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# The impact of the global economy: An analysis of foreign language study in the United States.

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# THE IMPACT OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMY: AN ANALYSIS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY IN THE UNITED STATES

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## Abstract

An examination of global forces helps us to understand how school curricula in a nation are shaped. This emphasis on global forces is important especially when we deal with foreign languages as a school subject, because the study of foreign languages, unlike other school subjects, is more likely to be influenced by world political and economic situations.

This study is designed to examine what impact the emergence of the new economic order, or global economy, has brought on language study in the United States. The impact of economic transformation will be measured by analyzing language enrollments at various educational levels, state and federal educational language policies, and U.S. corporate attitudes towards the value of language competence.

# THE IMPACT OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMY: AN ANALYSIS OF FOREIGN LANGAUGE STUDY IN THE UNITED STATES

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Contents

## Tables

## Figures

# Chapter 1

# Theoretical Background and Study Design

## 1. Introduction

The rise and fall of school subject matter occurs as social environments surrounding schools change. Foreign languages as a school subject are no exception. Presently foreign language study is becoming increasingly popular among U.S. students. According to a study conducted by the Modern Language Association, the number of college students enrolled in language courses other than English exceeded one million for the first time in fourteen years.[1] The study also reports an increasing popularity of foreign language courses in high school. Not only individual students but also educational institutions are showing an interest in language study. For example, an increasing number of U.S. business schools demand that some or all M.B.A students take foreign languages.[2] In addition to business schools, colleges which have foreign language requirements for admission and sometimes for graduation are increasing in

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[1] Beverly T Watkins, "Teachers Urged to take Advantage of Public's View That Language Are Important." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Dec 7 1988, Vol.135: A15-6.

[2] Joann S Lublin, "Managing Globally: Language Skills Move to Head of Class." *Wall Street Journal*. Jun 12 1992, Sec B, p.1, col 1.

number.[3] Why is foreign language study becoming popular in U.S schools, and why are more colleges and universities adding language requirements for admission and graduation?

Although the popularity of language study has increased recently, U.S students, historically speaking, have not shown great eagerness in foreign language study until recently. This reluctance to study foreign languages and culture is sometimes explained from a cultural point of view. For example, Doyle (1990) sees ethnocentricism as a main obstacle preventing Americans from improving their language competence. This cultural explanation, however, is insufficient; it does not consider the political and economic position of the United States in the world, which is considered to have affected the attitudes of U.S. citizens toward language skills. It is likely that the current status of English as an international language, established by the dominant economic and military power of the United States after World War II, has made foreign language study not very important or popular in the United States. To understand American reluctance to study foreign languages, we need to consider the larger arrangements which influence the degree and extent of language study in the United States. By larger arrangements I mean the global,

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[3] Watkins, op. cit.

political, and economic structure into which the United States is incorporated. It is true that the examination of various national forces such as social classes, professional organizations, and religious groups has provided useful information concerning the mechanism of school curriculum formation. But I believe that an examination of global forces which have sizable impacts on language instruction would lead to a better understanding of how school curricula in a nation are shaped. This emphasis on global forces seems to be important especially when we deal with foreign languages as a school subject. This is because the study of foreign languages, unlike other school subjects, is more likely to be influenced by world political and economic situations. A language selected for school instruction often reflect the location of a particular nation within the global power structure. Because of this characteristic of foreign languages, it seems justifiable to focus our attention on global forces.

## 2. Literature Review

There are few empirical studies which deal directly with the issue of impacts of the global economy on foreign language study in the United States. Cha's (1991) study showed the historical trends of foreign language instruction at the elementary and secondary levels throughout the world.

For example, his study found that English among modern foreign languages had become dominant in schools world-wide during the period of 1800-1986, while two most predominant classical languages, Latin and ancient Greek, had declined dramatically during the same period.[4] However, the study did not include information as to what is happening to language study in U.S schools in the global economic era.

However, there exists various literatures which offer useful ideas and theories for examining the impact of the global economy on language study in the United States. Suggestive ideas and theories for this study came mainly from two fields: education and political economy.

(1) Education

Literature in the field of education gives some clues to understanding the hierarchy of languages in the school curriculum. Theories dealing with the role of school are useful because the role the school plays in society sets guidelines on what should be taught in school and, more particularly, what foreign languages should be offered to students. Two major theories, functional and conflict theories, offer interpretations of the school role from

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[4] Yun-Kyung Cha, "Effect of the Global System on Language Instruction 1850-1986," *Sociology of Education*, vol.64 January 1991.

different points of view. The functional view sees the school as a social institution which helps to prepare children for their future participation in a complex contemporary society by providing them necessary knowledge and skills (Clark, 1962; Parsons, 1959). According to this explanation, the school curriculum should include subjects which help to achieve this goal. Foreign language study, in this sense, is likely to be one of them because an increased degree of interdependence in the world requires enhanced language competence. Contrary to this view, conflict theorists see school as a social institution which serves the interests of the capitalist class (Bowel and Gintis, 1976). According to this view, the school produces docile workers through a "hidden curriculum."[5] However, neither view helps us understand why certain subjects are included in the curriculum, while others are not. For example, as Hurn (1978) points out, we do not understand why some languages, especially classical languages, are still maintained at some schools despite their seemingly little practical values, which functional theory cannot explain satisfactorily. Also, there are some subjects such as arts

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[5] Bowles and Gintis argue that schools or teachers' emphasis on some values such as punctuality, obedience, and industriousness contributes to producing workers who will perform their tasks without questioning the authorities of their bosses.

and history, which do not seem very helpful in producing docile workers, as conflict theorists claim. Therefore, we must look at other theories which help to understand the function of schools and language choices.

In addition to the functional and conflict theorists, other scholars provide theoretical insights regarding the role of school. Collins (1979) discusses the social meanings of educational credentials. According to Collins, educational expansion in the twentieth century was a result of racial social conflicts in the United States. Therefore, it is not what school teaches that is important, but rather what the educational credentials given to those who have completed the courses satisfactorily. However, this explanation is also not very helpful in understanding why certain foreign language are included in the curriculum. Bourdieu (1972; 1984) provides an interesting idea. He views the school as a social institution which contributes to the social distinction between elite and non-elite classes. According to Bourdieu, material capital which exists in the form of physical resources such as land and means of production needs to be transformed into a different type of capital for the social elites to maintain their powerful and distinguished positions in society. This type of capital is referred to by Bourdieu as "symbolic or cultural capital," which takes the form of prestige and

honor. Language proficiency is considered to be cultural capital. This concept helps us to understand the previous question, why some schools continue to teach classical languages despite little returns from studying them. The rich may be trying to pass on their wealth and power to their children by encouraging them to accumulate cultural capital in the form of a good command of Latin or ancient Greek.

Other scholars discuss in great detail what factors have influenced the contents of school curricula. For example, Kliebard (1988) discusses the effects of academic theories such as the evolutionary theory and Frederick Taylor's scientific management on the school curriculum formation. Flanklin (1986), like Collins, stresses the important role of multi-ethnicity of the United States in shaping the school curriculum. It is true that both the presence of various ethnic groups in the nation and academic theories, as Kliebard and Flanklin argue, are important factors which have contributed to the formation of the U.S. school curriculum; however, neither of them addresses the issue of what causes the hierarchy of foreign languages in the school curriculum.

In contrast to the scholars who examined various domestic factors, Durkheim (1977) examined the impact of the international economy on education. He pointed out that an

increased interest in the classical works in the Renaissance era was actually a product of the economic transformation resulting from some European nations' active trade with the New Continent. According to him, the impact of economic transformation on education included not only change in teaching materials but also change in the method of student control. As this Durkheim's discussion suggests, we sometimes need to extend our attention to global levels when a change as great as that which occurred in the Renaissance is taking place in the economic sphere. As the review of political literature in the following section indicates, this seems to be the case. For this reason, it seems reasonable to say that the economic factor, one of the four main causes identified by Hertzler (1965) for the spread of language,[6] is likely to play a dominant role today.

(2) Political Economy

Works from a political-economy perspective provide information as to what is happening in the economic sphere and how we should approach it theoretically. Wallerstein (1974) reminds us of the influence exerted by the whole (world system) on its parts (nations). He stresses the

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[6] The other three factors identified by Hertzler are political and military power, religious activities, and others (arts, science, technologies, and ideology),

importance of considering the world economic system as a unit of analysis in understanding social phenomena in a given nation.

Has there been as any significant change in this world system as Durkheim discussed? The answer is yes. Harrison and Bluestone (1988) provide a nice summary of what has happened to the U.S economy. The United States, according to them, experienced deindustrialization and polarization of the workforce since the early 1970's as a result of intensified global competition. Because the international economic arrangements since the end of World War II were sustained by U.S. leadership, the emergence of a new economic arrangement required significant change at various levels accordingly. Ross and Trachte (1990) theorize this emerging economic order which is characterized by the declining U.S economic position, based on the analysis of the relationships among three major players in capitalist society: Capital, Labor, and State. They call it "global economy", distinguishing it from the previous order, monopoly capitalism. Regulation school theory also provides a valuable theoretical insight in understanding structural change. Boyer (1988), using new notions such as "accumulation regime," explains why the economic regime in the United state since the end of World War II, or "Fordist regime" to use the regulation school's term, could not

sustain its economic efficiency and superiority. His view supports Ross and Trachte's position that the period of global competition needs to be treated separately from the previous one.

Other scholars also make efforts to characterize the emerging new economic order, focusing on different aspects of the new economic system. Reich (1991) discusses the effects of increasing transnational activities of corporations. For example, he points out that the traditional notion of "national economic growth" is not useful any longer in the global age. Thurow (1992) focuses on an increased degree of international competition. He refers to the type of competition in the global economy as "head-to-head competition," in contrast to "niche competition" in the previous economic order. Sassen (1988) pays attention to the flow of immigrants and the creation of global cities in core nations as a result of the world-wide activities of multinational corporations. Sklair (1991) demonstrates that the concept of the global system can become valid scientific guidelines, creating new concepts such as transnational practices (TNPs). Based on TNPs at three levels (economic, political, and cultural and ideological), Sklair shows how powerful and influential the multinational corporations have become.

However, not all scholars share the same views about

whether the period since the early 1970's constitutes a distinct economic arrangement. For example, Gordon (1988) does not interpret this period as the construction of a new economic system. Rather, he sees the current economic situation as a decay of the post-war global economic arrangement. World system theory also disagrees with the global economists because the theory believes that there has been no fundamental change in the structure of the world economic system since its construction in the sixteenth century.[7]

Despite disagreement among scholars on some points, it seems safe to conclude from the literature review that the period since the early 1970's is characterized by intensified global competition. The emergence of the new economic arrangement does not simply mean that the U.S. is competing with other industrialized nations; it not only caused a relative decline of the U.S economic position, but it also accelerated overseas activities of U.S. corporations, resulting in an increasing number of large U.S. corporations which do not identify any longer the interests of the United States with their own prosperity. And these increased overseas activities of U.S.

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[7] For more information on this theme, see Robert Ross and Kent C. Trachte, Global Capitalism - The New Leviathan, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991.

corporations, in turn, gave significant impact on the physical and social structures of the United States: they contributed to the reorganization of U.S. cities as well as the U.S. workforce. Based on the review of the economic and education literature, it can be predicted that this economic transformation has exerted considerable influence on the behavior of U.S. students, governments, and corporations, including their attitudes towards the values of foreign language competence.

## 3. History of Language Study in the U.S.

### (1) Two characteristics of U.S. education

In examining the historical trends in language study in the United States, it is necessary to consider a few characteristics of the U.S. educational system because they help to shape language study in the nation in a fundamental way. According to Hurn (1985), U.S. education has two distinct characteristics, compared with those in other nations. The first characteristic of U.S. education is local control. States and local boards of education, rather than the Federal government, have the actual authority to determine the contents of the curriculum according to their local conditions. The Federal government, although it occasionally takes the initiative by setting guidelines as in the case of the National Defense Education Act in the

late 1950's, does not usually play as large a role in educational control as in other nations. This principle remains valid even today. This means that it basically depends on individuals whether they take language courses or not unless state boards of education set a new rule and designate foreign language study as a mandatory class for all students. In this respect the trends in the number of students enrolled in high school and college language courses tends to reflect any educational language policy change at the local or national level.

The second characteristic of U.S education is unselectivity. The students in the United States do not need to take examinations administered by authorized institutions at the national level when they advance to a higher level of education. This means that the process of selection based on students' academic performance does not occur on a large scale as in other nations. This relative lack of selectivity or competition leads, especially at the secondary level, to U.S schools' offering many elective courses, sometimes including non-academic courses such as driving and typing classes, in order to meet the diverse needs of a heterogeneous student population. Regarding foreign languages, this means that unless there are language requirements for graduation or admission to college, only those who have a particular interest are

enrolled in language courses. Although language study seems to be regaining its popularity today, we should not ignore the fact that many students can graduate from high school or college without taking any language courses.[8]

In these two respects, decentralization of control and a greater opportunity for those who pursue higher education, the U.S. education is unique.[9] These two characteristics explain, in part, why a rise and fall in foreign language enrollment occurs in the U.S. school. Keeping them in mind, I want to review briefly the history of language study in the United States before the global economy emerged.

(2) Language study until the early 1970's

A review of literature suggests that language study in the United States had been conducted without clear national language policies. The Federal Government did not feel an urgent necessity to have a policy during this period. One scholar observes, "(U.S) language related policies are almost always directed at certain groups rather than the

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[8] "A 1980 State-by-State survey of high school diploma requirements reveals that only eight states require high schools to offer foreign language instruction; but none requires students to take the courses." (National Commission on Excellence in Education, "A Nation at Risk," The Elementary School Journal, Nov. 1983, p.121.)

[9] For more information on the language requirements in other nation, see Paul Simon, *The Tongue-Tied American*. New York; Continuum, 1980.

language needs of Americans as a whole."[10] Sometimes the Federal government encouraged students to study foreign language by allocating funds for language study to meet the nation's urgent needs, but its efforts were not influential enough to bring far-reaching effects in language study in the nation. Language study in the period after World War II, according to Hertzler's categorization, was influenced mainly by the political and military factor.

The establishment of the school system created a few dominant languages at the secondary and higher levels. Since the introduction of grammar schools and universities from England to the New World, Latin occupied a prominent place in language study because of its status as a vocational subject for students who intended to study professional fields such as Christian theology, law, and medicine.[11]

However, the rise of the public high schools, a resulting larger high school population, and the growth of academies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth

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[10] Raymond E. Castro, "The Influence of Educational Policy on Language Issues," ERIC ED 212172, 1981: p.3.

[11] Edward A. Krug, *The Secondary School Curriculum*, New York; Haper & Row, 1960, Chapter 8.

century, broke the Latin monopoly in the curriculum.[12] Modern languages, mainly French and German, began to be popular among students.[13] Although foreign language study reached its highest point in 1910, it witnessed the decline after that. One factor that contributed to this decline was the anti-German atmosphere during World War I, which made German study unpopular. Other factors such as students' giving more attention to the values of more practical and vocational studies and an increasing number of universities' dropping foreign language requirements also contributed to the decline of language study in the United States.[14] The language popularity was not regained until the late 1950's.

The political and military factor played a significant role a few decades after the war. National defense needs during World War II led to the establishment of the U.S

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[12] Latin was attacked mainly for its little relevance and utility in an industrial society, and consequently most colleges and universities dropped their Latin requirements for either admission or their A.B. degree programs (Daniel Tanner, Secondary Curriculum, New York: the Macmillan Company, 1971, p.257.)

[13] The percentage of the students who took French in public high school rose from 5.84 percent in 1889-1890 to 7.78 percent in 1899-1990 and German from 10.51 percent to 14.33 percent, while Latin also showed an increased popularity from 34.69 percent to 50.61 percent in the same period. (Krug, op. cit. p.258).

[14] Tanner, op. cit. p.270.

Army's intensive foreign language programs.[15] Although these programs brought about considerable impact on language teachers in terms of teaching methods, they did not boost the popularity of language study in the schools.

In the fifties and sixties the presence of the Cold War between two superpowers shaped language policies in the United States. The successful launch of Sputnik by the former Soviet Union in 1957 resulted in a quick U.S. response to the crisis, the enactment of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in the following year, which was designed to promote the study of foreign languages as well as sciences and mathematics for the security of the nation. Section 101 of the law clarifies the purpose of the Act as follows:

> To meet the present educational emergency require additional effort at all levels of government. It is therefore the purpose of this Act to provide substantial assistance in various forms to individuals, and to States and their subdivisions, in order to insure trained man power of sufficient quality and quantity to meet the national defense needs of the United States.[16]

Under this law, centers for teaching certain modern foreign languages and knowledge about regions in which these

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[15] Ibid., p.270.

