

Institution: University of Oxford		
Unit of Assessment: 26A Modern Languages		
Title of case study: Valuing Creativity in Multilingualism, Translation and Language Learning		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: Jan 2007–May 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Katrin Kohl	Professor of German Literature	Oct 1993–present
Dennis Duncan	Postdoctoral Research Assistant	Oct 2014–Sept 2017
Stephen Harrison	Professor of Latin Literature	Oct 1987–present
Matthew Reynolds	Professor of English & Comparative Criticism	Oct 1997–present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: Aug 2013–July 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Creative Multilingualism (CML; 2016–2020) was an interdisciplinary AHRC-funded programme researching the nexus between creativity and multilingualism, with Kohl as Principal Investigator. CML events, including the exhibition <i>Babel: Adventures in Translation</i> (over 35,000 visitors), shaped public attitudes towards the value of languages and their interaction with creativity and enabled children (bilingual and monolingual) to engage with multilingualisms in new and empowering ways. Teacher workshops (213 participants) influenced participants' views on the usefulness of creativity in language learning and increased their confidence in using creative techniques to motivate pupils. Kohl represented HE views in a campaign for languages exam reform at GCSE and A Level, which generated a policy review process with the DfE (The Department for Education) and Ofqual (The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation).</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Kohl has long-standing expertise in the cognitive and communicative power of metaphor and the creative use of language in everyday discourse, rhetoric, poetics and literature. Monographs (e.g. [R2]) and articles (e.g. [R3] and chapter 1 of [R1]) investigate metaphor as a creative process that mediates holistically between cognition, language and culture, facilitating identity formation and cultural transfer across languages and art forms, and shaping cultural impact. Kohl's research on metaphor as a creative principle built into language formed the basis of her development of 'Creative Multilingualism' as a 'brand' concept in collaboration with colleagues. This shaped a four-year interdisciplinary research programme funded by the AHRC's Open World Research Initiative (2016–2020). Projects drawing on performance and the creative potential of community languages demonstrated the value of linguistic diversity (see Kohl's chapters 1 and 10 of [R1] and Impact Claim 2).</p> <p><i>Creative Multilingualism: A Manifesto</i> (2020) [R1], a collaborative volume co-authored by CML researchers at Birmingham City University, University of Reading and University of London, and for which Kohl is lead editor, constitutes the representative output of Creative Multilingualism. It establishes the key concept as a fundamental principle to elucidate the interaction between creativity and linguistic diversity from cognition through to language use in the public domain, including translation, language teaching and language learning. The accessible presentation of the research and open-access publication format of the volume are designed for maximum reach in order to shape and inform public attitudes towards the value of linguistic diversity, translation and language learning, and to raise awareness of their connection with creativity.</p> <p>Kohl's co-curation of the exhibition and co-authorship of the accessibly designed exhibition book, with Duncan, Harrison and Reynolds, built on her research on translation as a creative process [R5]. The metaphorical framing of the exhibition topic in terms of 'adventures' drew on research</p>		

insights concerning the power of metaphor in the language of criticism [R4] to make the concept of translation accessible, to open up new ways of thinking about it and to surprise visitors and readers with unexpected discoveries.

