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Problems to be Considered When Instituting a Foreign Language Program in the Elementary School

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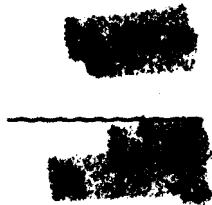
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PROBLEMS TO BE CONSIDERED WHEN INSTITUTING
A FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM
IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



A Research Paper
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington College of Education

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
Betty Jean Briggs Auty
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FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

Whenever another subject is introduced into the public elementary school curriculum, there are those who question whether or not there are more effective ways to accomplish the purposes or goals of such instruction.

This paper will investigate the problems to be considered when instituting a foreign language in the elementary school: the aims of the foreign language program, methods of foreign language instruction in the elementary school, and practical administrative problems of the foreign language study in the elementary school.

Importance of the Study

A primary purpose of school is to prepare young people for life. In preparing young people for adult living, the school must develop the child's total personality by giving him a wide variety of experiences to meet his social, emotional, physical, and intellectual needs, allowing full expansion of his mental powers and deepening and widening his knowledge of the world and its people (38:513, 518).

The world is shrinking rapidly. The United States has gained in power and prestige as a nation, and its citizens are having more contacts with other peoples. These peoples look to the United States for much more than economic aid. They want understanding, recognition of their cultures, evidence that the Americans are not the "self-centered imperialists rival nations call us" (63:373).

Today's schools are under an obligation to give tomorrow's citizens international understanding and an expanded horizon (16:373). If the United States is to be a true world leader, the American public must learn an open-minded humility. "This attitude of open-minded humility is the basis of real culture and an essential part of our education" (49:453).

The United States is not succeeding now in its battle with Communism because Americans today do not understand the basic desires, the motives, and spirit of the people America is trying to help (19:451). This study will attempt to show the factors to be considered when starting a study of a foreign language in the elementary school so as to create these new attitudes and to develop international understanding.

Limitations

The factors a school district must consider before starting a foreign language program in the elementary school

are (1) the cultural and practical aims of a foreign language study in the elementary school; (2) the effect of public opinion on a foreign language study in the elementary school; (3) the importance of continuity in a foreign language program in the elementary school; (4) the choice of a foreign language for a foreign language study in the elementary school; (5) two methods of foreign language instruction in the elementary school; (6) the age to begin instruction in foreign language study in the elementary school; (7) selection of pupils for a foreign language program in the elementary school; (8) time in the elementary school curriculum; (9) the expense involved in a foreign language program in the elementary school; and (10) the recruitment of teachers for a foreign language study in the elementary school.

This study will be concerned with the "what" and "why" phases of the factors listed above, not with how the problems are to be solved. The solution of the above problems should be based on the needs of an individual school district and would not be of much significance to other school districts. In addition, this study will be concerned not with problems of the past but with contemporary problems.

Definitions of Terms Used

Every field of learning has a vocabulary peculiar to that particular field. There is often need for a clarification of the terms used. In this study the following words are defined for clarification.

Americans, as referred to in this study, are citizens of the United States.

Culture is the sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings and transmitted from one generation to another.

Elementary school, as referred to in this study, is the lowest school giving formal instruction, teaching the rudiments of learning and extending from kindergarten through sixth grade.

FLES are the initials designating "foreign language in the elementary school."

Gifted means to be endowed by nature with a special faculty or talent. "I. Q. is only one and sometimes a lesser factor in superior performance than a keen musical ear or contact with a foreign language in the home or early life of an individual" (47:295).

Humanist is a student of human nature or affairs.

Humanities concern literature, philosophy, art, and similar studies, distinguished from the social and physical sciences.

Linguistics is the science of language.

MLA is the abbreviation for Modern Language Association.

Practical mastery of a foreign language means the ability to understand, speak, read, and write the foreign language.

II. RESUME OF HISTORY OF PROBLEM

In the 1830's there began a period known as the era of Jacksonian Democracy. It was marked by the first rapid expansion of elementary and secondary schools--public, state-controlled, and tax-supported (23:761).

Prior to this time most of the classes in the elementary schools were conducted in the native tongue of the cultural groups in the area the schools served. In areas where the schools served foreign cultural groups, the establishment of the public elementary school became the center of bitter controversy. For example, people of German ancestry resented the fact that they and their children were being pressed into a mold of English law and English custom. Now, even schools were to be conducted in English. They foresaw the disappearance of their German way of life in America. This controversy continued for about fifty years (46:11).

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, the early FLES movement originated as an expedient for attracting the children of German immigrants away from the German private schools. This movement, not motivated by any basic educational and social needs, lacked supervision, planned teaching, learning progression, and achievement. This early FLES movement died out with the coming of World War I (43:500-501).

The new FLES movement began in the early days of World War II. During World War II the armed services training program provided intensive instruction in foreign language study and appeared to achieve outstanding success. After two or three months of training, the men who were enrolled in these classes were provided with a practical command in one of the foreign languages. The methods used to teach these classes influenced the organization of the courses and classroom teaching of the current FLES program. "In teaching a foreign language, conversation instead of reading became the ideal" (28:203).

The national movement for starting foreign language study in the elementary grades began with an increase in the foreign language programs in elementary schools in the fall of 1952 (12:142). As may be seen from Table I, the FLES movement had already begun in scattered places in the United States but had needed leadership and coordination (2:279; 16:373).

TABLE I
DEVELOPMENT OF FLES (43:498)

1939	2,000 public school children	10 communities
1949	114,000 public school children	40 cities and towns
1954	209,549 public school children	300 cities and towns (1,478 public elementary schools and 73 college demonstration and campus schools.)
	120,000 other children	Radio lesson broadcasts into classrooms in 8 states.