[16] Public Law 85-864-Sept.2,1958. *United States Statutes at Large*, 85th Congress 2nd Session, vol. 72 part 1, Public Laws and Reorganization Plan, 1958.

languages are used were funded through the Federal government. Owing to this Federal support, the major expansion in foreign language and international studies occurred in the 1960's. A new section added later to the NDEA made it possible for the funds to be allocated to locally designed programs such as K-12 and continuing education, which came to develop foreign language instruction in the elementary school (FLES).[17] In achieving the goals, the U.S. government gave a top priority to six languages--Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Japanese, Portuguese and Russian--and a secondary priority to an additional list of eighteen languages.[18] However, the size of monetary support from the Federal government became smaller as time went by, and, consequently, it became hard to sustain the programs at the initial levels.[19]

The Federal government was not the only player who responded to Sputnik; other organizations also played a part. The Ford Foundation, for example, began to support

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[17] Sue E. Berrymam et al., *Foreign Language and International studies Specialists: the Marketplace and National Policy*, Santa Monica, Ca: The Rand Corporation, 1979, p.9.

[18] The Committee on the University and World Affairs, *The University and World Affairs*. New York: the Ford Foundation, 1960, p.

[19] Sue E. Berryman et al, op. cit. p.8.

area programs.[20] A Ford Foundation' report published in 1960 stressed that new tasks of American universities were to maintain or promote a free society in newly independent nations. The report states,

> They (Universities) have the responsibilities, in the best university tradition to make a contribution which no other institutions can: to enlarge our horizons as a free society, to help educate the leaders and help build the educational foundations of the newer nations, and to cooperate with educational institutions in other nations in order to help create a free international society.[21]

As the citation above indicates, the top priority for the nation is to establish a "free international society"; therefore, language study was seen as one means to help achieve this goal. The report, pointing out the overall inadequacy of Americans' language skills, stressed the necessity of the concerted efforts of the nation in both standard (Western) and non-standard modern languages to produce Americans capable of efficient communication with people from other parts of the world.

In 1966 the Congress passed the International Education Act, which was to expand language courses for the promotion

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[20] The policy of the Ford Foundation was that it withdrew its financial supports gradually after it stimulated activities. (Sue E. Berryman, op. cit. pp.39-41.)

[21] The Committee on the University and World Affairs (1960). *The University and World Affairs*. New York: the Ford Foundation. P.2.

of mutual understanding and cooperation between the United States and other nations. However, funds were never appropriated.[22] This implies that a better knowledge of other nations through an enhanced language competence of U.S. citizens was not regarded as an urgent or top agendum for the nation by most U.S. political leaders.

In the beginning of the 1970's, an increased degree of economic integration began to call for a new type of corporate managers who can work effectively in foreign countries. In 1971 a business task force issued a report on this theme.[23] The report did not mention specifically the importance of language skills for the international operation of business but recommended, instead, a change in school curricula for the production of new types of managers at all levels with support from the business community.

As is clear, the political and military factor played a major role in the language study in the United States until the early 1970's. The attempts made by the Federal government, along with other organizations, to promote language study in the nation were mainly the results of political and military threats the nation felt from outside

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[22] Sue E. Berryman, op.cit. p.8.

[23] National Commission for UNESCO, *Business and Education for World Affairs. A Report of the Business Task Force to the International Education Year Committee of the U.S National Commission for UNESCO*, ERIC; ED 056293, 1971.

as in the case of World War II and the Cold War. However, in the early seventies the business circle began to understand that business was conducted under completely different settings; however, it did not discuss language competence as a valuable asset in the new business settings.

**4. Study Design and Data Source**

(1) Study Design

This study is designed to examine what impact the emergence of the new economic order or global economy has brought on language study in the United States. The impact of economic transformation will be measured by analyzing language enrollments at various educational levels, state and federal educational language policies, and U.S. corporate attitudes towards the value of language competence. By the new economic order I mean the world economic system which began to emerge in the early 1970's and in which the degree of global competition is intensified, and the position of the United States shifted from the only economic super power to an economic power competing with other industrial nations.

I assume that the global economy has made the economic factor the most influential in shaping language study in the United States, and it also brought sizable change in the behavior of U.S. students, politicians, and corporations in

terms of language study.

If my assumptions are correct, I will find the following in the global economic era:

(1) The total number of students who took language courses increased after it declined in the 1970's because of diminished financial support from the Federal Government and other organizations. Also, an increasing number of students studied modern languages rather than classical languages because of their practical values.

(2) The languages of nations which had close economic ties with the United States showed an increase in popularity among students.

(3) The number of colleges or universities with language requirements for admission or graduation increased.

(4) Committees or task forces formed at the local and national level issued reports which recommend the promotion of language study, mentioning the emergence of the global economy as a main reason.

(5) An increasing number of U.S. corporations began to see language skills as critical in doing foreign business.

Some terms require clarification. The "global economy," as I mentioned before, means the world economic

arrangements in which the United States competes with other nations, especially developed nations such as European nations and Japan. This type of economic arrangement is believed to have emerged in the early 1970's. Although U.S. corporations experienced a "profit squeeze" in the late 1960's[24], I use the early 1970's as the beginning of the global economy, as followed by many scholars. To examine the effects of the global economy, I divide the time into two parts: I call the period from the early 1970's to the present "global economic era," and the preceding period, "pre-global economic era." "Foreign language" means any language, common or uncommon, other than one's own native language. The term includes both modern and classical languages. The "modern foreign languages (MFLs)" mean languages which are still used. In contrast, the "classical languages" mean the languages which are not used today. Here this category includes specifically Latin and ancient Greek. The line drawn between the "commonly taught languages (CTLs)" and the "less commonly taught languages (LCTLs)" is not always clear, but in this study I follow the classification used by many Modern Language Association survey reports. The CTLs include the five leading modern

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[24] Barry Bluestone and Bennet Harrison, The Great U-Turn, New York: W.W. Norton, 1988.

foreign languages (French, German, Italian, Russian, and Spanish) plus Latin and ancient Greek, and the LCTLs include the remaining languages.[25]

(2) Data Source

I analyzed existent data both quantitatively and qualitatively to test my hypothesis. Studies conducted by research institutions and individuals were examined to understand the national trends in language enrollments at various education levels, higher educational institutions' language requirements for admission and graduation, and popular foreign languages. In this respect, the data provided by the Modern Language Association were especially helpful.

Government agencies also provided useful data, especially on economic indicators such as foreign direct investment. These data were used in examining the possible relationships between observed trends in language study and U.S. economic relationships with some nations.

Various reports issued by committees or task forces formed at both local and national levels were collected and examined qualitatively to know whether observed change in

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[25] Walton defines the LCTLs as all languages other than French, German, and Spanish. (A. Ronald Walton, "Expanding Vision of Foreign Language Education: Enter the Less Commonly Taught Languages." ERIC ED 345539, 1992.)

language study is a result of active state involvement in the nation's educational language policies. I believe these qualitative analyses will show how the global economy has influenced the perception of U.S. political leaders, and what recommendations they proposed regarding language study.

No nation-wide studies on language needs in business were available. So several studies conducted previously by individuals and groups were examined to see whether U.S. corporations had changed their views on the value of language skills in international business. The number of studies examined here is not large enough to conclude, but I hope it suggests whether there has been any change in the business community's views on the value of language skills in the global economic era.

**5. Organization of the Thesis**

In Chapter 2, the trends in language study in the United States will be discussed. These trends include language enrollments at different educational levels, the rise and fall in particular languages, and language requirements of higher educational institutions. In Chapter 3, case studies will be conducted to see whether the popularity of three languages in the global economic era---Spanish, Japanese, and Chinese---can be explained by some economic indexes such as U.S trade relations with the

nations in which these languages are used. In Chapter 4, various committee and task force reports will be examined to see whether change in language enrollments, if any, is related to state activities. In Chapter 5, the impact of the global economy on U.S. corporations' views on language skills is discussed. I will examine two contradictory views and study findings which support each view. In the last chapter, I will summarize the study findings and discuss what they imply.

# Chapter 2

# Foreign Language Enrollments in the United States

## 1. Overview of the U.S. Economy

As I discussed in the previous chapter, the global era is characterized by the relative decline of the U.S. economic power due largely to intensified global competition. One of the indicators which reflect this declining position of the U.S. in the world system is the U.S. share of world exports of manufactures.

Table 2.1 U.S. Share of World Exports of Manufactures

| Year | U.S. Manufactures Exports | | Year | U.S. Manufactures Exports | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total (bil. dol.) | Percent of world | | Total | Percent of world |
| 1960.... | 12.7 | 25.3 | 1979.... | 116.7 | 17.4 |
| 1965.... | 17.3 | 22.5 | 1980.... | 147.2 | 16.8 |
| 1970.... | 29.4 | 21.1 | 1985.... | 150.7 | 16.7 |
| 1975.... | 71.0 | 19.1 | 1987.... | 179.4 | 13.9 |
| 1976.... | 77.2 | 18.8 | 1988.... | 225.5 | 15.1 |
| 1977.... | 80.2 | 17.3 | 1989.... | 275.0 | 17.1 |
| 1978.... | 94.5 | 17.0 | 1990.... | 300.3 | 16.3 |

Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, International Trade Administration, Business America, biweekly, 1992.

As Table 2.1 shows, the United States experienced a gradual decline in its share of world exports of manufacturing

within the past three decades. The U.S. share fell from 25% in 1960 to 13.9% in 1987, the smallest share, despite the constantly increasing amount of exports in dollars in the period. After 1987, the U.S share showed a sign of recovery--but not much.

Today the United States faces a serious trade deficit problem which is preventing the U.S. economy from recovering smoothly. In June 1993 the U.S. merchandize trade gap reached $12.1 billion, more than $ 3 billion above the previous estimates. And this worsening trade deficit is considered as the major source of the slowdown of the U.S. economy.[1] Further, the world-wide economic slowdown is making the U.S. economy worse.[2]

Reflecting this trend, the value of U.S. dollars fell significantly against other currencies. Since the advent of the floating exchange rates in 1973, the U.S. dollar moved between appreciation and depreciation. However, Table 2.2 indicates that the U.S. dollar generally depreciated against the currencies of other developed nations. Except for the period from 1981 to 1985, which witnessed the appreciation of the U.S. currency, the currencies of several nations

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[1] James C. Cooper and Kathleen Madigan, "An Import-Hungry America Took a Bite Out of First-Half Growth." *Business Week*, Sep. 6, 1993.

[2] Michael Mandel, "What Happened to the Trade Numbers?" *Business Week*, Sep. 6, 1993.

raised their values to a considerable degree.

Table 2.2 Exchange Rates---Indexes of Values of Foreign Currency Relative to U.S. Dollar:1970 to 1990

| Year | United States | Belgium | Canada | Den-Mark | France | Ger-many | Italy |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1970 | 100 | 92.2 | 118.3 | 111.3 | 119.0 | 66.6 | 215.9 |
| 1980 | 100 | 156.8 | 105.6 | 148.2 | 155.9 | 133.8 | 158.3 |
| 1981 | 100 | 123.7 | 103.7 | 116.9 | 121.0 | 107.7 | 118.9 |
| 1982 | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| 1983 | 100 | 89.6 | 100.2 | 91.2 | 86.3 | 95.1 | 89.1 |
| 1984 | 100 | 79.3 | 95.3 | 80.6 | 75.3 | 85.3 | 77.1 |
| 1985 | 100 | 77.2 | 90.4 | 78.7 | 73.3 | 82.5 | 70.9 |
| 1986 | 100 | 102.5 | 88.8 | 103.1 | 95.0 | 111.9 | 90.8 |
| 1987 | 100 | 122.6 | 93.1 | 121.9 | 109.4 | 135.0 | 104.4 |
| 1988 | 100 | 124.5 | 100.3 | 123.8 | 110.4 | 138.2 | 104.0 |
| 1989 | 100 | 116.2 | 104.2 | 114.0 | 103.1 | 129.1 | 98.7 |
| 1990 | 100 | 137.0 | 105.8 | 134.8 | 120.8 | 150.2 | 113.0 |

| Year | Japan | Nether-lands | Norway | Sweden | United Kingdom |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1970 | 69.5 | 73.9 | 90.3 | 121.2 | 137.1 |
| 1980 | 110.4 | 134.6 | 130.8 | 148.6 | 133.1 |
| 1981 | 112.9 | 107.4 | 112.4 | 124.0 | 115.8 |
| 1982 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| 1983 | 104.8 | 93.6 | 88.4 | 81.9 | 86.7 |
| 1984 | 104.9 | 83.3 | 79.1 | 76.0 | 76.5 |
| 1985 | 104.4 | 80.5 | 75.1 | 73.0 | 74.2 |
| 1986 | 147.9 | 109.1 | 87.3 | 88.2 | 84.0 |
| 1987 | 172.2 | 131.9 | 95.8 | 99.0 | 93.8 |
| 1988 | 194.3 | 135.1 | 99.0 | 102.4 | 101.9 |
| 1989 | 180.4 | 125.9 | 93.4 | 97.3 | 93.7 |
| 1990 | 171.8 | 146.7 | 103.2 | 106.1 | 102.1 |

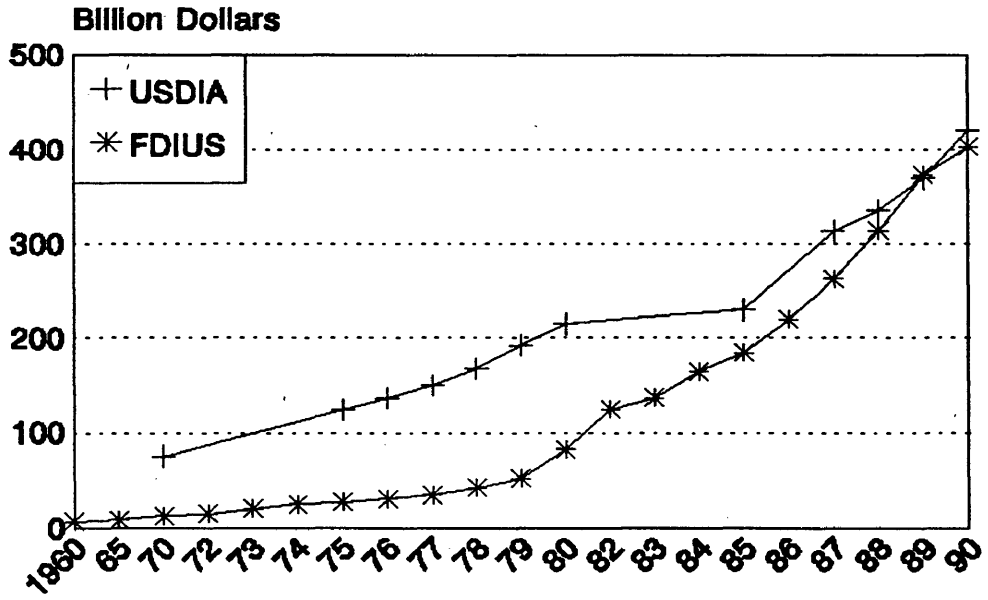
Source: U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics, News Release USDL:90-383, "International Comparisons of Manufacturing Productivity and Labor Cost Trends," July 27, 1990.

Belgium, Denmark, United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, and Netherlands belong to this group; above all, the last three nations raised the values of their currencies sharply. On the other hand, the currencies of such nations as Canada,

France, Norway, and Sweden showed no significant changes in their values.

Trends in international direct investment also reflect a changing face of the U.S economy.[3] Figure 2.1 shows

## Figure 2.1 U.S Net Direct Investment Position
1960-1990




Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Survey of Current Business, 1980 and 1991.

increases in both U.Sx. direct investment aboard (USDIA) and

[3] U.S Bureau of Economic Analysis defines the term, direct investment, as private enterprises in one country owned or controlled by investors in another country or in the management of which foreign investors have an important role.

foreign direct investment in the U.S.(FDIUS). As is obvious from the figure, the period since the early 1970's witnessed a constant increase in both USDIA and FDIUS, although the late 1970's witnessed different trends in two types of investment. A close look at the graph reveals that FDIUS began to increase more sharply than USDIA starting in the early 1980's; it maintained its rapid growth throughout the period and caught up with USDIA in 1989 and overtook it in 1990. USDIA increased fifty-six times between 1970 and 1990, while FDIUS increased fifty-eight times between 1960 and 1990. It should be noted that a much greater amount of U.S. investment goes to other developed rather than developing nations; about 73% of the U.S. capital was invested in developed nations in 1990, and the percentage has risen gradually since 1970. This fact tells us that U.S. corporations are not investing their capital randomly. That is to say, not all languages have the same degree of importance for U.S. corporations; languages in developed nations occupy a more important position than those in developing nations for U.S. international business, as far as foreign direct investment is concerned. However, there are some languages in developing nations which are becoming popular among U.S. students and important for U.S. governments, which I will discuss in this and later chapters. On the other hand, major nations which invest in

the United States are European nations; they account for more than two-thirds of the total investment in the U.S. in 1990. Among European nations the United Kingdom is the leading nation from which the largest amount of capital (26.8%) came to the U.S., followed by the Netherlands (15.9%) and former West Germany (6.9%). Japan accounts for 20.7% of the total FDIUS in the U.S, and Canada, 6.9% in 1990.

