and all they have is their ticket to the Olympic Games. After offering sympathy and support, the Official gives them advice on reporting the matter to the police, travel insurers, etc., and tries to find out where they are staying so that transportation back to their hotel can be arranged.

2. Sailing Weather Report

Role 1. Sailing Competitor (foreign national); Role 2. Olympics Official (British National); Role 3. Olympics LSV

Scenario: The sailing competition was scheduled to start today, but due to weather reports announcing that a hurricane is making its way for the south coast of England, the event is being postponed. An Olympic official is trying to explain this to a non-English-speaking competitor who is having difficulty understanding this forecast given the fine weather at present and the positive forecasts heard on the international radio. The competitor wishes to take the boat out on a test run all the same, which is strongly advised against by the Olympic official.

3. Pitch-Side Press Interview

Role 1. Footballer (foreign national team); British journalist; Olympics LSV.

Scenario: One of the national football teams competing has just won an important qualifying match. The final score was 5-1 to their team, and the footballer being interviewed scored a 'hat-trick'. The journalist is therefore interviewing the footballer to find out about their role in the game, their reaction to the match and opinion of the opposing team, as well as their predictions for the next stage of the competition.

4. Flower Ceremonies Preparation Area

Role 1. Athlete (foreign national); Athlete (British national); Olympics LSV.

Scenario: A British athlete, who has just won the discus gold medal, has asked you to provide language assistance as the silver medallist is disputing the British victory. An accusation of foul play is being made, which naturally results in a heated discussion, brought to a premature end when the national anthems are heard playing in the background!

5. Judo Injury

Role 1. Athlete (foreign national); Role 2. British physiotherapist; Role 3. Olympics LSV

Scenario: An athlete in the judo event has just sustained an injury while competing. You are interpreting between the athlete and the medic, who is trying to ascertain the location of the injury, how it occurred, and so on, as well as requesting more general information about the athlete's medical history. The final conclusion is that the athlete needs to seek further medical help and should therefore withdraw from the competition; a protest follows.

6. Lost Athlete

Role 1. Athlete (foreign delegation); General Olympic Venue Volunteer (British national); Role 3. Olympics LSV.

Scenario: A general volunteer has radioed you for language assistance, as they have found a distressed athlete, who appears to be lost and does not speak a word of English. You arrive on the scene and translate for the general volunteer who is trying to determine which delegation the athlete is from, which event they are involved in and at what time they are competing. This proves very difficult as the athlete is very confused.

7. Doping Testing

Role 1. Athlete (foreign national); Role 2. Official Urine Sampler (British official); Role 3. Olympics LSV

Scenario: You are accompanying a non-English speaking athlete from the Competition Area to the Doping Control Station. They have just competed in the 100m sprint and are suspected of having taken steroids. Before collecting the sample, the official carries out a brief interview with the athlete to find out more about their medical and sporting background. The athlete is then requested to take a urine sample and is advised of the following procedures (time scale for test results; consequences if they are positive/negative, etc.)

8. Security Situation

Role 1: a managerial member of an overseas official delegation; a British security guard; Role 3. Olympics LSV

Scenario: A non-English speaking manager has been denied entry to the Competition Area. The security guard has discovered a suspect package in their bag and is therefore questioning them about it. The manager is unwilling to divulge much information about the object, and wishes to enter the zone regardless. Access is again denied, resulting in string of apparent lies being told by the manager.

9. Trackside Dispute (Long Jump)

Role 1. Athlete; Role 2; Referee (British national); Role 3. Olympics LSV

Scenario: A non-English speaking long jumper has just been given three 'no jumps' (when the foot goes on or beyond the line) and wishes to take the matter up with the referee. The athlete believes that their last attempt was well clear of the line and claims that there is no evidence to the contrary. The referee disagrees and an argument ensues. To conclude, the referee recommends that an official protest form be filled out.

10. Swimming Pool Dispute

Role 1. Athlete (foreign national); Role 2. Athlete (British national); Role 3. Olympics LSV

Scenario: With only half an hour remaining before they compete, a non-English speaking swimmer claims that one of the other competitors (representing Great Britain) has hidden their swimming kit, in a deliberate attempt to sabotage their performance. Naturally, the accused swimmer denies this and a heated argument follows. In the end, one of the cleaning staff finds the missing bag in another locker room!

8. Comments from the students following the experience of carrying out one of more of the above task included:

- Acknowledgement of the incredible amount of pressure under which the LSV must carry out their role/duties – one of them admitted to being pushed to saying “that’s enough, I can’t do this!” in the role-playing activity;
- The issue of dealing with dialects and accents from around the world in the language in which they are working;

- The constant desire to want to add something to what the official, for example, is saying;
- The difficulty of maintaining impartiality and a mediating role after being used to working in (a) language(s) in social situations;
- The need to be provided with and extremely familiar with very specialised vocabulary;
- The ‘problem’ of multilingualism – many of the students speak several languages and needed to find the correct expressions quickly in the language that were working in at that moment (this would probably be less true in a ‘real’ situation where they are working into/out of one language only, but it remains an interesting observation on linguistic skills and experience).

9. Our further general observations on the experience of the pilot training workshop:

- HE languages departments are uniquely-equipped to deliver both (part of) the workforce and the training for Language Specialist Volunteers at this very high level of linguistic expertise (as well as at the lower levels of competence needed to deal with, for example, international visitors at the extended Olympic venue, including wider cultural events); this could be done through the enhancement of existing courses (including within undergraduate degrees –Westminster’s ‘Languages in Action’ strand emphasising skills and employability within the BA Modern Languages degrees is a good example of this (and there are no doubt similar elements in many other HEIs’ Modern Languages undergraduate and postgraduate degree work); specialised short courses; offering consultancy and training services;
- The amount of training time dedicated to language training at this level at previous Games (see the information on Atlanta, for example, above) is very tight given the complexity of the tasks that LSV’s are likely to face and the fact that they do not necessarily have previous-acquired professional interpreting training in impartiality and other interpreting techniques (use the first person, for example);
- Considerably more attention needs to be given to intercultural competence and training than is the case at the moment.

Before making a more extensive comment on this final point, well-equipped volunteers make a valuable contribution to the Government’s agenda to promote social inclusion and HEI’s are again exceptionally well-placed to introduce strands of the volunteer training in relation to the social cohesion agenda, which would draw explicit attention to these issues:

Volunteers will:

- Gain intercultural skills and through their training and through the tasks that they are assigned;
- Gain a sense that their existing linguistic skills and cultural/knowledge skills are valued in the wider society and by the UK whom they are to some extent ‘representing’;

- The level of inclusion implied by their participation (reliant, of course, on the backgrounds from which they are selected) should contribute to helping to forge the evolved sense of inclusive British identity which government reports and statements have encouraged in recent years.

To return to the levels of intercultural awareness shown in the existing Olympic training manual, our experience led to a blunt observation being made. While, to some extent, good use has been made of what had been learned at previous Games and the manual that we worked with is a valuable building block, the intercultural studies specialist observed: “my strongest feeling at the end of what I thought was a good session, was how much better it would have been if we had had a free rein to design the whole session ourselves” [please note that we did not do this as one of the objectives of the workshop was to deliver an ‘authentic’ Olympics experience as far as possible].

There is some evidence that those currently involved in training for language services are aware of the shortcomings in this area. At Vancouver 2010, there will be more “general training” for volunteers. This will focus on ‘culture and protocol’ and will involve everyone from International Client Services, not just the LSVs (who represent about one third of that department) and will ensure “a certain level of cultural awareness” (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 8, March 2008). Indeed, volunteers are unlikely to all be appropriately aware of the cultural differences they are likely to encounter even though they are speaking the same language as some of those for whom they are interpreting. They are unlikely to be as fully aware as they need to be of the cross-cultural differences between athletes etc., and Olympic officials and the effect of that on communication.

However, considerably more attention needs to be given to intercultural competence and training than is the case at the moment. The Salt Lake 2002 training materials show a minimal awareness of the intercultural complexity of the situations in which volunteers will find themselves. The WARMTH formula (see section 5.2 above) which volunteers are asked to keep in mind looks appropriate enough for dealings with many people who have English as a first language, but volunteers at least need to have some awareness of how far this formula might need to be adapted when dealing with people of very varied cultural backgrounds. Similarly, the scenarios (section 5.3), whilst quite rightly prioritising conformity to key ethical principles, do not challenge volunteers to develop an awareness of the intercultural and linguistic complexity of the tasks they will have to perform.

It is as well to recall briefly some of the basics of the intercultural situation volunteers will generally be in. Volunteers will be using English with Games officials or people with similar responsibilities. Those officials will tend to be using English as a lingua franca and therefore come from extremely different cultural background to the volunteers. At the other end, the athletes or other people for whom the volunteers are interpreting, will also frequently come from a different cultural background to the volunteers, in spite of the fact that they are communicating in the same language.

The students' responses to both the scenarios and the interpreting role-plays (section 7) were revealing and confirmed the above. They found the scenarios in general too easy, partly because their ability to grasp the underlying ethical principles was very strong, but also because they were not challenged to reflect on how members of different cultures might behave in these critical situations. At the same time, they were quite often overwhelmed by the complexity of what was asked of them in the interpreting role-plays. This was because they had to simultaneously be aware of key ethical considerations, function as interpreters with sometimes minimal training in interpreting techniques, and also deal with two individuals from different cultural backgrounds who were also often from different cultural backgrounds to themselves. How well an exchange between an athlete, member of the press and official goes and how tightly the rules of the event are adhered to will not just depend on a clear grasp of those rules on the part of volunteers, but also on their rounded grasp of the intercultural complexity

All of this underlines the need to refine the training strategy to include the intercultural dimension and HEIs are particularly well-placed to implement this as intercultural awareness has come to occupy a major place in the approach of many HE Modern Language Departments to both teaching and research.

The scenarios, whilst quite rightly prioritising conformity to ethical issues, are too one-dimensional in suggesting that there are no other vital linguistic and intercultural strands which will affect hugely what tensions occur, and to which volunteers should at least be sensitised. Given the limited training volunteers can be equipped with, no doubt the Salt Lake (and subsequent) trainers wanted formulae (CHARGE & WARMTH) to act as focal points for organising the process. We know that HEIs can enhance this significantly with more sensitisation to intercultural complexity and assumptions of similarity.

The Government has been very keen to promote the development of intercultural skills as part of its agenda to foster social cohesion. This is an important theme which could be far more present in the training provided. The issue of validating minority languages and the building of an up-to-date notion of British identity figure which includes the value those languages/heritages (as outlined above) should also have a higher profile [and compare the Routes into Languages Research Project and Report on Community Languages in Higher Education].

What does the LOCOG website currently say about volunteers?

From the LOCOG website, accessed on 26/06/2008
[<http://www.london2012.com/>]

“London 2012 will depend on up to 70,000 volunteers to make sure the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games run smoothly and successfully.

Volunteers will carry out a range of essential tasks, from spectator services to language services and medical care.

The London 2012 volunteering spirit will spread wider than the Games themselves as we encourage everyone to give their time to help others.

<http://www.london2012.com/get-involved/volunteering/index.php>

Roles in 2012

There will be a variety of roles in 2012, including:

- sport;
- medical;
- language services;
- spectator services;
- technology;
- press operations;
- transport; and
- accreditation.

Up to 70,000 volunteers will be needed to help put on the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Our programme will aim to encourage a wide range of people to join in.

We will provide the training to make sure our volunteers' skills are of the highest standard.

London 2012 is an opportunity to inspire everyone to develop their interests and volunteer – in sport and also more widely within their community.

Will you volunteer?

Recruitment for Games-time volunteers starts in 2010, when the official London 2012 Volunteer Programme launches.

Did you know that right now, you could volunteer in your local community? Do you have the skills to coach a local sports team? Maybe you could help organise a local cultural event, teach a language or volunteer at a school.

You can find opportunities to volunteer in a range of activities in your local area by following the links on the right hand side of this page.

You can also register your interest in becoming a volunteer. It will not mean you automatically become a volunteer for 2012, but you will receive regular updates and information on the London 2012 project. ([Register your interest in volunteering](#)).

The Volunteering Registration form simply asks for contact details (name, address, etc.) and has no preference/special skills section. However, there is

an equal opportunities/inclusivity dimension to it in the form of questions on age (with selection between: 18-24; 25-34; 35-44; 45-54; 55-64; 64-75; over 75), gender and ethnicity (the choice being Black/Asian/Chinese/White/Mixed/Other).

“As well as staging the 2012 Games, LOCOG will also be responsible for staging a series of test events in the year before the Games; recruiting and training volunteers; and overseeing the four-year Cultural Festival leading up to the Games.

Starting with just 50 staff in July 2005, LOCOG will remain a relatively small organisation until the end of the Beijing Games in 2008.

But by the time of the 2012 Opening Ceremony around 100,000 people will be working on the Games - including 3,000 staff, and thousands of volunteers and contractors. Staff roles will be advertised on this site.

Roles in the organisation range from sports competition managers and project planners to cultural curators and functional specialists”.