The FLES movement gained impetus when Dr. Earl J. McGrath, then United States Commissioner of Education, in May, 1952, addressed the thirty-fifth annual meeting of the Central States Modern Language Teachers Association in St. Louis. Dr. McGrath had attended an international educational conference in the Near East at which the United States was represented by five delegates, all of whom held doctor's degrees and all of whom had nineteen or more years of formal education. Not one of the delegates had a command of any language other than English sufficient to communicate with the non-English speakers. The Egyptian delegate addressed the assembly one day in fluent French, the next day in fluent English, and between sessions, with the West German delegates in their own language. Dr. McGrath realized the linguistic shortcomings of the United States delegates and resolved to see ways of correcting them (2:279).

Dr. McGrath declared:

Educators from the elementary school to the top levels of the university system ought to give immediate attention to the importance of an early introduction to foreign language study in our educational system (16:373).

Immediately thereafter, the Modern Language Association applied for and received two grants from the Rockefeller Foundation totaling \$235,000. This was for a study

to determine what the role of modern foreign language should be in the United States during the latter half of the twentieth century. Though the two grants expired in 1958, the Foreign Language Program has become a permanent concern of the Modern Language Association (42:vi; 2:280).

In 1953 the United States Office of Education sponsored the Conference on the Role of Modern Languages in American Schools, a national conference held in Washington, D. C. Also, in 1953, 1954, and 1955, the Modern Language Association of America conducted three national surveys of the foreign language conditions in public schools. From 1955 to 1958 the MLA gave new impetus to language study research by continued and intensified appraisal of existing conditions, by surveys and by conferences and reports on directions to be taken in the future (6:134).

In 1958 the United States Office of Education proposed that every child study a foreign language, at least in grades three through six, and in that year the United States Congress passed the National Defense Education Act of 1958, which " . . . provides financial aid to schools for research in foreign language instruction" (24:136).

The National Defense Act of 1958 encourages the use of the aural-oral method in teaching foreign languages. Part of the billion dollars available under the act is to be used for purchase of new equipment for education in foreign

languages, for the development of better techniques, and for language institutes to inform teachers of recent developments (45:27).

III. SUMMARY

Over a century ago, the United States began to try to make Americans out of the immigrants who had rejected the "old world" but were clinging to the culture patterns of their native land; the United States was rejecting the "old world" culture. Today the United States is reversing this rejection, attempting to adjust to the world as it exists.

CHAPTER II

AIMS OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

In today's world where every other place is within one day's distance (60:9), there is need for goals of communication and international understanding if the citizens of the world are to live in peace and security. American education has a basic responsibility for helping American citizens learn to live with neighboring peoples, to respect the differences in cultures, both within and outside the United States, and to acquire the linguistic ability to interchange thoughts, opinions, or information. In an effort to assume this basic responsibility, some American school districts have instituted a foreign language study in the elementary school.

I. CULTURAL AND PRACTICAL AIMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN ESTABLISHING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

One purpose for learning a foreign language is to communicate ideas and feelings to other human beings. Reading, writing, listening, and speaking technics in a foreign language are vehicles for thought exchange. A foreign language may be both an end and a means.

Practical Mastery of a Foreign Language

Both within and outside the United States, there are practical reasons for achieving the practical mastery of a foreign language.

Over 3,000,000 Americans live, tour, or work outside of the United States each year, including United States armed forces personnel and their dependents (55:v). These Americans need foreign language proficiency in order to listen, learn, and interchange ideas with foreign peoples.

The need for persons to fill positions requiring the use of foreign language skills is increasing. In 1958 the United States government recognized the lack of skilled linguists and passed the National Defense Education Act to encourage foreign language instruction in the American schools so that in the future there will be adults qualified for positions requiring foreign language skills. The American government has had difficulty finding persons who had facility in foreign language (51:46). United States representatives abroad have realized that interpreters are no substitute for adequate verbal intercourse because of the deliberate or unintentional slant arising from the translator's personal interests.

One of the reasons Russia has been able to exert an effective influence in her relations with some of the other nations is that the Soviet Union has made an effort to

learn to communicate with foreign nations in the native tongue (33:7). Americans must become multilingual if they are to maintain a position of world leadership and are to influence foreign people by facilitating communication between foreign and American cultures in an effort to improve international relations (58:359-360; 62:117; 33:7).

In addition to the need for practical mastery of a foreign language to communicate with foreign peoples abroad, there is a need for practical mastery of foreign languages within the United States. Export and import houses and banks with foreign connections; school districts which are carrying on foreign language programs; and businesses, trades, industries, and professions in communities with foreign ethnic groups all have need for employees with a mastery of a particular foreign language.

To discover the need for skilled linguists in the United States, the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare contracted with the American Council of Learned Societies to make a preliminary survey to determine language needs of the government, business, industry, and education. The results of this survey "revealed alarming facts about our present linguistic deficiencies" (64: 157-158).

Cultural Enrichment

In addition to equipping the elementary school child with the skills necessary for the eventual practical mastery of a foreign language, the American school has the obligation to enrich the elementary school child's mind with knowledge which will enable the child to understand and help consolidate intercultural relations and develop lasting empathy toward other cultures.

There is the belief that a social-studies program can do as much toward cementing intercultural relations as a foreign language program in the elementary school (17:35) and that another subject need not be added to the present elementary school curriculum. However, factual knowledge of a foreign culture, given in the English language only, does not necessarily develop an adequate understanding of that culture. Collecting indeterminate facts about a foreign people does not substitute for the experience of learning to think and react in the foreign language and thus learning to think and react in a different culture. "Without a working knowledge of their language one is insulated from the people" (47:299).