Two of Kohl's essays in [R6] informed the exhibition. The essay on 'Negotiating Multilingual Britain' articulated the research basis for a display case on translation in texts ranging from medieval national treasures through to contemporary everyday documentation. The essay 'Traversing Realms of Fantasy' provided the academic underpinning for a display case exploring the role of translation in experimental poetry and worldwide bestsellers such as Grimms' fairy tales and *Harry Potter*.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- R1.** [Edited Book] Kohl, K. lead editor of 7, including Reynolds, M. and 2 further Oxford affiliates. (May 2020) *Creative Multilingualism: A Manifesto*. Cambridge: Open Book Publishers [peer reviewed] DOI: <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0206>
- R2.** [Authored Book] Kohl, K. (2007) *Poetologische Metaphern. Formen und Funktionen in der deutschen Literatur*. Berlin, New York: de Gruyter. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110920420>
- R3.** [Chapter] Kohl, K. (2010) 'The Metaphor of Cultural Impact and the Cultural Impact of Metaphor', in *Cultural Impact in the German Context. Studies in Transmission, Reception, and Influence*, Rebecca Braun and Lyn Marven (eds.). Rochester/NY: Boydell 7 Brewer, pp. 19–35. DOI: [10.7722/j.ctt14brqr9.4](https://doi.org/10.7722/j.ctt14brqr9.4)
- R4.** [Chapter, available on request] Kohl, K. (2007) 'Conversation, Sport or Hatchet Job? Criticism and the Power of Metaphor', in *In(ter)discipline: New Languages for Criticism*, Gillian Beer, Malcolm Bowie and Beate Perrey (eds.). Oxford: Legenda, pp. 83–93. ISBN: 9781905981137.
- R5.** [Chapter, available on request] Kohl, K. (2010) 'Michael Hamburger as a Translator of German Poetry', in *From Charlottenburg to Middleton. Michael Hamburger (1924–2007): Poet, Translator, Critic*, Joyce Crick et al. (eds.). Munich: IUDICIUM, pp. 41–61. ISBN: 978-3862050703.
- R6.** [Authored Book, available on request] Duncan, D., Harrison, S., Kohl, K., Reynolds, M. (2019) *Babel: Adventures in Translation*. Oxford: Bodleian Library. ISBN: 9781851245093.

Grants and awards

Kohl, K (PI) AHRC Open World Research Initiative (OWRI) award 'Creative Multilingualism', 1 July 2016–30 June 2020; GBP3,230,978. Grant number AH/N004701/1.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Shaped and informed public attitudes towards the value of linguistic diversity and the ubiquity of translation as a creative process

Babel: Adventures in Translation was one of over 20 events CML organized to showcase the prevalence of translation and linguistic diversity, its importance for our everyday lives, and relationship with creativity. The exhibition, co-curated by Kohl, Duncan, Harrison, and Reynolds with Bodleian Libraries (2019, 85 exhibits), attracted 35,528 visitors. Display cases drew on Kohl's research on 'Multilingual Britain' (revealing translation at work from iconic medieval masterpieces to everyday documentation, like UK health leaflets) and on fantasy literature (highlighting the role of translation in linguistically experimental poetry – Tolkien, Carroll – and the global dissemination of popular favourites including Grimms' tales and *Harry Potter*). The *Times Literary Supplement* highlighted how the exhibition 'rescues translation from its worthy perch by revealing it at work everywhere' [S1].

Visitors, some with little or no prior knowledge, reported that it informed their views in 'thought-provoking' ways [S2] and stimulated insights: 'the Harry Potter section [...] involved my love of

reading [...] but also gave an insight to the translation that was involved' [S2ii, p. 16]. The exhibition facilitated discoveries for students and language professionals: 'I do A level English – it's all so interesting and will help with my course work!' [S2iii, pg. 34]; 'As a translator [...] I thoroughly enjoyed this exhibition! Both interesting and educational' [S2i, pg. 5]; 'As a speech and language therapist I've found it fascinating thinking about different languages and their similarities' [S2i, pg. 5]; 'As a French teacher I use languages every day but [...] I had forgotten how to focus on creativity' [S2iv, pg. 46].

Influenced teacher and student views on the usefulness of creativity in language learning and the value of foreign and community languages

As part of Creative Multilingualism, the Multilingual Performance Project (MPP), promoted taught and community languages by supporting schools in incorporating multilingual performance and drama activities into teaching, and helped establish relationships between schools and local theatres. MPP reached approximately 15,600 students in 67 primary and secondary schools in England, Wales, France, Ireland and Spain [S3, p. 11]. 26 teacher workshops resulted in 100% of the 213 participants feeling more confident using drama techniques in the languages classroom [S3, p. 16]. All 213 reported gaining greater confidence in using other languages [S3, p. 43]. Teachers noted a bottom set growing 'very motivate[d]' and 'very attentive to accuracy' [S3, p. 43]. Many passed on their learning: 'I was able to share my experience with teaching colleagues at my schools, [...] at ALL Bicester Primary hub [...] and the Southern Primary Languages Show 2019' [S3, p. 17].

