



THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES IN BRIDGING RESEARCH ON MULTILINGUALISM AND SOCIETY

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Bi/multilingualism over the lifespan



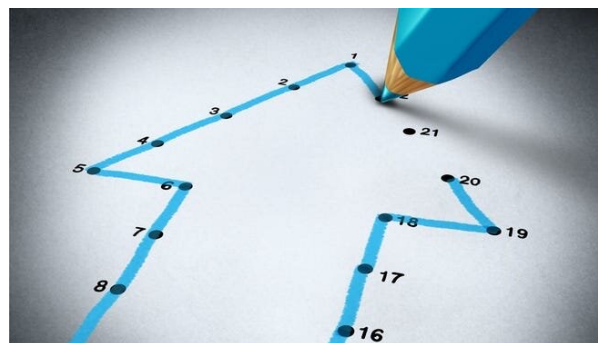
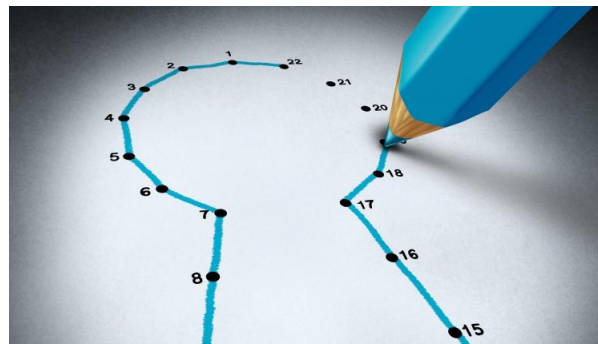


Joining the dots

... among different subfields of research on language, language learning, and bilingualism, and different populations