Neither can the mere study of a foreign language alone develop an adequate understanding of a foreign culture. Studying only the language of another nation does not bring automatic awareness of the basic differences

between the American and foreign cultures. The American student must have experiences in the foreign language to build international understanding.

The American child must try to understand the minds of other peoples--their problems, their needs, their achievements, their contributions to civilization. The American child must be willing to listen and learn from other peoples. Other cultures can teach the American people many things. Foreign language learning, integrated with other areas of the elementary school curriculum, may, through its direct personal experience in the thought and group culture of another people, fulfill effectively the goal of cultural enrichment (19:454).

The success of the aim of cultural enrichment, as evaluated in terms of changes in behavior, is evident in some areas in the southern part of the United States where foreign language programs have been established in schools located among varying ethnic groups. The American children and their parents are becoming more tolerant of the foreign people in their communities, and the status of the members of the ethnic group is improving as a result of foreign language study in the elementary schools. In the elementary school classroom a perceptible change is taking place in the standing of the child who comes from a home with a foreign culture. The foreign child's classmates respect

and admire him because of his pronunciation and fluency in the foreign language being studied. The child with a foreign culture background has a skill to share with children who do not have such a background and who are learning the language--something of value and interest to his peers (57:518; 35:511).

Furthermore, Americans need to learn humility toward other peoples (19:454). Americans should be immersed in another culture for the purpose of learning that the values Americans have learned are not necessarily the only nor the best values and that learnable techniques are available for mastering the essence of an alien way of life and thought. A person who has in early life become aware of different cultures, different modes of thought, is not likely ever again to be so provincial in his outlook.

II. EFFECTS OF PUBLIC OPINION

Before adding any subject to the elementary school curriculum, a wise administration attempts to build a unified community-school relationship.

Schools that are considering instituting a foreign language study in the elementary school cannot expect support by tax payers and voters if the public does not understand the reasons for adding foreign language to the elementary school curriculum. Prior to the institution of a

foreign language study, the members of the school system and the general public in the area affected should be informed of the practical aims, the specific objectives, and the methods and materials of instruction to be used in the elementary foreign language program.

School boards, too, should not be expected to endorse the teaching of a foreign language in the elementary school until the board is convinced of the support of the majority of the citizens included in the school district. The most "dynamic" foreign language programs are those programs which enlist the interest and participation of all the people concerned with the foreign language study (4:15).

Realizing the importance of the influence of public opinion on the success or failure of a foreign language study in the public schools, Congress included in the National Defense Education Act of 1958 funds for the purpose of informing the public about the facts, trends, and problems relating to foreign language teaching in American schools (2:285).

Indications are that the general public is showing an interest favorable to foreign language study. Community support has aided in the establishment of many foreign

language programs in the public schools.¹ Attendance in adult foreign language classes is increasing with increasing foreign travel. The sales of foreign language books and foreign language records to adults are increasing in number (57:514).

During the fiscal year of 1957-1958, the staff of the Modern Language Association of America processed 7,000 requests for advice and information on foreign language study in the school, including inquiries from every part of the world (42:vii).

In an effort to discover the opinion of public school administrators about the inclusion of a foreign language study in the elementary school curriculum, The Nation's Schools, a national magazine, sought the opinions of public school superintendents selected at random throughout the nation; the following results were published in the May, 1959, issue:

TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES--SUPERINTENDENTS' RESPONSES

1. Should a second language be taught to children in elementary grades?

Yes 72%

No 28%

¹Notably in Cleveland, Ohio; Somerville, New Jersey; York, Pennsylvania; Allentown, Pennsylvania; Fairfield, Connecticut; Fairfax, Virginia.

66% specified this instruction should not be compulsory;

33% compulsory; 1% no opinion (50:80).

When the school district endeavors to determine public opinion toward the teaching of foreign languages in the public schools, a survey may be used to assess public opinion. The public schools in Bloomington, Indiana, used this method:

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

200 households chosen at random:

91% favored teaching foreign language in public schools

5% were opposed

4% didn't know (40:328).

When the residents of the same 200 households were asked on what grade level modern languages should be begun, they replied (40:328):

	Grade School	Junior High	High School	College
Per cent:	49	27	21	3

Thus, when the public school administrators in Bloomington, Indiana, consider a change in their language program, they might conclude from the above survey that the public in Bloomington gives the teaching of foreign language in the public schools high priority in the curriculum, and almost half of the population affected believe that

the foreign language study should begin in the elementary schools.

III. IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUITY

The importance of providing continuity in the foreign language study must not be overlooked when a school district establishes a foreign language program in the elementary school.

Sustained Continuity

If the aim of the foreign language study is to equip the student with the ability to understand, speak, read and write the foreign language, it is not reasonable to expect the American school child to master a second language in two or three years or even six years when the present-day school curriculum indicates that it is necessary to spend twelve continuous years developing a basic understanding of the child's native tongue.

The literature on foreign language study indicates that the average elementary foreign language student needs at least two (better, three) years of continuous exposure to the foreign language to learn to understand and speak the foreign language effectively. In addition, provision must be made for the development, study, and practice of reading and writing skills in the foreign language for a sufficient length of time to assure functional mastery.

The education principle, "skills that are not used are soon forgotten," may be applied to foreign language study. If a school district, then, institutes a foreign language study with practical mastery of the foreign language as one of the aims, the school district has the obligation of providing continuous learning in the foreign language until the foreign language skills are mastered.

