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FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDIES IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL:
CURRICULA REQUIREMENTS, TEACHING APPROACHES
AND STUDENT OUTCOMES
IN THE UNITED STATES AND SELECTED COUNTRIES OF THE
EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

A Thesis

Presented to the
Department of Teacher Education
and the
Faculty of the Graduate College
University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

Jan L. Lund

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THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance for the faculty of the Graduate College, University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Committee

<u>Raymond A. Ziebert</u>	<u>Teacher Education</u>
Name	Department
<u>Garson A. Mundell</u>	<u>English</u>

Eugene H. Freund
Chairman

7-15-91
Date

Abstract

The premise of this study is to ascertain whether there is a significant difference between foreign language education in the United States and in certain countries of the European Economic Community which would lead to significantly different outcomes of student achievements on the secondary level.

The study was undertaken to compare aspects such as foreign language requirements, methods in foreign language teaching and various factors which contribute to student motivation in foreign language study.

The countries researched for the study were Great Britain, France, Holland, Belgium, Italy, Norway, Denmark and Germany. Sources used included journal articles, position papers, conference proceedings, documents retrieved through ERIC, interviews and personal observations.

Conclusions of the study indicate that European foreign language classroom outcomes are more favorable than those of the United States. American foreign language teachers are inundated with so many research-based methodologies that they have a difficult task reaching consensus on optimal language instruction. European classroom techniques are more traditional and when research is cited in their methodology it is often American research.

The United States has no common instrument for measuring student progress nor any sets of national requirements. European

students are required to take foreign languages at various set stages in their education, and their progress is rigorously measured at given intervals. European students are motivated both intrinsically and extrinsically to start a foreign language and continue with one or more to obtain proficiency, while American students generally do not see a need for foreign languages in their lives.

This study sets forth several implications for further research which could play a role in the equalization of outcomes in American and European classrooms. These would include the possible need for the following: uniform national standards for foreign language education in the United States, the introduction of foreign language at the primary level, centralized management of foreign language study, research on actual classroom behavior of foreign language teachers, the need to improve the status of foreign language teachers, and the globalization of the curriculum.

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Chapter One

Introduction

It is the purpose of this study to analyze the state of second language education in the United States and in the countries of the European Economic Community in order to compare the outcomes of the foreign language education in the secondary schools. A comparison will be undertaken to illustrate the differences and similarities between European and American foreign language education requirements, methods in teaching foreign languages, and factors which motivate students to study foreign languages, with the intent of illustrating the theoretical and practical outcomes of the different programs.

Statement of the Problem

Is there a significant difference between foreign language education in the United States and in countries of the European Economic Community which would lead to significantly different outcomes of students on the secondary school level?

Definition of Terms and Abbreviations

Second language and foreign language as well as L2, shall be used interchangeably to refer to those languages other than the native language of the country which are taught in schools.

European Economic Community and EEC shall refer to the following nations: France, Belgium, Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland), Ireland, Spain, Portugal, The Netherlands, Denmark, Greece, Germany and Luxembourg.

ESL shall refer to English as a Second Language.

References to the French Baccalaureat examination denote the exit assessment tool used nationally in France at the end of the secondary schooling (lycee) for all college bound students.

References to the O-Levels (Ordinary Levels) and A-Levels (Advanced Levels), respectively, indicate the examinations used in the British school system for advancement in secondary school and entry to the university, although successful passing of the A-levels may not be all that is required for entrance into certain universities, c.f., Oxford, Cambridge.

The Council of Europe is an organization emanating from Strasbourg, France, which initiates many educational programs throughout the EEC, bringing together under its auspices scholars from the various European countries to study problems and develop solutions in curricula, to formulate programs and so on. The Council of Europe is not an administrative body, but rather an inter-governmental organization without any executive authority. It may pass resolutions and make recommendations. Having no direct governmental powers, it is nevertheless influential in policy development. It is also a clearinghouse for information dissemination and project development.

The Council for Cultural Co-operation is a subgroup under the auspices of the Council of Europe, established specifically to develop projects in foreign language education.

The term functional-notional is a proficiency description referring to a set of tasks that language students must be able to perform at a given proficiency. Functions are the tasks, and notions are the content categories. They form the core of the instructional syllabus, taking the place of grammatical structures. For the past decade, language educators and researchers have suggested that curricula and syllabi be arranged around a functional-notional method rather than a grammar lesson method. An example of a functional-notional lesson might be "Obtaining information on the telephone about a person's health."

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to the state of foreign language instruction on the secondary (high school) level, with certain citations of research done on the elementary level mainly used here to compare the ages at which second language study is compulsory. For the most part, the study will neither consider courses taught to students under eleven years of age nor will it reference post-secondary or adult education, except in the instance of citing research concerning the preparation of foreign language teachers.

Except to reference historical data, the study will examine only that research done after 1970.

The study is limited to sources found in the library of the University of Nebraska at Omaha and those found in journal articles retrieved through ERIC at the UNO library. Whenever primary sources were available in English or French, they were read in the original language. When the primary source was available in either German or English, the English translation was requested.

The study does not have the intention of reviewing all data from every country in occidental Europe or in the EEC, but does concentrate on specific countries: France, England, Belgium, Italy, Holland and Germany, with adjunct data from other countries mentioned briefly.

This study is non-hypothecated and is exploratory in nature.

The Significance of the Problem

The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden, has been carrying out assessments of educational outcomes in Europe, the United States, Israel, Japan and other countries since 1964. Hundreds of thousands of students in multitudes of schools have been evaluated in virtually every subject area taught to youngsters in the industrialized world. It seems that no matter what subject is being compared, from math to geography and everything in between, students in the United States rank near the bottom.

It is this researcher's observation that teachers of foreign language in the United States are at the forefront of the education profession in their propensity for change, in the development of new

and different methods for teaching their subject, and in the pursuit of research on second language acquisition and learning, it is not readily obvious why American foreign language students lag behind; yet, from the Swedish studies, we know they do. Most American foreign language teachers are neither passive nor complacent. These teachers generally try to educate themselves in, and use, the newest methods. They follow the latest national trends, such as oral proficiency assessments. They keep up on linguistic theories of language acquisition and change their programs to concur with these findings. (Omaggio, 1986). They try new activities such as pair work (a cooperative learning technique featuring conversations between two students) to foster such notions as "real talk," and they use the latest technology in the classrooms such as computers and interactive video. Yet the results of all this effort continue to show that the level of proficiency of the American high school foreign language student is judged to be inferior to that of similar students abroad.

In most European schools it has been found that students reach near fluency in English and often take another language besides. While it is conceivable that there needs to be an entirely new foreign language policy nationwide in this country, there may also be factors such as environment, language utility, motivation, methods, curricula or requirements for graduation which come into play in European schools and would account for the difference. It is rare that American second language teachers are exposed to the routines of the European second language teacher in his/her classroom. Unless

one becomes an exchange teacher, or undertakes to go abroad to study the specific aspects of teacher education there, American teachers are essentially ignorant of the factors producing the varying outcomes.

When considering factors which impact on the comparability of the outcomes, it is not the intention of this study to give the impression that teacher training and teacher action in the classroom are the only influencing criteria. It is also necessary to mention such factors as the multi-lingualism (ability in and use of more than one language) of educated Europeans, which is far more common than in the United States; further, it is necessary to note the extensive use of tracking in European schools, which is different from tracking in American schools, with the possible exception of those very few American schools which award the International Baccalaureat as their high school diploma.

It is the premise of this study that such information may be analyzed. Data has been gathered, analyzed and evaluated in order to draw conclusions, and it is anticipated that these conclusions will shed light on the different outcomes in foreign language education here and abroad. Emerging from this study will be a set of recommendations and suggestions for further investigation.