The CML-commissioned multilingual song 'We Are Children of the World' (all materials freely available online; 613 downloads) empowered speakers of marginalized languages. 500 primary school children performed in Oxford's Sheldonian Theatre. Teachers reported that 'children began talking more about the languages that they speak at home and how they sound compared to each other's languages' and 'wanted to learn more about [...] what languages were spoken in our school. They researched the countries and languages, and wanted to learn greetings' [S3, p. 33].

In CML's *World's Stage* film project, 81 West Midlands students performed in their native and taught languages. 80% said it 'had made them think [...] community languages were more valuable to the UK, with 90% now thinking that they were very important' [S3, p. 33]. A headteacher commented: 'dual language speakers [...] blossomed [...]' and as a result they appointed somebody responsible for English as an Additional Language [S3, p. 33].

Identified barriers to motivation in Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) in schools, shaped public debate by mobilising Higher Education (HE) support, and forged networks across sectors to generate policy review

Kohl has led a Higher Education drive for MFL exam reform since 2012, campaigning for grading adjustment by forging stakeholder alliances across higher and secondary education. Her research on the crucial role of creativity in all aspects of language [e.g. R1, R4] underpins the long-standing concern to promote creativity as a motivating force in language teaching and learning. Impact of Kohl's research and campaigning on public debate [R1] contributed to the 2020 recommendation by the British Academy, AHRC, ASCL, British Council and UUK – highlighted in TES – that Ofqual should 'adjust grade boundaries for language qualifications so that they are not unduly severe' [S10, p. 10].

Dialogue with teachers in the Oxford German Network established by Kohl in 2012 revealed the barrier that assessment places on learners' ability to develop creative use of foreign languages, the confidence born of independent creativity, and the motivation to continue learning. Identifying entrenched excessive exam difficulty and the demotivating effect of severe grading as barriers for language take-up and progression, Kohl generated growing support from HE and subject associations for reform (while 80 academics from 18 universities signed an open letter to Ofqual in October 2013, a further open letter by Kohl in May 2019 was signed by 152 academics from 36 universities; both were complemented by *Guardian* features [S4, S5]). Ofqual's promise of 'more engagement with the MFL community' [S6] resulted in Kohl being invited to its meetings.

A 2017 letter to Ofqual showed that ‘the HE languages community is unequivocal in its support for the subject associations representing teachers and the school leadership associations, and “urge Ofqual to accept that there is now sufficient evidence to demonstrate the severity of grading in MFL ... and that the steps necessary to rectify this anomaly need to be implemented with urgency”’ [S7.ii]. Kohl’s interventions are shown to ‘demonstrate widespread support for an adjustment to grading standards’ [S7, p. 66], and were quoted in subsequent Ofqual policy documentation (November 2018) as representative.

