

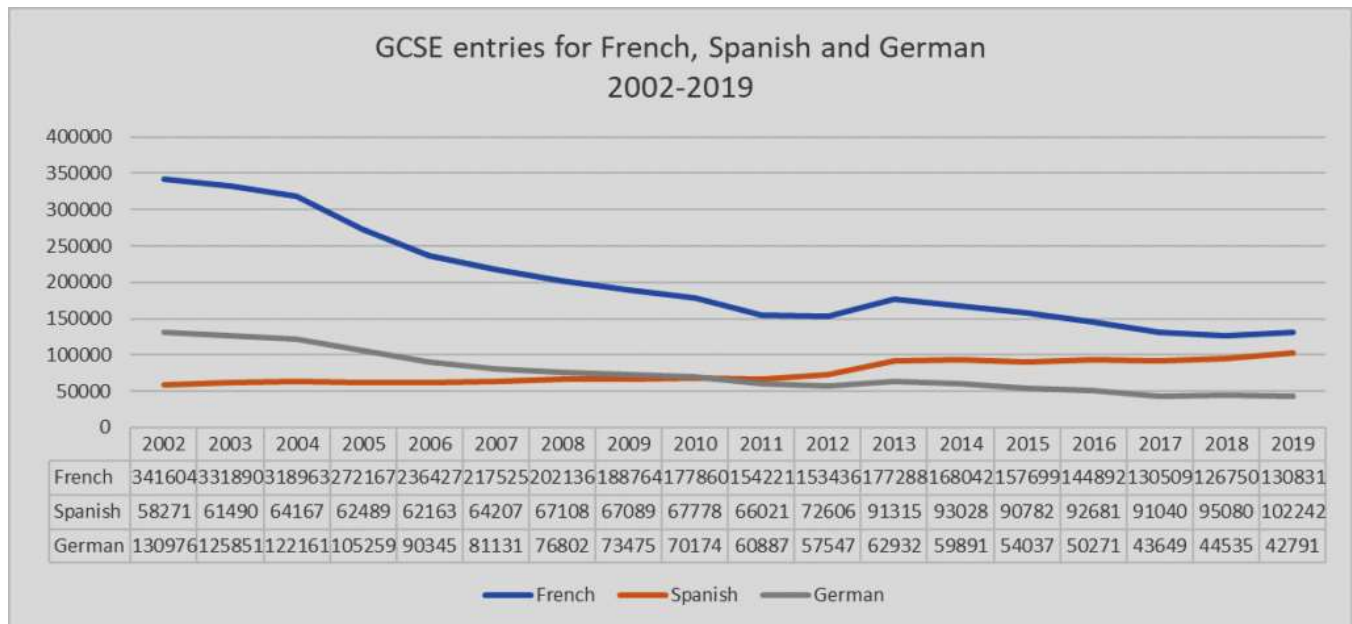
Blog

GCSE languages entries 2019

August 22nd, 2019 by [Teresa Tinsley](#)

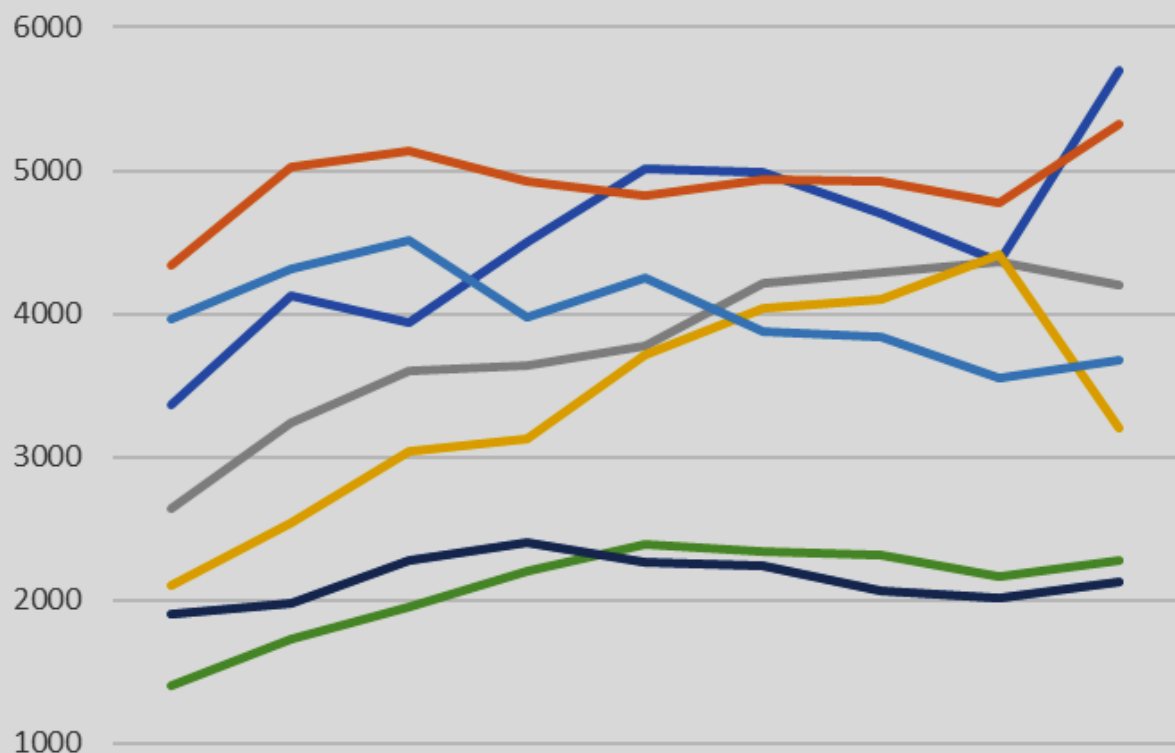
Call me curmudgeonly but I don't reckon a 2.3% rise in GCSE language entries equates to a [revival](#). Especially when GCSE entries across all subjects have gone up 1.4%. And numbers for languages are lower now than when the Government introduced the EBacc which was intended to turn things around. Let's have a closer look at the figures released today:

We are looking at a very welcome upturn for both French (3%) and Spanish (8%), but German continues its downward trend with a 4% drop.



There is a mixed picture for other languages, which I am showing on two separate charts because of the difference in scale. Entries for Chinese, which has been enjoying some recent growth, declined by 27% between 2018 and 2019, while the number of candidates for Arabic also dropped – by 4%. However, Polish (+31%) Italian (+12%), Russian (+6%), Portuguese (+5%) and Urdu (+4%) all show increases.

Smaller entry languages at GCSE (1), 2011-2019



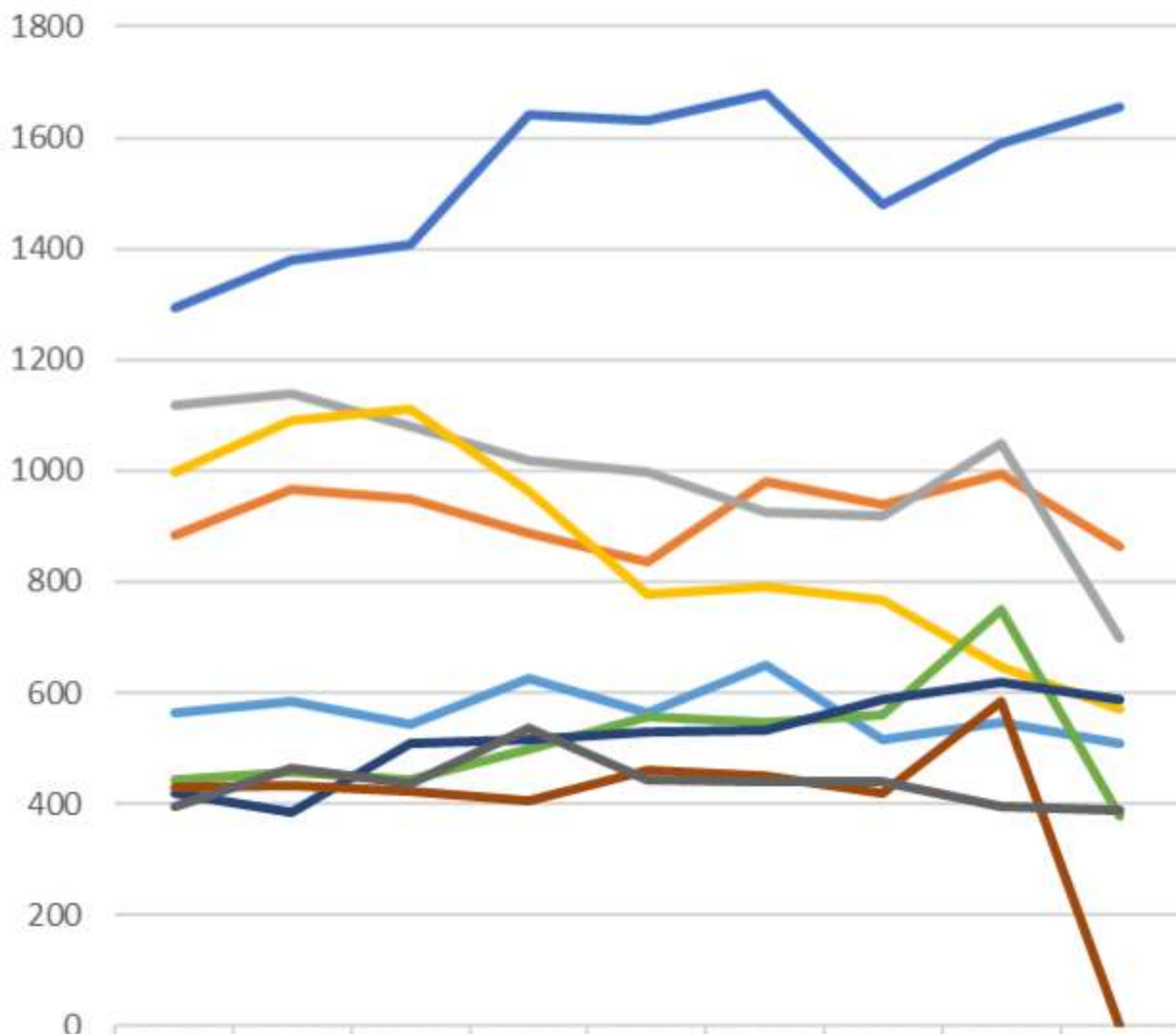
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Polish	3369	4128	3933	4498	5018	4988	4699	4357	5704
Italian	4343	5023	5136	4929	4824	4943	4929	4770	5331
Arabic	2639	3236	3607	3641	3780	4211	4294	4358	4203
Chinese	2104	2541	3042	3132	3710	4044	4104	4410	3201
Urdu	3960	4307	4519	3976	4253	3871	3841	3549	3679
Portuguese	1397	1721	1955	2197	2392	2341	2314	2170	2280
Russian	1899	1982	2274	2400	2270	2243	2061	2020	2133