... between research and society

**MORE INFORMATION =
BETTER DECISIONS**





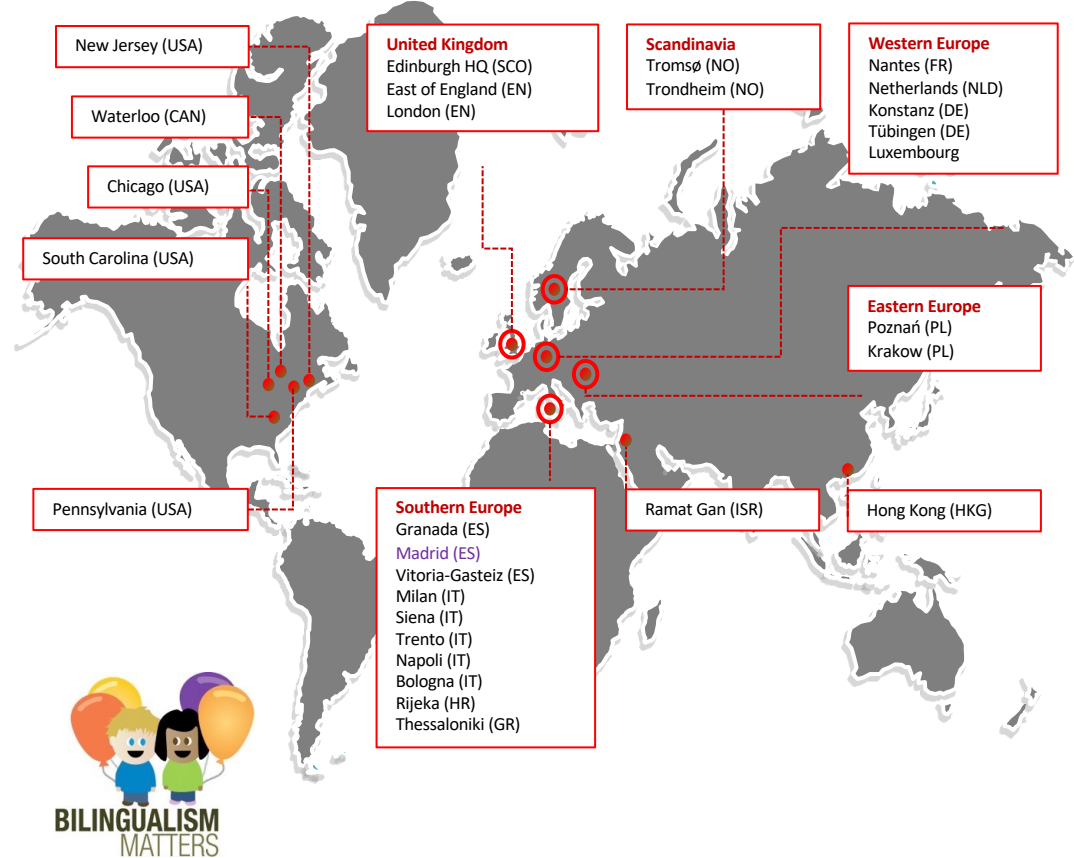
Bilingualism Matters



- Founded in October 2008
- A Centre of Excellence at the University of Edinburgh in October 2014
- Bilingualism Matters spins out of the UoE in August 2021 as a non-profit social enterprise focusing on network activities; official launch: 30 March 2022

Bilingualism Matters: the international network

30 BM branches in the UK
(3), Europe (19), US (4),
Canada (1), the Middle
East (1), China (1),
Australia (1)



Bilingualism Matters: most recent branch (22 November 2022)



[RESOURCES](#) [FIND A BRANCH](#) [MEMBER LOGIN](#) [ABOUT US](#) ↓



Bologna



KEEP IN TOUCH

Bilingualism Matters@Bologna, within the School of Education Studies 'Giovanni Maria Bertin' of the Alma Mater University, is a centre for Public Engagement whose members are committed to sharing the latest research on bilingualism with the local community, through the organisation of information and training events aimed at educators, teachers, students, families and care professionals; the publication and dissemination of information material in several languages; and the active participation of its members in research-training-action projects on bilingualism and language learning.



International network: future members

Soon opening:

Monash University, Australia (4 April)

University of California@Irvine, US
(22 April)

Università di Urbino, Italy (9 May)

Expressions of interest from:

- University of British Columbia
- University of Florida
- University of Texas, El Paso
- Carinthia University, Austria
- Western Sydney University, Australia
- University of Arizona
- Stellenbosch University, South Africa
- Asociación Chilena de Neuroaprendizaje
- and others



BM members

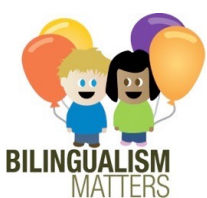
Branch members

Individual members

- staff and students of existing branches
- staff and students of unaffiliated universities
- professionals
- community members
- honorary members

Organisational members

- private sector
- non profit and for profit



Bilingualism Matters Board of Directors



Prof Antonella Sorace
BM Founding Director



Dr Katarzyna Przybycien
BM Director / CEO



Prof Tanja Rinker
BM Director



Abril Jiménez
BM@ Rutgers

Frances Blanchette
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Katarzyna Przybycień
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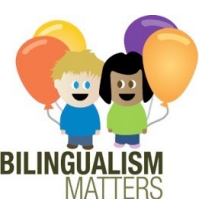
Tanja Rinker BM@
Tübingen