It is recommended then that Higher Education becomes involved as soon as possible in contributing to delivering training and in a range of these “test events” and in cultural events leading up to 2012.

(b) Training Members of the Beijing Public Security Bureau (police) in preparation for the Olympics

**Rob Williams, Principal Lecturer in Translation;
Deputy Course Leader MA International Liaison
and Communication, University of Westminster**

This case study is included to highlight the type of high-quality, task/profession-specific linguistic and intercultural training that the UK HE language sector (in this case at postgraduate level) can deliver.

It provides a detailed example of the type of specialised knowledge-base, expertise and resources that HE language departments are able to offer.

1. Origins of the agreement.

In 2000 or earlier the Beijing Public Security Bureau (PBSB) identified a need to train officers from all divisions in English. This was in tune with a wider ranging initiative to ensure that China was ready linguistically to receive the vast numbers of visitors that will arrive in July and August 2008. The

University of Westminster already had a good reputation through its short course programme for delivering bespoke language training to specific groups. The director of the short course programme was approached by a contact at the Police University in Beijing and terms and agreements were set up. The agreement was to train 50 Beijing police officers over a period of four years. The first group arrived in September 2002 and the final group in September 2006. The aim was to provide both training in language and culture over the period of a year, as well as to provide the opportunity for police officers in China to compare methodologies with their counterparts in the UK – specifically the Met. In this way the PBSB would be better equipped to deal with the influx of visitors anticipated in August 2008. The agreement was organised on a year on year renewal basis. This was the format frequently agreed on by government sponsored groups of students from China and allowed for review on their side contingent on student satisfaction and good progress. The same arrangement was also made between the PBSB and other higher education institutions: University of Surrey in the UK and at least one university in Australia.

2. Make up of the group

Student selection was made on the Chinese side, so the University had no input in the selection procedure and was not aware of how the particular students were chosen. The police officers came from various departments of the force – from traffic, to exit and entry visas to cyber crime and counter-terrorism. Some of them were already teachers of English in their own training academies and police universities. Others already had interpreting experience. Some, on the other hand, had no experience of using English regularly in their profession. The apparent aim was to spread the experience of living and studying in the UK across as wide a section of the police as possible. It may have been the case that within each division we were being sent the best person available in terms of language ability. It may be that the individuals concerned already had a career path identified for them. However, there was no real homogeneity in terms of language level.

The result was that there was a wide range of ability within the group itself. None of them had taken IELTS or equivalent entry level measurements. From our experience the range was from perhaps 5.0 in one instance to 7.5 in the case of two police interpreters and one English teacher. Each group had an appointed leader, though this was not always the person with the best language skills. Rank ranged from sergeant to captain, though overall the majority were sergeants. All of them were graduates of the Police University in Beijing. It was clear that training time before becoming a police officer is longer in China than in the UK. The first group contained a higher proportion of higher ranking officers and gradually as there was greater confidence on the Chinese side this was reduced as evidenced by younger group leaders.

3. Programme design

The programme design underwent changes over the four year period. It was clear that in many cases their level of English needed improving before they were trained in the specific tasks they would encounter in their work. Consequently, the original concept was to give all participants general English language training through the EFL department for the first semester of their

stay and then to introduce more specialised language training for the second semester. This would also allow them to mix with students from other nationalities from the outset – an important factor, given our understanding that few of the students had ever travelled outside China and few had had social contact with people from other nations. The specialised language training in the second semester would focus on specific terminology as well as the use of language in the role of a liaison officer (interpreting, representing etc.). As well as this, students had the opportunity to conduct a research project in an area of specialist professional interest. This would give them experience of UK style research, stretch their language performance ability further and also result in a document that was useful for themselves and their employers.

However, student feedback suggested that the group felt that they were spending too long in the general English classes and wanted to get into language that was professionally relevant earlier. It was identified that the specific nature of the linguistic operations they would be required to carry out and the performance ability needed to achieve this (see below) was similar to that being trained on the MA International Liaison and Communication (MA ILC).

As a result, the specific purposes element of the course was brought forward and students were brought into the MA ILC course, though with added support in English language in the initial stages to mitigate the disparity of ability within the group. By joining the MA ILC, students then had access to a wider range of modules that would support their specific professional needs, namely:

- Intercultural Communication,
- Intelligence and National Security,
- Information and Media Studies,
- Information Technology (with specific reference to security issues).

The aim became to provide the language tools necessary for their professional environment and broaden their professional knowledge base.

A programme of cultural and professionally relevant experience was included as a vital element of the course. It was felt that this would enhance their language performance as it would provide both an understanding of the cultural drivers and first hand professional experience. The programme included:

- visits to theatres and museums
- visits to police training academies
- visits to European institutions
- accompanying police during operations
- social events with UK police officers
- visit to the Garda in Ireland

4. LSP and appropriate content

Experience in the short courses unit training military personnel, business people, train drivers and others demonstrated that, for the student, the prime aim of their training was to have tools that were fit for purpose. In extreme cases, students were not interested in grammar (some had no knowledge of grammatical concepts), rather they just wanted to know what to say or write in order to get a certain job done. This would suggest that their storage techniques and recall was based on concrete application rather than on where a particular structure or lexical item fitted into the target language system.

With this in mind general professional areas were established in the drafting of the original agreement and specific areas of interest and use were identified with each group through needs analysis discussions in the first week of the course. The parameters driving this were:

- The divisional origin of the students;
- The different groups of people they might interact with;
- The types of incident they might be involved in;
- The specific performance tasks attached to each incident

The outcome of this in terms of content built into the course was

General thematic areas:

- Community Policing
- Anti terrorism
- Crowd control
- Customs and Immigration
- Interpol
- Forensic Investigation
- Cybercrime
- Traffic control
- Police/Media relations

Target interface

- Members of the public
- Suspects
- Foreign Media
- VIPs
- Group representatives (tourists, business people, athletes)
- Opposite numbers in police forces

Specific operational tasks

- Imparting information (general information; procedures; rules and regulations; incident report)

- Obtaining information (interview techniques; interrogation; incident details)
- Handling complaints
- Giving instructions (crowd control; advice to individuals)
- Stop and search
- Arrest

The majority of this would be face to face, though there would be some telephone interface and some written communication (emails and reports). Students would have to be individually capable of performing these tasks as well as doing so in an interpreting/liaison capacity (see below).

5. Skills beyond competence and performance in English

The experience of the University in training and profiling students from military and peacekeeping environments led us to question whether improved performance in English was sufficient for the students to use their language effectively once they returned to the workplace. While the experience of peacekeepers on the ground cannot be said to be the same as for serving police officers, parallels may be drawn in terms of the skills required of the military linguist and of the police linguist. These were used to inform the skills sets that need to be trained and the way in which content was introduced.

Within the MOD, training content and course design is in response to a highly detailed training needs analysis of each post. From this they establish Operational Performance Statements, which are used to inform the specific functions, grammar and lexis on a given course. It has been found that equally, if not more, important than their ability to communicate as an independent language user is a person's ability to handle information across two or more languages. They have to have a level of proficiency in the target language, but they also need to be able to switch between languages effectively (and rapidly) in order for communication between different groups to take place. Part of their role could be seen as similar to that of a public service interpreter. In addition service personnel may be sent to represent their organisation in meetings in one language and report this back to their superiors in their mother tongue. Here they may or may not be given negotiating responsibilities. Such tasks require discrete metaskills that do not normally feature in language training, nor in the training of interpreters. They would need to inform, advocate, placate, explain, interpret but also take information received in one language and report it back in the other. Interestingly, in the military context such tasks were given to relatively low (CEFR A2, B1) level linguists, depending on the nature of the information required. Also great emphasis was placed on accuracy of information, since in their world inaccurate or incomplete information could have dire consequences. It was clear that the officers being trained would constitute a tiny minority of police officers on the ground during the Olympic Games and that very often they might have to function as the bridge between the host community and foreign visitors. Such competences are briefly discussed under the heading of mediation in the Common European Framework of Reference, but there is little detail in terms of descriptors and levels.

It was important to identify whether the communication experience outlined above mirrored that envisaged for the police officers who were attending the course. Through discussion with group leaders, their sponsors in Beijing and members of each group, it was agreed that the skills sets were basically similar. It was also clear from the ability of the student groups that officers of varying language competence could be placed in critical communication situations.

The focus of the language skills syllabus became information handling onto which discrete elements of grammar and lexis were built. The training programme corresponded to five of the modules on the MA ILC:

- Information retrieval
- Interpersonal Communication Strategies
- Text drafting

(these focussed on the independent language user in the target community and gave initial training in information handling across languages)

- Information Assessment
- International Liaison

(these focussed on appraising information and relaying it from one language community to the other in a form that would – in essence the application of the first set of modules in a bilingual setting)

6. Professional Visits

In order to enable students to experience language used by counterparts in policing and for them to interact with fellow professionals and learn about different policing methods first hand, a series of visits were included. Once again this developed over the four years of the project. Initially, this was limited to visits to:

- Scotland Yard;
- Police College at Hendon;
- Hampshire Police at Portsmouth to watch police crowd control procedures at a football match.

As the programme continued and contacts with various forces developed, this was expanded to include:

- Northampton Police Firearms Training;
- Shadowing the policing of Chinese New Year;
- Matching each student with a counterpart from the Met and shadowing their work for one week.

In addition there was a five day visit each year to Ireland to meet the Garda and compare different working practices with their own and those they had witnessed in London. It also gave them exposure to a different English speaking culture, mode of expression and accent.

As part of their background knowledge and to show yet more cultural differences between western countries the group visited the Houses of Parliament, the Old Bailey, European institutions in Brussels and the ICC in The Hague.

Groups were also introduced to VIPs when the occasion arose such as the Chief of the Metropolitan Police and the Queen. On such occasions they were able to practise diplomatic language and how to deal with people of high status in English.

7. Guest Lectures

A specialist guest lecture programme accompanied the tuition already described. Professionals from different areas of policing were invited as well as experts from other parts of the university.

Topics covered included

- Policing for the Olympics
- Anti terrorism
- The British legal system
- Drug enforcement
- People trafficking
- Community support policing

Apart from the immediate language benefits such visits and lectures had, it was hoped that students would be able to establish their own networks with counterparts who shared a similar professional interest.

It can be seen that there was a large content element supporting the specific language skills that were being trained. Given that they had not really come into contact with the UK or western cultures before, they needed input to create a wider framework in which to place their language knowledge. It was hoped that this would help them respond more intuitively in liaison situations. This was essential if the students were going to perform well on their return to work.

8. Challenges in Training Delivery

The target group of students could in many ways be seen as ideal students. They were highly motivated. Being sent to London was seen as a privilege and for many this was the first time they had left China. Attending a Masters programme in the UK had potential advantages in their career. They were naturally curious about all aspects of UK life and culture, not just the language. Nonetheless a variety of challenges presented themselves in the deliver of the course. These were generally attributable to four key factors:

- Learning style
- Communication strategies and information handling
- Mother tongue influence

- Culture shock

Dealing with these issues was largely a question of managing expectation on both the teaching and learning side. From year to year expectation management became easier – each successive group had a clearer idea of what to expect as did the teaching staff.

9. Learning Style

It is well known that students from China at secondary level and beyond are taught English in large classes, often by non native speaker teachers. The result of this is that they frequently get very little input of native speaker English and have learned stock phrases by rote which they use if prompted to by a teacher. In extreme cases the non-native speaker teacher does not enter into free conversation partly because they might lose face if their English is not as good as they would wish and partly due to the knowledge based system of education.

The teacher is supposed to talk and students are supposed to respect the teacher's input and learn it. Success is often rated by a student's ability to reiterate what the teacher said. Added to that is the factor that the easiest elements of a language to input for the non native speaker teacher are grammar and lexis through a study of written text. The flexibility of elements such as pragmatics, discourse analysis and shades of meaning in lexis are often threatening for the non-native speaker teacher. Consequently little focus is placed on them in instruction and students are left with a reservoir of grammar rules and formulaic expressions which they may use inappropriately. This seems to be true regardless of the level of the student, and often is a cause of misunderstanding when transferring information into English.

It was expected, then, that students would be less competent in listening and speaking than reading and writing. In that, the teaching team was not disappointed. Particularly there was an issue with speed of delivery. As students were not used to hearing long turn taking at speed, they attempted to focus on individual words rather than grasp general sense. The result was that they became all the more disheartened. This was addressed by shifting the skills balance in input during the early weeks of the course so that greater emphasis was placed on listening and viewing rather than reading. Activities were devised that focussed on grasping the nature of the text and the general message. Students were initially reticent to give their answers and relied on teachers explaining answers. What was surprising was the extent to which learner style was one of absorbing information and regurgitating it upon prompting.

Much of the lesson shape was originally based around task based learning and critical themes or incidents that were appropriate in terms of content to the target group. A scenario would be established and then various information handling tasks carried out, culminating as the course went on in transacting business and situational interpreting tasks (see the assessment section below). It was found that students waited far longer to be told what to do than was the case with western students and they needed far more detail in the setting up of free stage productive tasks. They also needed more intrusive monitoring during these stages and continual input in terms of ideas.