The school child also needs continuity because of the aim of cultural enrichment. A child is able to grasp certain concepts at one grade level more easily than at another, and the degree of his ability to understand is increased as he matures. A more complete knowledge and understanding of a foreign culture occurs as a child continues in his foreign language study.

Progressive Learning

Included with the factor of continuity is the factor of continuous or progressive learning. Little value would be derived from a foreign language study based on the same vocabulary, phrases, sentences, and activities for each grade level. The foreign language study should be challenging for each grade level and should build on the foreign language experiences the children have had in the previous grades.

A continuous program must be organized, based on cumulative experience and practice (17:35-36; 4:36; 24:139; 49:78).

IV. CHOOSING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Deciding on a foreign language to be taught in the elementary school or schools in a school district may be a difficult problem for the school administrators. Although public opinion influences the choice of language, the school administrators need to study the type of community and the community needs in order to decide on the foreign language study that best fulfills these needs.

Needs of the Children and the Community

When there is an immediate social purpose for choosing a particular foreign language because of a dominant ethnic group in the community, the choice of language by the school district is simplified. For instance, Spanish as the foreign language meets the sociological needs of the school children and communities near the Mexican Border. Study of the Spanish language has developed an understanding of the American child's neighbors and helped the ethnic group better their status in the school and in the community. Spanish is the logical language in that type of community.

On the other hand, New York City contains numerous ethnic groups, including Puerto Ricans, Jews, Germans, Italians, and Irish. There are Spanish, Yiddish, German, Italian, and Polish radio programs. Also, many opportunities

present themselves for persons in New York City to master a foreign language. There are more export and import houses with foreign affiliations in New York City than in any other American city. Every Sunday the New York Times has approximately one hundred ads for people with foreign language competence. The needs of New York City influence its public school foreign language program (29:134-135).

School District Criteria

In communities where the need for a specific foreign language is not so explicit, the school administrators must take care in setting up criteria for selecting the foreign language or languages to be taught.

When there is no immediate practical purpose in the community for teaching a foreign language, the National Education Association reports that the selection of a foreign language is usually made on the basis of (1) the availability of teachers who can teach a foreign language--the one spoken by the greatest number of the presently-employed elementary school teachers is frequently selected; (2) the worldwide use of the language, such as French or Spanish; (3) the foreign language spoken predominantly in the community; (4) the ease of learning the language; (5) the wishes of parents as determined by questionnaires; (6) the availability of foreign language high school teachers whose class loads are not filled in high school;

(7) the availability of interested persons in the language department in near-by or local colleges to serve as elementary foreign language teachers for a number of periods a day (including graduate students majoring in the foreign language); (8) the advantages to be derived from studying a worthy cultural heritage through the language of a particular foreign country; and (9) possible contact with foreign visitors to the community, as at conventions, which depend upon visitors for business (60:12-13).

Most of the above criteria have been included in public opinion or will be included in Chapter III as the problems are related to the administration of the foreign language program. However, the second criterion above, concerning the choice of a foreign language based on "world-wide use," will be included here.

The United Nations organization regards French as the second language of the world (17:35). Most international conferences are conducted in two languages--English and French (4:20). France is a few hours' distance by plane from the eastern border of the United States. French as well as English is the official language of Canada. There are communities in every New England state and in Louisiana, especially, in which French is the native speech of the majority of the population. French, spoken natively

in many parts of the world (4:21),² is the language of about seventy-five million people.³ French has provided about one-third of the stock of our English language and therefore is one of the important sources of American linguistic culture. French has a legitimate claim to the title of a second language for English speaking people (4:20-21).

Similarly, Spanish has both national and international importance because of its broad geographical distribution inside and outside the United States (4:21).⁴ Spanish is spoken by some of our closest neighbors and is spoken by over two million American citizens (4:21). The selection of Spanish as the foreign language to be taught in the elementary school seems to be justified.

²French is the language of France, Haiti, Martinique, Guadelupe, an island off Newfoundland, and French Guiana in our hemisphere; French Morocco, French Equatorial Africa, parts of India, Madagascar, Indochina and in the New Caledonia Islands in the Pacific.

³There is a discrepancy in the literature on the estimate of the number of people who speak French. See Table II, page 28.

⁴Spanish is the language of Spain, Spanish Morocco, the Balearic Islands, and of most of the countries of Central and South America and of the West Indies. Spanish is taught in the elementary schools in El Paso, Corpus Christi, Brownsville and many other Texan communities; in Carlsbad and other towns of New Mexico; in Tucson, Arizona; and in San Diego and Los Angeles, among other places in California.

German has contributed much to our national culture. Dr. Theodore Andersson says that in structure and vocabulary English is a Germanic language. Most of the common words we use are of Germanic origin, and text counts show that writers using the English language use from seventy to ninety-four per cent native Germanic vocabulary.⁵

As the influence of Russia in world affairs appears to be increasing, there is a trend to introduce the Russian language into the secondary schools (64:158). Russian is considered to be one of the "needed" languages under the National Defense Education Act of 1958 (64:158). Approximately 150,000,000 people speak Russian (3:347). Therefore, Russian seems entitled to a place in the foreign language study in the elementary schools.

Chinese and the various Chinese dialects are spoken by nearly a quarter of the world's population. The agricultural, industrial, and military potential of China is tremendous. Americans appear to be conscious of the present and future importance of the East. Perhaps the teaching of Chinese is justified in the elementary schools (42:vii).

⁵The percentages given are based on the common usage of the words, whereas the number given above for French (page 25) is based on the number of words listed in the dictionary. Only about twenty per cent of the words listed in a dictionary are of Germanic origin, but they are the words most frequently found in daily use (4:21).

