

Languages research and the ARIs

Briefing document for Government Office for Science, ARI Officers Network [ARION]

How and why can languages research contribute to current ARIs

The Areas of Research Interest (ARIs) reflect the interdisciplinary research needs of government organisations. **Given its inherently interdisciplinary nature, languages research has much to contribute to both current and future ARIs.** Languages research builds on **language competence, societal and cultural knowledge, and interdisciplinary methods** to address complex social issues. It draws on a range of perspectives and can provide narrative and historical evidence on individual lived experience, deriving general conclusions from individual cases.

Based on an analysis of current ARIs, here are broad areas where languages research can contribute:

• Community cohesion and communication. • Disadvantaged communities. • Access to public services. • Participation in the cultural sector and public life. • Multilingual underpinnings of social issues (e.g. crime, homelessness, modern slavery etc.). • Integration and migration.	• Diplomacy, defence (language competence and cultural awareness). • Cultural diplomacy. • International trade. • Economic growth. • New technologies (including artificial intelligence). • Devolution. • Public health.
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The word search for ‘languages’ on the Overton ARI database only yields a few results, but some key words or topics could potentially refer to languages in a more explicit manner, such as:

- ‘Barriers’ (e.g. to participation, to access to public services etc.) often include **language barriers**.
- Notions of ‘support’ and ‘access’ have a language dimension (e.g. language provision, access to employment, home and heritage languages etc.).
- Communication.
- Community and cohesion.
- List of factors (e.g. ‘social, economic factors for...’) could sometimes include **linguistic factors** as well.

The following table is a non-exhaustive list of concrete examples of how languages research can contribute to current ARIs and provides some simple alterations (in red) to current ARIs to make them more accessible to languages researchers.

Government Department Question Group	Relevant ARIs	How languages can contribute to policy
MHCLG Devolution	What opportunities does devolution offer for strengthening local resilience and improving community cohesion <u>and communication?</u>	Devolution and language(s): the impacts of languages on community cohesion and resilience
DfE Technology: harnessing benefits	- How has the increased accessibility of generative AI influenced our sectors (including schools, colleges etc)? - How can artificial intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies be implemented in our settings so that they do not widen existing inequalities or create new inequalities?	- Language teaching and learning and AI. - Ethics of AI (translation and teaching). - Use of technology in languages classrooms.
Home Office Migration and borders - Refugees	- Supporting those who are admitted, both for their own and for wider benefit. - Equipping refugees for life in the UK and for returning home if/when they can.	- Evidence on languages and integration. - Language provision and access. - Lived experience evidence on experiences of resettlement and migration.
DCMS Art, Heritage and Tourism's role in levelling up	Analyse and explain the drivers of spatial <u>and/or linguistic</u> differences in cultural engagement across the UK?	Impact of multilingualism and languages differences on engagement with cultural industries.
DWP Enable disabled people and people with health conditions to start, stay, and succeed in work, and get financial support	How is disability changing over time? What is the role of the benefit system in this change?	- Definitions of disability. - Narrative and historical evidence on disability. - Sign languages and access.