It seemed that these students were not used to applying their language knowledge independently to fulfil a task. Answers were supposed to come from the teacher as they were in a position of power and what they said was automatically correct.

This attitude could also be seen in terms of study skills. Their approach to reading was focussed on understanding individual lexical items and then building a picture of the whole sense of a text rather than recognising general sense first. Students often relied heavily on electronic translators to piece together the sense of a text and appeared either to have little faith in or unawareness of their own abilities to make sense of a text by using their own previous knowledge. The dictionary was correct because it was a published document. This had a bearing on independent glossary building. Students made lists of all the words that were new and their meaning (rather than their use) and did not appear to make a distinction between expressions that would be useful for them in practice and others that could be part of their passive store.

In some cases this attitude also had consequences when it came to carrying out research projects for the Bilingual Presentation. The notion that the tutor responded to the lead given by the student and offered advice and guidance was often completely alien to them. Students were unable to decide on a topic for research as they were unsure whether it was the right one or was what we wanted.

This difference in learner style and learner expectation was mirrored in the apparent lack of understanding of needs analysis driven training among sponsor institutions. Recent meetings in June 2008 with sponsors from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Police University, and staff members from Shanghai University among others appear to indicate that there is a fundamental divide between what can be described as top down curriculum design where the tutors decide and bottom up design, drawing on the experience of the learner. In language teaching terms this could be seen as the difference between knowledge driven and process driven design.

The features described are not unique to this particular group of students, but the combination of cultural background, both national and organisational, meant that they needed a significant amount of support to adapt to a communicative, student centred approach to language learning. Potential loss of face, in many cases, made it difficult for students to try out their interpreting in public.

Lesson shapes were adapted to include more formalised input and directed practice in the early part of the year and gradually leading students to discover their own language potential and encourage longer turn taking and more extensive practice as the year went on.

10. Communication Strategies and Information Handling

In terms of communication strategies and information handling, there were two main challenges that students needed to overcome: how to interact successfully beyond survival level and how to present information in a way that could be readily understood by a native English speaker audience. Successful interaction as an independent language user was felt important if

the police officer is going to represent their organisation effectively in information giving or transacting business situations. Clear presentation of information was felt to be essential both as an independent user and in a liaison situation.

In terms of interaction, one of the first issues was to foster use of appropriate politeness and markers in spoken and written discourse. Utterances were either too brusque, combining a politeness marker with what was effectively an instruction – or seemingly exaggerated, with an overuse of deferential language.

Perhaps the main issue in spoken language was that of discourse management. There were language and cultural reasons for this. Students had not learned a set of functional management expressions for checking understanding, asking for clarification, summarising, turn taking, inviting response etc. However, even with these expressions at their disposal, there was the issue of when to use them. If a person of high status was speaking, then it is incumbent on the listener to understand. To admit that they didn't understand could result in communicating disrespect and in a loss of face. Consequently it is better to keep silent than to manage the conversation.

When it came to information handling, there were challenges in how to assimilate information and in the presentation of that information, both in spoken and written form – especially in a formal context. In terms of receptive skills, students were accustomed to focussing on detail rather than understanding overall message. Whilst accuracy of information is important to their profession, there is a need to situate the detail into a context and to use the context to anticipate content. Nearly all students attempted listening through bottom up processing only. This was possibly due to the lack of exposure to natural discourse they in their previous learning (see above). It was therefore imperative to train awareness of the context and anticipation skills and then to build in note taking skills so that they could cope with summary tasks and with consecutive interpreting. In terms of presentation of information there was a significant difference in the way the students naturally presented their information compared with what might be expected by a western target audience. The main difference was the list-like method adopted by the students. When required to give a presentation, students would start with a slogan type beginning and then list the points that justified the slogan, but without any analysis.

By working together we should reduce traffic problems in London

The first point is too much traffic in London

The second point is roads are too narrow

The third point is pollution

The fourth point is congestion charge

The fifth point is sharing cars

The issue here is not one of understanding the message – the target audience would clearly do so - but one of expectations of discourse patterns in a given situation. On closer questioning, students said that they felt it was not necessary to give examples or reasons to justify the points made, since

often the points made were obvious and everyone should understand them. Coupled, then, with the list style of presentation is a high context use of language and a focus on content rather than process. Students did not feel they had to make their thinking process explicit. The lecturer personally experienced the same style of information giving from a tourist guide in Beijing. The guide gave the information that was required in factual list form. There was no explanation of the historical events and she was unable to answer any form of question that involved reasoning. Indeed, she seemed irritated by them.

This focus on content was also apparent in the attitude students had in classes. They were unfailingly interested and enthusiastic in aspects of UK life and culture, but when they asked questions, the questions were once again in list form. Instead of asking a question and reacting to the response with supposition and further analysis (as might be the case in a native English speaker conversation) once a response was given, the conversation moved to another question, at times on a new topic. Once again it is not a question of misunderstanding the message; it is a question of comfort in interaction. When faced with this pattern of discourse, a native English speaker might after a while feel uneasy – expectations are not being matched.

Given the role that the police students were going to have, namely as liaison officers during the Olympics, it was important to offer guidance in discourse management so that the foreign visitors would feel relatively comfortable. Emphasis was placed on giving explanation of regulations and procedures and dealing with why questions politely as well as dealing with potentially aggrieved visitors who think that their system is better than the one they find themselves in. Differences in the presentation of information and in the way English speakers might react in certain situations was also important in training anticipation skills for listening comprehension and interpreting so as to foster faster response.

In terms of the course and of the situation of delivering English in a formal situation much time was spent on presentation techniques, not only from a language and signposting point of view, but also on organising information and selecting an appropriate amount of information. Once again this can be seen as an extended form of task based learning, addressing content, cognitive processes and language use.

All the skills that were trained in the area of independent language use were then transferred to a liaison situation and students were encouraged to recognise both the message and intent of the speaker and render this faithfully into the other language. There was also the issue of the role of the liaison interpreter as a mediator, attempting to ensure that the conversation continued, rather than to exacerbate confrontation.

11. Mother Tongue Influence

Students from the Beijing Police Group displayed the usual problems that Chinese learners face when dealing with English. There was a problem with consistency of verb forms within sentences and utterances. In past narrative sequencing, for example, verbs could vacillate from past to present and back again with some present perfect forms thrown in for good measure; in

describing the future there was an overuse of future simple forms (common among most EFL learners) and at times there was a mismatch between auxiliaries and participles, both in form and number. Personal pronouns were confused so that men and women changed gender. Simple sentence (SVO) word order did not pose too many problems for this group. However, difficulty arose when noun group based structures were moved across from Chinese to English. In terms of pronunciation, certain individual sounds caused problems // /r/ and /3/ as well as consonant clusters, particularly with three consonants together. In terms of syllables, speakers sometimes had problems with words of three syllables, but nearly always had problems with four syllable words – one syllable was nearly always lost. Where a speaker had a particularly strong Chinese accent they did not close one syllable before starting the next.

Perhaps the most successful strategy used by the teaching team to overcome this was contrastive analysis. The team contained some Chinese nationals with excellent English and one English native speaker who could speak Chinese. This enabled us to approach these problems by comparing one language against the other. It was felt that this greatly helped students in their understanding of how English worked. Given the specific requirement to train students to have a liaison capacity when they returned to work, contrastive analysis was crucial in equipping them with the skill of reformulation from one language to another. It also played a role in helping the students' competence in anticipation

12. Culture Shock

Culture shock was apparent from the first day the students arrived. Most had never been outside China before and were surprised by many features from the multiculturalism of London to the apparent disorganisation of our administrative systems and the unusual quality of our food. Although staff at the University ensured that students were met and were given a welcome dinner, this was not as elaborate as visiting parties would receive when visiting China. Expectations of their role and of that of their tutors as discussed above created a period of confusion, especially in the first group of students.

It was felt important to address this specifically. The MA ILC contains a module on Intercultural Communication which covers the theories of cross cultures and the parameters defining different cultures. These were brought into the language classroom through analysis of media reporting, specialist lectures on systems in the UK and in asking students to consider how their actions as police officers might be perceived by visitors to their country and the preconceptions they might have. Such discussion had a direct bearing on discourse management and communication strategies that could be used and by extension on the type of language taught and practised. It also had a bearing on anticipation competences in the liaison environment.

13. Progression

The lecturer visited Beijing and met with a number of former students in June 2008. All were actively engaged in preparation for the Olympic Games and all were putting their English to use in the workplace. The more successful are now employed as interpreters for the force and work for senior officers on

visits abroad, conferences or when overseas delegations come to China. Others have become the liaison officer in their specialist area with members of overseas forces in the planning of police operations for the Olympics and sharing of information. More than one officer said that they were able to meet counterparts from the Metropolitan Police who they had tried and failed to meet when in London. Others said that they had maintained the police contacts they had established when in the UK. Other officers have been given positions of responsibility (for example exit and entry visas) due to their improved language ability and others have been deployed at different police stations where many visitors will arrive (Tiananmen Square and the Olympic park). All of the group questioned had fond memories of their time in the UK and valued it as a learning experience. Their exposure to language and the cultural background to the language had made them more confident language users. Many echoed the impressions they had at the end of their year saying that not only had they learned language and culture, but they had also been shown new ways of thinking and even how to think for themselves.

14. Conclusion

The experience of working with the Beijing Police over four years confirms the benefits of content, task-based training for LSP groups. It highlighted the fact that people with a language competence in professional environment are often placed in a liaison situation and that a liaison situation involves competences beyond interpreting. It also confirms the vital role that cross cultural insight plays. From feedback and conversations with sponsors this particular group of students is involved in a more complex set of tasks than acquitting themselves well in English in the workplace. Often they have to be the bridge between two language communities. Contrastive analysis and the provision of tutors from both language communities would be an ideal way to deal with this challenge, and may even be an ideal way to construct a teaching team and methodology not only for the training of interpreters (liaison or otherwise) but also for language teaching in general. It is recognised that attendance on a specialist masters programme offers a luxury in terms of a pool of staff that does not always exist in other environments. However, in spite of the challenges that content-specific teaching creates, it is clear that second language competence and performance, at whatever level of task, is as much a question of handling information and managing discourse in a way that will be well received by the target language community as it is a question of accuracy and fluency.

In addition to in-depth insights into the complexities of specialised language and intercultural training (which, it will have been seen are based on an expertise, knowledge and resource base that outstrips commercial provision of such training), this case study therefore also provides insights into the ways in which the Beijing Government has planned for the delivery of certain aspects of the Olympics and into the type of language-training programmes that are needed, and will continue to be needed, as the Games and other mega-cultural and sporting events move from city to city, from nation to nation, from culture to culture.

(c) Regional Language Network London: Welcoming the World – giving a great welcome to international visitors

Work with the RLN (in this case, London) is an example of the fruitfulness of the collaborations that the HE languages sector is able to foster and maintain with other key organisations involved in language and skills delivery. It is essential that these relationships, which have developed further under the Routes into Languages programme, continue in order to coordinate (and not duplicate) and to develop and extend delivery of knowledge and expertise beyond the capacity of organisations working alone.

The report below was prepared for the 'Languages and International' Events project by Jane Collis, Regional Language Network London (June 2008)
jane.collis@rln.london.com

Welcoming the World: giving a great welcome to international visitors

Introduction

Regional Language Network London (RLN London) www.rln-london.com is funded by the London Development Agency (LDA) to support the skills and employment objectives of the London Employment and Skills Taskforce action plan for the 2012 Games. RLN London was involved throughout the bid phase for the 2012 Games in the London Higher Olympic sub-group, led a 'languages' group with representation from ten London HEIs and organised a major event supported by the Bid Team and Association of University Languages Centres in 2005. RLN London retains active links with Podium, the FE and HE co-ordinating unit for the 2012 Games, and sits on the Steering Group of the 'Routes into Languages' Capital L consortium of eight London universities. The opportunities for contributions from HE (and FE) language departments to developments for the 2012 Games have been highlighted by RLN London in a range of briefings and articles (notably: http://www.rln-london.com/pdf/ata_article.pdf and http://www.rln-london.com/pdf/Olympic_briefing.pdf)

The aim of the 'Welcoming the World' initiative is to contribute to driving up standards for our 'international welcome' before, during and after the 2012 Games through improved use and understanding of language and cultural skills. LDA funding has supported the programme as a contribution to ongoing work to develop a Customer Service Gold Standard led by the Sector Skills Council, People 1st. Delivery of the pilot phase of the one-day training programme has been trialled in London in spring 2008, and full evaluation will be complete in late summer 2008.

This report focuses on the experience of conducting the pilot programme as an example of a language and cultural skills initiative which may serve as a useful starting point for HE (and FE) language departments looking to develop and promote their expertise, influence and partnerships in connection with international events.

About the ‘Welcoming the World’ training programme and resources

The ‘Welcoming the World’ initiative builds on three major research projects conducted by RLN London:

- ‘Heathrow Talking to the World: A languages audit’ (March 2005)
http://www.rln-london.com/pdf/heathrow_taking_report.pdf
- ‘Managing in a Global City’ (November 2005)
http://www.london-rln.com/pdf/Exec_Summary_MGC.pdf
- ‘Minding the language gap’ – a report produced for London Underground in May 2007

The findings of these studies, based on interviews with hundreds of employers, employees and international visitors informed the development of the training programme and resources.