Table II shows the thirteen languages spoken by the greatest numbers of people in the world. The reader will derive a different connotation from Table II if he will keep in mind that the number of speakers includes all dialects in the foreign language and that people of the same nation speaking different dialects often cannot understand each other.

The elementary school administrator may decide on a foreign language which has made a major contribution to American speech and culture. This may explain why French, German, Italian, and Spanish are the most widely taught at the present time (28:201).

The school administrator, too, may believe that the choice of a foreign language isn't important because the language studied makes little difference so long as the language is well-developed, the language of an important nation with a culture worth knowing. If the chosen language is well taught and studied over a sufficient period of time to acquire a practical mastery and a basic understanding of the culture of the foreign nation involved, the student is equipped with the ability to apply the learning methods and attitudes to any foreign language and any foreign country. The basic attitudes for international understanding of all nations will have been developed in the student (19:453).

TABLE II
NUMBERS WHO SPEAK VARIOUS LANGUAGES
IN THE WORLD (3:347)

1. Chinese (with various dialects)	Estimated 500 million or more. Taught in only twenty-nine institutions of higher education and one high school in the United States.
2. English	Estimated 275 million.
3. Hindi and Urdu (closely related and therefore considered together)	Estimated 150 million native speakers.
4. Russian	Estimated 150 million native speakers.
5. Spanish	Estimated 150 million or more native speakers.
6. German	About 100 million speakers.
7. Japanese	About 100 million speakers.
8. Malay (national language of Indonesia)	Seventy million speakers.
9. Bengali (language of India and of East Pakistan)	Sixty-seven million.
10. Arabic	Sixty-five million.
11. French*	Sixty-five million.
12. Portuguese	Sixty-five million.
13. Italian	Fifty million.

*The United Nations says French is the second language of the world (17:35). There is a discrepancy in the literature on the estimate of the number of people who speak French. See page 25.

Language Needs of the United States

In addition to considering the needs of elementary school children and the criteria of elementary school districts in determining the choice of the foreign language to be taught in the elementary school, the needs of the United States must be taken into consideration.

The National Defense Education Act of 1958 authorized the establishment of language and area centers, federally supported, to teach "needed languages" not now "readily available" in terms of "adequate instruction." These criteria eliminate French, German, Italian, and Spanish as the foreign language to be taught at the centers to be established because if the present instruction in these four languages is inadequate, the remedy lies with the school administrators and language teachers. The six foreign languages which fulfill the above criteria at the present are Arabic (in its chief dialects and with the modern written language stressed); Chinese (in its chief dialects, with Mandarin given the highest priority); Hindustani (or Hindi-Urdu); Japanese; Portuguese; and Russian (64:157-158).

If the choice of a foreign language is to depend on our national needs and interests, there will be a need for individuals trained in the national or official languages of all the sovereign nations with which the United States has business or diplomatic relations and also, in some of

the unofficial languages spoken by millions of inhabitants of a foreign country or territory (64:158).⁶

V. SUMMARY

When a school district considers the establishing of a foreign language program in the elementary school, both cultural and practical aims must be given thoughtful consideration. The effect of public opinion favorable to the establishment of a successful foreign language study in the elementary school must not be overlooked. The provision for continuity so essential in a foreign language study affects the choice of language as do the needs of the children and the purposes, goals, and needs of the school district, community, and nation.

Chapter II included the major problems confronting a school district considering the institution of a foreign language in the elementary school. Until a school district can find a satisfactory solution for these major problems, it need go no further in setting up a foreign language program in the elementary school.

⁶Examples: Javanese (spoken by approximately forty-two million in Indonesia, where the "official" language is Indonesian); Hausa (thirteen million) and Swahili (ten million), two widely used African languages (12:158).

CHAPTER III

TEACHING METHODS IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The foreign language program as taught in the armed services during World War II achieved such outstanding results in such a short time that it was carefully appraised. The following facts became apparent:

1. The students were highly selected.
2. The students were taught in groups of ten.
3. The students were given intensive instruction by an American teacher plus a native informant.
4. Various mechanical devices were employed.
5. There was a singleness of aim and an absence of competition with other subjects.
6. The students were highly motivated (under military discipline) (15:203).

The above findings influenced the organization, methods, and materials in classroom teaching in the new FLES movement.

I. TWO METHODS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Aural-Oral Method

In applying what was learned from investigating the armed services foreign language program to the teaching of

FLES, new FLES methods rejected the initial teaching of grammar and translation of a foreign language and substituted an initial emphasis on hearing and speaking the foreign language without the use of books.

In most elementary school foreign language teaching today, there are four basic steps (just as in learning the native tongue): (1) The child hears the language; (2) the child speaks the language; (3) the child reads the language; and (4) the child writes the language.

Because the first basic step is hearing the language, the foreign language classes in the elementary school should be conducted entirely in the foreign language, if possible (16:374). Carlos Rivera, who established the FLES program in El Paso, Texas, and teaches Spanish in the elementary grades in that city, adheres to this principle by speaking only Spanish to the children. Mr. Rivera is presented to the FLES classes as a gentleman "who understands a little English but does not speak it" (4:51), thus establishing a need for the children to communicate in the foreign tongue.

Dr. Theodore Mueller compares learning a foreign language to learning to play a musical instrument (45:271). He says that each language is a signaling system of sounds that combine to form words and sentences in a melody that is unique to that language. Stress, loudness, pitch, pauses, and sentence patterns are heard by the ear at the

same time. The primary school child absorbs this "tune" and the characteristic behavior of the speaker of the foreign language, and arranges this "climate of sound" and behavior in sense patterns. Within a few weeks, the child in the FLES program is beginning to speak the language (4:49-50).