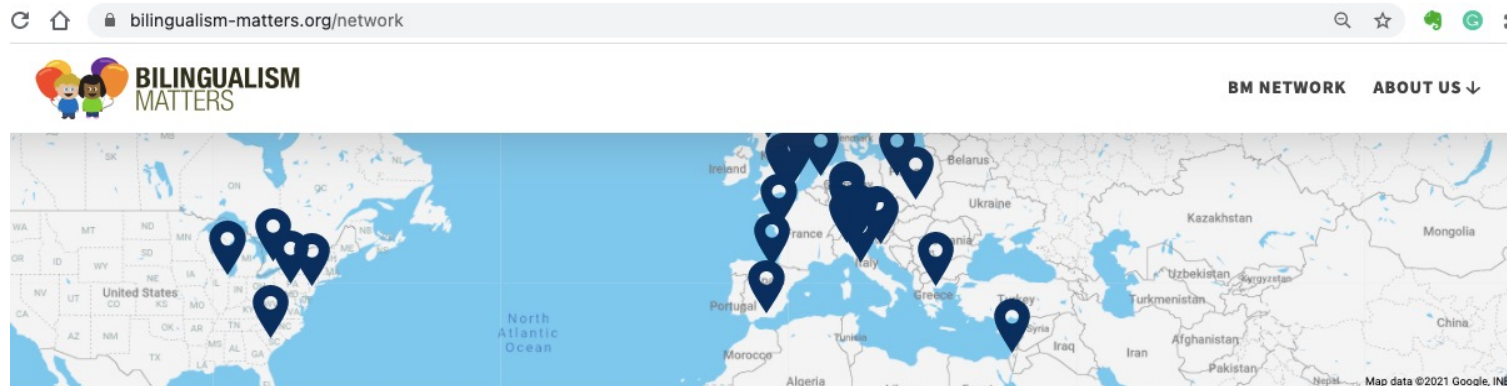
Maaike Verrips BM@NL



Advisory
BOARD
MEMBERS
2020-2023



Bilingualism Matters external website



European branches



Edinburgh



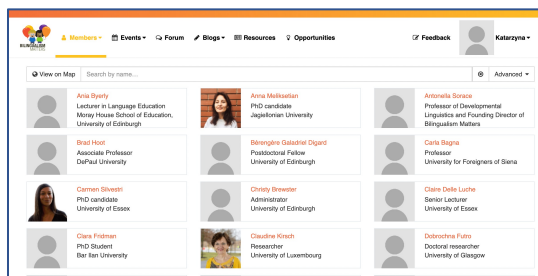
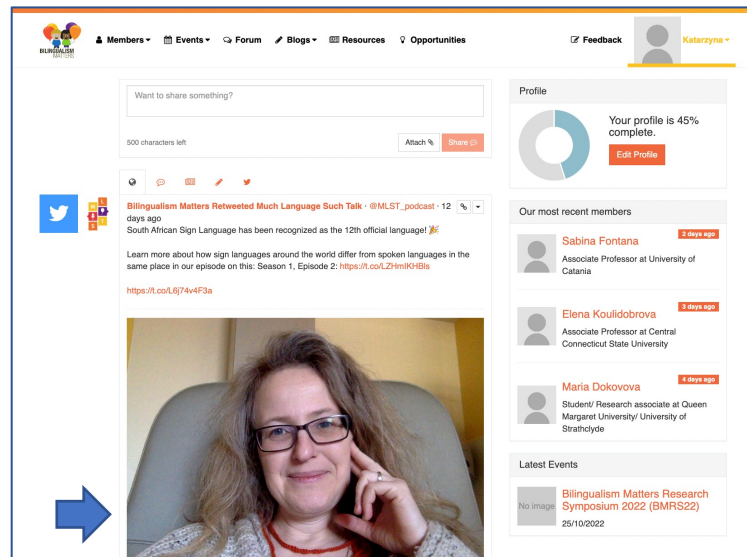
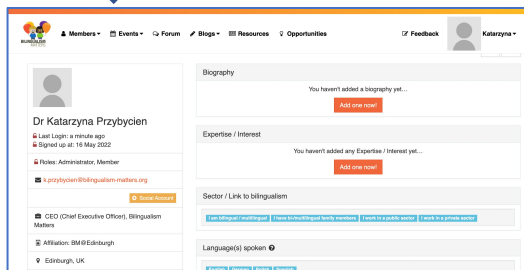
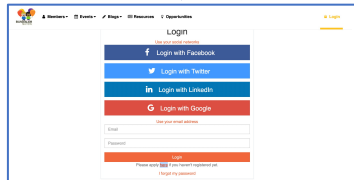
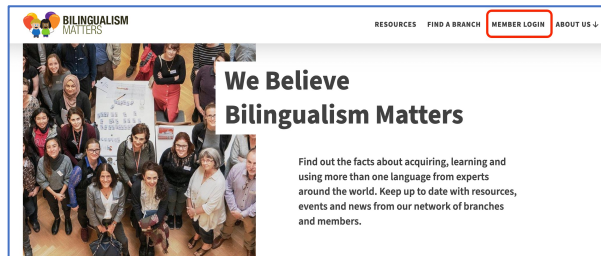
Essex