The dramatic increases in both USDIA and FDIUS, however, mean not only an intensified degree of internationalization of the U.S. economy; they also mean change in the stratification system in the United States. As many scholars argue, the structural change in the U.S. economy promoted the socio-economic polarization of the work force. Here, I want to show this process by using the income distribution as an index. Table 2.3 shows that the upper classes expanded while the middle classes shrunk during the past two decades. The stratum of $75,000 and over experienced a considerable increase from 5.6% to 9.7% during the period 1970 -1990, followed by the $50,000-$74,999 stratum. In contrast to these upper strata, the middle strata suffered shrinkage; the percentages of both $25,000-$34,999 and $35,000-$49,999 stratum shifted from 18.6% to 15.8%, and from 20.0% to 17.5% respectively between 1970 and 1990. Although the lowest stratum stayed stable,

the second lowest increased its share slightly during the period.

Table 2.3
Money Income of Households---Percent Distribution, by Income Level in Constant (1990) Dollars: 1970 to 1990

| Year | Number of house-holds | Percent Distribution By Income Level | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Under $10,000 | $10,000- &14,999 | $15,000 $24,999 | $25,000 $34,999 | $35,000 $49,999 |
| 1970 | 64,778 | 15.6 | 8.7 | 17.6 | 18.6 | 20.0 |
| 1975 | 72,867 | 15.7 | 10.1 | 18.4 | 16.7 | 19.6 |
| 1980 | 82,368 | 16.3 | 9.7 | 18.9 | 16.6 | 18.6 |
| 1985 | 88,458 | 16.2 | 9.6 | 18.3 | 15.7 | 17.7 |
| 1987 | 91,124 | 15.5 | 9.4 | 17.4 | 15.3 | 17.7 |
| 1988 | 92,830 | 15.4 | 9.2 | 17.2 | 15.6 | 17.4 |
| 1989 | 93,347 | 14.7 | 9.4 | 17.2 | 15.6 | 17.4 |
| 1990 | 94,312 | 14.9 | 9.5 | 17.7 | 15.8 | 17.5 |

| | $50,000- $74,999 | $75,000 and over | Median Income (dol.) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1970 | 13.8 | 5.6 | 29,421 |
| 1975 | 13.8 | 5.8 | 28,667 |
| 1980 | 13.6 | 6.4 | 28,091 |
| 1985 | 14.5 | 8.0 | 28,688 |
| 1987 | 15.3 | 9.4 | 29,984 |
| 1988 | 15.3 | 9.7 | 30,079 |
| 1989 | 15.5 | 10.2 | 30,468 |
| 1990 | 14.9 | 9.7 | 29,943 |

Households (1,000)
Source: Department of Commerce, Current Population Survey.

As a net result, the median income did not change on a large scale during the past two decades.

As Table 2.3 shows, increased overseas activities of U.S. corporations contributed to the polarization of the

U.S. social class system, reducing the size of the middle classes and expanding the upper classes. And this has significant implications for educational policies in the United States, because U.S. political and social leaders believed that the polarization of the U.S. workforce was the direct result of the lack of adequate skills and knowledge of U.S. workers. For them, language skills was one of these skills (I will discuss how the global economy has changed the perception of U.S. political leaders in Chapter 4).

As these tables and figures show and many scholars point out, a significant change in the international arrangements urged U.S. corporations to adopt new business strategies in order to survive in intensified international competition. These new strategies such as direct investment abroad, in turn, brought considerable impacts on the structure of the U.S. work force. Now our attention turns to the impacts brought by this economic transformation and correspondent change in the job structure on foreign language study in the United States.

**2. Language Enrollments in U.S. Schools**

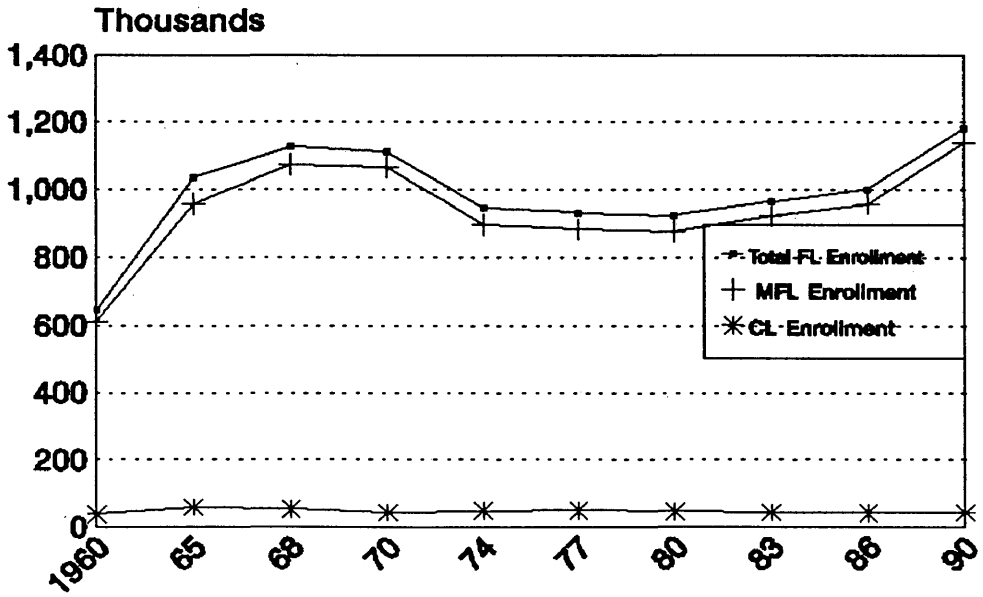
Foreign language courses are offered at various educational levels; therefore, the analysis of language study must cover each level in order to examine whether each level has particular characteristics. First, I will analyze

the college level and then the high school level. Next, I will discuss language instruction at other levels.

(1) Foreign language enrollments in college

Figure 2.2 shows the historical trend in college foreign language enrollments from 1960 to 1990. Although the number of students who registered in language courses increased dramatically since 1960, reaching its peak in

## Figure 2.2 FL, MFL, and CL Enrollments in College




Association of Department of Foreign Language, New York, NY
ADFL Bulletin, vol 23, No. 3 (1992) and earlier issues.

1968, the language boom began to decline following that year, and the enrollments (see Fig. 2.2) flattened out from 1974 to 1980.

This rise and fall in the language enrollments in the 1960's and 1970's have much to do with the political developments in the 1950's and 1960's. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, these periods were characterized by ideological confrontation between the United States and the former Soviet Union. The U.S., after the launch of the Sputnik, tried to make the most of its human resources to catch up with advanced Soviet space technology. Language skills were considered as one of these human resources. From this vantage point, the Federal Government provided financial support to educational institutions under the Title VI of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA), which was enacted in 1958, to promote the study of foreign study in the United States. Berryman and others (1979) reported a constant increase in support from the Federal Government in the sixties and seventies and a dramatic increase in the supports from other organizations such as the Ford Foundation in the 1960's. Although the Federal Government continued its financial efforts, the consideration of inflation diminished the real value of the funds. This financial factor seems to explain why the language boom occurred and died down in the 1960's and 1970's in colleges

and public high schools as well.

Entering the 1980's, language study began to regain its popularity. The year of 1983 witnessed a slight recovery of language study, and the year of 1990 reached the highest point since 1960.

Of course, this increasing popularity of language study needs to be seen in association with the total population of college students, because an increase in the latter may simply have caused the former. An examination of higher education registration suggests that this might be the case. The size of the college population expanded continually from 1960 to 1983 and remained at almost the same level between 1983 and 1986. Just as the language enrollments, the college student population grows considerably after 1986. However, considering the fact that a constant population growth in the 1960's and 1970's brought little effects on the size of language enrollments, a population increase does not seem to explain the language boom in the 1980's.

Another factor which may have caused an increase in language enrollments in the 1980's is a change in foreign language requirements in college and university curricula. If the number of higher educational institutions which require students to take language courses for graduation increased, this is likely to have caused the increase in language registration. According to a survey conducted by

the Modern Language Association, this seems to be the case.[4]

Table 2.4 Foreign Language Degree Requirements: 1965-66 to 1987-88

| | 1965 -66 | 1970 -71 | 1974 -75 | 1982 -83 | 1987 -88 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| % of Institutions Reporting Degree Requirements | 88.9 | 76.7 | 53.2 | 47.4 | 58.1 |

Source: Richard Brod and Monique Lapointe, *The MLA survey of Foreign Language Entrance and Degree Requirements, 1987-1988*, (1989).

According to Table 2.4, the historical pattern of foreign language degree requirements seems to coincide roughly with that of language enrollments.[5] The percentage of institutions which have language requirements was highest 1965-66, becoming lower thereafter. After recording the lowest in 1982-83, the percentage rose by about 10% in 1987-88. This increasing number of institutions with language requirements explains, in part, why college language enrollments increased in the 1980's.

Next, we are concerned about whether there has been any

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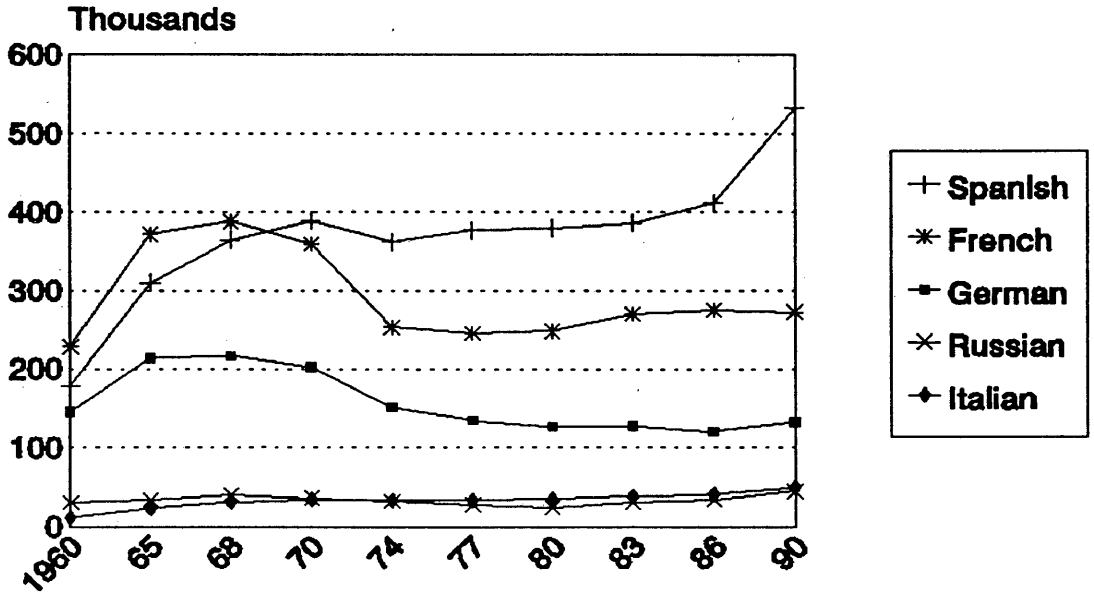
[4] Richard Brod and Monique Lapointe, "The MLA Survey of Foreign Language Entrance and Degree Requirements, 1987-88," *ADFL Bulletin* vol.20 January 1989, pp17-41.

[5] Paul Simon explains the declines in foreign language requirements for college admission and graduation as a result of the students movements which swept U.S colleges and universities in the seventies.

change in the popularity of foreign languages studied by U.S. college students. Figure 2.2 also provides information of the historical enrollment trends in both modern foreign languages (MFLs) and classical languages (Latin and ancient Greek). The graph shows the dominant place of MFL in foreign language instruction throughout the period. It also shows that it was the MFLs which fluctuated; the classical languages did not contribute to the rise and fall in language enrollments. Latin and ancient Greek enrollments experienced neither an increase nor a decrease during the past three decades. A close look at these two languages reveals that Latin has managed to maintain its enrollment level in the eighties, while ancient Greek saw a constant decline in the decade. These two classical languages share only approximately 4% of foreign language study in 1990. Considering these facts, the classical languages stopped playing an important role long ago in U.S. colleges and universities.

Figure 2.3 examines the trends in the commonly taught languages (CTLs) other than Latin and ancient Greek. The graph shows an increasing popularity of Spanish among MFLs. In 1970 Spanish became the most popular language studied in the nation, replacing French. In 1990 Spanish marked a record-high enrollment, about 30% increase over 1986. In this year 45% of the total students who were enrolled in

## Figure 2.3 CTL Enrollments (Except L and G) in College




**Association of Department of Foreign Language, New York, NY. ADFL Bulletin, vol. 23, No.3 (1992) and earlier issues.**

language courses took Spanish. French, the most popular language until 1970, maintained its position as the second most popular language without any significant change throughout the 1970's and 1980's. German, the third most popular language, followed almost the same pattern as French. Russian, although the number of enrolled students is much smaller, showed a steady increase since 1980. Like Russian, Italian has become more popular during the period 1960-1990.

In foreign language study the CTLs still occupy a dominant place; more than ninety percent of college students selected a language out of the CTLs throughout the period. However, its dominant place had began to be challenged by the less commonly taught languages (LCTLs). Table 2.5 shows the gradually declining position of the CTLs' share in contrast to the LCTLs' share.

Table 2.5 Trends in Commonly Taught Languages Share (%)

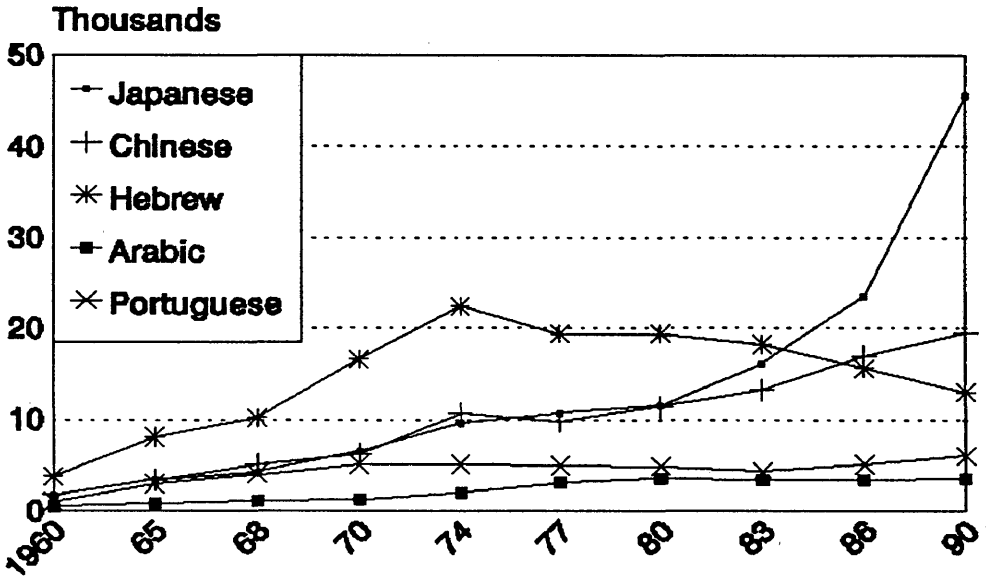
| 1960 | 65 | 68 | 70 | 74 | 77 | 80 | 83 | 86 | 90 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 97.9 | 97.8 | 97.1 | 95.9 | 93.2 | 93.1 | 93.1 | 92.9 | 92.2 | 91.1 |

Source: Association of Department of Foreign Languages. New York, NY. *ADFL Bulletin*. vol.23, No. 3, 1992.

Although the LCTLs still occupy a small portion of language study (less than 10%) in U.S. colleges, it is clear from this table that it has increased its popularity gradually during the past decades.