Under the FLES or aural-oral method, the primary school child uses the foreign language to satisfy his wants. The elementary foreign language student builds up this second language of his through an experience with objects and situations such as pointing, asking names of things, handling objects, summoning, demanding, announcing, responding, thinking, and remembering, until he uses the foreign language learnings to express ideas. Now the elementary school child using the aural-oral method can think ahead and plan in the foreign tongue. The aural-oral method of foreign language learning takes place incidentally and builds up cumulatively day after day without hurry or pressure.

The FLES course of study for each elementary grade level should be integrated with other areas of study presented by the regular elementary classroom teacher. The elementary school child should be offered many situations in which he actively participates in a different cultural pattern.

For instance, the foreign language in the elementary school may be considered part of the language arts program or of such social studies as international relations. Numbers, art, music, and science are common learnings which provide a medium of international communication (4:40). As the foreign language is integrated into the common learnings in the elementary school, the foreign language, too, becomes a common learning.

Observance of foreign traditions, customs, and holidays brings American elementary school children into contact with the foreign culture, provided that all participation, linguistic and cultural, is carried on by the elementary school children in the second language. Empathy with the foreign culture may be developed in the elementary school child as he enters into activities common to the members of the foreign culture.

Numerous audio-visual aids, such as tapes, records, and radio programs have been developed for use in the FLES program (7:385-405). These audio-visual aids may leave little provision for individual differences and flexibility, and may not stimulate activities and interest in the foreign language. On the other hand, if the audio-visual aids are carefully selected to fit a specific purpose and are wisely used, they may contribute much to the foreign language teaching in the elementary school by allowing flexible response and stimulating learning activities.

If the sound patterns of the foreign language have been firmly established through use of the aural-oral method, the written or printed symbol of the foreign language will cause the elementary school child no difficulty. There will be no conflict between his first and second languages if he has already learned to read and write his own language well (4:56). Now the foreign language teacher is ready to guide the children as they learn to read and write the words which they have already learned to say. The aural-oral approach should not be abandoned, because it is a permanent part of the foreign language learning in the FLES method. The objective is that the elementary school child read and write everything he can understand or say in the second language.

Reading-Writing Approach

However, there is a difference of opinion among proponents of a foreign language study in the elementary schools as to which step in the foreign language learning process should be emphasized.¹

The aural-oral approach is based on the theory that an elementary school child is taught to speak the foreign

¹See page 32, paragraph two.

language first because learning to speak is the child's first step in learning the mother tongue. The opponents of the aural-oral approach say that a child first learns to speak the native tongue because the child cannot read; since the child can now read the native language, why learn a foreign language by trying to speak the foreign language first.

Thus, the reading-writing approach uses the formal, old-style method of learning a foreign language, with the stress on reading, written work, and grammar. If a foreign language pupil reads and knows 10,000 words, the proponents of the visual approach believe that he can manipulate far more of the foreign words learned through reading in conversation than the relatively fewer foreign words the student learns in the aural-oral method. Also, since most American children have little contact with foreign speaking people, there is no need to use any other language than English, but without a need for speaking a foreign language, the elementary school child would forget the second tongue quickly.

Believers in the visual approach say that in the new conversational approach, the elementary school students no longer taste the richness and wisdom of the literature in the foreign language.

II. AGE TO BEGIN INSTRUCTION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The proponents of FLES say a foreign language should be started in the elementary school (16:374; 5:491-492; 4:31; 44:4; 24:138-139).² "Our failure to capitalize on the language facility of children is a woeful waste of human resource" (1:529).

Physiological Development of Elementary School Children

According to Dr. Wilder Penfield, Director of the Montreal Neurological Institute, three or four areas in the human cerebral cortex are specialized for the formulation of speech and the acquisition of language (4:28). In his opinion

The optimum age for beginning the continuous learning of a second language seems to fall within the span of ages four through eight, with superior performance to be anticipated at ages eight, nine and ten. In this early period the brain seems to have the greatest plasticity and specialized capacity needed for acquiring speech (16:374).

There is an age, then, when the elementary school child has a remarkable capacity to utilize the areas in the cerebral cortex for the learning of a foreign language. As the capacity for reason and abstract thinking appears, the early facility for aural-oral language learning gradually diminishes.

²Many other articles support this opinion.

If instruction in a second language is started before the elementary school student is ten years old, the pupils are mimics and have more flexible speech organs (44:4; 17:33). After the age of ten, the school child is more likely to speak the foreign language with an accent (2:282).

Well-known and successful Cleveland, Brooklyn, and Los Angeles foreign language programs are based on the above assumptions as are the programs in El Paso, Carlsbad, Jamestown, and Washington, D. C.

In the evaluation made by Mildred Wiseman--the foreign language teacher in Menard, Texas, where the school district initiated a foreign language program for the six elementary grade levels in the school year 1959-1960--at the end of one year of foreign language instruction in the elementary school using an aural-oral approach, the following conclusions were reached: (1) The first three grades learned quickly and easily with never a thought that the material was difficult. (2) The fourth grade children also learned readily and easily. (3) By the fifth and sixth grades, the school children began to think in terms of difficulty and the strange and foreign sounds often produced embarrassment for them. (4) Good results were obtained in the fifth- and sixth-grade classes but not with the ease and pleasure that they had been accomplished in the first four grades (66:18).

Psychological Development of Elementary School Children

Concern has been expressed that the introduction of a foreign language study in the elementary school tends to interfere with the learning of English and further hamper academically and emotionally some children with language disabilities.