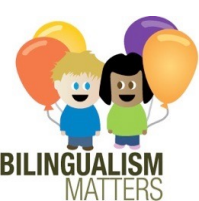


Basque Country



Bilingualism Matter community: member login





Memorandum of agreement & code values

Bilingualism Matters International Network Memorandum of Understanding

Platform

§ 1 Background

Bilingualism Matters International Network stemming out of the Bilingualism Matters (BM) Research and Information Centre at the University of Edinburgh. BM founded by Professor Antonella Sorace in 2008 aims to bridge the gap between research and different sectors of society, enabling people to make informed professional or personal decisions on bilingualism and language learning that are based on facts rather than prejudices, misconceptions, or misinterpretation of current research findings. The objectives of BM are outlined in the separate document (attach).

The Memorandum of Understanding defines the scope of collaboration and relationship between BM branches within the network.

§ 2 Difference between BM Branches and Members of BM International Network

BM Branches sign a legal contract with BM@Edinburgh (i.e. their organisation with the University of Edinburgh).

Members of BM International Network sign this Memorandum of Agreement in addition to the contract with BM@Edinburgh.

In order to become a member of BM International Network, an organisation needs to become a branch of BM first.

§3 Members' Benefits

- Membership in a global community of researchers and practitioners dedicated to investigating and promoting bilingualism
- Knowledge exchange within the network
- Access to resources developed across the network
- Joint funding applications
- Access to a mature network of organisations enabling effective global dissemination of local research results
- Shared information website on bilingualism featuring branches, researchers and research results
- Shared promotional materials for the network (leaflets)
- Cross network invitations to lectures and placements
- Access to network funding for attendance of network meetings

- Recognition that all types of bilingualism in all languages are equally valuable
- Public engagement is a vital part of branches work
- Public engagement is based on solid research results and feeds back into better research
- Collaboration
- Multidisciplinary



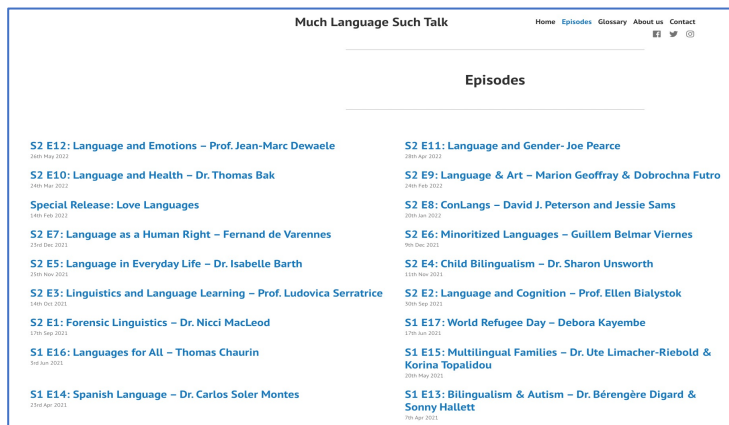
Bilingualism Matter community: students

New students' community

Student-led projects

Training

Student representatives on
the Advisory Board



MUCH LANGUAGE
SUCH TALK





Bilingualism Matters Network: collective events

ANNUAL events

- BM Research Symposium (2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022)
- Knowledge Exchange Event (next one: 24 May 2023)
- AGM