The ‘Welcoming the World’ training and resources are designed to help people who work – or are seeking work - in frontline positions in Hospitality, Tourism, Transport, Retail and Sport and Leisure. They focus on ways of improving and developing the customer service skills necessary to communicate with and serve international and UK-based visitors from a range of cultural and language backgrounds. They are also envisaged as valuable for people working – or wishing to work - at events as volunteers and ambassadors.

The resources include:

- A training manual for the one-day module (tailored to each group in the pilot phase).
- A reference booklet on Intercultural Skills which includes cultural briefings for China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, the Middle East, Poland, Russia, Spain, the USA (downloadable from www.rln-london.com/welcoming).
- A phrasebook with key customer service phrases in twelve languages (Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), French, German, Gujarati, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Panjabi, Polish, Russian and Spanish)

The one-day training programme was piloted as an interactive and practical course including:

- Intercultural Skills (focusing on the skills, knowledge and behaviour needed to serve and communicate with people from other cultures effectively and sensitively)
- Cultural background and customer service advice for visitors from two of the following: China, the Middle East, France and Poland
- Taster sessions in 'meet and greet' phrases for two of the languages spoken in the countries and territories above.

Delivery of the 'Welcoming the World' training programme

The six-hour training programme was delivered free of charge to the following five groups of around 100 Londoners in total between April and June 2008. Funding conditions for the programme require that a minimum of 50% of all delegates (beneficiaries) are from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds and that 50% are women.

The training was led by an independent consultant intercultural trainer working alongside specialist language and culture tutors, most of whom were recruited through City Lit, a Central London adult education college. Promotion was conducted through e-mail circulars, online publicity and registration via the RLN London website, hard copy flyers and posters and a radio interview with an East London community radio station.

1. Students from London Metropolitan University (LMU) City campus were involved at the suggestion of a Podium contact. Promotion and engagement were facilitated by the Reach student services team. Employability and skills for volunteering and ambassadorial roles were highlighted in course publicity.
2. People seeking employment or developing their careers in the relevant sectors – session held in Stratford, East London. Promotion and engagement were facilitated by a number of brokers (community and training organisations, Job Centre Plus and the Five Boroughs Unit). Employability and skills for volunteering and ambassadorial roles were highlighted in course publicity.
3. Employees (part and full-time) and self-employed people in a range of businesses dealing with international visitors and contacts. Delegates from London Underground and the Museum of London as well as from small companies, organisations and micro-businesses attended the session at City Lit. Promotion and engagement were through City Lit, the Kings Cross Business Forum, British Library and direct marketing to hospitality and hotel HR and training managers. Increasing international visitor market share and improving customer service were highlighted in course publicity.

4. Employees in Retail, Airport Management and Hospitality attended the session hosted and facilitated at the Heathrow Academy. Promotion and engagement were carried out by BAA Heathrow and through direct marketing to HR managers. Increasing international visitor market share and improving customer service were highlighted in course publicity.
5. All delegates were employees (Red Cap wardens) from the New West End Company who, as part of their services, provide on-street information and help for visitors to Oxford Street and Regent Street. Engagement with the company was facilitated by Visit Britain and the LDA. Delegates were recruited directly by the company in view of the relevance of the programme to their frontline roles with visitors.

Evaluation of the 'Welcoming the World' training programme

As mentioned above full evaluation of the pilot programme and recommendations for next steps will be produced in summer 2008. Initial feedback from delegates —whether students, people in full or part-time employment or those seeking jobs — has been overwhelmingly positive in terms of the quality of the training and resources and value of the programme. Several organisations and companies expressed an interest in further training sessions for their employees, but the viability of full or partial cost recovery programmes has not yet been explored.

Food for thought for the higher education sector

1. HE students were universally positive in their views of the programme, valuing intercultural, language and culture-specific aspects of the training in equal measure. The provision of similar bite-sized programmes to existing students within HEIs who hope to work in frontline roles in multilingual, multicultural settings warrants consideration - notwithstanding the small scale nature of this pilot with a single group of students in one university.
2. On the advice of the student services colleagues at LMU, promotional materials emphasised the employability skills to be developed by the programme and their relevance to future careers. The programme was not specifically marketed to student ambassadors or volunteers, but it could be worthwhile to explore inclusion of elements of the 'Welcoming the World' training for students involved in ambassadorial and outreach roles. The interest in the programme and positive feedback from employers and employees in the sectors which have the most impact on the welcome for international visitors provide useful messages for those in the HE sector about the importance of language and cultural skills for effective communication in a wide range of work settings.
3. The innovative nature of the training programme and the focus on the importance of language and cultural skills in UK-based settings – whether for events, volunteering or future careers – appears to be a

useful way of engaging students who do not necessarily view themselves as linguists or intend to embark on international careers. The programme also offered an opportunity to highlight the value of the exceptional linguistic diversity in London – with the number of languages spoken, including a basic level of competence, in each of the five groups usually exceeding the number participants.

4. Some companies whose staff attended the programme expressed and interest in follow-on bite-sized language courses focusing on ‘meet and greet’ and customer service language. ‘Horizontal’ programmes giving students ‘ice breaker’ competence in a number of languages may also be a useful way forward for language departments in HEIs – whether as programmes on offer to existing students or / as well as community engagement, outreach and widening participation initiatives. Such an approach could complement and possibly help to promote ‘vertical’ programmes leading to higher levels of linguistic and cultural competence.

The above report was prepared independently of the overall Project report; it is striking to see how much in tune it is with the thrust of the experiences echoed throughout, and especially with the recommendations for HE languages involvement.

Alison Phipps has considered the importance of providing basic language and training skills in, for example, the tourism industry:

**“‘Serious [i.e. academic] language teaching is ‘more than just learning to order a cup of coffee’ I hear and read, repeatedly. Maybe. But to take seriously the multilingual, intercultural concentrations that accompany the world’s largest industry – tourism – then learning to order a cup of coffee has to be taken more seriously than has hitherto been the case in the literature on languages
[...] Languages, as taught both to tourists and those studying for qualifications to work in the tourism industry, are sold as packaged commodities and skills sets for basic training and in the lifelong learning market (Kelly and Jones, 2003). Those studying languages in these contexts – usually on the margins of the working day, after hours or in lunch breaks, or as part of vacation courses – are of diverse ethnic and social backgrounds. This is in marked contrast to the demographics of those studying modern languages in mainstream contexts. The democratisation of travel has brought about a democratisation in the learning of languages for tourist purposes, but not yet in mainstream study” (Phipps, 2007)**

It is certainly the moment to seize the opportunity for just such a democratisation of language learning within the HE sector.

As she also writes:

“To be a good host, these days, is to be able to speak words of welcome – be it on websites, in tourist brochures, and as tour guides – in languages that are comprehensible, and even native to the tourists. To be a good host in Cronin’s terms (Cronin, 2003) – is to be a translator [...] Linguistic and also economic power is involved in the languages used by hosts and guests alike within the tourism industry

[...] the activity of tourist language learning [gestures], in its own particular ways, towards more generous manifestations of the human spirit, of neighbourliness and the social bond” (Phipps, 2007)

(d) THE INTERNATIONAL VISITOR EXPERIENCE

This final section on intercultural communication will use as case studies:

- (i) the findings of AHRC-funded research carried out by the University of Westminster into the international visitor experience in the museum and gallery sector (‘Museums, Galleries and the International Visitor Experience’ [MGIVE];
- (ii) focus-group work (again specifically commissioned for this project) with a range of nationalities based on the methods used in the MGIVE work

(i) Museums and Galleries and the International Visitor Experience (MGIVE)

University of Westminster Pilot Project (2006): Enhancement of the International Visitor Experience to London’s Museums and Galleries

Context: cultural tourism, cultural diplomacy, and the globalisation of commerce, communications, ideas

The research showed that London’s leading museums and galleries are already aware of the need to develop their international visitor numbers in an increasingly competitive global market, and this is evident in their published visitor/audience reports, mission statements, annual reports and in some of the information available for international visitors. International visitor numbers are monitored as part of wider audience research, often carried out through the use of market research companies (MORI and BDRC are mentioned by Tate, for example).

There are significant differences in types of international visitors across the museum and gallery sector. Audience research by the Victoria and Albert Museum shows a significantly higher number of international creative industry

professionals visiting the museum in 2004/05 compared to groups. Tate appears to be particularly aware of visitor experience, describing itself in its 2005 annual report as “one of the more visitor-focused museums in the sector” (indicating therefore that it considers other less visitor-focused) and “aware that visitors need to be placed at the heart of organisational development”. After carrying out a major visitor audit on 2003, it set up a Visitor Experience Development Group, and develops strategies relating to service standards and income generation. The V&A sees itself as playing a role in cultural diplomacy in what it terms “an active cultural system”, and in its annual report notes particularly the globalisation of ideas and culture as well as of commerce and communications. However, these surveys and polls are all conducted in English and within the museums and galleries. It was clear, therefore, that the use of focus groups outside the UK in our research would provide information that they do not currently have access to and a perspective that has not been explored by the current market research practices that they employ.

The websites of Tate, National Gallery, National Portrait Gallery, the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum are good examples of the recognition by the sector of the need for information to be available in languages other than English, but this remains very variable. Research in 2006 revealed that the Russian-speaking visitor to London would find information on Tate, the National Gallery and the V&A, but not on the British Museum or the National Portrait Gallery. The Chinese-speaking visitor would not necessarily be presented with the appropriate character system when information in Chinese is available at all. The National Portrait Gallery provides Chinese, but not the National Gallery nor the British Museum (which of the large museums has the worst provision). Museums and galleries clearly see foreign-language information via the website as the direction for future development – in 2006 Tate was providing on-line information in German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Greek, Japanese, Russian, Arabic, Chinese and Polish and the quality and content of this is much better than that provided in print format at Tate Britain, for example. The V&A had recently expanded its provision to eight languages, already achieving the goal set out in the 2005 annual report to add seven more to Chinese by 2007 (these are Arabic, German, Spanish, French, Italian, Japanese and Russian). The V&A website recorded 10 million visits last year – 60% of which were from overseas (its status amongst creative industry professionals should be remembered here, however). Please note that in 2008, the availability of information for international visitors has changed significantly in some cases, often in response to this and subsequent research with the University of Westminster in which the above museums and galleries have been involved (see below).

However, the printed information at the point of contact currently provided for international visitors at London’s leading museums and galleries, and the main focus of this research project, remains generally at best inadequate, at worst alienating. It is often too basic or too confusing to be of any practical use. When available at all, it is often poorly presented (photocopied sheets) suggesting to the visitor that information in other languages is of less value than that on offer in English. The National Gallery is the exception here with

the foreign language information presented in exactly the same format as that available in English, and using the clear system of international symbols to indicate its facilities.

Critically, information takes the form of translations, of variable quality, based on written information that originates in a British cultural perspective showing no awareness of the needs, expectations and sensitivities of visitors from other cultural areas. Research at physical as opposed to virtual museum sites reveals therefore that there is often a mismatch between the aims expressed with regard to international visitors in an institution's statements and its practice. In our original survey, the V&A, a museum with a well-developed and linguistically-varied website and a clear acknowledgement of the importance of international visitors in its annual reports (as indicated above) had no foreign language information available at the information desk (although it does have in fact have photocopied A4 sheets in a drawer under the reception desk) because: "Marketing doesn't like us to have too many leaflets out". According to this logic, a foreign visitor would need to approach the information desk and ask, in English, if there was any information available in their particular language.

In the pilot project, the British Museum was singled out for the paucity of information on offer. While the website offered some information in French, German, Italian, Spanish and Japanese, there are no printed leaflets and international visitors wishing to navigate the museum in any meaningful way need to bring their own guide books or pay £6 for an in-house guide. The result of this is clear in the demand for audio guides (another linguistic variable in all museums and galleries) which, observation shows, outstrips supply. Another hit and miss factor is the information which is available for temporary exhibitions. Taking Tate Britain as an example, at one exhibition in 2006, printed information (A4 photocopied sheets) was available in Italian, French, Japanese, German and Spanish, but not in Russian and Chinese, although these are available in the general information sheets, resulting in another potentially frustrating visitor experience for speakers of those two languages. Nothing at all was available for an exhibition of recent British art being held at the same time. Consistency of provision as well as quality should be part of the standard to be set.

In the increasingly competitive global tourism environment, and in the light of planning for the 2012 Olympic Games which stresses that Britain should be a "generous host", aware that it is hosting the Games for the world, and a "cultural inspiration" (taken from Jacqui Smith's Keynote Address to the Museum Association's 2005 Annual Conference), the research made clear that London's galleries and museums need to re-visit attitudes to the information (and by extension the welcome) that they provide for foreign visitors. While Britain is consistently rated highly in visitor surveys for 'culture', it is almost universally rated poor for 'welcome' according to polls carried out for VisitBritain. The VisitBritain survey shows that the Chinese, for example, believe that they would not be warmly received in Britain, while France comes top of their perception of the most welcoming country which in the light of this developing market requires urgent attention. Of the Europeans surveyed, only

the Russians scored Britain highly for the likely welcome that they would receive.