Kohl participated in DfE-initiated MFL exam reviews (ALCAB, 2014; MFL GCSE Pedagogy, 2016). Following a May 2019 submission [S8], she led an HE team at a meeting with the Chief Regulator and met the Schools Minister in July 2019. In November 2019, six years after Kohl’s initial intervention, Ofqual announced an adjustment to GCSE French and German grading [S9]. The DfE simultaneously set up an MFL GCSE content review, appointing Kohl to the panel.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- S1. Arts Review from the *Times Literary Supplement* on the impact of the exhibition (‘Babilfrenzo’), 12 April 2019. <https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/babilfrenzo/>
- S2. Babel: Adventures in Translation Exhibition Feedback
 - i) Exhibition report: Babel (25 November 2019)
 - ii) Evaluation report by University of Oxford GLAM (Gardens, Libraries and Museums) PER Evaluation Officer. ‘Babel: Adventures in Translation’
 - iii) Comments Book from Bodleian Libraries: Babel – 22 May–2 June 2019 (29 May 2019)
 - iv) Library Late event: Babel – Postcard feedback from attendees (8 March 2019)
- S3. Report: Creative Multilingualism (June 2020), ‘Creativity with Languages in Schools’. <https://university-council-modern-languages.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Creativity-with-Languages-in-Schools-Report-FINAL-2MB.pdf> (Creative Multilingualism is a research programme led by the University of Oxford and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council as part of the Open World Research Initiative)
- S4. Press Coverage by *The Guardian*, October 2013
 - i) Open letter by Kohl, K. (7 October 2013), ‘Modern Language exam grades translate into poor results’, *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2013/oct/07/language-exams-grades-translate-results> Accessed 30 July 2020.
 - ii) Newspaper report: Bawden, A. (8 October 2013), ‘Modern languages: degree courses in freefall’, *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2013/oct/08/modern-foreign-language-degrees-axed> Accessed 30 July 2020.
- S5. Press Coverage by *The Guardian*, May 2019
 - i) Open letter by Kohl, K. (11 May 2019), ‘Ofqual is killing off modern foreign language education’ *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/may/11/ofqual-is-killing-off-modern-foreign-language-education> Accessed 30 July 2020.
 - ii) Newspaper report: Bawden, A. (11 May 2019), ‘Modern language teaching “under threat from tough exams”: Academics say regulator is “killing” subjects as GCSEs and A-levels are marked too harshly,’ *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/may/11/modern-language-teaching-under-threat-from-tough-exams> Accessed 30 July 2020.
- S6. Response from Ofqual’s Acting Director of Research and Evaluation (9 October 2013), ‘Arresting the UK’s Decline in Language Learning’, *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2013/oct/09/arresting-uk-decline-language-learning> Accessed 30 July 2020.
- S7. Examination Evidence, 2017-2018
 - i) Letter from Kohl, K., and Mentchen, S. (24 July 2017) to Ofqual’s Director of Strategic Relationships for General Qualifications on A level examinations and grading in Modern Foreign Languages.
 - ii) Open letter by Carruthers, J., Kohl, K. et al. (5 Dec 2017) to Ofqual’s Chief Regulator from Higher Education modern language subject associations <http://www.ags.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Letter-to-Ofqual.pdf> Accessed 30 July 2020, both quoted in:

iii) Black, Beth et al. (November 2018), 'Technical Report: Inter-subject Comparability – The evidence pertaining to the claim of grading severity in A level French, German and Spanish and the impact of statistical alignment of standards on outcomes' (Ofqual 18/6450/2), pp. 63f. and 66f.,
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/757840/Inter_subject_comparability_-_technical_report_MFL.pdf Accessed 30 July 2020.

S8. Department of Education-initiated MFL exam reviews

- i) Letter from Kohl, K. (7 May 2019) to Ofqual's Chief Regulator, with submissions on severe grading and exam difficulty
- ii) Creative Multilingualism (2016–2020), 'Languages in the UK: "Severe" and/or "Unreliable" Grading' <https://www.creativeml.ox.ac.uk/languages-uk> Accessed 30 July 2020, responding especially to:
- iii) Ofqual (November 2018), 'Policy Decision: Inter-subject comparability in A level sciences and modern foreign languages. Examining the claim that these subjects are more severely graded than other A levels' (Ofqual/18/6450/1)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/757841/ISC_Decision_Document_20.11.18.pdf

S9. Ofqual Analysis and Decisions Document (November 2019), 'Grading Standards in GCSE French, German and Spanish: Evaluating the evidence for an adjustment to grading standards in GCSE French, German and Spanish on the basis of inter-subject comparability' (Ofqual 19/6557/1),
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/844471/Grading_standards_in_GCSE_French_German_and_Spanish_-_FINAL65571.pdf Accessed 30 July 2020.

S10. British Academy et al. proposals

- i) British Academy, AHRC, ASCL, British Council, UUK (July 2020), 'Towards a national languages strategy: Education and Skills',
https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/2597/Towards-a-national-languages-strategy-July-2020_R0FHmzB.pdf Accessed 30 July 2020, reported by:
- ii) TES Reporter (8 July 2020), 'Adjust A-level language grades to level playing field', *TES*,
<https://www.tes.com/news/adjust-level-language-grades-level-playing-field>.

S11. Corroborator 1: Former Director of the Multilingual Performance Project, who collected teachers' responses for S3 and may be contacted to corroborate feedback.