All year round

- Workshops & events online





BMRS 2022

#BMRS2022



BILINGUALISM MATTERS RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

25 - 26 October 2022

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME



BILINGUALISM
MATTERS



From research to the community, and back again



More insightful cross-disciplinary research



The experience of public engagement gives

- a better understanding of the contexts of research questions and more research insights
- a better ability to communicate across disciplinary boundaries



Research



REGIONE AUTÒNOMA DE SARDIGNA
REGIONE AUTONOMA DELLA SARDEGNA



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



Canada



EU-funded projects





Bilingualism Matters Network: current collaborative projects



Teacher
Education
About
Multilingualism



Bilingualism Matters in
the Waterloo Region and
Canada



Student training and experience

- Students and visitors volunteer to assist with particular BM activities or projects.
- Training and opportunities to talk to the general public and engage in community projects.
- This experience is increasingly valued by employers.





Partnerships and collaborations in the UK





Wider partnerships and collaborations



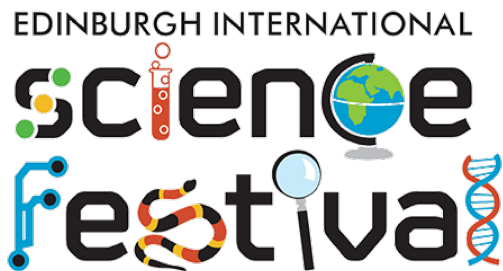
CoNGO • Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations • Conférence des ONG ayant des Relations Consultatives avec les Nations Unies • مؤتمر المنظمات غير الحكومية ذات العلاقة الاستشارية مع الأمم المتحدة • Конференция неправительственных организаций, имеющих консультативный статус при Организации Объединенных Наций • Conferencia de Organizaciones No Gubernamentales en Relación Consultiva con las Naciones Unidas • 与联合国协商关系的非政府组织会议