Research Procedures

The intent of this study is to examine and compare some aspects of teaching strategies, curricula, and research in foreign language

education in both the USA and the EEC. By researching journal articles, position papers, conference proceedings and texts available primarily through ERIC or other sources at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, relevant data were gathered for analysis.

Interviews were conducted on the subject of the state of French foreign language study on the secondary level with Dr. Jean-Pierre Farjon of Paris, France and the University of Bordeaux, France. Dr. Farjon does not teach in the education department, but spoke rather from personal knowledge of the preparation for the Baccalaureat examination in the private secondary school, as well as the French government's emphasis on foreign language learning.

Interviews were conducted with Mrs. Antony Wood, a public school teacher in Leek, Staffordshire, England, and with her sons, Mark, Gavin and Craig, on the subject of preparation in foreign languages for the O-Level examinations and the A-Level examinations, as well as on the general curriculum in the British public high school.

Interviews were conducted with Madame Martine Ramboatiana during visits to the private school for foreign language study (extra-curricular) in Montbeliard, France, where she teaches students who enroll for additional study outside of their regular school coursework. The researcher taught several classes in this school ("Mini School") to assess the curriculum and the materials, as well as student achievement.

Organization of the Study

The study is divided into the chapters shown in the Table of Contents. The review of related literature will begin with a brief summarization of the status of foreign language instruction and the research thereon in the United States today. This will serve as a basis for comparison to be made with countries in the EEC. An exploration of the research on second language instruction in several European countries will be developed in order to illustrate their approach to foreign language instruction as well as the make-up of their schools and other factors which may contribute to conclusions about their outcomes. In the concluding chapters a presentation and analysis of the data will illustrate the differences in the outcomes of the compared countries, while an evaluation of the findings in the last chapter will be set forth along with implications for further study. Sources consulted will be named following the last chapter.

Chapter Two

A Review of Related Literature

The State of Foreign Language Instruction in the United States

There have been two major reports published by the government of the United States which underline the abysmal condition of schooling in this country. *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* and *High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America* both go to great lengths to paint a depressing, frightening portrait of inferior school systems producing inferior results. In reaction to these reports, counterproposals in papers such as *Tomorrow's Teachers: A Report of the Holmes Group* and *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* prescribe the remedy: since the quality of education is directly related to the quality of the teachers, major reforms in teacher education must be initiated.

American foreign language teachers are confronted constantly with grim statistics, yet appear to be in the forefront of movements for change. Buoyed by the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies, the National Advisory Board on International Education, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, all of which have authored position papers calling for stronger emphasis on foreign language learning in the USA, the nation's foreign language teachers have responded, developing new curricula, new methods, new assessment models, higher standards of

outcomes, and a host of professional growth opportunities to meet the challenge. Nevertheless, the actual outcomes of all that effort, what the student can actually do with the foreign language linguistically and culturally, are still below those of other nations where the emphasis on teacher education, methodology and curricula may not be superior to that of the USA, and indeed, it is believed, may lag behind American standards in some instances. (Heike,1985).

The Holmes Group referred to above, a consortium of deans of colleges of education throughout the United States, has cited seven obstacles to understanding the problems in teaching and teacher education in the United States. First, the group cites (pp. 24-25) "overly simple solutions" using the analogy that "only the best and the brightest" should be permitted to teach, and that if "teachers were smarter, learning would improve." Second, the group cites what it calls "naive views of teaching," meaning the idea that "any modestly educated person with average abilities" can teach (p.29). Their third contention is that schools are "institutions unfit for teacher professionals" (p.31) and as such are not pleasant, "professional" places to work. Fourth, "the pitfalls of credentialism" (p.41) including competency testing and differentiated pay scales, are considered to be problematic. The fifth obstacle set forth by the Holmes group is "problems in undergraduate liberal education" characterized by "a lack of curricular coherence and an avoidance of a core of enduring and fundamental ideas" (p.47). The sixth is

"inadequate professional education" that tends to be "restricted to a few university courses and a brief period of supervised practice in the schools," (p.50). The last obstacle cited is the "lack of demonstration sites" (p.56) in which field professionals can contribute to the research base in education.

Almost immediately upon the release of their findings, the Holmes Group began to mount a major effort towards reform, and the teaching community launched responses to the issues of teacher education as outlined by the Group. The foreign language community was/is all too familiar with the crisis in education. Despite the large number of process-oriented, theoretical, methodological position papers which has been widely disseminated throughout the profession, research findings on actual classroom teaching have been comparatively absent.

In 1982 Goethe House in New York published the proceedings of their workshops for teachers of German, French and ESL in Europe and North America wherein David Stern makes a summary statement reflecting the urgency felt by many in the language teaching field that a contradiction exists between the state of the art in research and actual classroom practice: that ours is a teacher-centered product-oriented approach rather than learner-centered, which would help create a communicatively rich classroom setting (Heid, ed. 1983).

Some of the research illustrates how foreign language teachers should be taught and other papers identify teacher behaviors.

(Bernhardt and Hammadou, 1987). Omaggio (1986) sets forth an entire history of second language instruction from the 1930's to the present and presents the definitive case for proficiency-oriented instruction. Gritner (1980) emphasizes the importance of target language fluency as well as skills in planning and self-assessment. Alatis (1983) sees a need for emphasis on strategies of classroom management and discipline. Another perspective is taken by Hancock (1981), who focuses on theoretical models for teacher education programs and discusses the implications of developmental/humanistic- vs. behavioral/competency-based models. Stern (1983), on the other hand, sees language teaching theory as the component of teacher education most needing critical examination.

Another perspective is that of Lange (1983), who provides an entire developmental model for the education of foreign language teachers. He focuses on issues of selection, depth of teachers' general education, language proficiency, instruction of culture, knowledge of methods of language acquisition, the concept of learning as process, and abilities in the development of goals, both instructional and professional.

It is a general consensus of the research examined that teacher competence is a fundamental component in excellence in foreign language education. The literature in this area stresses the decision-making characteristics of teaching and outlines the vast array of components that make up teacher competence.

Another whole group of publications deals specifically with the classroom behaviors of foreign language teachers. Typically the most frequently mentioned "behavior" is target language fluency.

Annandale (1985) and Kalivoda (1985) address target language proficiency in terms of coursework, while Woloshim (1983) considers the problem in terms of residency in the target culture.

Brumfit/Rossner (1982) and Nerenz/Knopp (1983) consider the notion of teacher behavior from a different perspective, namely that of classroom management and lesson planning. Blumfit and Rossner argue that the focus of teacher education programs should be on daily lesson planning and on the execution of planned lessons before teachers are asked to plan their own. Nerenz and Knopp focus rather on specific findings of teacher planning research, i.e., that teachers spend considerable time in transition from one activity to another and that they should decrease that time and increase active learning time.

The research makes clear that there is a need for experiences which would help language learners in non-academic settings. Research also focuses on affective behaviors of foreign language teachers, suggesting that foreign language teachers should be trained in empathy, respect and self-awareness in order to increase their classroom effectiveness.

Bernhardt and Hammadou, in summarizing a decade of research in foreign language teacher education, find fault with many of the findings' failure to consider teaching as an activity which is both

cognitive and affective, product- and process-based. They claim that hardly any data really exist on effective foreign language teacher education programs. The small number of papers available on methods and course curricula belies the importance of same, while the vast majority of work lies in the area of second language acquisition and other linguistic theory. They also cite the fact that recent foreign language teacher education literature draws from a relatively small pool of references. It seems that the field has relied more on discussions among experienced foreign language educators about the educational needs of foreign language teachers rather than on the collection of data.