The notion of the 'Entrepreneurial Museum' was one of the themes for the Museums Association Annual Conference held in October 2006, and it is clear, again in annual reports and other institutional statements that the sector is looking for ways to generate and increase income. With evidence that the UK visitor economy remains strong and with growth rates of visitors from countries such as China and Eastern Europe increasing (based on VisitBritain research), it is not enough to rely on an unsatisfactory mixture of often poor quality foreign language material and assumptions that international visitors will largely be able to cope with English.

Pilot project focus groups were held (Summer 2006) in France, Spain, Germany, Russia, the Arab Gulf (Bahrain) and Hong Kong (with Hong Kong and mainland Chinese and Taiwanese participants). The groups worked with the information currently available in their respective language at one of London's leading museums. In response to initial feedback, the Project's linguists/intercultural specialists then re-worked the material, re-presented it to the focus group, and then again collected feedback. The resulting material was therefore culturally-informed and met linguistic and cultural expectations.

The pilot project identified that the material currently on offer, originating from a British cultural perspective showed no awareness of needs/expectations/sensitivities of visitor's from other cultural areas, as previously noted. It relies on translations that vary in quality (sometimes supplied by our now familiar friend the "accidental linguist"), revealing preconceptions and concerning communication and culture which are often negative in subtle ways, and ultimately leading to lower outcomes in terms of cultural mission/economic development.

This internally-funded pilot project led to a Workshop Series funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

**Museums and Galleries and the International Visitor Experience (MGIVE)
Research Workshop Series
University of Westminster June-December 2007**

Participants of the first two workshops were the project team of linguists/intercultural specialists from the Department of Modern and Applied Languages, and marketing/communications directors from the National Gallery, Tate, National Portrait Gallery, Museum of London, British Museum and the V&A; at workshop 3 museum marketing/communications directors from the museum and gallery sector across the UK participated (The Royal Academy, National Maritime Museum, Historic Royal Palaces, Roman Baths (Bath), British Library, National History Museum, Fitzwilliam Museum (Cambridge), and the National Museums of Scotland).

The languages covered were those available at undergraduate level in the Department: Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Russian and Spanish.

The activities of the workshops and the themes explored

The fundamental aim of the workshop series was to facilitate further development, exchange, and eventual application of academic research into the needs and expectations of international visitors to the UK museum and gallery sector, focusing firstly on London and then extending to include institutions across the country.

Its original specific aims were to:

- Work through a set of issues and questions concerning not only the experience of the international visitor, but also the needs of the museum and gallery sector and its potential to develop in this area of intercultural communication;
- Discuss the possibilities of providing a readily applicable, accessible and adaptable model for the development of culturally-informed and high-value information for international visitors based on effective and positive intercultural communication that meets these visitors' cultural and linguistic expectations;
- Develop guidelines for 'best practice' in the application and use of the above model (possibly in the form of an on-line 'toolkit') that would significantly enhance the international visitor experience in the museum and gallery sector.

A major aim of the workshop series was that the insights should convert into strategy and then into practice, based on evidence-based research findings, and should be immediately applicable. After further analysis by the range of modern linguists/intercultural specialists of printed material brought by the museum professionals to the workshop, each museum accepted to work closely with one language to develop and test new material.

At the second workshop, the academics and museum professionals presented their experience of working together and working with the draft new material in their chosen language for further comments. A major issue concerning branding emerged which had not been anticipated and which produced a new item for discussion concerning the extent to which a museum's 'brand' is embedded not only in its logo (an obvious example of branding) but in the very discourse it uses to talk about itself. This leads to a major consideration since such discourse does not necessarily transfer well or easily to other cultural contexts. A number of possible solutions were identified – for example the writing (in collaboration) of text directly into the foreign language, or the production of a more 'neutral' English base text that can then be appropriately adapted to the needs and expectations of a variety of international visitors.

At the third and final workshop, a wider range of marketing and communications professionals from across the UK visitor sector were invited to share our findings and to comment on them. The six museums involved

most closely in the project reported on in-house testing of the material (where it had been possible to carry this out) and/or the academic team presented further findings from international focus groups on the new material. The experience of all those closely involved in the project proved to be very positive with changed attitudes and shared knowledge apparent on both sides and resulted in material that was equally positively received by international visitors on whom it was tested.

What also became clear was the need to explain the aim of such work carefully. The decision emerged that the original aim of developing a model for the content of, and guidelines for the use of high-value and culturally-informed information for international visitors in a readily applicable, accessible and adaptable form (for example, initial discussions suggested the possibility of developing an on-line 'toolkit') for use in the museum sector was not the most effective or appropriate use of the research findings.

Instead, a model of a process for the production of such high-value information was developed and discussed, but for use by the linguistic/intercultural specialists in discussion with the needs of a particular museum or gallery, since these vary significantly, and also because the cultural findings remain open to misunderstanding and misinterpretation.

It should be made clear that this is not an exercise in 'political correctness' as one new participant the final workshop suggested, it is a way of making decisions to provide a better experience for a specific target audience. Neither does it attempt to "smooth out" the pleasures and challenges of 'intercultural exchange' in the way that it has been explored with regard to tourism (Jack and Phipps, 2007). As Phipps also writes: "I regard attempts to manage away intercultural difference and linguistic diversity as removing certain crucial dimensions and opportunities for encounter and for imagination from the tourist experience [...] smoothing out the intercultural bumps in languages and tourism itself places significant obstacles in the path of the creative processes of culture, closing down options and imaginative possibilities for cultural change" (Phipps, 2007).

Instead, the process that has been developed aims to enhance the visitor experience within a specific context (that of the navigation of the museum/gallery) with a view to building enjoyment and confidence in those intercultural bumps that come into being in the "intercultural life of exchange" (Jack and Phipps, 2007).

Overall MGIVE Research Development and Research Findings

(a) Research Base: Communication for Intercultural Navigation (CIN)

The research which resulted from the MGIVE projects was developed from established theoretical bases and MGIVE Team research resulting in the creation of an original, cutting-edge model/process of producing material (University of Westminster research known as 'Communication for

Intercultural Navigation'; CIN) that interrogates not only how to communicate most effectively with international visitors, but more generally how to package information meaningfully in the museum/gallery context (with enormous potential for replicability across areas of the public/private sectors whose needs and business are international and inter/multicultural in scope). While the focus of the MGIVE project is on the international visitor experience, the research has important potential for domestic multicultural audiences, and for education programmes more widely (notably in Modern Foreign/Community Languages, providing an obvious and effective link to Routes into Languages programmes).

(b) Research Background:

The research model is grounded in theories of intercultural communication and translation studies, and also partially based on semiotic analysis (including the notion of the 'semiosphere'). It extends beyond texts and translations to issues concerning social interaction and ethnographic encounters, incorporating some methodologies from sociolinguistics to inform not only the analysis of texts and their semiotic value, but also, crucially, their production by one culture for consumption by another. This is fundamental to the CIN model which is emphatically not about the translation of texts, but precisely about the production and consumption of information across cultures. The research that informs the CIN model now cuts across aspects of translation studies, intercultural studies, and applied language studies together with tourism studies (including tourism and intercultural exchange), museum studies and cultural policy. Put simply, no-one in museum studies (and indeed beyond) is thinking about audiences in this way.

(c) Overall MGIVE Research Findings:

- current quality/availability of information for international visitors reveals preconceptions concerning communication and culture (often negative in subtle ways, leading to lower outcomes in terms of cultural mission/economic sustainability); needs/expectations of those visitors often vary widely from information on offer;
- current information usually takes form of translations, varying in quality, of material originating from British cultural perspective showing no awareness of needs/expectations/sensitivities of visitors from other cultural areas;
- museums and galleries have (admittedly restricted) budgets to spend on visitor information, but (as sector readily admits) little thought goes into overall strategy/policy despite awareness of need to provide appropriate experience for international visitors;
- some museums and galleries believe they have developed a 'global brand', often embedded in the institution's own promotional discourse, but this does not transfer readily into other cultural areas;
- model needed (CIN developed as above) for production of high-value, specifically-targeted, culturally-informed material based on effective intercultural communication that meets cultural/linguistic expectations of international visitors; for use by linguistic/intercultural specialists in

- discussion with needs of specific museum/gallery (since these vary significantly) to counter above problems;
- support needed to identify target audience (not necessarily everyone from a particular cultural area) and provide them with a better experience.

The application of the CIN model/process produces effective intercultural communication because it questions the very assumptions that producers and consumers from different cultures bring to what constitutes 'information'. These questions address the surface notions of neutrality and efficiency that are normally anchored within a deeper, but ultimately mono-dimensional code/conduit metaphor of language/ideology of communication. Gallery 'interpretation' and educational/marketing 'information' are both re-orientated as part of the 'cultural navigation' process developed, which positions each communicative act within a carefully articulated response to audience and context.

(ii) The Olympics and the International Visitor Experience

"The best was the experience of multiculturalism, meeting people from so many different countries attending the Olympic events in our own country"

(Spanish focus group participant on the experience of the 1992 Barcelona Olympics)

The following summary is based on focus group work carried out by the MGIVE team in France, Spain, Germany, the Arab Gulf (Bahrain) and Russia during 07/08 (the work carried out in China features in the section on Beijing 2008 in chapter 4 above). The MGIVE work, detailed in the section above, began with similar focus group work and its noted benefits led to this method being used again.

HE languages departments are well-equipped in terms of both research skills and resources to carry out just such small-scale pilot/exploratory projects in the international arena (which can then be extended to larger projects) and, as for other examples given in this report, it is included not only for its research findings, but as an illustration of the transfer of the HE skills, knowledge and expertise base to extended areas of operation.

The MGIVE work also demonstrated that there are significant benefits to carrying out surveys/interview/focus group work in the native language and on home territory as opposed to the methods used more widely by organisations

of gathering on-site feedback in English, and thereby providing a real enhancement of research findings.

The issues surrounding 'event-led' and 'event-themed' tourism have been discussed at the beginning of this report, together with some of the potentially negative associations that mega-events, and especially the Olympics, can have on resident private and commercial populations. These are usually clustered around objections to the huge cost of staging the Games. Within the tourist industry there are other potential disadvantages: excessive hype and an over-expectation of the economic/tourism benefits; disruption to normal trade before and during the event; regular tourism being deterred by locals and visitors staying away; Olympic tourism replacing rather than adding to regular tourism, particularly as the Games are held over the peak summer season.

Generally, there are two different aspects of Olympics Tourism: 'Olympics-related' – directly generated by those involved in the Games – participants, organisers, media, spectators (evidence shows that this has a low net tourism benefit; there was, for example, a negative effect on tourism in Greece as a result of the Athens Olympics with regular tourists avoiding the peak season); and 'Olympics-motivated' tourism which has medium/long term impact with an increase in tourism after the Games finish as a result of the raised profile, image and awareness of the host country across the world. This has the potential to be a relatively massive, ongoing tourism benefit (see, for example, Smith, 2006a; but there is also evidence of similar discussion in UK towns where Olympic events will be staged, for example Bournemouth and Poole (Economic Overview Panel Meeting, November 2007).

Research Brief

Aim:

The aim of the research was to obtain qualitative information on the language needs and expectations of potential visitors to international events in the UK, and to the Olympics in particular

Methodology:

Translate/adapt an agreed topic guide into the target language; this was open for appropriate adaptation by the linguist/intercultural specialist for the target audience (expansion/elucidation);

Form an 'accidental or convenience' focus group of not more than 5 or 6 people, and discuss the issues raised by the topic guide;

Conclusions:

Compile a report on some of the ideas, conclusions, etc that emerged.

Topic Guide

The complete topic guide for the focus group discussions is included in the appendices, but the topics broadly covered the following areas: general questions on travelling – have they been abroad as a tourist, if not/why not; if yes/where and why; previous experience of international events (such as the World Cup, concerts, exhibitions); an imaginary scenario of travelling to London 2012 – getting there, staying in London, using public transport, expectations on arrival and concerning language support, expectations about

venues and organisation of events; general questions on international tourism and languages – positive and negative experiences, suggestions. As a physical, visual prompt, a map of the London underground was used (together with other maps in some cases).

Linguistic/Cultural Areas Covered

The focus groups were held in the Arab Gulf (Manama, Bahrain); France (Paris); Germany (Munich); Russia (Moscow); Spain (Madrid) – thereby covering all the working languages of the Olympics to date. A focus report from China has previously been included in the 'International Events Present' (chapter 4) on Beijing 2008 which contains a number of general practical suggestions and idea in addition to the more culturally-specific issue of travelling in large groups.

Below are the summarised findings from each of the groups.

Preliminary Observations on the Focus Group Experience

All of our researchers recognised and voiced concern about generalising on the basis of limited data as age, gender, education, class background are significant factors in assessing visitors' needs and expectations. It became clear (not surprisingly) that older people generally expressed a preference for travelling in an organised group and prefer to rely on the tour leader for information and guidance in their own language (this clearly has drawbacks, however, the information you get is only as good as your guide..). Younger people were much more confident about travelling independently, using public transport, and overcoming the language barrier "somehow".