However, teachers who have taught a foreign language in kindergarten or first grade using the aural-oral method have found that foreign language study does not complicate in any way the adjustment of the child to school (4:8; 38:15). Apparently foreign language is one of the subjects that arouses the greatest enthusiasm and thus facilitates adjustment of the young child to school. Carlos Rivera, who directs the foreign language program in El Paso elementary schools, agrees completely with the above (4:27).

Dr. Arnold Gesell and Dr. Frances Ilg declared:

The present trend toward providing opportunities for second-language learning in the early grades indicates a clearer recognition of the patterns and sequences of child development. The child enjoys language experience. He is ready to learn, to listen, to communicate by word of mouth, in playful and dramatic situations. With favorable motivation he is emotionally amenable to a second or even a third language (16:374).

The psychological advantages of an early study of a foreign language by elementary school children are the children's freedom from inhibitions; spontaneous response;

a lack of being conscious of awkwardness, errors or failure; and the children's ability to retain new thought impressions easily.

Sociological Development of Elementary School Children

The stage of sociological development of the elementary school child tends to make him susceptible to the new attitudes and habits of intercultural sympathy and understanding. The elementary school child is proud to collaborate with his elders in building world peace.

In addition, teaching a foreign language in the elementary school encourages the children of the foreign culture. Many of the foreign-speaking children take more interest in their other schoolwork because of the interest and feeling of importance gained in their participation during the foreign language class. The foreign language study increases understanding between the children of the two cultures (60:23; 66:20).

The following tells of the results that may be obtained when the foreign language study using the aural-oral method has been instituted in the elementary school to take advantage of the elementary school child's stages of development.

Ruth Mulhauser, director of the FLES Institute at Western Reserve University, Cleveland, in which city FLES

is included in all the elementary grades, describes an ex-juvenile FLES student in college (18:33).

The former FLES student communicates in French, has no inhibitions about his second language, has no doubt that the language includes audio and lingual aspects and is unaware of nonsense about literal translations.

The FLES student who comes to college brings healthy attitudes toward other peoples and cultures as well as toward language learning. The student has accepted the principle of cultural differences and does not expect either the foreign people or their language to fit neatly into American patterns.

The former FLES student accepts naturally the principle that all languages have a spoken form, expects to learn language in this manner and becomes impatient if the audio-lingual aspect is removed. His own language achievement is most noticeably different and superior in the audio-lingual area. He may not be mistaken for a native but he won't be mistaken for the usual high-school product of the traditional method. His speech is fluent, uninhibited; he is keenly conscious of sounds (heard and spoken), shows marked capacity to learn through his ear as well as through his eye. His accuracy in reading and writing seems to correlate with his own mental habits in other subjects.

Former FLES students voluntarily lengthen their language studies by taking university elective courses beyond the requirements.

III. SELECTION OF PUPILS FOR A FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Another problem which confronts elementary school administrators who are considering the instituting of a foreign language study in the elementary school or schools included in the school district is whether all the

elementary school children should receive foreign language training or whether the recipients of the foreign language training should be selected by criteria determined by the school administration.

School District Criteria

In order to decide which elementary school pupils may study the foreign language, the school administrator must review the purposes and goals of the foreign language study and then consider the arguments for and against the method of selection. Arguments for the selection of special students for the foreign language study in the elementary school are as follows (4:32-33): (1) Correlation between high I. Q. and language aptitude is high, though not especially significant (because of high I. Q., correlation would be high in any subject), (2) The addition of a foreign language may handicap the slow student in his regular work load--(there is doubt about the validity of this), (3) More foreign language learning can be accomplished in a given time if apt and ready students only are taken, (4) Schools don't have an adequate supply of fully qualified teachers, so that the selection must be restricted, and the enrollment in the foreign language study should be limited, (5) Foreign language study enriches the curriculum of the gifted pupils (those who can profit most and those who need the enrichment most), and (6) The administrator is justified

in limiting the number of children participating in the foreign language study because only certain families are interested or because of budgetary restrictions or lack of time in the school program.

There are several arguments against the selection of special students for the foreign language study in the elementary school: (1) The selection of foreign language pupils is against the democratic principle of educational opportunity for all, (2) Non-selection of the foreign language recipients would eliminate one of the school administrator's difficulties--the selective process and the justification, (3) There appears to be no inevitable correlation between high I. Q. and foreign language aptitude, (4) The selective process encourages the snob appeal of the foreign language experience, (5) Foreign language programs should use the principle of enrichment rather than selectivity for gifted school children, (6) An objective of foreign language learning is to understand and appreciate a foreign people and their culture, an objective equally important for all to learn, and (7) The addition of a foreign language to the elementary school curriculum is stimulating. The foreign language study is often more beneficial to the slow learner than the fast learner, for, if successful, the taste of success encourages the slow learner to renew his efforts in all subjects (4:33-34).

The better case appears to be for all the elementary school pupils to have the opportunity to participate in the foreign language training as long as they derive a clear, educational benefit.

Gifted Students

A factor to be considered when determining the selection of elementary school pupils for the foreign language program is the concept of "gifted" as applied to foreign language achievement. Foreign language instruction for high I. Q. children is not justified by adequate research. Statements of some supervisors of long-established foreign language programs indicate that slow learners in other areas of the elementary school curriculum sometimes are outstanding in learning to speak a foreign language (60:17). This may be due to the elementary school child's having a keen, musical ear or having had contact with a foreign language in the home or in his early life prior to starting school (47:295).