Then, the question is: What languages have become more popular or less popular among the LCTLs? Figure 2.4 shows the rise and fall of each language in this category. According to this graph, two languages--Japanese and Chinese--have shown remarkable growth throughout the period. Japanese is the fastest-growing language. Until 1980 Japanese increased at almost the same pace as Chinese; however, thereafter Japanese began to grow at a much faster pace, making it impossible for Chinese to catch up. In 1990

# Figure 2.4 LCTL Enrollments in College



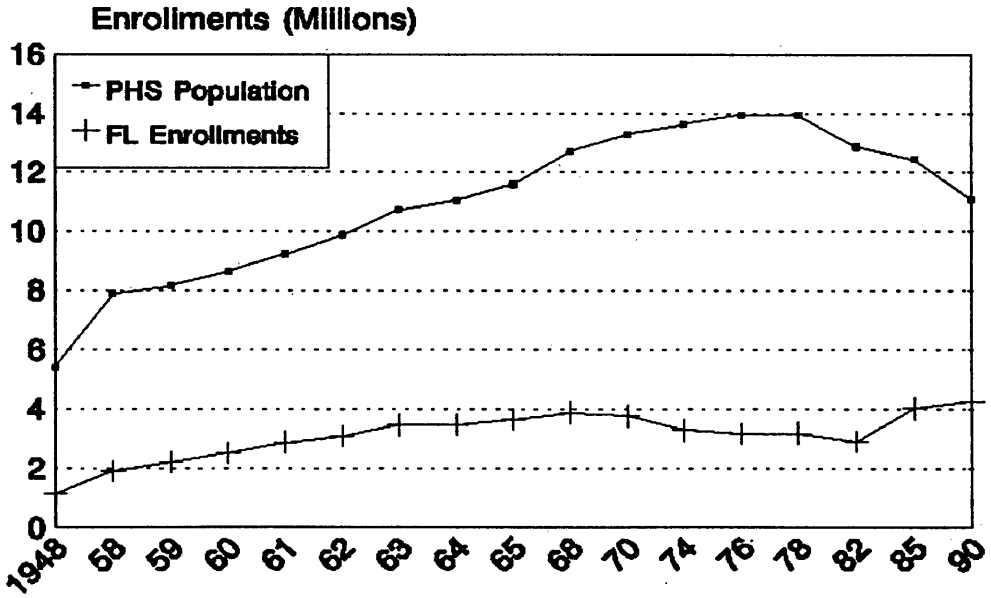

**Source: Association of Department of Foreign Language, New York, NY ADFL Bulletin, vol. 23, No.3 (1992) and earlier issues.**

Japanese became the fifth most widely-taught language in U.S. colleges, replacing Russian. Although the pace was not as fast as Japanese, Chinese continued to grow in the 1980's. Arabic and Portuguese show a slight increase between 1960 and 1990, although the numbers are much smaller than the other two. Contrary to these four languages, Hebrew could not stop its decline which started in 1974. As a result, Hebrew became third in 1990, following Chinese, among the LCTLs.

(2) Language enrollments in public high schools

Language enrollments in public high schools show approximately the same pattern of language enrollments as in college. Figure 2.5 shows a constant increase in language enrollments in the 1950's and 1960's, then a decrease in the

**Figure 2.5 Foreign Language Enrollments in Public High Schools**
1948-1990




Source: James B Draper, Foreign Language Enrollments in Public Secondary Schools Fall 1989 & Fall 1990, (1991).

1970's, and a sign of recovery in the 1980's. In 1990, 38% of the public high school population took language courses,

the highest since 1928. As in the case of language enrollments in college, the total high school population does not provide a good explanation of why the 1980's saw the increasing popularity of language study. This is because the total population experienced a constant decrease from 1978 to 1990. These facts suggest that in order to explain the language boom, we need to seek factors other than the population increase.

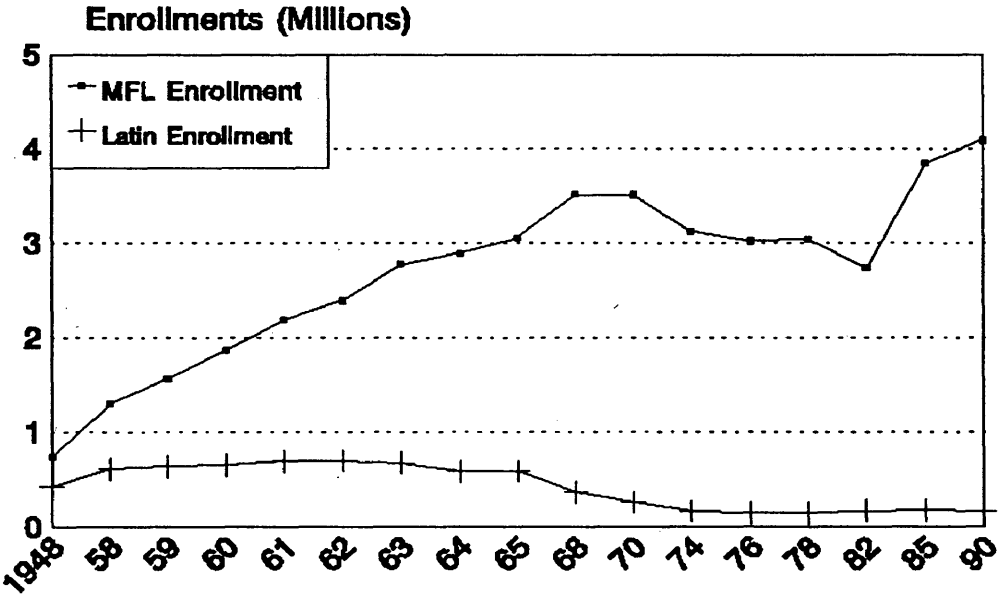
Again, changes in language requirements for admission to colleges and universities seem to be related to the recovery of language enrollments in public high schools in the 1980's. Those high school students who wish to advance to college must take language courses if there are language requirements for admission. Therefore, an increase in the number of colleges and universities with language requirements directly affects language enrollments in high school. Table 2.6 reports exactly the same pattern of language entrance requirements as language degree requirements; a constant decrease from 1965-66 to 1982-83 and an increase in 1987-88. A 10% increase from 1982-83 to 1987-88 seems to have been a main reason for the language boom in public high school in the 1980's.

Table 2.6 Foreign Language Requirements for Admission: 1965-66 to 1987-88

| | 1965 -66 | 1970 -71 | 1974 -75 | 1982 -83 | 1987 -88 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| % of Institutions Reporting Entrance Requirement | 33.6 | 27.4 | 18.6 | 14.1 | 25.8 |

Source: Richard Brod and Monique Lapointe, The MLA survey of Foreign Language Entrance and Degree Requirements, 1987-1988 (1989).

**Figure 2.6 MFL and Latin Enrollments in Public High Schools**
**1948-1990**



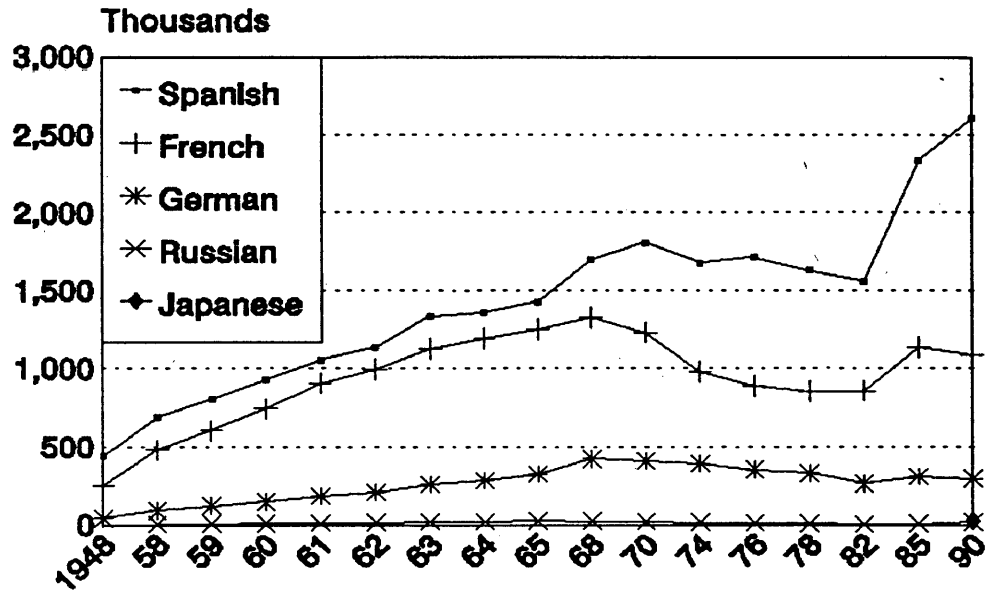

**Source: James B Draper, Foreign Language Enrollments in Public Secondary Schools Fall 1989 & Fall 1990, (1991).**

Figure 2.6 answers the question of what type of languages, modern or classical, the language boom has made more popular. The graph shows an increasing popularity of

the MFLs in public high school. In 1948 Latin was still studied by about 37% of the students who took language courses, while the MFLs, by 63% of the students. Since then, the MFLs spread rapidly in the next three decades; they increased their share from 63% in 1948 to 96% in 1990, while Latin lost its share by about 32% in the same period. Although the study does not include information about the other major classical language, ancient Greek, it seems that the MFLs, having replaced the classical languages, established its position in the school curriculum as the major languages for study. However, because the data are only about public high schools, we cannot generalize our findings to prestigious private high schools, where classical languages are more likely to be maintained because language competence in these languages is considered to help distinguish the graduates from other people. In order to know more about the place of the classical languages in the curricula of prestigious private high schools, more studies need to be conducted.

The analysis of languages taught in high schools shows very similar trends as those in colleges. The slight differences between the two levels are that public high school language enrollments experienced a more rapid growth of Spanish and a more rapid decline of Latin than college enrollments. Figure 2.7 illustrates these trends. The four

## Figure 2.7 MFL Enrollments in Public High Schools




**James B Draper, Foreign Language Enrollments in Public Secondary Schools Fall 1989 & 1990, (1991).**

languages--Spanish, French, German, and Latin--have dominated foreign language instruction in high school, but Spanish, as in the case of college, is the most popular among the American high school students. Spanish alone accounts for 61% of language enrollments in 1990. Spanish popularity in recent years was remarkable. Spanish enrollments in public high schools increased by 67% between 1982 and 1990. French, although it experienced a decline in the 1970's, began to recover its losses in the late 1980's.

German and Russian experienced slight decreases after 1968. Japanese enrollments were included for the first time in this 1990 study. The new entry of Japanese seems to indicate an increasing popularity of the Japanese language among public high school students. In 1990 public high school students who registered in Japanese were 50% more than those who chose Russian.

(3) Language Enrollments at other levels

Language study is also conducted at other educational levels. Although the percentage is small, compared with that in high schools, 12.4% of students in grades 7-8 were enrolled in language courses in 1990.[6] However, due to the lack of historical data, there is no telling whether this percentage is smaller or larger than those in previous years.

In public elementary schools about 4.2% of students studied a foreign language in 1990; 96% of the students studied Spanish and French, and the remaining 4% studied German, Japanese, Italian, and Russian.[7] Some states such as North Carolina and Louisiana, because of their mandatory

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[6] Jamie B. Draper, "Foreign Language Enrollments in Public Secondary Schools, Fall 1989 & Fall 1990," Eric ED340214, 1991.

[7] Ibid. p.6-7.

language requirements, report higher registration rates in these states. Although many language programs at the elementary school level disappeared by the end of the 1960's, partly because of the lack of funds from the NDEA, it is reported that the 1980's witnessed the rapid growth in foreign language study in elementary schools.[8]

**3. Summary**

Language study, which experienced its boom in the late sixties, could not sustain its popularity in the next decade. Starting in the early 1980's, however, language enrollments began to rise at almost all levels: primary, secondary, and higher levels. The examination of languages studied by U.S. students shows the increasing popularity of MFLs and decreasing popularity of classical languages. Among the MFLs, Spanish is the most widely taught language which has shown a rapid growth, especially in the mid-1980's. Although the CTLs still occupy a dominant place in language study in the United States, they began to give way to the LCTLs gradually. Among the LCTLs Japanese and Chinese have grown rapidly at the college level. In the case of Japanese, it is considered to have become popular at

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[8] Audrey L. Heining-Boynton, "Using FLES History to Plan for the Present and Future," *Foreign Language Annals*. Vol.23, 1990, p.505-9.

the high school level as well as college level.

As I discussed, one main reason for an increase in language enrollments in the 1980's seems to be an increase in colleges and universities which require language competence for admission and graduation, which I will examine in Chapter 4 in association with the responses of U.S. governments to the global economy.

# Chapter 3

## The Rise and Growth of Popular Languages: Case Studies of Spanish, Japanese, and Chinese

In the previous chapter we found that some languages experienced increasing popularity in the global economic era, while others experienced a decline or relative stability in popularity. The languages which drew much attention from U.S. students were Spanish, Japanese, and Chinese. Although the change in higher educational institutions' language requirements explains, in part, why the rise of the total registration figure in foreign language courses occurred, it does not explain why students are selecting these particular languages.

What caused the popularity of these aforementioned languages? Why has the status of two UCTLs risen despite the difficult nature of their languages?[1] Can we provide convincing answers to these question in terms of the U.S.

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[1] The Foreign Service Institute of the Department of State classifies all languages taught in U.S academic institutions into four categories. Category 1 includes such languages as French and Spanish, which are considered relatively easy for English-speaking people to study. It is said that the languages in this category require American students 480 hours of instruction to reach a certain proficiency level, while Category 4 languages such as Japanese, Chinese, and Arabic require 1,320 hours of instruction to reach the same level.

economic transformation? In this chapter I will try to identify some economic and other related factors which seem to have contributed to the growth of each of these three languages. Among the economic factors I will pay special attention to the role of foreign direct investment as one major force.

**1. Spanish**

As we saw, Spanish is the most widely-studied language in U.S. schools. Although the language has increased its popularity constantly since the late 1950's, the late 1980's witnessed a dramatic increase in registration of the Spanish language in high schools and colleges, making its position unchallenged by the two other popular languages, German and French.

In discussing what caused this language's popularity, we, first of all, have to consider one condition unique to the case of Spanish, that is, the presence of a large Spanish-speaking community in the United States. According to the 1990 Census, among all languages spoken in the United States, Spanish is the most widely-spoken language; 17.3 million people speak the language, which accounts for more than half (54.5%) of all people whose first language is not

English.[2] French follows(5.3%) as the second most widely-spoken foreign language in the nation, followed by German (4.9%). Comparing the 1990 Census with the 1980 Census, we find that people with Hispanic origins increased 57% during the decade; the Hispanic population increased from 14 million in 1980 to 22 million in 1990.[3]

This Hispanic community has expanded constantly, in part, because of the flow of immigrants from many Spanish-speaking countries to the United States. And they are the ones who tend to remain loyal to their native language, although language transition occurs unavoidably as time passes.[4] As far as numbers are concerned, Asian immigrants outnumber Hispanics during 1981-1989; the former group constitutes 42.7% and Hispanics, 11.4%, of the total immigrants at this time. However, the diversity of languages spoken by the Asian immigrants reduces the

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[2] "Immigrants Change Sound of America," *Omaha World-Herald,* Wednesday, April 28, 1993.

[3] "Resident population, by Race and Hispanic Origin: 1980 and 1990." *Statistical Abstract of the United States*,No.16. 1992.3

[4] For more information on this theme, see Alejandro Portes and Ruben G Rumbaut, *Immigrant America*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

linguistic impact of this group.[5] In contrast, Latinos speak the same language with the exception of people from Brazil, and this linguistic homogeneity makes this group much more influential in the nation.

The immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries has increased in number for the past three decades. Between 1961 and 1989 the number of immigrants from both Central and South America (except Brazil) doubled from nearly three hundred thousand in 1961-70 to approximately six hundred sixty thousand in 1981-1989. An analysis of the number of immigrants in each decade reveals that the 1980's was the period which saw a sharp increase from Spanish-speaking countries, especially from Central America. The immigrants from Central America doubled between the 1970's and the 1980's, and those from South America increased nearly 30% during the same period.[6]

This constant flow of immigrants with Hispanic origins is contributing to the expansion of a Spanish-speaking population in the United States, and this expanding population, in turn, seems to contribute to the rise of Spanish study in U.S. educational institutions. This is because this population, like immigrants from other parts of

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[5] "Immigrants, by County of Birth:1961 to 1990," *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, No.8, p.11, 1992.

[6] Ibid.

the world, is likely to make conscious efforts to pass on its linguistic heritage to the next generation. For example, one study reports that Hispanic parents, particularly wealthy and educated ones, often encourage their children to study both English and Spanish.[7] Another study, although it does not deal specifically with Spanish, confirms that the daily exposure of children to languages other than English in their home is more likely to motivate them to take language courses.[8] According to this study, approximately forty-eight percent of the business students who are exposed to language other than English in their households are enrolled in language courses, while only twenty-three percent of the non-exposure group are enrolled. Of course, students with immigrants parents are not the only ones who take foreign language courses. Students without immigrant parents also take language courses. One factor, which motivate these students to study foreign language is the presence of a ethnic community in their neighborhood, town, or area. The same study reports that business students who commonly hear languages other than English take language courses more often than their counterparts.