— Polish — Italian — Arabic — Chinese
— Urdu — Portuguese — Russian

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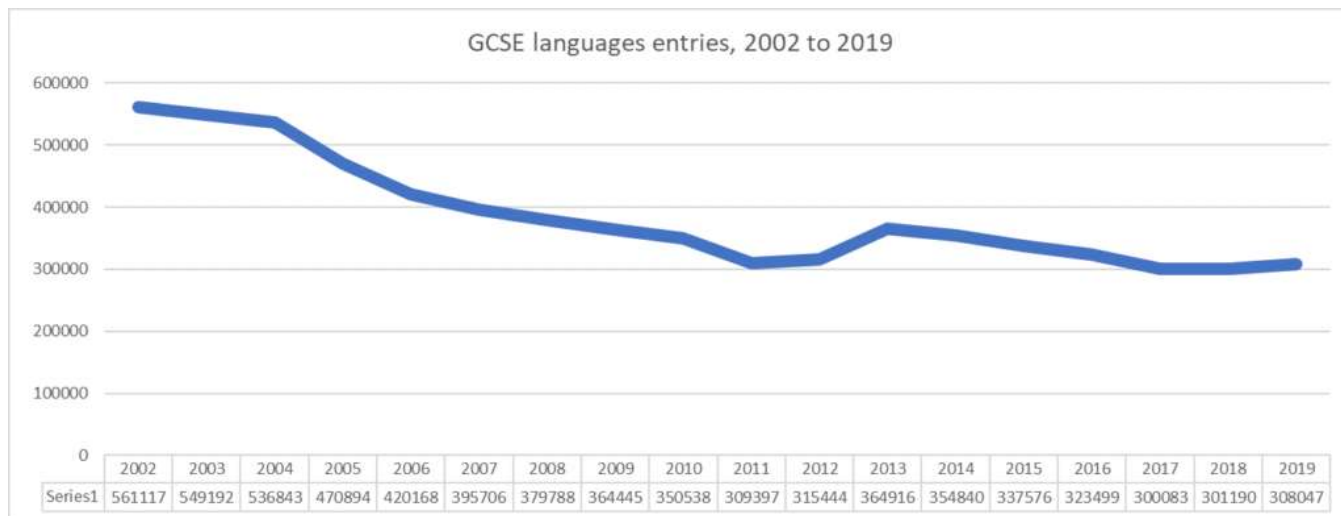
Smaller-entry languages at GCSE (2), 2011-2019



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Turkish	1293	1379	1409	1642	1630	1681	1478	1589	1656
Panjabi	885	967	951	886	836	982	940	994	865
Japanese	1119	1139	1080	1019	998	924	919	1048	698
Bengali	996	1092	1111	963	776	791	766	648	570
Gujarati	565	586	542	625	563	651	517	545	508
Modern Hebrew	445	458	443	500	558	545	559	750	378
Modern Greek	418	386	510	516	528	534	589	619	589
Dutch	431	434	421	406	462	451	419	584	0
Persian	394	464	435	535	445	439	439	396	388



Looking at all language entries together, it is easy to see how take-up declined by nearly half after the Government announced in 2002 that it would be withdrawing compulsory status for the subject – this policy came into effect in 2004. The E-Bacc, announced in 2010/11, produced a temporary upturn of about 18% but numbers then declined again. We still have a long way to go before numbers return even to the level achieved by the ‘EBacc bounce’.



NB these figures are for the UK as a whole, so include entries from Northern Ireland and Wales where different policies and circumstances prevail. I will be discussing these elsewhere.