What was clear is that all nationalities expect information delivered at a variety of locations, both written and oral, in their own language and in specific ways according to that location.

Arabic

The focus group consisted of five Bahrainis aged between 25-55 years old; two female journalists; a sports reporter, an administrator and a computer programmer. Of all the focus groups, this group identified most specifically their needs and expectations.

None of the participants had previously been to large events. Yet they all expressed their intention to attend the Olympics 2012. The two female journalists noted, however, that attending the sports events would not be the main purpose of travel: they would be more interested in tourism and shopping in London. Yet the event provides an exciting opportunity for family members to travel and do different activities. All of the participants are familiar with travelling abroad and have already been to various Arab, Asian and European countries. Only one of them had been to the UK. They are all married and they usually travel with their families. If they were to come to London in 2012 they would ideally come with their families [note that a finding of the MGIVE research was that Arab visitors from the Gulf States often travel in large family groups which is important for the information provided by museums and galleries, for example].

In order to prepare for their visit, the participants said that usually they would first ask friends and family members who have been to the UK and they would also rely on the Internet. They all have a good command of English and were familiar with the use of the internet, which is available at home and work. Before travelling they would check on the internet for information such as places of interest in London for both single people and family members, hotel prices, currency exchange rate, ticket price, price of excess luggage, price of international packing and shipping. Some of the participants explained that they have not been to London but had already heard from relatives and friends who have been there about Oxford Street, where designer brands are usually sold cheaper than in the Gulf States. It is common for people from the Gulf travel to London in the summer to spend their holiday and shop at the same time. Four of the participants said they would prefer to travel on an organised trip with a travel company, or with other family members who have been to the UK or with a group of friends, especially when it is their first time visiting a new place.

Once in London, they would like to find free information at the airport and also at the hotel. They would expect the information to include the following [these are included in detail here as many of these requirements would no doubt also be of benefit to all international visitors]:

- addresses of tourist information centres around London;
- a colour-coded London map that highlights London's famous attractions, preferably written in Arabic;
- the contact details of London Transport Enquiry Service;
- a tube map with a guide that explains in Arabic the types of tickets used in the underground e.g. Oyster Card, daily cheap travel card, day single, day return, etc. and prices for adults and children;
- a train timetable with a guide that explains in Arabic the different types of train tickets and prices for adults and children;
- the contact detail of car rental companies with clear price guide;
- the contact details of Arabic-speaking taxi drivers with clear price guide explaining metre price and destination;
- London tour buses timetable;
- addresses of London piers and boat trips timetable;
- addresses of a range of family-orientated hotels that provide children with entertainment facilities;
- addresses of mosques and Islamic centres with opening times;
- addresses of banks that have branches in Arab countries, Bureau de change, money transfer agencies;
- a list of mobile phone shops that sell sim cards and mobile top up cards;
- addresses of various range of good quality and family-orientated restaurants that provide halal and vegetarian food in various cuisines such as Italian, Indian, Iranian, Moroccan, Egyptian, Lebanese, Tai, Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, Mexican;

- addresses of children's entertainment facilities e.g. theme parks, children theatre, museums, circus, aquarium, London eye, children sports centres;
- a list of cinemas that offer children's movies with an opening time guide;
- the contact details of screened baby sitters with a service price guide;
- addresses of cinemas and theatre for adults with a price and show time guide;
- addresses of theatres and specials exhibitions in London with opening times and price guide;
- addresses of areas heavily populated by Arab communities recommending the most convenient means of transport to get there;
- addresses of Arab supermarkets and bookshops in London;
- addresses of night pharmacies, dental clinics and hospitals in London;
- addresses and contact details of Arab embassies and cultural centres;
- Tel no. of a help-line with Arabic speaking volunteers to be reached in an emergency;
- Addresses of accredited language centres with price guide;
- Security tips and places best avoided for security reasons in the UK.

The participants on this group "would not mind" if some of the information was presented in English. However one noted that it would better if the information were available in Arabic and added that not all people in Bahrain speak or read English, particularly those aged fifty and above.

They expect the information to be presented in the form of colourful leaflets, booklets or magazines with colourful pictures and illustrations of high quality. However, the favoured source for acquiring information is information desks. One of the older participants said that Arab culture favours the oral form of communication. For many Arabs, it is considered more familiar and less confusing compared to the written form. He added that it is not unfamiliar for many people, in his country, when driving for example, to ask others for directions rather than to rely on road maps or road sign posts. People tend to process the oral form of information rather than the written form.

However, another participant highlighted the fact that major technological leaps in the last five decades in the Gulf has familiarised people, particularly the younger generation, with ways of acquiring information via various hi-tech means, such as computers, interactive screens, etc. He added that the use of audio-visual technology devices is quite familiar now. However, all the participants were in favour of providing Arabic-speaking assistants or volunteers at information desks and airports during any international event. One of the female participants mentioned that it is comforting to be able to communicate with another human being who can speak the same language in a foreign country and culture [while there are elements of culturally-specific attitudes here, the generational difference also appears amongst other nationalities].

The oldest participant, aged 55 years, noted that his English was too basic to be able to communicate effectively in daily life during a large international event in the UK. He stressed that the older generation's inability to communicate effectively in English could act as a barrier which in turn could put people off travelling or enjoying their time once in the UK.

When it came to hotel choice, preference was given to hotels recommended by friends and family members who have been to the UK. Staying in a comfortable hotel with reasonable facilities is a must that would not be compromised. They would rather stay in hotels located in the centre of the city and in lively areas known to be inhabited by Arab communities such as Edgware Rd and Bayswater.

When shown a map of London underground, they were, to some extent, confused by the different colours and intermingled lines, yet managed after a while to work out their way round. It was interesting that one of the group said that he would rely on asking people or the underground staff and it is unlikely that he would rely on the map. Another participant suggested that it would be helpful to have a simplified tube map that would list on a separate page all the stops that exist on each line and their direction e.g eastbound, southbound, etc. [all focus groups supported this as was seen in the Beijing fieldwork above, and will be seen again below]. It took the focus group a while to understand the concept of a different ticketing system. Note that Bahrain is a very small country with a total area of 620 sq km. People rely on driving their own cars rather than on public transport. There is no underground or train system in Bahrain. Buses are mainly used by Indian and Pakistani migrant workers and runs on a pay-as-you-go ticketing system.

The group thought that, at the venues, it would be necessary to make information about the Games available in Arabic. A member of the group came up with the idea of making available headsets that would provide on-the-spot Arabic interpreting to the comments on the games. He said that he would be ready to pay for this facility regardless of the price: "To be able to understand the comments on the Games in your own language is part of the fun". They did not mind which form the information should be presented in. Whether in the form of a booklet, magazine or leaflet, explaining the rules of the games, timetables, etc. in Arabic would make them more involved. It would also help them to plan the day and enhance their enjoyment of the experience. The idea of making announcements in Arabic and of having large screens was also favoured, but they did not think it necessary to use Arabic signs for toilets and cafés since these could easily be identified through international symbols [if they are used properly and consistently – MGIVE research showed that this is not currently the case in museums and galleries printed information].

A member of the group noted that most of the people from the Gulf region tend to travel with their families in large groups [as MGIVE research previously noted]. In many cases a group can be something between 6-10 persons. He added that people from the Gulf do value their privacy and

personal space and suggested that it would be a good idea to make available quite corners/cabins for large families.

When the topic of food was reached, the group members were a little concerned about the quality and types of food that would be available. They know from friends and family members' experience in the UK that generally food offered in public places lacks taste and quality. They were not concerned with experimenting or trying different types of food since they are already familiar with international food in Bahrain and they all said that they would go for something different. Yet it was noted that providing varieties of vegetarian and halal snacks or hot meals at the venues would be a very positive point.

Before ending the discussion, one of the participants highlighted the importance of promoting cultural awareness in order to avoid cultural misunderstandings. He added that it would be an idea if those taking part in the event, such as employees, volunteers, etc. should receive seminars, workshops, etc to enhance their culture awareness and learn about how to deal with culture sensitivities of different nationalities. But he also noted that it is equally important for those travelling to the UK to learn about British culture to avoid falling into very obvious problems that could spoil the enjoyment of their stay. In this respect he suggested to make available to guests at airports, hotels, event's official websites, etc. some list of dos and don't in the UK. This might help to promote people's culture awareness and contribute to their positive experience [a further important aspect of intercultural communication and awareness, and worth noting].

French

There were 5 participants of different ethnic and social backgrounds and from geographical areas within France: three male participants 65, 51, 32; three female 43, 25. They ranged from a research student in biochemistry to a council maintenance worker with special needs. One works in a tourist office in a small town. All had been to a large event and found it a positive experience. These included: an international concert; a basket ball match; a cultural event in Florida; a large exhibition in a London museum; a business convention in Madagascar; a large jazz concert. Most of the participants use the Internet when preparing to travel. One stressed the importance of the Tourist Office in relation to travelling for the French.

All expected information to be available in French on arrival and especially concerning transport both in printed form and with the opportunity to also speak to someone. They all shared concerns regarding the use of the transport system and being able to find their way around in London. More than one would like to see instructions on ticket machines in languages other than English. They expected information in French at the airport, on public transport, at the hotel and at all venues. One stressed that it was extremely important at the hotel to get information in French as everything starts from there; he also expected to be well taken care of at the hotel and would need reassurance in French. They all preferred information in written form as it is "reassuring to have something in your hand and it reduces the stress of being in a foreign country". It also saves time.

At the venues, they expected information and announcements in different languages as more than one expressed concern about getting lost. Like the Germans, they felt that recycling was very important (but also agreed that the logistics of this were difficult; this was a repeated feature of all the groups) and that it was important for water to be easily available.

They all also expected large screens in accessible areas to make the most of each event. They would also like to see a range of other, free events and would also like to visit other sights in London during their stay.

German

There were four participants: female 22, female 28, male 15 and male 45; all were keen on sport and are planning to visit the Games in 2012.

Two of them had been to the 2004 European Football Championship in Portugal and had liked the 'atmosphere' of the event. They found the matches exciting and the supporters from different countries were friendly.

Overall it had been a very positive and exciting experience. The most negative aspect was on arrival – when they arrived at the airport, the taxi driver could not speak any foreign language, and communication was difficult. They found it very disappointing that there was no help/support of any kind at the airport. Once at the hotel, the experience was better.

In preparing for a visit to London 2012 they would first use the Internet to get information; then read travel guide books to find out more about London and plan their leisure activities (history, places to visit, museums, etc). Questions were raised by all of them on how to obtain tickets for events.

A common worry was how to get from the airport to the hotel. They would all ideally expect various information desks at the airport where people could speak different languages. They would also expect information about how to travel and other key information to be available in print in German. This would make them feel welcome and their visit would start off with a positive experience. They did not like the idea of having information on a screen in German, seeing it as inappropriate.

All thought that the current maps should be amended for the Olympics. One suggestion was to add little icons indicating the tube/train station where specific events will take place. The bus map was found to be very confusing. Another suggestion was that taxi drivers could indicate if they speak a foreign language [compare Liverpool 08 and Beijing 08]. All four speak English, but would feel more confident if they could talk to someone in German. A common concern was how and where to obtain tickets for public transport – and would like to obtain these beforehand, possibly when buying tickets for events, and perhaps in Germany before travelling. They would not expect Underground staff to speak English and also thought it is probably impractical to make announcements in various languages during a short tube journey. They were less concerned about information in German at hotels as they expected that staff there are used to dealing with queries from a variety of languages/cultures. They all also thought that information in German was less important at venues as they thought they would be able to understand the

programme and announcements in English [remembering that these participants all speak English; this is certainly not the case for other focus groups].

They expect there to be 'fan parks' and free events around the venues. These 'fan parks' were quite common during the 2006 Football World Championship in Germany with different types of food, souvenirs and the opportunity to meet people from various countries, and were generally seen as a success. They would expect there to be no entrance fee for these and thought that it would be good to see 'local' crafts/products or find 'local' information about the area close to the venue. The younger participants would like to have live music or DJs there (again common at the 2006 FWC). All expected large screens to watch events.

All were keen on exploring London while here for the Olympics and would like to see a number of museums and plan to go shopping. They would like to see longer opening hours for museums and shops during the Olympics and to be able to buy tickets for museums and cultural events in advance. They would like information about cultural events to be available in German.

There was a suggestion that airlines could play a prominent role in providing information to visitors. The advantage is that the information could be in the relevant language and could be targeted to a specific audience [see the importance of this highlighted by the MGIVE research findings above].

Russian

International travel is still a relative novelty for ordinary Russians and the same assumptions cannot be made about their habits, needs and expectations that one might for most Westerners. The composition of the group was as follows: Male 66; Female 54; Male 35; Male 28; Female late 50s; varied educational and professional backgrounds.