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[7] Portes and Rubaut, op. cit. p.213

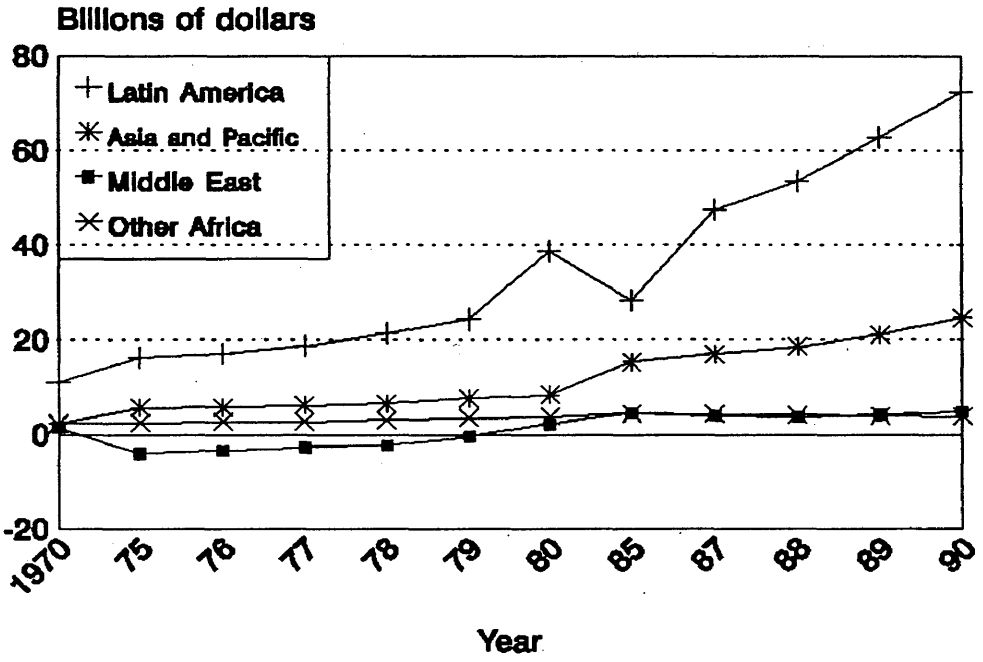
[8] Gregory B. Stone and Stephen A. Rubenfeld, "Foreign Languages and the Business Curriculum: What do the Students Think?" *The Modern Language Journal*, vol.73 Issue 4, Winter 1989, pp.429-439.

Considering these findings, Spanish is likely to be studied by many students with Hispanic backgrounds and also other non-Hispanic students, owing, mainly, to the presence of a large Hispanic population in the United States.

So far we have examined the effects of the Hispanic community on language study. As a next step we need to examine factors which are more directly related to economics. It must be noted that Spanish is the language spoken in many countries in the western hemisphere. This fact alone makes the study of the language more useful and attractive in terms of practicality. A knowledge of Spanish can be useful in many ways: to read the literature, to travel, to understand the cultures, and so forth; however, it must be remembered that it can also be used in business. People with a good command of Spanish are sought after, for example, by U.S. governmental agencies and U.S. firms. If the United States has close economic relations with Spanish-speaking countries, and if U.S firms, governments and other agencies are looking for personnel with the ability to understand Spanish, this could become a powerful motivation for students to study the language.

In the U.S. economy, Latin America occupies an important place. For example, an indicator of U.S. foreign direct investment reflects close economic ties between the two regions. As I reviewed briefly in Chapter 2, three quarters

## Figure 3.1 U.S. Direct Investment Position abroad 1970-1990




Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Survey of Current Business, August 1991.

of the total U.S. direct investment goes to developed nations. However, among developing nations, Latin America received the largest amount of capital (68.5%) from the United States in 1990.[9] As Figure 3.1 shows, U.S. capital investment in Latin America increased more rapidly than in any other area during the past two decades. The capital invested in this part of the world increased more than five

[9] , "U.S. Investment Position Abroad, by Country," *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, No.1324, 1992, No.1529,1980

times from 1970 to 1990. In addition to Latin America, Asia and other Pacific regions (except Japan) received a large amount of U.S. capital investment during the same period. However, the pace is not as fast as that in Latin America, and the size of capital investment in the former region is less than one third of that in Latin America.

Reflecting on this important position of Latin America for the United States, the demands from U.S. firms operating in the region for people with good commands of Spanish are increasing, despite the general findings of previous studies that U.S companies usually place little or no emphasis on language competence of their American expatriate staff.[10]

In addition to the past and present U.S. economic relations with Latin America, the future relation between the two regions also needs to be considered. A recent political and economic development, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), is likely to play a part in promoting the study of Spanish in the future. NAFTA is designed to create a free trade bloc in the Western Hemisphere by removing or reducing trade barriers such as tariffs and other government regulations. This type of effort to establish a free-trade zone started after the

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[10] Sue E. Berryman and et al, *Foreign Language and International Studies Specialists: the Marketplace and National Policy*, Santa Monica, Ca, Rand Corporation, 1979, p.135.

Bretton Woods system supported by the United States was abandoned.[11] NAFTA was one of such efforts made by the United States. If NAFTA passes, it will increase the flow of capital and workers to a considerable degree between the U.S. and Mexico, the third largest trading partner of the U.S. as well as a Spanish-speaking country. According to one journal article, the payoff from NAFTA is estimated to be billions of dollars worth of new investment in Mexico.[12]

As I will discuss in Chapter 5, U.S. corporations, although they generally do not believe in the value of language skills, see the ability to speak Spanish as a particularly important asset in conducting business in Latin America. Therefore, the intimate economic relations between two nations which NAFTA would create in the future is likely to contribute to the promotion of Spanish study in the United States.

**2. Japanese**

There exist some factors which have prevented the Japanese language from becoming popular in the United States. First of all, unlike Spanish, Japanese does not

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[11] Charles K. Willber, "What is NAFTA? Economics and the new world order," *the Christian Century*, June 16-23, 1993

[12] Geri Smith, "'The Moment of Truth' For Mexico." *Business Week*, June 28, 1993. p.44-5.

have a large Japanese-speaking community which supports the spread of the language in the United States. It is true that a Japanese-speaking population exists in the U.S. and some Japanese immigrate to the nation every year, but their numbers are so small that their impact can be said to be negligible. Second of all, the status of Japanese as a truly foreign language (TFL) is likely to discourage U.S. students from selecting Japanese to meet either language requirements or personal needs.

Despite these disadvantageous conditions, Japanese has been gaining its popularity among American students. In raising the number of students who study Japanese, technological developments play a part. For example, the introduction of distance-learning through satellite has made it possible for high school students in the most remote rural areas of the United States to get access to Japanese instruction.

However, it is hard to believe that the technological factor is mainly responsible for the Japanese boom because the introduction of new technology is a mere response to meet the new demands. We must find what caused these new demands for Japanese language study. As Jorden and Lambert (1991) point out, it seems reasonable to say that one critical factor which caused a Japanese boom in U.S. schools is the economic power of Japan. Jorden and Lambert state:

> The reason for this surprising phenomenon (Japanese language boom) is undoubtedly tied to economics. Although there continue to be those individuals interested primarily in the history and literature of Japan, they have been greatly outnumbered by those attracted by the current position of Japan in the hierarchy of the world's economic giants.[13]

This statement is supported by their study of American high school students who study Japanese. According to Jorden and Lambert's study,[14] the most popular reason for studying the language is to "improve job opportunities (65%)." However, the next popular reason is not directly economic-related: "Interest in Japanese culture (60.5%)." The third most popular reason for studying Japanese is "Want to go to Japan (53.7%)," which is hard to classify as economically related or not. The fourth and fifth reasons are again associated with the economic position of Japan or economic benefits that the language skill in Japanese brings to learners: "Importance of Japan in the world" and "Looks good on Record."[15]

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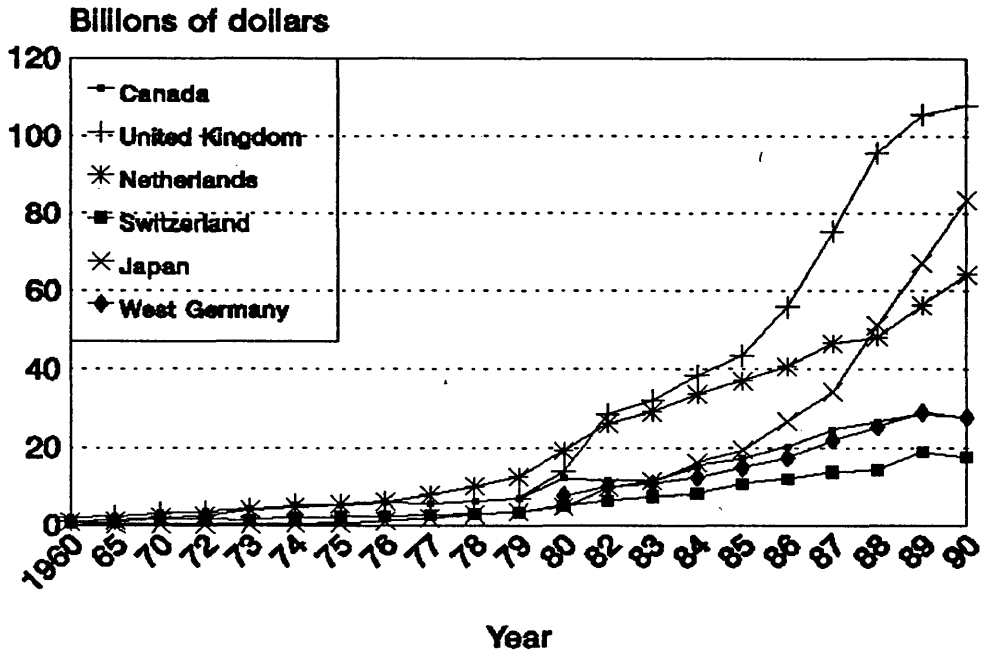
[13] Eleanor H. Jorden and Richard D. Lambert, "Japanese Language Instruction in the United States: Resources, Practices, and Investment Strategy," 1991, ERIC ED 342236.

[14] In this study 1,185 high school students responded to the questionnaire. Multiple answers were possible.

[15] Although many students who study Japanese expect some economic returns from Japanese competence in the future, Jorden and Lambert's study of 17 U.S corporations operating in Japan, like pervious studies, indicates disheartening findings to these students. According to the study, most U.S. corporations operating in Japan show little interests

(continued...)

## Figure 3.2 Foreign Direct Investment in the U.S. 1960-1990




**Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Survey of Current Business, August 1991.**

If the economic might of Japan is the main reason for the Japanese language boom in U.S. schools, there are some economic indicators which show an increasing important position of Japan as a business partner for the United States. One example is foreign direct investment. As is obvious from Figure 3.2, Japan increased its capital

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[15](...continued)
in language competence of their American employees. And they are not concerned with the offering of language training to their employees, either.

investment in the U.S sharply, especially starting in the early 1980's. U.S. investment increased fourteen times between 1970 to 1990, while Japanese investment in the U.S increased nearly three hundred sixty times, from 229 millions in 1970 to 83,498 millions in 1990.[16] Moreover, the second largest amount of capital came from Japan in 1990, following the United Kingdom. When I examined the correlation between Japanese investment in the U.S and U.S. students enrollment in Japanese language course, I obtained r=.98. This value is significant at the .01 level.

Japan is also a major trading partner for the United States. An examination of U.S. exports and imports shows that the U.S. exported the second largest amount of merchandise to Japan in 1990, following Canada while, on the other hand, she imported the largest amount from Japan in 1990.[17] As these indicators show, an increased degree of visibility of Japan and Japanese corporations in the United States seems to influence the perception of American leaders of the importance of studying the language. For example, a report issued by Illinois Task Force, which recommends the

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[16] Statistical Abstract of the United States, "Foreign Direct Investment Position in the U.S.- Value, by Area and Industry," No.1528, 1980, No. 1319, 1992.

[17] "Exports and Imports of Merchandise by Continents, Areas, and Countries," *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, No.1541, 1980; No.1335, 1992.

promotion of foreign language study in the state, mentions the governor's plan to invite a Japanese company to the state as one reason.[18] Senator Simon at a Senate hearing cited a story to convince other senators how critical the nation's efforts are to improve language skills of Americans. According to him, when asked why Mitsubishi chose Bloomington, IL. as a place for a joint plant with Chrysler despite fine offers made by many states, an executive officer of the company answered that one of the two main reasons was that the Bloomington schools started teaching Japanese a few years before, which made the company feel welcome.[19]

As these examples above show, the economic advancement of Japan in the Unite States would seem to be an important force behind the reform of language education policies in the nation. However, an increase in the number of students who study Japanese does not necessarily mean an increase in the number of those with a good command of the language. Because of the difficult nature of the language, the attrition rate is relatively high, compared with other

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[18] "Report of the Illinois Task Force on Foreign Language and International Studies," ERIC ED 179116, 1979.

[19] U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Education, Arts and Humanities of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources, "foreign Language Competence forth Future Act of 1989," 1989, p.31.

common languages. For example, the attrition rate in Japanese is 51.7% between the first and second year, while those in Spanish, German, and French range from only 3.4% to 20.8%.[20] The attrition rate of Japanese in the third and fourth year is even higher. Nevertheless, if the economic success of Japan is mainly responsible for the Japanese language boom in the United States, and if Japan will continue to sustain its current position in the world in the future, the study of the Japanese language will remain popular or become more popular in the United States.

**3. Chinese**

Chinese, like Japanese and unlike Spanish, does not have a large population which speaks the language in the United States; the size of the Chinese community was less than one tenth of that of Hispanics in 1990. Nor are the immigrants from China to the United States as large in number as Hispanic immigrants. For these reasons, it seems reasonable to associate the popularity of Chinese with factors other than the size of the Chinese community and its immigrants. As is the case with Japanese, here I examine economic relationships between the United States and China.

First, we need to look briefly at the history of

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[20] Jorden and Lambert, op. cit. pp.51-2.

Chinese international policies to compare the trends in Chinese language popularity with her trade relationships with the U.S.[21] In the 1950's and 1960's the Chinese government chose isolationist policies under hostile environments: an ideological split from the former Soviet Unions and active anti-communism campaigns by the United States and other nations. This situation, however, began to change for the better in the 1970's. In 1971 China joined the United Nations. In the following year, President Nixon visited Beijing, which contributed to the improvement of the relationship between the two nations. In the late seventies China began to make active efforts to industrialize and internationalize the nation through foreign trade and investment.

After Mao's death, the Chinese government introduced many economic reforms, which started as the encouragement of regional decentralization and eventually led to the general opening up of the Chinese economy to foreign countries. In the course of the reforms the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) were created, and later more cities, counties and areas were to be designated as open regions. For example, fourteen coastal cities were opened up for foreign investment without

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[21] The information about the economic history of China is mainly based on Leslie Sklair, *Sociology of the Global System*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 1991.

much restriction in 1984. One year later other open areas, Coastal Open Economic Areas, were established in 52 Pearl River delta cities and Yangtze River delta cities and counties in Fujian. These cities and areas eventually strengthened their ties with the outside world through foreign direct investment and trade. In establishing SEZ, the Chinese government, like counterparts in other developing nations, invested actively in its infrastructure to attract more foreign capital to the nation.

As a result of these open-door polices of China, a number of foreign companies began to operate in this once politically and economically isolated nation. The foreign companies included not only small and medium-sized companies but also very large transnational corporations (TNCs). The number of foreign bank branches which opened in China indicates an increasing degree of internationalization of the Chinese economy; in 1985, 17 foreign bank branches were founded in China, 26 in 1988, 31 in 1989, and 33 in 1990.[22] The sudden increase in 1989 seems to have much to do with the Chinese government's decision to establish the Pudong New Development Zone in Shanghai.[23] As a result, the "long

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[22] Han Guojian, "Foreign Banks Seek Development in China," *Beijing Review*, vol.33, No. 51, Dec 17, 1990: pp.12-4.

[23] ibid., p.12.

time isolation from the world economy, a product of many historical factors, has become a matter of the past (qtd. in Sklair, 1991)."

These open policies of China made her one of the important trade partners for the United States. Although U.S. investment in China is not too large, its economic relations with China have become strong; China increased its exports nearly five times from 1985 to 1991; China is ranked sixth in terms of exports, following Taiwan.[24] This increase of exports from China to the U.S derives primarily from a status accorded by the United States to the country as a favorable trade nation. Because President Clinton declared the extension of this status of China for one more year in 1993, China is likely to continue to increase her exports. Compared with exports, the size of imports from the United States is small, only a third of China's total exports to the U.S., but its amount almost doubled during the same period of 1985 to 1991.

As I mentioned before, there is a gap between companies' and students' views towards the values of language skills. Nevertheless, the latter's perception may have encouraged some of them to study the Chinese language. Because there are no studies available which examine the

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[24] "U.S. Exports, Imports, and Merchandise Trade Balance, by continent, Area, and Country." op. cit. No.1335.

motivation of students who are studying Chinese, I cannot conclude with confidence that students' perception of great business opportunities in China urged them to take the language course. Yet, considering the study findings on the motivation of Japanese students, this may be the case.

It is true that China is not an economic superpower, but she offers different types of incentives such as a huge market. As the economic power of Japan has motivated some U.S. students to study Japanese, the economic potentials of China may motivate some students to study Chinese in the future. The number of students studying Chinese in U.S schools is still small, but there are possibilities that Chinese becomes more popular now that political and economic barriers between the two nations are being eliminated and the Chinese government is trying to actively establish better economic relationships with the outside world.