In addressing several of the issues raised by the Holmes Group, it has been suggested that much more specific data would be needed before the foreign language teaching community could even put forth a sensible response. For example, in response to the issue of only the best and the brightest being placed in the classrooms, the foreign language profession would acknowledge that the criteria for that might be those teachers with "total" fluency. Yet the profession has acknowledged that many native speakers, when lacking equivalent teaching skills, are not particularly the most effective teachers of their own language. Many excellent users of language clearly do not control a classroom or foster interest or inspire students! A principled needs analysis of classroom language skills should perhaps be developed in order to offer some answers here. (Ruiz, 1986).

Taking another of the Holmes Group issues, that the "conditions of work in schools have severely hindered efforts to improve the quality of teaching," (p.31), an image of the classroom setting is conjured up that, while not unique to America, is seen more often here than abroad, characterized by societal problems manifested in the classroom, such as drugs and alcohol-related difficulties, worn out classrooms, teachers on patrol in the halls, bathrooms and cafeterias, and so on. The profession needs to consider what social classroom, family and community environments are most conducive to language learning. These and other factors of the American foreign language classroom will be discussed more fully in the concluding chapters of this study.

Chapter Three

The State of Second Language Instruction in Great Britain

The old adage that the United Kingdom and the United States are "two countries separated by a common tongue" would seem to apply directly to the schools and colleges of each nation. What the British teach, why they teach it, to whom they try to teach it, and how they assess what they have actually taught all seem to be very different from their American counterparts; however, both systems use a surprisingly similar vocabulary to describe the various ends and means. A case in point is the common knowledge that what the British call a "public school" an American would call a "private" one.

More difficult for an American to answer would be a question posed by an English person like this: "What must one have studied in a modern foreign language at school in order to be able to pursue it further at college?" There is no one American answer to that question. The American terms, "grade school," "junior high," "high school," "college" and "university" are understood by an Englishman as describing students' ages or the institutions' administrative tone, not the curricular programs, because a British pupil might, if transferred directly from his/her own school to the American-perceived equivalent, be placed in utterly non-equivalent classes. American students progress by age rather than by curricular certification. An American college has more in common with a British secondary school's fourth through sixth forms than it has with

an English college. (It is also true that the American college has points in common with the French lycee and the German Gymnasium.)

When comparing any curriculum area of the American high school to those of Great Britain (or other countries) the first thing that stands out is the freedom students in the USA possess to take a wide range of course offerings (limited, naturally, by the availability of courses within a specific school.) In England, curriculum is prescribed. If a student is on a certain track, i.e., towards the A-Level examinations leading on to university study, the coursework in all subjects will be based on that requirement. An American student will be guided by a counselor (whose wisdom could be considerably less than divine) through a school which will urge, or appear to require, potential college-bound students to pursue certain courses, such as two or three years of a foreign language. (And many schools fail to offer any foreign language whatsoever!)

While England has prescribed curricula in all areas, it has gone through an understandable school reform in recent years, pressured by the need to move away from an elitist view of society towards a more egalitarian one. England has experienced controversies over the comprehensive school and questions of mainstreaming similar to those undertaken in the United States. Attempts are being made in England to eliminate factors which would tend to favor children from a particular socio-economic background. In England and many of the nations in the EEC there has been a noticeable tendency to regard

education as a form of national investment and as an instrument of rapid industrial expansion: "In a competitive world, survival as a nation depends on the best use being made of all national resources, including human resources." (Russell, 1970).

For England, the developments in education in general have brought considerable changes in the social, intellectual and academic structure of the sixth form, and as the sixth form is roughly the equivalent to the last two years of high school (though it really is not equivalent to them in coursework), that is the form we shall look at for the purposes of this study, keeping in mind that the curricula are at much more advanced levels.

Even in the 1960's, the sixth form was characterized, in a report to the Central Advisory Council for Education by Crowther (1959, pp. 222-5), as a place where "masters and boys alike assumed that to go to a university was the natural sequel to two or three years spent in the sixth form," where the intimate relationship between pupil and teacher, the intellectual life shared by them and the intellectual discipline fostered by them led to independent work and social responsibility. The sixth formers of the period were socially and culturally an elite group because the majority of their peers left school at the age of fifteen or so due to economic and other environmental factors.

The reality of the English high school today is very different. Vocational studies are mixed with academic studies. The same building will house pupils studying individual subjects at different

levels for different purposes, often a combination of O-Level and A-Level examination preparation. The modes of teaching, too, have changed so as to be more appropriate to young people who have attained in their life outside the school a "degree of independence never dreamt of before."

British university entrance requirements, however, have not changed much, and tend by their nature to run counter to the needs of a broadly based education, since they are predicated on performance in the A-Level examinations. This battery of exams determines the content of the individual subjects, as well as the way they are taught. England has, therefore, experienced conflict between the interests of university departments understandably anxious to maintain the standards of their entrants and those of the schools eager (and obliged) to open their sixth forms to a wider spectrum of learning abilities.

In the intervening period, England has undergone reforms of their system and has revamped A-Level requirements and syllabi. From the point of view of foreign language teaching, the requirements are two examinations measuring linguistic proficiency (not necessarily oral) based on the following assessment criteria: aural comprehension, oral speech, reading and writing. (Wood, 1989). The program as a whole has the objectives of showing the foreign language functioning as a medium of communication for human purposes (rather than studied in isolation); of giving the student an

insight into a culture other than his/her own, and of ensuring for the pupil a widening of experience, a maturing of mind and emotions.

What motivates an English student to study foreign language? If students have passed the O-Levels and are in the sixth form (at ages approximately 15-19) they will have decided that the foreign language they have chosen to study is going to play some role--major or minor--in their future activities, and they will need it. Studies show a majority of students are convinced, or hope, that their continued study of a foreign language will be profitable and, while it is seen partly as the teacher's task to confirm that conviction or hope, motivation may at this stage be greater than ever before in these students' foreign language learning experience.

It is not the purpose of this study to analyze and compare specific breakdowns of curricular areas but rather to ascertain to what extent these areas are part of the required study. For example, Post O-Level studies are characterized by a good deal of emphasis on literature and the linguistic capabilities that will emerge during the study of literature. Translation tests as the only assessment tools in general use have been abolished in some languages (French) but are still used in others, such as Russian. The grammar-translation methods per se are no longer used; nevertheless the English system still seems more traditional than the American one. In England, for instance, it is still felt that the language laboratory can play a useful role in improving accent and fluency. American schools may also continue to use language lab facilities, but such facilities now more

commonly tie into computer networks or interactive video. As a consequence, lab facilities are often neglected or even abandoned unless they are state of the art. In England, whether or not by use of the language lab, a strong emphasis is placed on the study of theoretical and practical phonetics as an indispensable part of teaching the spoken language.

The British recognize that the language lab concept was invented in the first place to simulate living (and therefore speaking) in foreign countries, and while there are certain practical limitations on the number of English school pupils that can be sent abroad, it is still much easier to facilitate student exchanges from there than from the USA, as the growing numbers of exchanges between England and France and Germany attest. The British believe strongly that residence in a foreign country, in appropriate surroundings and with adequate preparation and control, must count as one of the most effective means of developing oral proficiency (Austin, 1970).