Rather typical of the older Soviet generation, the two older participants had never travelled abroad and had no foreign languages, but do travel extensively in Russia, especially to the countryside. The other more educated, older participant had been abroad once to Bulgaria and was interested in foreign travel (money permitting), and would like to travel as part of a group if going to a country the language of which she was unable to speak. Information would be expected at the point of arrival, preferably in Russian, and she would expect printed information in Russian at the hotel and at all other venues. Ideally, she would also like to be able to obtain spoken information in Russian. She was also able to figure out the London underground map (not the case for all our nationalities).

The younger generation showed both more desire and the wherewithal to travel abroad, but neither speaks English. One had been to Turkey and Egypt with friends for a holiday (both favourite holiday destinations for Russians) as well as the Czech Republic. He tries to master a little of the language before he goes to a country so that he can communicate a little. He also showed interest in sport and cultural activities as a focus of tourism, being a keen

sportsman (having played water polo at national level), and was likely to travel abroad to sporting events like the Olympics. The other young man had also holidayed in Egypt. Both said that the language barrier was not a hindrance to travel. Both would prepare for a trip to an international event via the Internet, but they would also expect information to be provided in Russian at the point of arrival, in the underground, at the hotel and at all venues.

Spanish

There were again 5 participants aged between 28 and 32, three males and two females, all working in media and media-related professions (web content coordinator; radio broadcaster; IT support technician; photographer; events organiser). All of them had attended one or more international events, including: the Barcelona Olympic Games 1992; Universal Exhibition Seville 1992; Universal Exhibition Lisbon 1998; International Festival of Benicasim (Spain), and Noca Rock (Austria).

Positive experiences discussed included: meeting people from other cultures; the camaraderie amongst people; excellent organisation and easy access to information on how to get around; good services and cleanliness of facilities; a variety of activities taking place simultaneously, always something interesting to do. Negative aspects included: long queues and traffic jams, difficulty moving around due to the crowds; long distances between buildings where events were taking place and no transport connecting them; not being allowed to take food or drinks inside the grounds of the event as prices inside were double that outside making it very expensive for families; very few information centres within the grounds of the event; size of font used in brochures was too small for comfortable reading; and – the fact that the International Festival was in Spain but the signs were only in English.....

On the scenario of coming to London 2012: to prepare they would mostly search for information on the Internet since “nowadays, almost everybody is in into internet culture”, but might try to get additional information from relevant institutions e.g. embassies, and in special issues of magazines, brochures and tourist guides: “I would like to take with me a magazine focussed on the Olympics, such as those that are normally published by newspapers, with good summaries and a little of the history of the Games. If I were attending the Olympics for more than 2 days, I would buy a tourist guide in order to go sightseeing”.

On arrival, they would expect information centres in transport hubs, e.g. train, metro and bus stations, airports, etc., providing them with general information about transport and Olympic events. In addition to traditional brochures, full use should be made of new technologies e.g. assigning bar codes to events so that people scan the code and can download update information; distributing software which allows the translation of signs into other languages by simply taking a picture of signs in English with a mobile phone. They all agreed that information should be provided in Spanish in all transport hubs and in tourist information centres. It was suggested that a brochure was the most convenient format for this kind of situation, but that information through

the internet, SMS and information centres should also be provided [note the professional profile of these participants above, working in new media].

Although they could interpret the current tube map, all of them agreed that the current font and event the size of the map should be larger: “Taking in account the Olympic Games, special maps should be printed indicating the places where the sports events take place” [compare the discussion in the Chinese focus group included in the section on Beijing 2008 above].

They would like to see a good number of information centres “with helpful staff” also at the event venues. They would expect information regarding the sports events e.g. starting times and location; information on the history of the Games and about new sports that have recently been included. They would like to watch interviews with players of those new sports. Basic information, including announcements, should be in the most important world languages, including Spanish [the Olympic Charter stipulates only French and English for announcements].

They would like to see prices, especially for food and drink, kept under control (especially as “London is already an expensive city”). The event should provide and promote typical dishes from all continents, and monopolies should be avoided: “Several different companies should sell food, especially since there is going to be people from so many different countries”.

All participants agreed that there should be free events and that the core of those events should be music:

“Sport and music are two universal things. The Olympic Games are a good opportunity to organise multicultural music events: Spanish music, African music... music of all countries which take part in the Games”.

Summary of Focus Group Suggestions

- Arrival at the airport is a crucial point in the visitors’ experience; to have information desks and staff who can speak foreign languages, together with printed information, enhances the visitor’s experience from the start; hotels would also ideally do this, but it was generally felt to be less essential there;
- Airlines might also play an important role as they could provide visitors with targeted information before they arrive;
- Public transport maps need amendments (for instance by adding symbols) to make them more user-friendly for foreign visitors; buying tickets needs to be explained more clearly in some cases, and ideally by multilingual staff as well as in information in stations/on buses;
- Visitors would welcome it if they could buy tickets for public transport and cultural (not only sports) events in advance;

- Taxi drivers could indicate if they are able to speak a foreign language; access to other services in languages other than English would also be welcome especially for emergencies;
- 'Fan parks', large screens and free events are regarded as being very important;
- Visitors are keen to exploit the 'cultural' aspects of London and would like to have information on cultural events available in their language in a variety of printed forms and on other media platforms;
- Information is needed on children-specific services and activities;
- Attention needs to be given to the provision of family facilities;
- Provision of information needs to be in combinations of oral, printed and electronic formats at event venues (and in other tourist-oriented locations).

While Transport for London already offers a multilingual journey planner and other information in world and community languages on its website, it can be done better and in more varied forms. Relying on websites is insufficient – and the information there is, in any case, only as good as those who provide it (as for all information systems). MGIVE research showed that UK websites are often inferior to those available in other countries (usually because of lack of investment).

Multilingual support is, of course, an integral part of the training of public and emergency services with security and safety a high priority. “The police, health, emergency services and local authorities in London and across the UK have a long track record in providing language support services to non-English, and these services will be a high priority” (Collis, 2007).

Nonetheless, language provision can always be done better and with a better understanding of needs and expectations – not what ‘we’ think that people need, but what ‘they’ know that they need.

8. THE LANGUAGE DEPARTMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCES

Further Recommendations: Go Global; Tourism and Leisure; Way Finding

Following participation in the 'Museums and Galleries and the International Visitor Experience' (MGIVE; see details in chapter 7 above) research conducted with the involvement of all the large London museums and galleries, the National Gallery in particular has identified the provision of high-quality, culturally-informed and audience-targeted information as a priority area for development, not only in the current climate of the increasingly competitive global cultural tourism market, but also in the context of preparation for, delivery of and legacy succeeding the 2012 Olympics. This also looks forward to the period around the Games for which many of London's museums and galleries are planning special Olympics-related exhibitions. The National Gallery has subsequently implemented various changes to its language policy, for example:

- Starting to map out audiences and their needs based on actual usage of (limited) information and interpretative material available;
- Creating information vaults for each of its target groups; analysing patterns of usage throughout the year;
- Separating English print from foreign print, and internal lobbying to focus in international audiences in every area of the Gallery's work, from curatorial to educational, from marketing to front-of-house.

In effect, the AHRC-funded Workshops triggered a completely fresh way of thinking about strategy/communications planning for international audiences and brought the needs of those users to the forefront of planning. The Gallery is now working with the MGIVE team at the University of Westminster on developing plans for an ambitious new interpretative programme for its permanent collections, focusing on the needs and expectations of its international visitors.

Having accepted that while the quality of its general information guides for those visitors already exceeds that of other leading UK museums and galleries, the MGIVE research revealed a range of areas for radical improvement, development and expansion of language provision at the National Gallery.

The National Gallery is a high-profile example of an organisation that believes having an academic (as opposed to commercial) partner offers significant 'value-added' with a joint focus on sustainability and ensuring long-term and varied benefits of the resources developed.

That particular project serves, therefore, in addition to its specifically-focused research findings, to show one way in which Humanities-based research, in this case emerging originally from the discipline of Modern Languages, can engage in knowledge transfer activities in a mutually beneficial way for both academic and public/private communities. As the project developed it became clear that in terms of dissemination, its findings were better placed in Tourism Studies, Museum Studies and indeed Cultural Policy, thereby developing research in Modern Languages into new areas of collaboration, in addition to the perhaps more obvious alliances with Sociolinguistics and Applied Language work, for example.

There is no doubt that as far as work on the international visitor experience was concerned, particular mention should be made of the use of native speaker researchers and international focus groups interviewed in their respective countries (or in some cases on-site, but still in their native language, as shown above in the previous chapter). Much better quality, and different, feedback was gathered using the methods in the MGIVE project. HE language departments once again have effective resources to carry out and deliver small-scale knowledge-transfer research that can be developed into much larger projects.

Further Recommendations

Some areas that HE language departments could consider developing collaborative projects around are:

Go Global

- Development of multilingual websites for public and private sector organisations; more comparative work in a global context with both web-based and printed material would be beneficial – the short international survey conducted for the purposes of the second MGIVE workshop (chapter 7 above) showed that greater investment is needed by (for example) the UK museum and gallery sector to compete in a global market and to reach international expectations on what a website can offer the visitor;

Language and New Technologies

- The scale of communication challenges will require innovative technological solutions (Collis, 2007a); language departments should be working with their computer science, informatics, media, etc departments to look at the needs, opportunities and challenges of/for languages in the technological society (this area was the subject of a recent European call for bids – ‘Multilingualism in the Information Society’, European Commission, Information Society and Media DG; crucially, Beijing 2008 is being seen as the first “digital Games” and there has been a huge investment by the Chinese Government,

international broadcasters and global telecom giants to ensure that the communication and technology infrastructure meets the needs of the estimated 4.5 billion viewers – however they choose to access coverage; there will be serious analysis of the impact of media technology employed at Beijing to look at how it was used by the consumer, and to consider the extent to which those lessons can be carried forward to 2012 and other major sporting events);

Tourism and Leisure

- Working with the Tourism and Leisure sectors more broadly; the project highlighted above focused in the museum and gallery sector, but the research findings clearly have implications for and relevance to these broader sectors (high-profile international and sporting events such as City of Culture and the Olympic Games as in this report being just one example); the report from RLN London above on ‘Welcoming the World’ in the previous chapter makes a number of suggestions for this area;
- Contributions to cultural events (one example is the ‘Manchester Music Map’ for the 2002 Commonwealth Games where the guide was produced in several languages; see chapter 3 above); small-scale initiatives such as these developed in association with mega-events are critical if the momentum of an event is to be properly capitalised upon; Routes into Languages projects could be specifically directed at producing such materials, and involving school and university students working together. Diverse, small initiatives that are not necessarily sport-orientated provide a more sustainable basis for tourist development. The ‘Music Map’ is an example of a positive legacy left by the Commonwealth Games, despite being thematically unrelated to them. Event-themed, not event-led encapsulates (a combination of the two is the most productive).

Way Finding

- Contribution to ‘Wayfinding’ as an emerging (inter) discipline; this has already been highlighted earlier in this report; a small pilot project potentially leading to a large-scale collaborative HE project bringing together language departments with other disciplines would be needed to make an impact in this area.

The suggestions above are echoed in research done by the London RLN:

On Way Finding: “The challenge of moving vast numbers of people visiting for the first time – many with little knowledge of English – presents opportunities for linguists to work in partnership to create signs, maps and other graphic or audible methods to convey site locations and directions.

[...]

Multilingual touch screens, helpdesks, and information podcasts could all help provide information in different situations” (Collis, 2007).

The focus group research carried out for this project (see chapter 7) confirms these ideas, and see also the comments on the investment in technology at Beijing and in planning for London 2012.

On technology: “The scale of communication challenges presented by the Games will require innovative technological solutions. Translation tools and interactive solutions alongside specialist services such as versioning and digital sub-titling allow handling of enquiries and access to information for non-English speakers in settings where it is difficult to achieve direct access to a second language or assisted communication user. Examples of such solutions are cited below to illustrate the potential for such technology. Video sub-titling and dubbing are increasingly used by businesses and public services to provide information to foreign language speaking clients and users and people with visual or hearing impairment. In public areas multi-lingual audible information, such as ‘Talksign’, accessible by touch sensitive activation helps meet Disability Discrimination Act requirements as well as the needs of non-English speakers.

The LTC-Communicator is a multilingual eCommunication tool allowing non-English speaking users to interact with different service providers (Information provided by The Language Technology Centre Limited). For Olympic and Paralympic Games held in London, LTC Communicator could be integrated with an existing website to provide a helpdesk for tourists, organisers and athletes, requiring information in a wide range of languages. The user and the helpdesk team do not need to share a common language, as user requests are routed through the LTC-Communicator translation components, displayed to the helpdesk in English, whose solution is then routed back through the translation environment to appear in the user’s language.