**4. Summary**

The analysis of the three languages--Spanish, Japanese, and Chinese--indicates that some economic factors are involved in the recent popularity of these languages; close U.S economic ties with Latin America, the economic might of Japan, and the potentials of the Chinese markets. In each case, foreign direct investment played a part. Of course,

these economic factors alone have not caused the rise of the study of these three languages. Nonetheless, it is hard to deny that these economic factors are closely related to the rise and growth of these languages.

# Chapter 4

## State Response to the Global Economy: the Analysis of Report Recommendations

In the previous chapter, I pointed out some economic factors which seem partly responsible for the rise and growth of three particular languages, Spanish, Japanese, and Chinese. It is, however, state action which brings about significant change in language study in a more direct way. We can guess this from the findings in Chapter 2: the change in the number of higher educational institutions with language requirements for both admission and graduation seems to have much to do with the language boom in the eighties. Therefore, our attention now turns to the state--what role the Federal and state governments have played in improving the statuses of overall foreign language study and particular languages such as Japanese and Chinese in the United States.

In this chapter, I will try to answer this question by analyzing the contents of reports released by various committees, commissions, and task forces which were formed at the state and national levels. In analyzing these reports, I will focus on what they recommended concerning language study and what their justifications for these recommendations were. This chapter is intended to

illustrate how both poor U.S. economic performance and the shrinking middle classes influenced the perception of U.S. political leaders about what is going on in the world economy and how their changed perception, in turn, gave a new meaning to foreign language study in order to improve the competitive edge of the U.S. workforce.

**1. Reports in the late 1970's**

In 1975 a joint committee of the International Education Project of the American Council on Education and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the Department of State published a report which discussed U.S. educational reforms.[1] According to the report, today's world is characterized by its increasing "interdependentness"; political and economic developments in some parts of the world affect directly the lives of Americans. The report enumerates as indicators of this interdependence of the world nuclear threats, increased activities of multinational corporations, the rapid flow of financial capital, commodity prices, food supplies, environmental pollution, and so forth. In this interdependent world the role played by the United States is

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[1] American Council on Education, "Education for Global Interdependence; A Report with Recommendations to the Government/Academic Interface Committee," ERIC ED113263, 1975.

not the same as before. The report states:

> U.S. leadership in the world is no longer obvious or unchallenged. But America is still a major power whose influence causes impressive ripples across the seven seas. In the long run, only an enlightened American public can insure enlightened American policies toward the rest of the world.[2]

To "insure enlightened American policies," American citizens are required to acquire a new ability, which was not given much attention in the past. The committee claims that "the quality and the very security of their lives depend upon their capacity to understand and to negotiate with other nations."[3]

Despite the language needs of Americans to "understand and to negotiate with other nations," the reality is far from satisfactory. The committee deplores, for example, the existing low figures of American students enrolled in foreign language courses and a small number of available language and area experts. For producing more globally-oriented leaders and citizens, the report makes numerous recommendations which governments, both Federal and state, and private foundations should follow. The recommendations include a new way of allocating the NDEA fund; half of the money authorized under the Title VI for support of language

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[2] Ibid., p.17.

[3] Ibid, p.v.

and area centers as before and the other half for support of citizen education such as teacher training and instructional material preparation and dissemination.

An educational reform in the United States is also discussed in relation to business. A report released by a task force in 1977 discusses what new role colleges and universities should play to meet the new needs of the business community.[4] This report, *Business and International Education*, like the one in the pre-global economic era, stresses the importance of internationalizing the school curriculum to produce managers with a sufficient amount of knowledge of foreign languages and cultures. This is because;

> (M)ost business firms, regardless of size and type of operations, will be affected by economic and political developments on the international scene. Most businessmen will, therefore, need an ability to understand and anticipate those effects.[5]

Again, there is a wide gap between the need and the reality. The task force, pointing out the fact that U.S. corporations hire not only college graduates with business degrees but also with other academic backgrounds, recommends that higher

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[4] American Council of Education, Business and International Education; A Report Submitted by the Task force on Business and International Education to the Government/Academic Interface Committee International Education Project American Council on Education, ERIC ED 145741, 1977.

[5] Ibid., p.3.

education should take more responsibility for educating and training an entire body of students in the area of general skills, which include language competence. More specifically, it recommends that colleges and universities re-examine existing foreign language requirements for the improvement of the language competence level of students.[6] As we have seen in Chapter 2, language courses were required by approximately half of the colleges and universities for graduation, and only 18% of the institutions for admission in 1974-75. The task force expects colleges and universities to play a larger role in cooperation with companies to meet their business needs in the global era.

In 1979 a very influential report was released by the Presidents' Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies. According to Burn (1979), a few major developments contributed to the formation of this committee, that is, U.S commitments to the 1975 Helsinki Accords, which require the signatories to promote language study and area studies so that each nation involved will understand each culture and the interests of the State Department and National Security Council in the promotion of foreign area training and

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[6] It is not clear whether Americans' lack of language skills has been a main reason for the decline of the U.S economic position. For a literature review on this theme, see Sue E Barryman.

research.[7]

Although a mandatory clause in the Helsinki Accords may primarily have triggered the investigation of the language and international study situation, the Commission's findings and resulting recommendations were to bring sizable impacts on the status of language study in the nation. In the introduction section the Commission analyzes the new world order and warns the nation of the danger its language incompetence may cause. The report states:

> (T)he situation cries out for a better comprehension of our place and our potential in a world that, though it still expects much from America, no longer takes American supremacy for granted.[8]
>
> We were left with no room for doubt that America's position in the world has changed radically over the last quarter century. Powerful competitors challenge our military and economic position...[9]
>
> We are profoundly alarmed by what we have found: a serious deterioration in this country's language and research capacity, at a time when an increasingly hazardous international military, political and economic environment is making unprecedented demands on America's resources, intellectual capacity and public sensitivity.[10]

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[7] Barbara B. Burn, "The President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies: Its Origin and Work," 1979,

[8] Ibid., p.11.

[9] Ibid., p.11.

[10] The President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies, "Strength through Wisdom: A Critique of U.S. Capability," 1979, p.11.

From the statement above we understand that the economic factor is not the only one identified by the Commission for the necessity of improving Americans' language skills; as in the 1950's and 1960's, the political and military factor still continues to play an important part. Considering multi-roles the state needs to play, this makes sense. However, it is important to note that the economic challenge the United States feels has become an important reason for state action. The economic factor, along with the political and military factors, have come to affect the perception of political leaders at the national level.

The report, after citing disappointing data such as declining trends of language enrollments both in high school and college and a small number of Americans with a workable knowledge of foreign languages and cultures, makes numerous recommendations.

These recommendations made by the Commission are far more extensive than those in the previous reports. The Commission claims that because the nation could not accomplish its national goals of enhancing a level of Americans' language skills and awareness of other cultures without cooperation from numerous sources, it expects each player to perform in each field; players include private foundations, business circles, the media, local communities,

and volunteers, as well as various educational institutions. As a matter of course, the Commission urges colleges and universities to reinstate foreign language requirements for admission and graduation as the first step to improve the language situation in the nation. Moreover, it recommends that all students should study foreign languages and should start it in early grades through carefully arranged programs. Besides these recommendations, the report discusses other strategies such as the upgrading of foreign language teachers, new incentive funds from the Federal Government to schools and post-secondary institutions for foreign language teaching, and more attention to the LCTLs. In implementing these recommendations the Commission stresses that states must play an critical role because of the basic principle of state control of education. The report urges State Departments of Education to appoint language specialists if they do not have any and also urges governors to establish an Advisory Council on Foreign Language and International Studies to advise and recommend on necessary change in local education systems. Concerning citizen education, the report claims that the media, in cooperation with federal agencies and other institutions, should also play a large role in producing globally-conscious citizens, for example, by expanding their international coverage. This Commission's report, along

with a series of reports to be released in the following years, is to affect educational policies of states, specifically language and international study, to a considerable degree in terms of foreign language enrollments, which I will discuss later.

Responding to a newly emerging interdependent world, some states also began to tackle the issue of foreign language study. Because states do not need to deal with the national security problem, the economic factor becomes predominant as the major reason for the promotion of foreign language study and sometimes international study. In the same year as the release of the report by the President's Commission, the Illinois Task Force provided a final report on foreign language and international study. To convince people how critical both foreign language and international studies are to the state, the Task Force lists a number of facts: state's status of a leading exporter of agricultural products, a large portion of population's dependence on foreign trade for all or part of their income, the Governor's plan to invite foreign direct investment for the creation of new jobs, the presence of foreign firms, and so forth. Although the report also mentions non-economic factors such as the presence of a large number of minority group, Hispanics, and other ethnic groups, the facts identified by the Task Forces as critical to the state are

mostly economic, which reflects a high degree of the internationalized Illinois economy. The report points out the fact that people now share only one world:

> What is imperative is for all of us to understand that we are not living in isolation form the rest of the world and that we are not insulated from what happens in the world. All our citizens, in their community, their state, and their country, are in the middle of the concentric circle, linked to a global system on which they are dependent for existence. The air we breathe, the water we drink, the coffee we had for breakfast and the gasoline that fuels our cars are but a few examples of this interdependence.[11]

Based on this realization, the Task Force makes suggestions for an educational reform. Illinois educators, according to the report, must take new responsibility for the production of new types of citizens who have multi-language skills for effective communication. The Task Force also suggests that the new curricula should include, besides language skills, such new skills as an appreciation of world history and the development of sensitivity to a diverse world with different values and attitudes.

**2. Reports in the 1980's**

The 1980's continued to see a series of reports being released by various commissions and task forces, all of which emphasized the nation's or states' needs for action to

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[11] "Report of the Illinois Task force on foreign Language and International Studies," ERIC ED 179116, 1979.

improve language skills as well as knowledge about other nations. In 1983 the National Commission on Excellence in Education released a report titled *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. As the title indicates, this report warns the nation against the serious results which an inadequate U.S education system is creating. A sense of crisis on which the Commission stands results from its perception of the U.S. economy as a strong but not dominant power in the world. The report argues:

> Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world.
>
> The people of the United States need to know that individuals in our society who do not possess the levels of skill, literacy, and training essential to this new era will be effectively disenfranchised, not simply from the material rewards that accompany competent performance, but also from the chance to participate fully in our national life.[12]

The present U.S. education system which does not meet the urgent needs of the nation, naturally, requires educational reforms on a large scale. According to the report, poor performances of U.S. students are not confined only to foreign language study; they also extend to other fields such as science and mathematics. To improve the overall academic level of American students, the Commission

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[12] National Commission on Excellence in Education, "A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform," *The Elementary School Journal*, Nov. 1983, pp.113-30.

recommends that all high school students should obtain a secure knowledge in five important academic areas, which it calls the "Five New Basics": English, mathematics, science, social studies, and computer science. Although foreign language study is not included in these basic subjects, the Commission strongly recommends that college-bound students take foreign language courses for two years besides those taken earlier. In achieving this, the Commission expects four-year colleges and universities to raise their admission requirements.

In the same year another report was released by the Department of Education. The report, *Critical Needs in International Education*, is filled with a sense of national crisis. It stresses the critical needs of Americans' language competence for economic prosperity as well as the nation's security;

> Because of our lack of competence in foreign languages, American business stands to lose markets to foreign competition.[13]

Despite these critical needs of language competence, U.S. higher education does not provide satisfactory education and training for those who will enter private business. Regarding language study, the report points out the

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[13] National Advisory Board on International Education Programs, "Critical Needs in International Education: Recommendations for Action. A Report to the Secretary of Education," ERIC ED 247201, 1983, p.5.

uniqueness of U.S. higher education in comparison to educational systems in other nations.

> The United States remains one of the few countries where students may graduate from a university without studying a foreign language throughout their formal education.[14]

Unlike other reports, a few of the recommendations by the report include not the mere credit requirements but reinstate language proficiency requirements for both college admission and graduation and the development of advanced curricula and materials for elementary and secondary students in the CTLs and LCTLs.

Responding to frequent calls for the improvement of language and international study in educational institutions from government agencies and other organizations, higher education began to seek better education and curricula, which fit the new needs in the new age. In 1985 the American Association of Colleges and Universities offered guidelines for higher educational institutions to improve and enhance the international dimensions of their curricula. The report argues the expected role of today's higher education in the following way;

> In the modern world, quality is measured by the degree to which colleges, in their organization, instruction, research, and external relations, provide students with the knowledge, skills, and attitude necessary for

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[14] Ibid., p.3.

living in an interdependent world.[15]

Because the purpose of this report is to set guidelines which colleges and universities can use in their efforts to provide "the knowledge, skills, and attitude necessary for living in an interdependent world," the recommendations do not say specifically how higher educational institutions should change their curricula and what they should change. Instead, the report encourages them to create better curricula by asking themselves questions like, "Is foreign language proficiency required for general education? for liberal arts majors? for professional studies majors?"[16]

In 1987 a report, *The United States Prepares for Its Future*, addressed the issue of what knowledge and skills should be taught to students.[17] The report recommends that as many subject areas as possible in primary and secondary school should be approached from the global perspective. Naturally this emphasis encourages the development of communication skills or foreign language study, particularly

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[15] American Association of State Colleges and Universities, "Guidelines: Incorporating an international Dimension in Colleges and Universities," ERIC ED 256213, 1985, p.1.

[16] Ibid., p.6.

[17] Global Perspective in Education, "The United States Prepares for Its Future: Global Perspectives in Education. Report of the Study Commission on Global Education," ERIC ED 283758, 1987.

at the primary level.

The emergence of an interdependent and competitive world affects not only the U.S. school system but also other educational programs. A report released in 1988 discussed the new direction in which the international exchange programs should proceed.[18] The report explains why the exchange programs need to be more internationalized;

> Despite our position of international leadership for almost fifty years, we are ill-prepared for the changes in business, manufacturing, diplomacy, science and technology that have come with an intensely interdependent world...The Advisory Council on International Educational Exchange believes that if we fail to internationalize sufficiently our educational institutions, including expansion of students opportunities for study and work abroad, we will irreversibly diminish the world status of the United States.[19]

This report recommends, for example, an increase in the number of exchange students and the establishment of new educational programs with an emphasis on non-Western countries in the Western Pacific Rim as well as in the rest of Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe. This new emphasis on non-Western countries is necessary because:

Some are providing us our greatest economic challenge

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[18] Council on International Educational exchange,"Educating for Global Competence: The Report of the Advisory Council for International Educational Exchange," ERIC ED 305833, 1988.

[19] Ibid., p.1.

> and some are sending us our newest immigrants...The United States cannot continue to deal from a position of ignorance with people who have such an impact on us."[20]

The Council expects leadership to come especially from colleges and universities, making substantial adjustments in their procedure and priorities.

In 1989 the governors' version of "Nation at Risk" was published. The National Governor's Association declared in this report, *America in Transition*," that states must accomplish a new task of internationalizing their school curricula at all educational levels from preschool to graduate school and beyond to respond to a changing world. The report describes this rapidly changing world as follows:

> More than ever before our economic well-being is intertwined with that of other countries through expanding international trade financial markets and investments. More than ever before, our national security --- indeed, world stability as a whole, depends upon our understanding of and communication with other countries.[21]

After discussing the economic benefits this knowledge about other nations, including language skills, will bring to

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[20] Ibid., p.13.

[21] National Governor's Association, "American in Transition: The International Frontier. Report of the Task Force on International Education," ERIC ED 316447, 1989, p.9.

states,[22] the report continues;

> To compete Americans must know more about their economic partners and competitors, allies and foes. To do business overseas Americans must understand the customer's language and customs.[23]

In discussing the timing of foreign language instruction, the report points out that language instruction in the nation usually starts at a very late stage, high school in many cases, while many countries usually provide language instruction in elementary schools. It also points out that language instruction is seldom offered in such major languages as Japanese, Russian, Arabic, and Chinese.[24] Consequently, the new objectives identified by the association include increased opportunities for all elementary students to learn to speak a second language and the enhancement of the language skill level of all college and university graduates. For the accomplishment of these goals, the report recommends that states play a more active

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[22] The report provides some episodes as good examples which reflect the advantages of having more knowledge about other nations. For example, the Governors discovery in Hong Kong that chicken feet were served at a delicacy brought a new business to several poultry producers in his home state, who previously threw chicken feet away. Another example is a wood products plant in a southern state which succeeded in exporting their products, paper and pulp, to Indonesia because of the executive's knowledge about the establishment of new laws in that nation.

[23] Ibid.,16.

[24] Ibid., p.13.

role. i.e., by strengthening admission and graduation standards for colleges and universities in their states. The report further argues that these new agenda are to be achieved in cooperation with the local and business community.

In the same year, the American Council on Education published a report on international and foreign language competence.[25] The report provides concrete suggestions to implement the recommendations offered by the various previous reports. These suggestions, however, are not significantly different from the ones provided before. The report states that language study should start as early as possible, maybe in elementary school, and colleges and universities should provide advanced courses in the LCTLs such as Japanese, Chinese, and Russian, because these language courses are increasingly provided at secondary schools.