DEFINING THE PRESENT
SHAPING THE FUTURE





National and international science festivals and societies

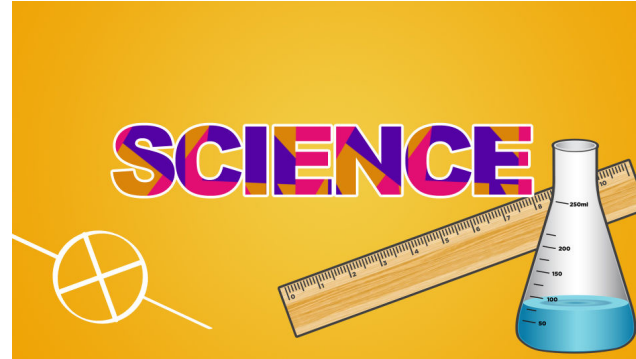


EXPLORATHON '18
ONE NIGHT • UNLIMITED DISCOVERY





Bilingualism Matters: our mission

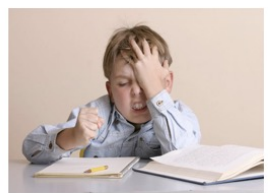


Old myths

Confusion



Problems at school



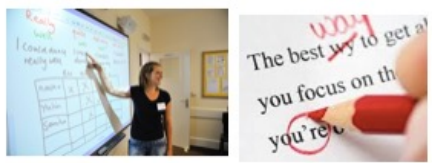
'Useful' and 'not useful' languages



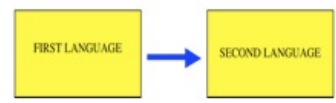
- TOO LATE TO LEARN A LANGUAGE WELL



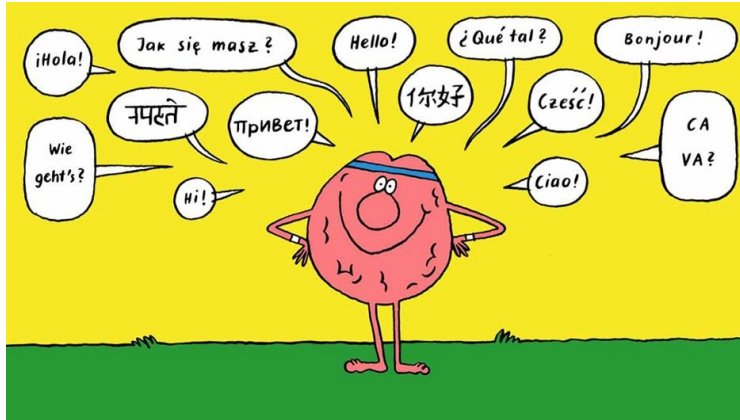
- RULES AND CORRECTION AS ONLY WAY TO LEARN



- L1 EFFECTS ON THE L2 (BUT NO L2 EFFECT ON THE L1)



Many possible (linguistic, cognitive, social) effects





It doesn't matter *which* languages

- It's the fact of having more than one language that matters, regardless of modality.



- **THERE ARE NO 'MORE USEFUL' OR 'LESS USEFUL' LANGUAGES FROM THIS POINT OF VIEW!**



New myths

**BILINGUAL CHILDREN ARE
GENIUSES!**



**BILINGUALS DON'T GET
ALZHEIMER'S!**





Are effects automatic?

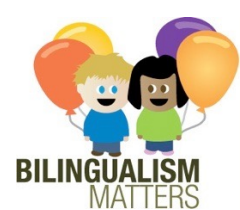
These benefits are not always found in all bilinguals because the type of **bilingual experience** plays a role: language distance, patterns of use, exposure to variation, attitudes, individual differences....



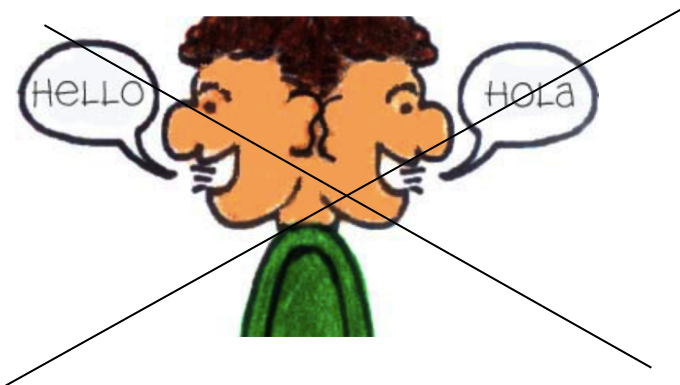
Less
Bilingual



More
bilingual



“Bilingual” → NOT the sum of two monolinguals



However, many educational and diagnostic tests are still based on monolingual norms

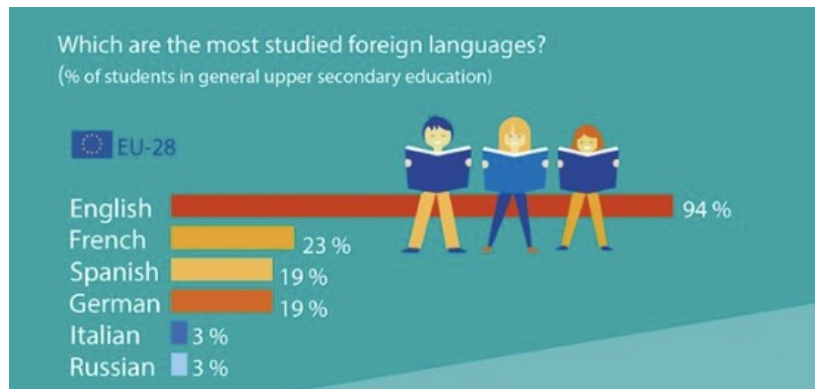
- Risk of over/under-diagnosis: some typical delays and mistakes in bilingual children may look like speech impairments but in most cases are not.