Technology may also have a part to play in responding to the huge language and cultural training commitment for the Games. With broadband networks giving fast, reliable connectivity, live, collaborative teaching networks allow the tutor to create learning groups easily in a ‘virtual classroom’ bringing together students of a similar skill level, time availability and language need irrespective of their geographical location (Information provided by Sanako UK Ltd) the development of the e-learning domain will permit more flexible and spontaneous responses to training needs. (Collis, 2007a)

On Tourism more generally, as Alison Phipps writes:

“Modern linguists ignore tourism in their research, with one or two exceptions making forays into the study of travel writing, and tourism scholars ignore the main medium of tourism – not language, but languages [...] failing to analyse the social and intercultural dimensions of language and tourism experience, as it is encountered through everyday life, will not get us very far in terms of understanding the human importance of learning to engage with others, in

different contexts and in different languages” and later “in the wider contexts of the multilingual phenomenon of tourism [...] bothering with languages [becomes] an economic and political issue” (Phipps, 2007)

HE language departments should aim to make the 2012 Olympics exceed both the specific expectations of the Olympic Charter and the more general expectations of the global community as far as language provision is concerned. In so doing, it will provide a sustainable and lasting cultural, social and economic legacy.

Again as Alison Phipps reminds us: “The past decade has simultaneously seen an unprecedented growth in mobility across international borders and a decline in the learning of languages other than English in the mainstream of higher education across the globe” (Phipps, 2007)

And what if the home of English began to reverse the trend, or at the very least demonstrate an understanding of the value and importance of all languages, both the “rich-world languages” (those that are prominent: “in the supply and demand models that dominate intercultural and linguistic training in the tourism industry”, Phipps: 2007) and the perhaps more currently ‘under-valued’ languages in which the UK is so rich and which are also world languages?

The Olympics in fact maintains a hierarchy of languages. Languages are cut from the provision based on budgets and resources (“beginning with the minority languages, then you cut Arabic, Portuguese, then Russian, then Spanish...”), and on a misconception of ‘demand’ and how many countries/people use a certain language (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 13, March 2008). The hierarchy clearly remains linked to the perceived politico-historical standing of the nations concerned.

“Critical awareness and intercultural communication, as part of education for peace and global citizenship, can usher in toleration and mutual understanding” (Phipps, 2007)

As is pointed out by the Programme Manager of the International Relations and Services Division at BOCOG 2008, Sydney 2000 and Athens 2004, the official languages and the language of the host city:

“[are] the starting point [...] the contractual obligation, and then we have a few conventions regarding Games tradition, client expectations, and **the response to the fact that the Games are also in a dynamic environment; we are always four years later all the time, so we need to recognise that the environment may be different**” (Huc-Hepher, Respondent 13, March 2008; our emphasis).

The major lesson from Sydney 2000, for example, is that for long-term benefits, established and proven networks of collaborating providers who share knowledge, resources and expertise are essential, not short-term competitors. HE language departments, especially working with the achievements and ethos of the national Routes into Languages programme, must work hard to communicate this message to regional and national government, and to LOCOG. London also needs a high-profile Languages Champion – but one who understands and appreciates the high-quality education sector contribution, and not solely that of commercial language services if real legacy is an objective, as has been made clear throughout this report.

What is LOCOG's own current thinking on education, culture and languages within the overall planning and delivery of the Games?

An indication may be obtained from the LOCOG Official Website <http://www.london2012.com> (last accessed 26 June 2008):

“EDUCATION

The official London 2012 education programme launches on 17 September 2008. It will help us to achieve our promise to capture the imagination of young people around the world.

Who is our programme for?

Schools - using the Games in the classroom and wider school activities helping to make learning more relevant, interesting and fun.

Colleges and universities - **there will be special programmes to involve students. Some institutions might provide additional services to support the Games. [our emphasis]**

Communities and other learning providers - in the UK and around the world will be a part of it”.

The Official Website also links Education and Culture:

“CULTURE

The Olympic Games and Paralympic Games are not just about sport. They will also celebrate cultures, people and languages – in London, the UK and around the world.

Cultural activities and education will combine with sport for an unforgettable experience and lasting change. The Handover Ceremonies taking place in Beijing and celebrated across the UK will be an important part of these activities this year [our emphasis].

We have taken a deliberately broad and inclusive definition of culture,

representing the breadth of London's and the UK's expertise and world standing."

The Cultural Olympiad will begin 26-28 September 2008

Languages

Although reference is made to languages other than English on the Official LOCOG website, all is not what it may appear, as the following experience demonstrates:

"The official languages of the Olympic movement are English and French, and the majority of this site is available in French as well as English. Where French is not yet available, French users are taken to the English sections".

[this is in fact NOT the case (yet), as far as our research could ascertain only one section regarding Culture, as previously referred to, is currently available in French]

Pages relating specifically to Wales are also available in Welsh.

Documents published by the Olympic Delivery Authority Planning Decisions Team are available in pdf format on this site are available in the following alternative languages on request: "View the alternative languages in which we provide information (PDF, 14kB):_

Albanian

Arabic

Bengali

Bosnian/Croatian/Serbia

Chinese

French

Greek

Gujarati

Hindi

Kurdish

Lithuanian

Malayalam

Polish

Portuguese

Punjabi

Russian

Spanish

Somali

Tamil

Turkish

Vietnamese

Urdu"

However, only after going to the pdf link mentioned above:
<http://www.london2012.com/documents/oda-equality-and-diversity/oda-web-language-panel.pdf>, do we find 'For free translation phone 020 8430 6291', which suggests that this is a commercial translation service. Indeed, when the project researcher tried calling the number, she got through to "The Language Shop", was greeted in a fairly unwelcoming manner and asked:

"What is that you want exactly?" "We provide what we call a 'caption service' in all the popular languages that it could be translated to. It costs £50 per caption and then whatever it is you want translating, say a leaflet, would be provided free to the member of the public".

Therefore LOCOG is using this service on the off-chance that an unsuspecting foreign-language speaker is skilled enough in English to find the telephone number in the first place, and then able to make a local London call (in English) from wherever they are and then somehow send whatever it is they need translating to "The Language Shop" to be transferred into their language, providing, of course that theirs is one of the "popular" ones!

This was the only evidence found of language provision on the LOCOG website on 26 June 2008. There was no mention of an Official LOCOG Language Services team or Manager, and certainly no attempt made to abide by the Olympic Charter in producing everything in French, although this is acknowledged above (but to no avail, as yet).

"The main 'new' skills that will be required of those working at or around the 2012 Games will be: games knowledge; cultural awareness; disability awareness and language skills" (*Analysis of the skills needed to improve the visitor experience and sports presentation for the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games: Impact Research Skills for the Business Network* (June 2007).

Our research would lead us to question how much in-depth research has been done into 'improving the visitor experience'.

And a final observation, Toulouse has put in its bid for European Capital of Culture 2013 – and its official City of Culture website is already fully available in French, English and Spanish.....

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http://www.la84foundation.org/5va/reports_frmst.htm

2) Official Website of the **Olympic Movement**:

<http://www.olympic.org/uk/games/torino/>

3) Official Website of the London Organising Committee for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games (**LOCOG**): <http://www.london2012.com>

4) Official Website of the Beijing 2008 Olympics (**BOCOG**): www.beijing2008.cn/

5) Official Website of the **Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games**: <http://en.paralympic.beijing2008.cn/index.shtml>

6) Official website of the **Xinhua News Agency**: www.chinaview.cn

7) The Beijing Pre-Games **Training Guide**: http://images.beijing-2008.org/lib/olympic_sqxlzn/en/prologue.pdf

8) Official Website of the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (**VANOC**): www.vancouver2010.com

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14) Official Website of the **Birmingham 2007** European Athletics Indoor Championships: www.birminghamathletics2007.com

15) Official Website of the International Sailing Federation (**ISAF**): www.sailing.org

16) Official Website of **Paula Radcliffe**: <http://www.paularadcliffe.com>

17) Official Website of the **Wimbledon 2008** Championships: http://www.wimbledon.org/en_GB/index.html

18) Official **Liverpool 08** Capital of Culture website: <http://www.liverpool08.com/>

19) Official **VisitLiverpool** website: www.visitliverpool.com

20) Official Website of the **City of Liverpool**: www.liverpool.gov.uk

21) Official **Luxembourg 2007** Capital of Culture website: www.luxembourg2007.org

22) Official Website for **Cork 2005** European Capital of Culture: <http://www.cork2005.ie>

23) Official Website of **Algiers Capital of Arab Culture 2007**: www.cultureldjazair2007.com

24) Official **VisitBritain** Website: <http://www.visitbritain.com/> (an impressive webpage with over 50 national languages and flags, which, once the

appropriate one is chosen, leads you onto the corresponding site, in this case:
<http://www.visitbritain.co.uk/>

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<http://www.bournemouth.gov.uk>

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<http://www.cilt.org.uk/index.htm>

27) Official Website of the Regional Language Network (**RLN**) London:
www.rln-london.com

28) England's Official **Volunteer Development Agency**:
www.volunteering.org.uk

29) International network for the world's **City Mayors**: www.citymayors.com

30) Official Website of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (**OIF**): <http://www.francophonie.org/>

31) Official Website of the Délégation générale à la langue française et aux langues de France (**DGLF**) : www.culture.gov.fr/culture/dglf/

32) **French** language website: www.languefrancaise.net

33) **Commission on integration and cohesion** – our shared future:
www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/Our_final_report.aspx

34) **National Curriculum** for England and Wales – citizenship education:
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Interviews:**All conducted by Saskia Huc-Hepher (2008)**

Respondent 1: Director of the Département de Français Langue Etrangère (DEFLE) de L'Université de Michel de Montaigne – Bordeaux 3 (February 2008)

Respondent 2: Director of Human Resources and Official Languages at the Vancouver Organising Committee (VANOC) for 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (February 2008)

Respondent 3: Head of Liverpool 08 European Capital of Culture/08 Welcome Team (February 2008)

Respondent 4: Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008 Language Specialist Volunteer and Torch Bearer (February 2008)

Respondent 5: Responsable Pédagogique at the Alliance Française Beijing (March 2008)

Respondent 6: Representative of the Luxembourg Capital of Culture 2007 Welcome Team (March 2008)

Respondent 7: Former Chair of Modern Languages at Georgia State University and Volunteer German Interpreter for Wrestling and Ping-Pong Events at Atlanta 1996 (March 2008)

Respondent 8: Member of the Language Services Management Team at Atlanta 1996 and Salt Lake City (Winter) 2002 and 'loaned employee' at Sydney 2000 for three months during that time; Consultant for Turin (Winter) 2006 and Vancouver (Winter) 2010 (March 2008)

Respondent 9: Head of Promoting the French Language at the French Institute in Athens/Responsible for French Cooperation in Higher Education at the Ministry of Culture for Athens 2004; now Rector at the Académie de Toulouse and Délégué Académique aux Relations Européennes, Internationales et à la Coopération in Toulouse (March 2008)

Respondent 10: Representative at the Welcome Desk at Luxembourg Capital of Culture 2007 (March 2008)

Respondent 11: Representative from the Manchester Commonwealth Games 2002 Legacy Team (March 2008)

Respondent 12: Arts Officer for Cork City Council and Board of Directors, Cork European City of Culture 2005 (March 2008)

Respondent 13: Programme Manager of the International Relations and Services Division at Sydney 2000; Athens 2004; Beijing 2008 (March 2008)

10. APPENDICES

(a) Interview Topic Guide

All interviews were carried out by the Project Researcher, Saskia Huc-Hepher, in February and March 2008. A full list of respondents is contained in the References and Sources section (9). These were semi-structured interviews.

1. Could you describe the language services provided at this major international event and your involvement in them?
2. Were you responsible for delivering training to language volunteers / local players?
3. If so, could you describe the selection and recruitment process to me?
4. What did the language training consist of and did you contribute to devising material?
5. What was the profile of the typical language volunteer?
6. Were there any languages under/over-represented at this event?
7. Did you collaborate with any other organisations or institutions, either at home or abroad, in the implementation of the language policy?
8. Can you remember what the general reaction was from foreign-language speakers at this event?
9. Are there any lessons that can be learnt from your experience?
10. How can you sum up the long-term effects of the language policy used at your event?

(b) International Focus Groups Topic Guide

All focus groups were carried out by and with native speakers in the Arab Gulf (Bahrain), China, France, Germany, Russia, Spain between December 2007 and June 2008. The focus groups were of 'accidental' composition and also used semi-structured questioning methods.

Topics and Questions for Focus Group (International events)

1. Previous experiences of large events

- Have you ever been to a large event?
- What was your experience?
- What was good / positive?
- What was negative / disappointing?

2. A ticket to the London Olympics –

- How would you prepare before to go there? (Internet? Books? Leaflets? None?)
- Expectations at arrival:
- Travel information – what information would you expect?
- Which format:
- Leaflets? On screen? Interactive? Information desk?

3. Staying in London

- Public Transport:
- Could you make sense of the current information available? (showing maps of underground, buses etc., ticketing system)

4. Expectations about language support

Would you expect to have information available in your language? If yes, where? -

- At Airport?
- Public Transport?
- Hotel?
- At Venues?

If yes, how would you expect this?

- In written form?
- Online? Interactive?

- Information desk?
- People able to speak the language?

5. Venues and Organisations

Venues:

- What would you expect?
- Information available? (in different languages?)
- Announcements (in different languages?)
- Food and drinks
- Payment

Organisation:

- Would you expect to have free events around the games?
 - Large screens?
 - A central point/venue for this?
-