## The Effects of Committee Recommendations on Language Study

We have reviewed a number of committee and task force reports issued since the mid-seventies at both the local and national level, almost all of which emphasized the

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[25] American Council on Education, "What We Can't Say Can Hurt Us. A Call for Foreign Language Competence by the Year 2000," ERIC ED318228, 1989.

importance of language study. Then what are the effects of these reports on national and state policies on language study in the nation? One study was conducted by the Joint National Committee for Languages to see what change has occurred in secondary school language study between 1979 and 1989.[26] According to this study, in which 36 states responded to questionnaire, the sharp increase in language enrollments at all educational levels is observed during the period, as we saw in the previous chapter. In 1978 the majority (29 states) had 10-20% of their secondary students enrolled in foreign language courses, while in 1988 the majority (31 states) had 21-30% of the students enrolled. In addition to this overall rise in language enrollments, some states introduced more extensive measures to insure minimum language skills for a larger population of students. For example, in Louisiana all fourth through eighth graders are required to study a foreign language. Students in New York are required to take language courses for two years before completing grade 9.[27] Moreover, the period from 1979 to 1989 witnessed an increase in the types of languages offered to students. The study mentions Arabic, Chinese,

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[26] Jamie B. Draper, "The STATE OF THE STATES; State Initiatives in Foreign Languages and International Studies, 1979 - 1989, ERIC ED 320390, 1989.

[27] Draper, op. cit. p.2.

and Japanese as the ones which saw a major increase mainly through satellite instruction and other forms of distance learning.

Judging from these study findings, the recommendations made by a series of reports brought significant effects on language study in U.S. elementary and secondary school.

U.S. political leaders' realization of the nation's critical language situation eventually resulted in the introduction of two bills in Congress in 1989, although neither of them passed. One bill is cited as the Critical Languages and Area Studies Program Assistance Act, in which the term "critical languages" means Chinese, Japanese, Russian and Arabic.[28] This bill stated clearly that the lack of knowledge in other languages and culture is the main obstacle to the better performance of the U.S. economy.

> The economic and political objectives of the United States favoring greater international cooperation are being severely impeded by the lack of knowledge of foreign languages and international affairs on the part of American citizens. This lack of competence has contributed to the largest international trade deficit in our Nation's history by undermining the ability of United States firms to deal with foreign clients and to

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[28] U.S Senate, Subcommittee on Education, Arts and Humanities of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources, "Foreign Language Competence for the Future Act of 1989: hearing before the Subcommittee on Education, Arts, and Humanities of the committee on Labor and Human Resources," Y4. L. 11/4: hrg.101-435, 1989, p.119.

compete with better trained foreign competitors.[29] This bill was designed to develop educational equipment, materials, facilities, teacher-training programs, texts, curriculum, and other activities for the improvement and expansion of critical languages and area studies in secondary and elementary schools across the nation by authorizing grants (a maximum of $5 million) to eligible consortiums.

The other bill, the Foreign Language Competence for the Future Act of 1989, was designed to provide grants to institutions of higher education or consortia of such institutions for the development of proficiency of elementary and secondary foreign language teachers. The justification of these grants was that:

> The future economic welfare and national security of the United States will substantially depend upon our ability to educate our citizens to communicate in other languages."[30]

As I mentioned earlier, these two bills did not pass. This indicates that the majority of political leaders did not believe that improved language competence of Americans was at the root of better economic performance of the nation.

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[29] Senate Bills, 101st Congress 1st Session, S. 1540, 226 F7, pp.1-2.

[30] Senate Bills, S.1690, 101st Congress 1st Session, 268 B4, pp.1-2. 1989.

Unlike military and technological threats as in the Sputnik scare, the economic transformation does not appear to affect the perception of political leaders immediately. Nonetheless, the fact that two bills designed to promote foreign language study were introduced to Congress indicates that languages needs for an interdependent world are being felt by an increasing number of political leaders.

**3. Reports in the early nineties**

Some states continue to respond to recommendations made by various committees or task forces in the previous decades. For example, Michigan State Board of Education released a report on foreign language study at K-12 levels.[31] According to the report, the reason for studying foreign language is that:

> Foreign language skills enhance the capability of the people of Michigan and of the United States to do business and to encourage policymaking at international levels.[32]

The report also states:

> During the 1970s, both the public and private sectors of the U.S. economy began to realize that they would have to learn to compete in the international marketplace of the global economy. Beginning with the publication of the Report of the President's Commission

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[31] Michigan State Board of Education, "Michigan Essential goals and Objectives for foreign Language Education (K-12)," ERIC ED 344471, 1990.

[32] Michigan State Board of Education, op. cit. p.iii.

> on Foreign Languages and international Studies in 1979, many government agencies and official began to equate the knowledge of foreign languages and cultures with superiority in the international economic arena....Foreign languages are now seen to have a functional, practical value instead of the purely intellectual role assigned to them in the past.[33]

Although the report does not advocate one particular methodology in teaching foreign languages, it emphasizes a communicative approach in fulfilling today's needs. This is because today U.S. citizens have more opportunities than before to communicate with people from other parts of the world because of rapidly developing communication and transportation technology. The board summarizes that "in short, the focus should be on teaching more languages to more students at more age levels."[34] Then, the report sets guidelines for effective ways to teach foreign languages at each educational level, including curriculum development and evaluation strategies.

In 1991 a survey was conducted by the Joint National Committee for Languages to see whether there had been any change in the status of language study in elementary and secondary schools.[35] The survey, which received responses

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[33] Michigan State Board of Education, op. cit. p.3.

[34] Ibid., p.3.

[35] Jamie B. Draper, "Dreams, Realities, and Nightmares: The Present and Future of Foreign Language Education In the United States," ERIC ED 336953, 1991.

from thirty-seven states, found that there were fourteen states which have over 35% of their high school students enrolled in language courses, seven states, over 40%, and four states, at 45% or above. Although these figures may not be very impressive compared with those in other nations, foreign language study in the United States, according to the survey, is improving slowly.

This survey also asked some questions about ideal forms of foreign language instruction. According to the survey, the vast majority of respondents felt that not only the academically advanced or college-bound students but also other students could benefit from foreign language study. Consequently, a substantial majority of respondents believed that all students should be required to take some language courses. To do so, the respondents felt there should also be language requirements at the elementary level, rather than waiting until the secondary level. Further, all respondents agreed that there should be as wide a variety of second languages as possible offered to students, but with a special emphasis on the LCTLs. These beliefs of the respondents are likely to continue to boost language study enrollments in elementary and secondary schools in the 1990's.

**4. Summary**

The analysis of the various reports reveals that the Federal and state governments have played an important role in promoting language and international study in the form of report recommendations, which led to the establishment of new language education policies in some states. Recommendations were made by many types of committees and task forces created by both the Federal and state governments' and sometimes the business community's initiatives. Almost all reports recommended reforms in language education at all educational levels to improve Americans' ability to communicate with people from other parts of the world so as to survive the newly-formed world economic order. These recommendations were based on committee or task force members' realization that language skills could help the United States to perform better economically and militarily.

In the pre-global economic era (the 1950's and 1960's) the national security was the main reason for the promotion of language study, which makes sense when we consider the presence of the Cold War. However, in the global economic era the governments began to refer to the global economy, or international competition, as one of the major reasons for the promotion of foreign language study. This was especially the case with the reports released by state

committees and task forces because states basically do not need to deal with the issue of national security. State leaders' awareness of the global economy led to a variety of recommendations from an early start in language instruction to mandatory language study. Needless to say, these recommendations included the restoration of language requirements for college admission and graduation. Furthermore, some reports stressed the importance of studying the "critical languages," which appears to have contributed to the growth of unfamiliar languages to American students such as Japanese and Chinese.

The shift of the U.S. economic position in the world seems to have made both the Federal and state governments more active in order to enhance a level of language competence in the nation.

# Chapter 5

## Language Needs in Business

The analysis of the reports in the previous chapter indicated that U.S. leaders perceived the declining position of the United States in the global era and felt the necessity of changing the educational system. As a result, most of these reports recommended various measures to meet today's language needs, in part, for the purpose of improving the performance of the U.S. economy. Some reports dealt directly with this issue of the relationship between language skills and economic performance.

As the examination of these reports shows, both the federal and state governments responded to the emergence of the new economic order. But what about U.S. corporations which do business in foreign countries? U.S. corporations, as we saw in the literature review, adopted new business policies such as the reorganization of their work force and active investment abroad as a consequence of new economic challenges from outside. Did these new policies include the improvement of language skills of employees? More specifically, did U.S. corporations begin to recruit a larger number of high school or college graduates with a good command of foreign languages and provide language training for their employees more extensively in order to

increase their market shares or develop new markets? If global competition were powerful enough to force U.S. companies to change their traditional ways of doing business, it would seem logical to reason that this was the case. In this chapter, I examine corporate responses to the global economy to see if there has been any change in U.S. firms' views of and attitudes towards language competence.

The recommendations suggested by most reports were based on the view that language skills and area knowledge are critical in improving the performance of the U.S. economy, but research findings do not necessarily share this view. According to Berryman and et al.(1979), there are two competing views of the role of language skills in business.[1] One view argues that language skills are not critical for business activities of U.S. corporations because the U.S economy has been developed based on the expansion of the domestic market and, more importantly, because the wide use of English as the lingua-franca in world business transactions makes Americans' mastery of foreign language less necessary. When language skills are required for business dealing with foreign countries, U.S. corporations can turn to foreign nationals who speak English. The other

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[1] Sue E. Berryman and et. al., *Foreign Language and International Studies Specialists: The Marketplace and National Policy*, Santa Monica, Ca: the Rand Corporation, 1979.

view argues that an inadequate level of language competence of U.S. workers has been one of the main reasons for losing battles by U.S. companies abroad. According to this view, it is critical for U.S. education to provide adequate language courses for students. And the studies I reviewed seem to support the latter view of language skills, that is, the U.S. corporations do not see language ability as a critical asset of their human resources.

**1. The View of Language Skills As Irrelevant**

Inman (1979) conducted a study in 1977, in which 184 U.S. corporations doing business abroad were examined. She found that language ability of an employee was neither considered seriously as a criterion for overseas assignments, nor did it help to increase his or her salary.[2] Naturally, U.S. corporations did not establish firm language policies. For example, major responses from the corporations were "no official policies," "not required," or "desirable but optional." Only a few corporations reported that they required foreign language proficiency from some segment of their employees. Even when language training was provided, the period of study was short, usually between 100

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[2] Marianne Inman, "Foreign Languages, English as Second/Foreign Languages, and the U.S. Multinational Corporations," Language in Education: *Theory and Practice*, vol. 16, Virginia: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1979.

to 120 hours, which is hardly possible to bring learners up to a workable level of language proficiency.

In contrast, many large Japanese corporations have a different view of language skills.

> Many Japanese multinationals consider language an important criterion in the selection of a candidate for overseas assignment, although its rank ordering has decreased relative to technical and administrative skills." [3]

As if to prove this difference in corporate views on language skills, expatriates of Japanese multinationals achieve higher rates of success than their U.S. counterparts.[4] Expatriates of European multinationals also report a higher success rate. These different policies of language skills seem to derive mainly from different economy orientation in two types of economies. To traditionally export-oriented nations such as Japan and Western European nations, it is likely that language competence has been seen as an important business asset in developing a larger market share. In contrast, the U.S. economy grew based on the expansion of the domestic market. What is more, the U.S. was the only economic giant for approximately two decades

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[3] Rosalie L. Tung, "Language Training and Beyond: The Case of Japanese Multinationals," Richard D. Lambert (ed.) *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, London: Sager Publications, vol 511, sep. 1990, p.99.

[4] Ibid.,p.106.

after World War II. These economic conditions allowed U.S. corporations not to pay attention to business strategies in order to make their products and services more competitive and more appealing.

Inman's study also found that corporations regarded the knowledge of some foreign languages as more valuable than others:

> Most companies felt that a foreign language proficiency for their U.S. national employees is more important in some areas of the world than others. Central and South America were ranked first, followed by the Middle East and Western Europe. Those areas where a foreign language proficiency was accorded less importance included the Far East, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, Africa, Canada, and India.[5]

As we see in Chapter 3, the demands of the business community for Spanish were already high in the late 1970's.

A relatively easy access to foreign nationals with English competence leads to U.S. corporations' hiring more local nationals in foreign countries. The main reasons cited by U.S corporations for this were, according to Inman, the lower costs of hiring local nationals than sending American employees overseas and the wide usage of English in business.

Berryman and et. al (1979) reached the same conclusion about U.S corporations' view of language skills. They interviewed representatives of 43 American firms, 5 foreign

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[5] Inman, op. cit. p.5.

firms, and 2 non-profit organizations which were actively involved in international business. What Berryman and et. al. found in this study was that U.S. companies, generally speaking, placed little emphasis on language skills, because English was widely used in world business, and English-speaking foreign nationals were easily available.

The prevalence of this type of view towards language skills among U.S. corporations, as a matter of course, discourages their employees from mastering foreign languages. What is worse, employees may try not to be proficient in foreign languages on purpose because language skills may place a person in a disadvantageous position.

> The employee may even consider it detrimental to acquire these skills (language skills) for fear of being frozen into an overseas position when the most promising career prospects are at home.[6]

One interesting finding of the study reflects U.S. firms' attitudes towards language skills. When asked what type of college graduates they want to hire to improve the staffing of U.S business, many respondents reported that they wanted the ones who could write English well, rather than who had foreign language and area skills!

As opposed to this language-skills-as-irrelevant view of many U.S. corporations, some industries such as international law, management consulting, and international

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[6] Ibid., p.124.

journalism see language ability as a critical asset. For example, Berryman et. al. found that international law firms had difficulty in recruiting lawyers with the knowledge of French, German, Chinese, and Japanese. Newspaper companies also had difficulty in recruiting reporters with the knowledge of Arabic, Farsi, Russian, Chinese, and Japanese.

Like Inmans' study, this study found that bank and other business firms placed more emphasis on the knowledge of some languages such as Spanish and Portuguese as essential for American expatriates serving in Latin America. On the other hand, the study also found that the demands of U.S. corporations for language and area experts in special areas where new markets are opening up were increasing, notably Chinese, Arabic, and Russian.[7]

The studies I examined so far refer to U.S. corporate attitudes towards language skills in 1970's, when the full force of global competition began to be acutely felt. How about studies conducted more recently? An examination of such studies also revealed the same type of attitudes of U.S corporations toward language ability. Lambert (1990)

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[7] A 1990 survey reported that an increasing number of higher educational institutions offered Chinese and Japanese for business and professional students. (Christine Uber Grosse and Georffey M. Voght, "Foreign Languages for Business and the Professions at U.S Colleges and Universities," *The Modern Language Journal*, vol.74, spring 1990.

studied 600 graduates of three best-known international business programs which combined general business courses with foreign language training and international studies.[8] The study found that a relatively small number of U.S. corporations which hired the respondents provided language training (only a third) and that language competence did not make a significant difference in economic rewards and promotion. Further, the study found that a small portion of the graduates of the language institutes were not posted abroad. Lambert attributed this to the high cost of sending American personnel to foreign countries as one of the main reasons for this low degree of utilization of human resources.[9]

Another example is a study conducted by Jorden and Lambert (1991). They studied 17 U.S corporations including all types of industries from food to aerospace, all of which had offices in Japan.[10] According to their study, these

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[8] Richard D. Lambert, "Foreign Language Use Among International Business Graduates," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 511, London: Sager Publications, Sep. 1990.

[9] According to Lambert, it costs an American company $300,000 on the average to send an executive to Great Britain for the first year, while it costs approximately one million to send more senior executives to countries such as Japan.

[10] Eleanor H. Jorden and Richard D. Lambert, "Japanese Language Instruction in the United States: Resources, Practices and investment Strategy," ERIC ED 342236, 1991.

corporations usually used Japanese native speakers rather than American employees with Japanese competence in handling business activities which required the knowledge of Japanese. These U.S. corporations in Japan took advantage of native speakers of Japanese, by hiring and assigning them for all positions except upper-level management. Naturally, the corporations showed little concerns with improving the overall level of language proficiency of American nationals, and, consequently, language training was rarely provided. The U.S. corporations had not only hired very few Americans with a good command of Japanese in the past three years but also had little interest in hiring such Americans for the next few years. Because the study does not include information about employment policies based on each occupational level, we do not know whether this is occurring only at upper-level management or all levels.

Although the great majority of the American corporations in Japan is not eager to employ U.S. citizens with Japanese language ability, there are some exceptions. For example, according to Jorden and Lambert, a U.S. translation company hired seven Americans with Japanese language skills in the last three years. And the company reported its intention to hire five more Americans. Another example is an information service company. The company hired ten Americans in the last three years, and intended to

hire ten more in the next three years. These two American companies, because of the very nature of their industries, seemed to be placing an emphasis on language skills, but this type of companies is still exceptional.