Like other nations, Britain finds itself in competition in its export markets with large international corporations from abroad. The importance that British companies attach to strengthening their position in Europe can be seen from the growth in the number of mergers which are taking place with European companies. They recognize that an essential element for the success of such mergers is the formation of sound communication links. In joining the EEC it is realized that companies must be able to deal in international business in the language of their clients. This reflects the recognition

that a closer cooperation between schools and colleges of higher education with business and industry was necessary (Wainwright, 1970). Surprisingly, however, given the attitude of the British and their motivation to use foreign language in business fields, they see themselves as lagging behind other EEC countries, notably Holland, where Dutch firms report minimal difficulty when their employees must use English, French or German, since the study of these languages is regarded as compulsory for anyone in Holland receiving a secondary school education.

Research also shows that in Britain during the five years up to the O-Level stage, a pupil will spend, in total, no more than 600 hours (or less than two "waking months") on the subject of foreign language; and therefore the outcomes after the O-Level studies are not very advanced. English parents of O-Level students and the students themselves interviewed for this study felt that the students could not really speak another language, particularly since most of the effort on that level was channeled into potential preparation for the A-Levels. However, after the A-Levels, especially when coupled with study abroad, student satisfaction with proficiency was increased.

Chapter Four

The State of Second Language Instruction in Norway

Prior to the 1970's, the English classes in Norwegian schools were predominantly under the influence of the British tradition. This came about in no small measure because Britain had as a main goal after the Second World War the spreading of its "Palmer-West-Hornby" method throughout Europe, especially to the Nordic countries which suffered from a serious lack of qualified teachers (Gundem, 1989). By the early 1960's, however, British influences were beginning to be replaced by American ones, characterized by applied structural linguistics, behavioral learning psychology and instructional technology, using the audio-visual methodology developed in the USA. The new system was overseen by the Council of Europe and had the effect of changing the prevailing theoretical climate of foreign language learning all over Europe.

Britain was always given primacy as the nation whose language constituted "correct" English. American English was considered a substandard form of British English and thus not desirable to teach in schools. In the period of Palmer et al., the teaching of English as a foreign language was characterized by stress on pronunciation and intonation, "Standard English", the role of the teacher in mediating the linguistic and lexical quality of the language, and oral activity and teaching techniques.

A policy of "assistance with English teaching" set forth by the British Council developed rapidly, providing for the in-service training of teachers and expert advice to policy makers within the state administrative apparatus.

British teachers have had a tradition of being in a sort of "overseas service." An acute lack of qualified foreign language teachers in Europe after the war, especially teachers of English, opened up a new labor market for British teachers with an interest in this field of teaching. They became quasi-ambassadors for English culture and language.

In Norway a major change in emphasis on foreign language teaching and learning happened from the mid-fifties through the seventies, a period when there was an impact of influencing forces more intense and extensive than ever before or after in the teaching of modern languages in Europe, and especially in the Nordic countries. These changes have been compared to those that took place when the textile industry changed from being a craft to "an applied science backed by technology," with the inference that changes in modern language teaching were of the same kind because "we see the application of scientific knowledge and techniques assisting the personal art of the teacher." (Millar, 1989).

At the forefront of the new ideas were American principles such as: a) language is speech, not writing; b) a language is a set of habits; c) teach the language, not about the language; d) a language is what the native speakers say, not what someone thinks they ought to say;

e) languages are different. Applied linguistics joined forces with learning psychology to bring about a way of teaching modern languages whose chief characteristics were the structural approach, a behavioristic learning foundation, and an audio-lingual teaching methodology.

As early as 1954, Norway was influenced by the interest of the Council of Europe in the field of modern languages. The importance of foreign languages in furthering international understanding and co-operation appeared in the Articles of Convention adopted by the Council. Later, the Council for Cultural Co-operation was established and two important modern language teaching projects were launched: "Major Project: Foreign Languages" and "An Intensified Policy for Modern Language Teaching." Europe in general and Norway in particular saw political intentions as well as the curricular implications and consequences of the new focus on language teaching and learning that was being put forth. National school policy was established as a result of these projects, the impact of which on the national level can be seen in decisions regarding the installation of language labs and audio-visual hardware as well as in the teaching materials being produced.

New aims of foreign language teaching were adopted into the nine-year comprehensive and basic schools. These were to enable pupils to understand speech at normal speed; to speak a foreign language intelligibly; to read with ease and understanding; to express themselves in writing; and to develop a knowledge of the foreign

country and an insight into its civilization and culture. (Council of Europe, 1969).

Now the question: Did it work? Gudem concludes that while the British methods were outmoded and culturally slanted, their language teaching succeeded in combining the systematic with the intuitive, as well as the pragmatic with the eclectic, thus avoiding the dogmatism typical of the audiovisual methods. He makes the point that while the British Council's work fostered notions of "cultural imperialism," it did meet the urgent needs for information and in-service training, as well as impacting on the professional climate surrounding language teaching in Norway.

In essence, the American domination of the foreign language teaching trends as set forth by the Council of Europe didn't work. Gudem points to the fact that the preconditions for the teaching of the foreign language in a sociological and sociocultural perspective were missing. Determinants of interactions in local communities, schools and classrooms were not dealt with, nor were determinants connected to the individual pupil's motivation for the learning and the mastering of a foreign language.

Millar (1989) indicates that changes are being introduced currently in Norwegian colleges of education regarding the training of English teachers, and that the traditional divisions (phonetics, language, culture, literature, etc.) are being replaced by a theme-based approach, in which students are obliged to use English and are more actively engaged in the learning process.

Chapter Five

The State of Second Language Instruction in France

French education has undergone several reforms, some stemming from the "events" of May, 1968 and some more recently demanded by high school students seen marching for better schools last fall in the streets of Paris. Without a doubt, the reforms in education have also led to reforms in the instruction of languages.

Upon entering the first year of secondary school in France (the sixth or sixieme, which is equivalent to our sixth grade in a middle school setting,) all students begin the study of their first foreign language. (It is important to understand that they are required later to add another foreign language, and that in French schools, the first foreign language is referred to as "the first language.") This first foreign language is considered a "basic" course, i.e., a fundamental course like "reading, writing and arithmetic," and not an elective. In essence all foreign languages carry the same weight, and the young student can choose from German, English, Arabic, Spanish, Italian and Russian. Portuguese, modern Hebrew, Dutch, Polish, Chinese and Japanese are added to this list by the time the student is ready to choose the second foreign language, and French students may actually choose from among twelve foreign languages to present as choices for the Baccalaureat examination, the exit assessment after high school (lycee). In reality these twelve languages are not offered in every school, however. (Van Deth, 1979).

By the third year of secondary school students may start the study of their second modern foreign language or they may take Latin or Greek. From 1970 to 1978 French schools were also under the jurisdiction of a law which gave students the option of taking a language enrichment course for their first foreign language in lieu of starting a second one. French schools generally provide no remediation other than retaking an entire program of coursework; however, this law was conceived to permit those students who were not all that gifted in languages some remediation so that they could reach an acceptable level in at least the first foreign language. In practice this backfired, however, as too many students who easily could have elected a second language opted not to, and took advantage of an easy way to excel in one language. In the meantime, the reform movement has given students another choice currently: if they do not want a second foreign language they may substitute a course in computers or other technology. (Van Deth).

The study of the first and second foreign languages goes all the way through to the end of the secondary schooling. In the class called *Seconde* (the fifth year of secondary school, i.e., the sophomore year), students can still begin a second foreign language if they have not already done so, or they may begin a third language. Not only that, if the student can find a suitable teacher, (s)he may sign up for any other language that exists. More than forty languages are recognized for the *Baccalaureat* exam.

A course offering so great has some drawbacks, it must be noted. The first is the myriad of problems in organizing and implementing these courses. One way around that problem has been to use the National Center for Tele-communication, a correspondence course on the *Minitel*, a telephone-linked computer system which will be discussed later in this chapter. Generally, the size of a school is also a determinant in the languages offered. Junior highs of less than 400 students offer two foreign languages; those with 600 or less students have two or three modern languages; and when the school has 1200 students, three or four are taught. High schools across the nation offer even greater choices.