Challenges in an English-dominant world

Out of the world's approximately [7.5 billion](#) inhabitants, 1.5 billion speak English (20% of the Earth's population)

About [360 million](#) people speak English as their first language.



English is by far the [most commonly studied](#) foreign language in the world, followed by French at a distant second.

“Privileged monolingualism” in the Anglosphere

- The UK had the worst language skills of all countries in the EU.
- Lack of language skills **costs the UK economy £48 billion a year.**

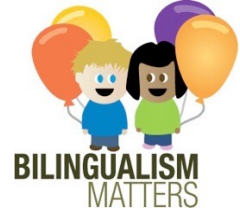


Brexit Briefing **Brexit**

[+ Add to myFT](#)

Putting up Brexit language barriers

Monolingual Britons are disadvantaged if they cannot communicate effectively abroad



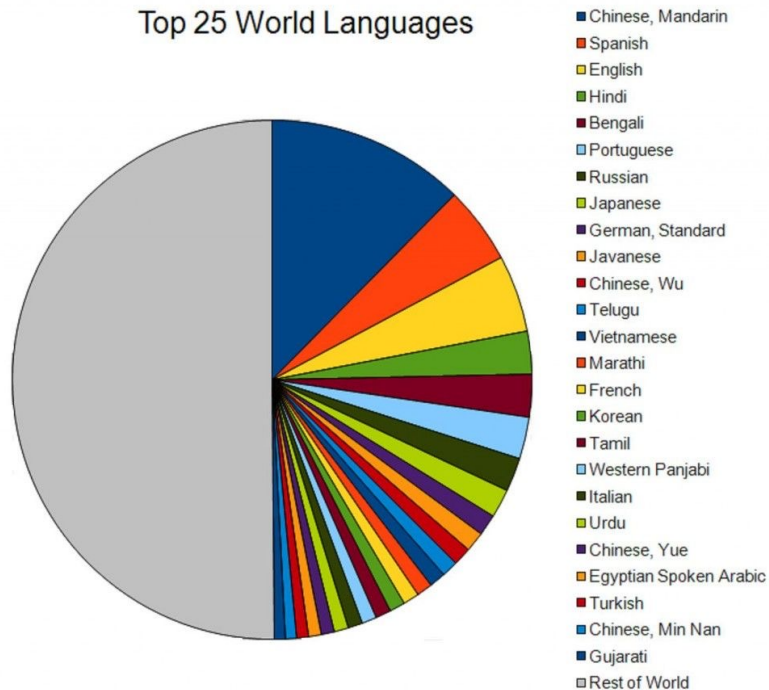
Linguistic diversity disappearing

Roughly **6,000 to 7,000** languages spoken worldwide

- **25 languages account for more than half of the world's populations**

- **The vast majority of languages are minority languages in every country in which they are spoken.**

Top 25 World Languages





Some challenges for BM

- Which research? Whose research?
- Learning to communicate clearly
- Universities tend to attach great importance to ‘impact’ but on a competitive, rather than collaborative, basis
- Understanding the practices of policy making



Some challenges for BM

- Connecting and coordinating actions (within countries, across countries)
- Integrating different kinds of research expertise and public engagement experiences
- Exercising a political (non-partisan) role



Today's presentations

- Altman: BM's work with multiple minority communities in Israel, facing the challenges of the Covid pandemic
- Barni: 'Third mission' new citizens, and the visibility of BM's impact on politics
- Blanchette: Making research a point of reference for policy-making
- Busby: The relationship between of English and Norwegian in Norwegian universities



Thank you!

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Twitter [@BilingMatters](https://twitter.com/BilingMatters)
Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/bilingmatters>



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