These findings are disheartening to the students who study Japanese. Although the majority of American high school students, as we saw in Chapter 3, study the language, expecting the Japanese skill to help them to find a better job, it is unlikely that they can do so. After all, no matter how hard Americans study Japanese, they cannot reach the level of native speakers.

These findings are not always applicable to the attitudes of U.S. corporations towards other languages because, as I mentioned earlier, language skills in some languages such as Spanish are highly appreciated by U.S. corporations. However, the study review indicates that for U.S. corporations language skills are something which can be purchased. As long as English remains an international language and there exists a large number of people who speak the language in other nations, this situation will continue.

**2. The View of Language Skills As Relevant**

Although the literature review seems to indicate that U.S. corporations operating abroad generally tend to attach a low priority to language skills, there is an opposing view

to this interpretation. This view argues that the failure of U.S. corporations to pay attention to these skills is partly responsible for the loss of the U.S. market share in the world. Following this view, it is critical for U.S. corporations to improve language skills of their employees if they are to recover America's previous economic strength. However, empirical evidences which supports this view are not strong.[11] Although I could not find such empirical studies which support this view, I did find some literature which suggested that the lack of efforts by U.S. corporations to improve language competence seemed to have contributed to the declining market share of U.S. corporations. For example, Inman reviewed the literature which dealt with possible links between low status given to language skills in U.S. corporations and their business performance. According to one scholar cited by Inman:

> There is considerable evidence in the literature and in the studies that have been performed by international business experts that this attitude (insisting on English as the operating language) is detrimental to the overall operating potential of American businesses abroad and for firms in the U.S. doing foreign business.[12]

A following episode of an American executive in Europe cited by Inman also makes this point:

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[11] Sue E. Berryman and et. al., op. cit.

[12] Arnett 1976, quoted in Inman, op. cit. p.7.

> After living seven years in a French-speaking community, he was unable to say or understand "bonjour," and his superior and indifferent attitude antagonized the distributors. The initial successes can be traced to the strength of the product itself and the lack of competition. Once competition appeared, immediately the U.S. manufacturer suffered; even though the new competitive product was not superior, the obliging and positive business attitude of the competitor literally won over the distributors and swept the market.[13]

In order to explain the importance of studying local languages in business, Paul Simon (1980) used his own experience. When he tried to buy a few things, he found that:

> But for most supplies, competitive prices were fairly close, and then I bought the salesperson rather than the product. The salesperson who knew about my family and my interests, who had read an article I had written---who "spoke my language"---got me as a customer. If someone had come to my office speaking only Japanese, he might have had the best product in the world but I would probably not have bought from him. The world market is not different. To sell effectively in Italy, speak Italian.[14]

He cited other episodes, one of which indicate what language is most important for successful business:

> Visiting in Paris, Jack Kolbert, president of Monterey Institute of International Studies, asked a Japanese businessman, there to negotiate a big contract, what language he thought was most important for world trade. In fluent French, the Japanese businessman replied, "Sir, the most useful international language in world trade is not necessarily English, but rather it is the

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[13] Vogel 1968, quoted in Inman, op. cit. p.8.

[14] Paul Simon, The Tongue-tied American, New York: Continuum, 1980, p.31.

language of your client.[15]

All the quotes used here point to the fact that U.S. corporations need to change their views of language skills in conducting foreign business. However, as I mentioned before, there are no recent statistical data or case studies available which prove the validity of this interpretation. Although I cannot conclude based on the studies which I covered here whether or not the economic transformation has had a sizable impact on language policies of U.S. corporations, they do not seem to have changed their views considerably on the role of language skills in business.

**3. Summary**

The lack of necessary information makes it hard for me to draw definite conclusions about the impact of the global economy on language policies of U.S. corporations. As far as the studies I reviewed are concerned, most U.S. corporations seem to have little interest in improving their language skills. This English-only policy seems to be a result of the current status of English as an international language, which is a product of U.S. political and economic power in the pre-global economic era. However, there are also the conflicting views and some episodes which indicate

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[15] Ibid., p.27.

that little attention given to language skills by U.S. corporations has partly contributed to the loss of the American market share. In order to test the validity of each explanation, more studies need to be conducted, studies on how U.S. corporations' language policies have changed historically, what effects the English-only policy has brought on the market shares of U.S. corporations, what U.S. industries have abandoned their English policies, and so forth.

# Chapter 6

# Conclusion and Discussion

## 1. Validity of Five Predictions

The previous chapters gave an answer to the validity of each of the five predictions I made in the beginning. The first prediction was that the emergence of the global economy increased the total number of American students who took language courses, and that it also made the modern foreign languages (MFLs) more appealing to the students because of their practical values. The study indicated that the first part of the predictions was correct, and the second part was inconclusive, depending on educational levels. The study found that language course enrollments at all educational levels, as I predicted, rose in the global economic era, especially in the late 1980's. Although the MFL share increased since 1960 and occupied a great part of language study at the college level, this trend did not necessarily start in the global era; the sixties already witnessed a rapid popularity of the MFLs. What is more, the proportion of students who studied classical languages (Latin and ancient Greek) remained stable during the past three decades. On the other hand, a slightly different trend was observed at the high school level. Latin high school students (the information of students who studied

ancient Greek was not available) began to decrease since the late 1960's and remained at the same level in the late 1970's and 1980's, while MFL high school students increased dramatically during the 1980's. From these findings, I can conclude that the global economy itself did not cause the decline of ancient languages as long as colleges and public high schools were concerned.

The second prediction, that languages of nations which have increasing strong economic ties with the United States experienced rising popularity among American students, was tested by conducting case studies of three popular languages: Spanish, Japanese, and Chinese. The study found this prediction correct. In each case, some economic indicators suggested that there existed growing economic relations between the United States and these nations or areas in which three language are used. One main reason of an increasing popularity of Spanish, the most widely studied language in the United States, seemed to be an active commitment of U.S. corporations to Latin America. In addition, the on-going political, economic development---North American Free Trade Agreement---is likely to strengthen the position of the Spanish language as the most valuable foreign language to study in the future. The Japanese language boom is also interpreted as the result of an increasing importance of Japan as an economic partner for

the United States in terms of foreign direct investment and exports and imports relation between two nations. Although China does not occupy a very important position in the U.S. economy, the future economic potentials which the Chinese market would provide to the U.S. seem to have contributed to a steady increase in the number of American students studying the language.

The third prediction that higher educational institutions with language requirements for admission and graduation increased in number in the global economic era was correct. The examination of the pattern of increase in the number of these institutions revealed that this institutional change was mainly responsible for the increase in language enrollments in public high schools and colleges. Moreover, this institutional change was the result of the pressures from many sources to produce college graduates with language competence.

The fourth prediction, that the global economy urged U.S. leaders to reform U.S. education for the purpose of improving language proficiency of Americans, was also correct. The analysis of a number of reports at both local and national levels revealed that the emergence of the global economy was the main reason for the nation's efforts to improve the level of language competence of Americans. The promotion of foreign language study was recommended by

almost all kinds of committees as a means to strengthen the U.S. economic position in the world.

Finally, the validity of the fifth prediction, that the global economy forced U.S corporations to change their views on the values of language skills in business, is inconclusive from this study. The review of study findings, however, pointed to the fact that U.S. corporations usually place little emphasis on language skills, although some evidence supports the view that inadequate language skills have been contributing to the decreasing market share of U.S. corporations in the world. Because there exist no empirical studies which provide adequate information of the effects of English-only policy on business activities, a conclusion cannot reach until further studies are conducted.

**2. Conclusion**

It usually depends upon social, political and economic developments in the world what languages individuals choose for study and what languages the state encourages them to study. Under certain circumstances one particular factor becomes more influential. This seems to be the case with the economic factor in the global economic era.

The emergence of the global economy became a major force in influencing the position of foreign languages in the U.S. school curriculum. Although consideration of

domestic forces such as academic theories and conflicts among ethnic groups is important, this study shows that consideration of global forces is critical when dealing with foreign languages in the school curriculum. As Wallerstein (1974) suggests, it is necessary for us to consider the structure of the whole economic system in order to understand why particular foreign languages are taught in school.

Functional theorists are correct because an increased degree of interdependence in the world requires U.S. schools to teach foreign languages to students. However, conflict theorists are also correct because this study shows that demands from the business community for school graduates with proper language skills and international perspectives made a contribution to changes in school curricula, although I cannot show how much pressure the business community put on governments.

As global economists pointed out, the period since the early 1970's created new economic and social environments. Intensified international competition changed strategies of some U.S. corporations, which contributed to changes in the U.S. class system. This was because under the new circumstances those who possessed high skills could increase their incomes, and those who did not possess such skills lost what they had gained before, according to Reich (1991).

And language proficiency was considered as one of these skills by U.S. political leaders. They believed that the U.S. economy would improve if U.S. students acquired adequate foreign language skills and international perspectives.

This is why both federal and state governments were actively involved in efforts to increase global competitiveness of the nation by producing U.S. citizens with language competence. In this respect the interest of State coincided with that of Capital, although there is a slight difference between the two actors in their views on the role of language skills in business. The Federal Government once played an important role in the pre-global economic era when it felt threats from the former Soviet Union; in the global economic era it begun to do the same thing in language education when it felt economic threats from other developed countries. This highly visible involvement of the Federal Government can be said to be one of new phenomena which the global economy created.

However, the global economy did not change U.S. corporate views on language skills on a large scale. An enhanced degree of global competition made U.S. capital more mobile across the national border, seeking more profits. And I believed that this enhanced capital mobility required U.S. corporations to change their views on language skills

in order to sell their products and services to possible customers by improving their communication skills. However, as opposed to my expectations, it seems that their views have remained almost unchanged. It is true that some American industries such as international laws and information service are trying to employ more linguistically competent workers, but the general trend is that the great majority of U.S. corporations still adhere to English-only policy. The two reasons for this policy are possibly that 1) English is still widely used on international business scenes, and that the economic power of the United States continues to support it today; and 2) Language ability can be obtained relatively easily by U.S. corporations all over the world due to this current status of English. Because locals who speak English are abundant world-wide, U.S. corporations can hire them without much difficulty.

In addition to changes in the behavior of U.S. students, governments, we need to pay attention to changes the global economy brought about in the status of some foreign languages. The increasing importance of the economic agenda in the new economic order has made previously uncommon languages more common. This is especially the case with Japanese and Chinese. Although the portion of the LCTLs is still very small, it is increasing gradually. This new phenomenon can be understood only when

it is associated with the global economy. Penalosa (1981) stated that the Japanese language could not strengthen its position in the hierarchical order of languages owing to its "difficult" and "exotic" nature, despite Japan's increased economic dominance in the world,[1] but the Japanese language boom in U.S. schools shows that this is not correct. The economic power or potentials of a nation are sometimes powerful enough to motivate people to study "difficult" and "exotic" languages.

Although I have discussed the importance of the economic factor, I have no intention to conclude that the economic strength of a nation or economic ties of a nation with the United States exclusively determines the popularity of its language. The incorrectness of this type of extreme view becomes clear when we consider, for example, the case of The Netherlands, which invested its capital heavily in the U.S. but failed to improve the status of her language. As this example shows, many other variables such as historical relationships between two nations and personal preference for foreign languages need to be considered to answer the question, why some language become popular. Nevertheless, it cannot be underestimated that the economic

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[1] Fernando Penalosa, "Introduction to the Sociology of Language, Rowley, Mass: Newbury Howe Publishers, Inc. 1981.

factor is one of the most influential factors. Only by referring to the economic transformation which started in the early 1970's can we explain part of the recent trends in language study in U.S schools and state action. As Durkheim (1977) pointed out in his analysis of the impact of the economic transformation in the Renaissance era, the reconstruction of the new economic order has made sizable impact on the status of some foreign languages, students behavior, and state action.

Does this mean that the Federal Government will take a stronger initiative and that many states will embrace a stronger language policies in the future? It is true that some states are tackling more aggressively with the language issue, for example, by mandating language study for all students, but it is not clear whether this type of language policy will spread to other states and become a mainstream policy in the future, considering two factors: the economic power of the U.S. economy and the status of English. The United States, although it is not the only economic superpower any longer, will continue to be a powerful industrial nation. This fact will also affect the second factor, the status of English; the economic strength of the United States will continue to support the wide usage of English as an international language. Because the presence of an international language such as English makes it easy

for people with different cultural backgrounds to decide which foreign language they need to study and to communicate with each other through the knowledge of that language, English is likely to remain as widely used as it is in the future. Considering these two factors, there will be no dramatic change in language education in the United States. Many states may encourage students to study foreign languages, but not in a mandatory way. That is to say, language study in the United States may continue to change slowly but up to a certain limit.

However, there are some possibilities that this change in language study may be accelerated. If it is true that the English-only policy of many U.S. corporations, as some episodes in the previous chapter indicate, is damaging the activities of U.S. corporations, and if business leaders notice this, increasing demands for Americans with sufficient language competence from the business community might accelerate the speed of educational reform on a much larger and faster scale.

### 3. Some Suggestions for Future Studies

Finally, I would like to discuss some issues which this study posed. First of all, this study could not cover the trends in language study in private high schools, especially prestigious ones, due to the lack of data. Although the

information of public high schools showed that classical languages are studied by a very small number of students, private high schools may have completely different trends, that is, classical languages may still occupy a dominant place in their curricula. This is because prestigious private high schools usually have a different student population; the students are likely to come from a family of high social class and status. According to Kerbo (1991), children of the social elite form life-long relationship in private high schools and particular fraternities in prestigious private colleges, which will help them in business and political activities later in life.[2] In this sense prestigious private high schools are, as Bourdieu claims, exactly the places for transforming material wealth into cultural capital. Because the students are future leaders of society, the schools may be able to continue to offer classical languages without worrying about the practical values language study will bring to students. This may not be the case, and private high schools may have very similar trends in language study as those in public high schools. In any event, this area needs further exploration.

Secondly, foreign language as a school subject needs to

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[2] Harold R, Kerbo, *Social Stratification and Inequality*, (2nd ed.) New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc. 1991

be considered in association with the inequality-producing mechanism in school. According to Oakes (1985), the practice of tracking in many junior high and senior high schools determines who can take what courses, and it eventually contributes to the widening of inequality among students.[3] College-bound high school students are usually the ones who take or are encouraged to take foreign language courses. For this reason, an increase in language requirements for college admission and graduation may simply mean that only students with parents who can afford to send their sons and daughters to college will have a greater opportunity to study foreign languages. Those with parents who cannot afford it will not be given any opportunity to expose themselves to language study. Some states are making efforts to provide equal opportunity to every students by mandating language study, but others are not. Today language skills may not be making a big difference to the majority of people in finding jobs and building their lives, but it may be so in the future. It needs to be examined further as to what difference unequal exposure to academic courses makes.

Thirdly, the analysis of foreign language study posed a question concerning U.S. policies of immigrant treatment.

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[3] Jeannie Oakes, Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Although newly-arrived immigrants possess the ability to speak their native languages, the U.S. policy has been to Americanize them as soon as possible, which means that immigrants are required to master English and, at the same time, neglect their native languages. Baron (1990) observes:

> The American linguistic situation produces an almost inescapable paradox. Minority-language speakers are encouraged to abandon their native tongues and become monolingual in English to demonstrate their patriotism, their willingness to assimilate, and their desire to enter the economic mainstream. Once they do this, they are encouraged---with the same arguments of patriotism and economic advantage---to learn a foreign languages in order to strengthen their countries' position in the international area.[4]

If this observation is true, the present national language needs could be rather easily met by utilizing human resources of immigrants. However, this is unlikely because there is a class and race dimension to be considered. According to one view:

> (T)hose who need to adopt English are members of the poor and working classes whose linguistic handicaps cause them to fail in school and afterwards in adult life. Members of such a group will never become diplomats or international trade representatives. On the other hand,...it is the monolingual middle class, the academically and socially successful, whose second-language skills need beefing up.[5]

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[4] Dennis Baron, *The English-Only Question: An Official Language for Americans?* New Haven, Yale University Press, p.15.

[5] Ibid., p.16.

We do not know what change U.S. political leaders' recent realization of the nation's urgent language needs has produced or will produce on this class dimension of language skills. Further studies are needed.

Finally, more studies need to be conducted to see what effects the English-only policy of some U.S. corporations has brought on their activities with foreign counties. As I discussed in Chapter 5, previous studies did not necessarily agree on U.S. corporate views on the value of language skills in business. Some stories and episodes point to the fact that the English-only policy is detrimental to developing new markets and maintaining good business relationships, but it is not quite sure whether this view can be verified empirically. Therefore, it is necessary to examine this language-skills-as-relevant view by quantitative studies. There are many questions to be answered: Is the number of U.S. corporations or industries which see language skills as an important business asset increasing? Are U.S. corporations which are employing more U.S. citizens with a good command of a foreign language successful? Are U.S. corporations which are not doing so suffering business losses? How are U.S. corporations treating locals with language ability? and so forth. Studies on these topics will provide useful information about whether or not the global economy is affecting the

status of English.

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