In France the two motivational forces at work in promoting the study of foreign language are preparation for the Baccalaureat exam and entering the work force. Students may opt to leave secondary school without pursuing their "Bac," but they will have been channeled into a career by the time this decision is made, and, in all likelihood, knowledge of a foreign language will be helpful if not essential. One popular alternative to the university, for example, is the catering college, where students train in the culinary arts and hotel management. It is an extremely competitive school in Paris and the foreign language requirements of its curriculum are rigorous. Because tourism is the second largest industry in France, it plays an important role in shaping the study programs of those planning to make it their job in life. (Farjon, 1990).

Among the goals set forth by the various national governing agencies is that foreign language teachers contribute to the development of the student as a person, and enrich the student's personality and social conscience. This is initiated by teaching culture, philosophy and diverse ways of thinking as part of the foreign language curriculum. Based on actual observation, it appeared that the French foreign language teacher sees the classroom as a venue wherein the curriculum includes not only what the student can articulate in a foreign language, but also to what degree (s)he can think critically and to what degree (s)he can attain a deeper understanding of him/herself in order to respect and accept others. In theory the student is thus liberated from prejudice and is taken, via the foreign language study, to a better understanding of the foreign mentality. It is actually a stated "culture goal" to develop an awareness of the role played by international relations in the life of the nation and of the student's individual contribution thereto. (Ramboatiana, 1987).

The aforementioned is a lofty goal but one which is somewhat vague and difficult to assess. Therefore, at every level there are practical criteria upon which assessments may be based, and these do not differ from the prescribed outcomes of other countries: to understand various types of communication in the target language; to speak that language as fluently and with as much ease as possible; to read and understand written messages, and to be able to express oneself in writing. In France the primary objective is a practical

usage of the language. After the third and fourth year of study, the French pupil begins to work with texts and documents which introduce the student to daily life and certain aspects of the foreign civilization. In the more advanced stages, (called "second cycle") the goals of the first cycle, still valid, are combined with a "cultural objective" without which the teaching of the language could not be as effective. (Van Deth).

It should be noted that because so many EEC countries start foreign language study so much earlier in school than the USA does, the vast majority of their programs are set up along the same lines as that which was described above for France. In Luxembourg, for example, by the time the student enters secondary instruction, because of the background already given in lower school levels and the proficiency already attained, the student is ready to tackle texts for analysis and to discover the literature of the country whose language is being studied. In Germany, students in the junior high school (Realschule) receive an essentially practical teaching which includes a knowledge of the lifestyle of the country where the language they are learning is spoken, as well as an introduction to its history, civilization and economics. But again, it is only at secondary school (Gymnasium) that a particular accentuation is placed on the study of culture, notably through literature instruction.

France is an innovator in technology for the classroom in Europe, and vitually every French household that includes a telephone has received a free micro-computer, the *Minitel*, for which much

educational software has been developed. With the advent of networking, French students have at their fingertips a means for communicating with other computer users all over the world (although that part of it is not free; in fact all utilization of the *Minitel* is extremely expensive and is billed into the home along with the phone bill). Links have already been established between French classroom and American French classes (at surprisingly early levels, for example in a French Immersion school program in Silver Spring, MD), but again the cost for the American part of the bill is still rather high (\$.34 per minute). Nevertheless, the *Minitel* is paving the way to communicative competence and is helping the classroom on both sides of the Atlantic move towards a heightening of cultural awareness unknown previously. (Farjon).

French foreign language educators are also creating new objectives for speaking and action in their classrooms. One technique developed recently is to have pupils create useful, decorative and stimulating articles in the second language class as a means of encouraging student participation and active learning with the goal of enhancing the second language acquisition rate. (Pottier and Communeau, 1990). At the Mini School of Montbeliard, France, much is attempted with this approach to prepare classes for excursions to London, for example. This method is designed to involve even the most recalcitrant student in oral communication. In one instance observed by the researcher, an artist visited the class and had everyone design a craft, speaking only English to give directions and

discuss the finished products. On another occasion, the teacher used an American teen magazine as an authentic document to develop an understanding of figurative language and reading comprehension as an interpretative activity. These methods did not strike the researcher as particularly revolutionary, but certainly different for the French classroom, which usually has a decidedly traditional bent. (Boiron et al., 1990).

Chapter Six

The Status of Second Language Instruction in the Netherlands

The first year of post-primary studies in Holland consists of a transitional class called "Brugklas" (bridge class). All students have identical schedules and programs. Students in this class all study English and French three hours per week. (In 1970 the government tried to change the requirement and make French an elective at the early level, but there arose such a hue and cry that the reform was cancelled and never again suggested.) Dutch secondary students have three programs they can follow, more or less predicated upon whether they will leave school after the obligatory age to enter the work force (V.W.O.), go on for certificates related to a chosen career (M.A.V.O.) or proceed to the university and the professions (H.A.V.O.).

At the middle level the study of one foreign language always constitutes the minimum and is always mandatory. For the majority of career tracks, however, two or three modern languages are required within this program during the first three years. Languages offered to students of this level are German, English and French. Since 1975 they have also been able to choose Spanish as an elective.

In the longer study program, students are obliged to study three modern languages for three years. After three years, languages become optional once minimum competency levels are verified

through exit assessment examinations. Theoretically the students may choose among five languages: German, English, Spanish, French or Russian. In practice, local authorities, which guide each school, play a decisive role in the choices and options for languages because they may unilaterally decide on the opening and closing of a class (with various criteria guiding this decision, such as the number of students choosing a particular language, class schedules, qualified teachers, etc.)

Holland also has vocational education and technical high schools. This teaching is very diversified, but the majority of these institutions have written into their programs the requirement that students must have had at least one foreign language. Most of the time this will be German, English or French; sometimes Spanish. The tracks which lead to a business profession or the hotel industry, as well as those in economics and administrative fields, require two languages on the final examination.

In 1986 Holland began to debate the issue of inserting compulsory English into the elementary school. It is beyond the scope of this study to report on the findings here, but it was interesting to learn that one of the biggest issues in the debate was whether the elementary classroom teachers were qualified to teach a foreign language. A great majority of secondary English teachers ("specialists") thought they were not. It appears that the secondary English specialists were justified in not having a very high opinion of the elementary teachers' English proficiency, which they witnessed

in the in-service training program. Results were poor. But the ensuing research showed that for elementary language teachers to be successful, they really did not have to be very proficient speakers of the foreign language. Their professional skill was far more important; their way of teaching and handling the lessons outweighed linguistic competence. (Koster, 1986).

Holland, in its secondary language instruction, has also addressed the question of practical versus cultural instruction. Once again, the instruction is divided into two successive phases. The first, or basic, part proposes to teach the pupils to understand, speak, read and write "in simple language" while, at the same time, having them acquire some notions concerning the people and the civilization of the country where the language they are studying is spoken. The second phase builds on the first but aims to furnish the student with the means to mastery. At the same time, the students initiate in an increasingly independent way the study of documents and texts (not uniquely literary) presented either in a written, spoken or audio-lingual form. The goal of the second phase is to deepen the student's knowledge of the language and the civilization of the countries concerned. By the time the student completes the second phase, (s)he has studied the language for a total of six years.

Chapter Seven

The Status of Second Language Instruction in Germany

In what the Germans call Hauptschule, the main public elementary school, and in their junior highs (Realschule), one foreign language is required. Except for the region nearest to France where French is obligatory, the language offered is always English.

From what we would call seventh grade on, junior high students may elect to add another foreign language, usually French. Students in Hamburg may do Russian; those living in Schleswig-Holstein might choose Danish; and those in Lower Saxony or the Rhineland of North Westphalia may prefer Dutch.

Until 1968, all college-prep high schools (Gymnasiums) had three foreign languages required in each student's program, but because a great number of students were failing, seemingly due to the difficulty of the material, a certain number of high schools prepared students for the exit examination (much like the French Baccalaureat) with two languages or sometimes only one.

The first language chosen for Gymnasium must be the same one taken earlier, so it is usually English. A second language can be added in seventh grade, but the third cannot be added until the ninth grade. Choices at this level are Latin, ancient Greek, Spanish or Russian (a student may also have been permitted to start Latin earlier). Finally, after satisfying the requirements in Gymnasium of the first two or three languages, students may add another one.

In the professional or technical secondary school in Germany, at least one foreign language is required and it is usually English, but may also be Spanish or French.

The reforms that swept through the system around 1973 simplified and equalized hours spent on foreign language in the classroom (usually three hours per week on the lower levels and five-six hours per week on the upper level), but Germany has a long history of teaching English and it has, like France, a very traditional way of teaching that is hard to reform. The Gymnasium is still considered as more than an institution where pupils are prepared for the demands of adult life; it is also a place of responsible self-education with a strong accent on universality.

The study of English and certain other subjects is considered to contain values that will bring about a transformation of the pupil, and turn him/her into a well-balanced, "harmonious" individual (Petersen, 1970). But because the heritage of Athens and Rome was regarded as the "source and the instrument" of this German version of a liberal education, the place of English as a subject in the Gymnasium had to be justified. Over and above the more pragmatic considerations of the usefulness of a knowledge of English for a future university student, the study of English as a legitimate undertaking rests on the supposition that its language and literature, its institutions and their development in English history, constitute a curriculum that can direct and improve the student's moral disposition. (Petersen).

This study will not attempt to describe the total Gymnasium program in English, but it must be noted that the content is rigorous and traditional, with an emphasis on methods that have lost credence elsewhere, such as in the United States, due to doubts cast on second language acquisition by psychologists. The German high schoolers must remember multitudes of words; they must translate (it is still believed that this leads to a "general schooling of the mind"); they must study grammar out of context ("in order to think clearly and coherently"); and they must study the great works of literature (with the goal of making them more tolerant of others, "ready to go out and stand up for the idea of reconciliation of the peoples of this earth.") (Petersen). Suffice it to say that there are reasonable grounds for skepticism as to whether the attainment of such ideals, however admirable, can be measured objectively.

German foreign language educators cling to traditional methods seemingly because empirical studies, especially in the fields of psychology and social psychology, are seen as a bad influence, one that leads to a dissociation of values. According to this view, safe ground is to be found in the study of literature, for example, because the perspectives of literary art are more apt to present the pupil with a "more balanced and more complete view of the nature of man." They feel the poet, the dramatist and the novelist have more breadth of vision than the narrow social scientist.

The German Gymnasium curriculum in English heavily emphasizes British English rather than American due to the

perception of the "spirit of England" and of "Anglo-Saxonism". This rather provincial outlook may not require comment, but Petersen points out that "the net outcome in the pupil's mind is a unified picture of what *The English* were like, are like, will be like," adding, "a critic might well say, 'This proves that the influence of Hegel upon German educational thinking is not dead, only that it has become more naive...'"

The general educational aims in the teaching of English in German schools are not objectionable in themselves; there is simply a doubt that teaching can do as much as is prescribed in the particularly German philosophy of foreign language education. One sign of an awareness of this is the reform that has come about recently called area studies, which take their departure from the way culture was taught previously. *Englandkunde* or *Amerikakunde* try to explain what England or the United States are actually comprised of, their contemporary problems, triumphs, resources, etc. During the first three years of study, topics such as travelling, city life, country life, school, receiving a visitor and showing him/her around, etc. dominate the curriculum. In the intermediate classes, history is added, and in the last three years, contemporary England and United States culture command the attention of the classroom. Authentic documentation is used in addition to texts, as well as media.

In Germany a modification of the Direct Method of teaching foreign language, considered outmoded in the United States, is still widely used. (Petersen). Even if the average German pupil is able to

speak English after a fashion, it is in prearranged situations.

However, according to Petersen, linguistic competence of the kind described in the United States as desirable is not necessarily a goal at the Gymnasium level. Even the oral part of their exit assessment (the Abitur) consists of the pupil, when being examined, reproducing the linguistic example set by the teacher. (S)he is not confronted by the task of expressing him/herself in a foreign medium of thought.

Though the German system has an exit assessment similar to that of France and England, the German modern language teacher enjoys more liberty than his/her colleagues in Britain, for example, because there is a comparative lack of interference from examining boards or university-level standards boards. One would conclude, therefore, that the teacher would try out new teaching methods; however, that does not seem to be the case: "The average German teacher of English finds it far easier to hide behind the facade of educational claims of an untested and untestable theory of education." (Petersen).

It would be unfair, however, to say that there are no activities or influences leading towards a restructuring of the German teaching of foreign language. With the emergence of the EEC and all that that entails, plus the role Germany desires to play in policy making and the impact of findings of groups such as the Council for Cultural Cooperation, German foreign language professionals will no doubt be increasingly influenced by the instructional goals set forth by other nations.

Chapter Eight
The Status of Second Language Instruction
in Italy, Belgium and Denmark

In Italy, the restructuring of foreign language instruction was instigated under the recommendation of the National Association of Teachers of Foreign Languages. The new guidelines set forth by this body included seeing foreign language put in the curriculum starting in the primary; requiring every college-preparatory student to have studied at least two foreign languages; intensifying the two European languages least studied--German and Spanish; introducing the choices of Russian, Arabic, Chinese and Japanese by fostering teacher exchanges; and augmenting teachers' college standards in order to train more teachers who would be qualified to meet future needs.

After May of 1971 the following recommendation was adopted: foreign language was instituted sporadically at the primary level, with at least one foreign language becoming mandatory at the junior high level. The student could theoretically choose from among German, English, Spanish or French (but in reality French and English were/are the two languages most frequently offered.)

Students in technical/commercial institutions or in technical institutions associated with the tourism industry or international trade typically have two or three foreign languages required in their program. Technical art schools have foreign language as electives. In the classical high school and in many other institutes, a modern

foreign language is taught the first two years (which still makes a total of four to five years of study for the high school student).

In Belgium the study of a modern language is obligatory in public schools beginning with the first year of secondary school for all students taking general or technical courses. Those students tracked for professional degrees may choose to add another language during the second post-primary year.

Belgium is a bilingual country to begin with, of course, and for those regions which fall between two distinct language zones, the required first choice of modern language used to be the other national language, i.e. French or Dutch. However, after a decree passed in 1976 by the French Cultural Council, students at that level who were native French speakers but lived in the bilingual zone could choose to study German, English or Spanish rather than Dutch. The rule did not apply to those students living in the Brussels metropolitan area, nor to those in the part of Belgium where the majority language is Dutch.

Starting a second foreign language is required in the traditional high school beginning in the second year for those in "modern studies", and at the third year for "classical" sections. Under restructured curricula in Belgian schools, the second foreign language is considered an elective but a "basic" one. The language choices are Spanish and Italian and are in addition to the ones already mentioned. In reality, English and the second national language are the two most frequently taught.

In the fourth year of the traditional program a student tracked into an economics section must start a third foreign language; other students may elect to take one. Russian is made available at this juncture but it is German which is most often chosen.

In Denmark, because of the weak diffusion internationally of the Danish language, all students are required to study English, which is seen as the working language of the international organizations set up in that country. This obligatory teaching begins in the last two years of primary school, which correspond, if compared to most other European countries, to the first two years of secondary. In the last class (called fifth, but actually equivalent to seventh grade in the USA), the student who intends to go on to junior high (Realafdeling) begins the study of German. Added to that, all students learn Swedish and Norwegian integrated right along with Danish into the coursework of language study.

In junior high, then, the foreign language that students have chosen previously continues to be an essential part of their studies. Students continue with English, or English and German, to which French may be added as an elective at the third year of this level. Thus, before entering the final phase of high school, the Danish college-bound student already has studied Swedish, Norwegian, English, perhaps some German and possibly French as well.

In high school students are required to take at least one more year of English. Many students choose to do more.

Chapter Nine

Evaluation of Findings and Future Alternatives

Restatement of the Problem

Is there a significant difference between foreign language education in the countries of the European Economic Community and in the United States which would lead to significantly different outcomes of students on the secondary level?

The purpose of this study was to analyze the state of second language instruction in certain countries of the EEC and in the USA to determine what causes the different outcomes, if any, of students taking foreign language at the secondary level.

An Evaluation of the Findings

"In Paris they simply opened their eyes and stared when we spoke to them in French. We never did succeed in making those idiots understand their own language." --Mark Twain

Research Findings.

The concept of proficiency has dominated the field of foreign language teaching in the United States for the past decade. Defined by Liskin-Gasparro (1984) as "the ability to function effectively in the language in real-life contexts," proficiency is understood among American teachers to mean oral proficiency, so much so that the only proficiency test developed so far is one for speaking ability. Students often express speaking ability as their main goal in learning

a language and teachers want to produce students who can communicate on some level in the target language with native speakers.

The concern of this study is this: is this goal being met, and is it even possible or reasonable given the state of foreign language education in this country? And if not, what are we doing differently from countries in Europe where outcomes are better for the secondary pupil based on results of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement?

This study did not go into depth in analyzing the various curricula of the United States concerning foreign language study, nor did it go into detail in comparing materials used throughout the USA or the EEC. It is possible, however, to generalize and state that, for the most part, American foreign language teachers have tried to stay at the forefront of linguistic science as they make decisions about methodologies which work in the classroom, and have restructured courses trying to adapt to and adopt methods that are research-based. There is considerable research on the scientific side: second-language acquisition, communicative competence, proficiency-oriented instruction, teaching language in context, functional-notional syllabus, and so on. There are also papers on the various textbooks available and the extent to which they may be used to reach oral proficiency objectives. (Omaggio, 1986).

The research on textbooks bears a passing glance here. It tends to paint a rather grim picture of the teacher's chances to achieve oral

proficiency goals with the current texts on the market in the USA. It appears that even though linguists have been calling for more attention to oral forms and for more realistic descriptions of language, most texts have not changed despite a generation of emphasis on speaking skill (the barrage of publicity put out by the publishers to the contrary). Few textbooks like those written by linguists in the 60's have been financially successful. (Walz, 1986).

Books are written and written language is easier to represent than oral language. Written language has always enjoyed more prestige. Textbooks are often criticized by foreign language teachers in America because they present too much material and the teacher cannot get the material taught (or, worse, "covered") due to time constraints. Since most material included in texts takes the written form, it might be a good idea to eliminate a good portion of it. Most texts are outmoded in terms of current usage. Moody, writing in 1975, describes the grammatical system of the typical textbook as fifty years old. Others have commented on the "textbookish" speech of our students. This complaint is not new and shows that for a very long time we have been teaching primarily written forms of the languages. Bonin (1978) found that advanced students could not understand spoken colloquial French. Ruis (1986) states that elementary Spanish textbooks do not reflect the majority of the discoveries of linguistics and language acquisition research of recent years and do not accurately describe authentic speech. Studying

German textbooks, Clausen (1974) discovered that authors do not replicate spoken German accurately.

The consensus on research-based methodology for the foreign language classroom in America is that there is hardly enough to do us any good after an entire decade spent in amplification of the need to assess actual classroom teaching. It seems completely contradictory to have state of the art research on process, theory and method without research in actual classroom practices. Video tapes were used to assess text-oriented English instruction at the advanced level in a German Gymnasium with the objective of encouraging socially integrative (i.e., not purely intellectual) approaches in order to encourage a broader approach to teacher training. It was thought that video-taped classes could result in more practical student-teacher expectations and preparation than is presently the case in Germany. In America this method was established at Stanford University for teacher training in the late 60's.

In the course of this study it has been found that America does not lag behind other countries in methodological trends; in fact most of the European programs are either more traditional than their American counterparts, or, if they are using research-based methods, it is based on our research. They have embraced our research during modernization or restructuring processes. There has been a proliferation of ideas and American teachers seem more predisposed to trying out new things than teachers in the EEC. It is even embarrassing, as an American, to be confronted by teachers abroad

who proudly describe what they consider to be innovative techniques and then have it turn out that they are referring to something like the direct method, which Americans knew about, practiced years ago, and may since even have discarded. (Finocchiaro, 1982).

National Requirements for Foreign Language Study.

This study has clearly illuminated an important point in comparing the USA and the EEC: The United States has no national policy on foreign language study. Not only is every state different in what constitutes a requirement in the high school curriculum (in any subject), but many times the school districts within a state differ. The Joint National Committee for Languages (JNCL) in Washington, D.C. went so far as to compile a listing by state in 1985 to help determine the level of state "initiatives" in foreign language and international studies. It is a true jumble, a conglomeration of unrelated facts, some recommendations, and a few requirements. The cold hard fact is that either there are no requirements or the requirements are so minimal as to be invalid (c.f., the District of Columbia: "Beginning with the class of 1984, all graduates of District public high schools must have one unit of foreign language study.") (Minert, ed., 1986).

The educational profession, despite all its willingness and enthusiasm, cannot be solely responsible for providing the impetus for language study and for encouraging learners to work towards

mastery. Government at all levels must support this effort. Business and industry, which seek more and more to influence schools by constantly reminding administrators of their needs for the work force, would do well to give sound support to the study of foreign language in the United States. In Europe it is clear that foreign language is requisite for obtaining jobs in all fields of commerce and industry. One optimistic view held of late by businesses in America is that where politicians, the military and the church have failed in promoting peace and understanding among nations, the twenty-first century's business leaders may succeed. That is not likely to happen if those businessmen and women can't speak more than their native language. If the goal is to facilitate the acquisition of global knowledge and the broad-minded attitudes that come with it, there had better be some communication skills and cultural awareness. (Rippert-Davila, 1985).

Business and government could truly combine forces and literally demand that the study of foreign language become compulsory if we are to function in the global society. Americans are in another unique position in that the changing demographics in our own country mandate that we tolerate and appreciate cultural and linguistic diversity at home, as well as understand our contemporaries abroad, in order to achieve our full potential as global citizens. The consequences would be significant for the individual and for the nation. JNCL has issued a position paper wherein they state that language competence and cultural awareness

are essential to the responsible and sensitive fulfillment of our important international role, where we, as Americans, influence the political, social and economic structures of life in other countries, and are in turn influenced by them.

Another fact brought to light by this study is that students in most of the EEC are preparing for a national exit examination which will have a serious impact on their futures, and which they take seriously. American students stand no such exams. Foreign languages are not uniformly required for all universities in the USA, and even when they are, proficiency in the language is hardly measured. In the USA, levels of instruction are unarticulated and the cumulative aspect of skill acquisition by a student is almost accidental. No exit assessment which measures foreign language proficiency is required. Schools are not even required to use the only test that actually measures oral proficiency, the ACTFL test. For the purposes of this study, the SAT and the ACT are not considered national exit assessments. They are not mandatory and, even if some colleges require them, the student can still make a choice to go to a college that doesn't require anything.

American teachers are hard-working, but the skills they impart to their students do not lead the students to any measurable end or to usage of the language. Often such measuring instruments as textbook exams or the national language contests are outmoded. Students in the USA drag their feet in learning a skill whose utility to them is, at best, unclear. A valid comprehensive examination needs

to be developed in all subjects which are considered requirements for entering college, and foreign language should be among the requirements. This examination could emanate from a national center for language study.

Motivation.

EEC students seem more motivated to take foreign languages and to follow through with them. This motivation is both extrinsic, such as through graduation requirements and compulsory exams, and intrinsic, such as the desire to find meaningful employment after schooling. Their contacts with foreign cultures are not superficial; they are not isolated and they live in close enough proximity to other cultures that their personal contacts give them a more representative view of other peoples. Except for those Americans living in the Southwest part of the USA, in Florida, California or other states with a large Spanish-speaking population, that is not the case, especially on the secondary level. Even when American students travel abroad, their primary goal is not to learn more target language but to have a memorable experience, a good time.

Motivation is not easy to measure, but some studies have shown that the integrative motivation, the desire to relate to a foreign people and culture, is held by some to be more conducive to language learning than is instrumental motivation, a more utilitarian attitude (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). In probing the relationship between learners' attitudes and success in L2 study, most research thus far

has sought to measure and identify motivation as a predictor of achievement. The ultimate and far more urgent question is to determine what teachers, curricula and programs can do to broaden and enhance student motivation. EEC students seem to find improved cultural knowledge and communication skills to be goals worth working for.

In summary, it is evidenced by the research that in the United States an enormous amount of time and energy has gone into studying the way foreign languages are taught and how they are acquired. Practitioners have developed method after method, each one introduced as a panacea. But in reality, because of a superabundance of information competing for their attention at all times, teachers in this country still face a considerable challenge in arriving at a consensus concerning optimal methods of language instruction.

Two of the more recent rallying points for the American foreign language educator have been the concepts of oral proficiency and communicative competence. The recent focus on proficiency has, in turn, caused a reevaluation of assessment instruments. Even though some new assessment instruments are now in place, most teachers are not using them, presumably because of the training time involved in acquiring the expertise to successfully implement the new testing methods. (Omaggio).

The United States does not yet have either a common instrument for measuring student progress or any means of coordinating

research efforts in this area. There exists no set of national requirements for secondary schools; additionally, foreign language at the elementary level, to the extent it is found at all, exists only sporadically. (Minert, ed.). Teacher accountability and academic excellence are at the forefront of public attention in the United States today, yet many high schools do not require languages of their graduates, and many colleges award degrees to students who have never taken a foreign language. American students, unlike most of their European counterparts, generally do not see a clear need for the use of a foreign language in their lives and are thus less motivated to attain proficiency.

By contrast, European students start foreign languages before they reach high school. They are required to pass rigorous exit examinations at various intervals of their education in order to progress. Foreign languages are required, not optional, and are tested by criteria that are generally uniform within a given country.

Even though European methodology is more traditional than that in the typical American high school, studies such as the Swedish ones show that the outcomes of European students are more favorable. European students are more motivated intrinsically and extrinsically than American students. The proximity of differing cultures throughout Europe plays a significant motivational role in speaking several languages. Europeans are highly motivated to speak the languages of international business, and, in most instances, due to the insufficient dissemination of their own languages

throughout the world, they are willing to do this in order to compete economically. The European student who wishes to advance educationally and in society at large is motivated to speak other languages and speak them well, a goal not recognized as valid by most American students. (Rippert-Davila).

Implications for Further Study

We hear calls for a citizenry better prepared in foreign languages, for international affairs specialists--including foreign service officers and leaders of our internationally-oriented business concerns--who have a high level of competency in another language; for language teachers more conversant with the educational techniques and technologies of their trade, for area specialists able to conduct advanced research in the target language. Further study towards achieving these goals would include the following:

1. Research into whether uniform national standards for foreign language study should begin at the primary level.

2. Research into whether centralizing management of foreign language study would correct the extreme disaggregation which exists currently in each school system and each school district. Control of the various stages of the process of implementing curriculum is dispersed and the different segments of the national educational system are totally fragmented.

3. Research directed toward strengthening the weak tradition of empiricism in the search for what works and what does not work. In

place of solidly grounded practice, we have many claims for one or another way to teach a foreign language. In place of theory linked firmly to applied study, we have opinions staunchly asserted on how students learn. In place of carefully formulated relationships among practice, theory, research, curriculum and materials development, the United States has teachers, theorists, researchers and social scientists all going their separate ways. Further research could lead to the development of innovative instructional methodologies aimed at increasing the effectiveness of teachers and language learners.

Research priorities should be tied to national objectives which would guide public and private funds. Most educators would like the teacher training in colleges to be upgraded and made more meaningful. This is also a research goal. Teaching can be described; accordingly, there doesn't seem to be any reason why research in many of the controversial facets of the teaching process cannot be made the subject of reliable experimentation.

4. Research showing whether or not there is a need for raising the status of foreign language teaching in the United States. In the EEC countries teachers have a status that their American counterparts do not often enjoy. Teachers in Europe do not monitor halls, sponsor extracurricular groups, or counsel students. When their classes are not in session they are not required to be in the school. Though the pay scales may be comparable, the community status conferred is higher in Europe. Some experts feel there is a singular lack of recognition of classroom teachers' efforts except for a

few language teachers' associations which honor teachers with awards. (Finocchiaro). The demands made on teachers in this country are unrealistic in many of the difficult situations in which teaching takes place, and instead of parents recognizing this and taking more control of their own children, they place more responsibility on teachers. EEC students are routinely given three to four hours of homework per night, for example, and the parents support the teachers completely on this; it is normal and expected. In the USA, more often than not, the student who doesn't do the homework assigned by the teacher will be excused on the grounds of having had to work at a job outside the home, and the parents, while perhaps expressing chagrin, will ultimately support their child rather than the teacher.

In Europe there is little acquaintance with the insistence on teacher accountability and teacher behaviors we experience in this country. Many American teachers feel the intimidating interaction analysis grids of the 1970's were demotivating to teachers and, therefore, to learners as well. The evidence shows that the teacher is the crucial variable in the learning and teaching process, and there are conceivably teachers in the classroom who are not performing up to standard. However, for the majority of teachers the desire is to be left alone to teach instead of constantly having to go through evaluation processes which deal little with their actual knowledge but almost completely with their behavior.

5. Research into the globalization of the curriculum. One final implication for further study may be in the area of global education, a concept that is emerging at this time in the USA. Global education transcends the concept of biculturalism and even that of cultural pluralism. It expands and extends cultural pluralism. Foreign language education has an obvious tie-in to global education, focusing as it does on the development of cross-cultural awareness and fostering a spirit of kinship with other peoples. Technology in the foreign language classroom such as microcomputers and interactive video represent would enable students to instantly broaden their world. Communicating with other students the world over about subjects important to them (the environment, world peace) and getting immediate response could go far in making the study of foreign language more meaningful and more intense in the eyes of American students.

Concluding Note Regarding Further Study

This study did not address issues such as research in motivation where analysis is made of causal factors; nor did it address research areas such as computer-assisted language learning, the role of culture in language learning, reading and writing proficiency, or research into the various aspects of assessment, which would also be areas with implications for further study.

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