Dorothy E. Norris, in her article, "Programs in the Elementary Schools," says the high school is recognizing that many of its incoming FLES students, whether gifted or not, are "certainly outstanding in their achievement in language learning" (47:295).

The special talent of the "gifted" foreign language student should be recognized but the democratic principles

of education would encourage the use of enrichment in the foreign language program rather than selectivity.

IV. SUMMARY

There are two approaches in the methods of foreign language instruction in the elementary school. One approach places the emphasis on the aural-oral skills and the other on the reading-writing skills. Research has shown that the developmental processes of children influence the period of best language learning ability. In addition, the philosophy of the individual school district will determine the selection of recipients of the foreign language program in the elementary school.

CHAPTER IV

PRACTICAL ADMINISTRATION PROBLEMS OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Whenever the addition of a foreign language study to the elementary school curriculum is being considered, problems arise in the field of its practical administration.

I. TIME

To include foreign language instruction in the curriculum, the administrator must find the time in an already full elementary school program.

If the school administrator feels that the foreign language learnings are of doubtful value, the time spent in teaching foreign language in the elementary school might better be spent in more pressing areas in the classroom (20:362). However, if the school administrator has examined the aims of the foreign language program in his district and believes the aims of the foreign language program are worthy of execution, then time must be found in the curriculum.

In endeavoring to find time in the crowded elementary school curriculum (26:270), the school administrator may delete some subject, lengthen the school day, or reduce the time allotted some other subject (17:33).

Each school district, according to its philosophy and needs, may come up with a different answer to the problem of time for a foreign language study. The aural-oral method of foreign language instruction in the elementary school, however, may be correlated with other areas in the elementary school curriculum so that the time problem becomes less difficult to solve (16:374).

II. EXPENSE

In addition to finding time in the elementary school curriculum, the school district must allocate funds for the foreign language program in the elementary school.

The National Education Association set up criteria to be used in evaluating whether the expenditure of money for a foreign language program in the elementary school is justifiable: (1) Does the program have well thought out and defensible purposes? (2) Are the purposes of the program cooperatively developed? (3) Does the program provide for the mental health of children and teachers?¹ (4) Is the program based upon sound teaching-learning principles? and (5) Are the materials conducive to sound learning? (60:11).

¹Do the teachers participate on a voluntary basis or are the classroom teachers pressured into foreign language teaching when they feel inadequate? If the classroom teacher feels inadequate to teach a foreign language, she

If these criteria are followed, the National Education Association believes that the expenditure of money for a foreign language study in the elementary school is justifiable.

Additional funds will be required for instructional materials, teachers, or the cost of training the present personnel, and, in a larger school district, the cost of supervision for the elementary school foreign language program.

Again, each school district must come up with its own answer to the problem of finding available funds to underwrite a foreign language study in the elementary school.

III. TEACHERS

Although the school administrator has worthy aims for the foreign language program in the elementary school and has decided on the best method of instruction to fulfill the aims, his plans are to no avail unless qualified teachers of the foreign language may be found.

may feel a loss of self-respect and confidence. The teacher may fear the foreign language study may interrupt, impair or eliminate a needed classroom learning.

If a foreign language teacher-specialist is used, she may not know and provide for the needs of the children and for individual differences. If the foreign language specialist has a different teaching philosophy than that of the classroom teacher, both the children and the classroom teacher may be disturbed.

Dr. Theodore Andersson, Professor of Romance Languages at the University of Texas, has set up qualifications for a teacher of a foreign language in the elementary school:

1. In order to teach satisfactorily, a teacher should be well acquainted with the prevailing philosophy and practice in the American elementary school.

2. He must be genuinely fond of and effective with children so as to be able to arouse and maintain their interest and enthusiasm.

3. He should be a broadly educated, resourceful, and enthusiastic person.

4. He should possess a thorough knowledge of, skill in, and enthusiasm for the language or languages that he proposes to teach, together with a knowledge of the history, civilization, and culture of the country or area involved (4:43).

If the conversational or aural-oral method is used exclusively in the introduction of foreign language learning in the elementary school, the teacher should have native or near-native linguistic ability. Since children at this age level learn by imitation, their ability to reproduce without accent the foreign language of the environment will depend upon the complete accuracy of the teacher's foreign speech (5:492; 4:12, 45; 44:4-5).

The teacher of a foreign language in the elementary school must be familiar with the practices and philosophy of the learning program in the elementary school. If he

does not have a thorough understanding of child development and the elementary curriculum, he may be unable to adapt the methods of instruction so that the elementary school children will develop to their fullest capacity in foreign language skills.

If the public elementary school district is unable to recruit qualified foreign language teachers, the district may devise other methods of utilizing foreign languages in the elementary grades, such as with audio-visual materials.

IV. SUMMARY

In carrying out a foreign language study in the elementary school, the administrator must find time in the curriculum for foreign language instruction, the funds to finance the study, and the qualified instructors to teach it.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I. SUMMARY

This research investigated the problems to be considered when instituting a foreign language in the elementary school--the aims of the foreign language program, the methods of foreign language instruction, and the practical administrative problems of the foreign language study.

This study was limited to (1) the cultural and practical aims of a foreign language study in the elementary school; (2) the effect of public opinion; (3) the importance of continuity; (4) choosing a foreign language; (5) two methods of foreign language instruction; (6) the age to begin instruction; (7) the selection of pupils; (8) time in the elementary school curriculum; (9) the expense involved; and (10) the recruitment of teachers. This study was not concerned with the solution of these problems.

Definitions of terms used in relation to the foreign language field were included for clarification.

FLES teaching existed in American schools in the nineteenth century. This movement, ineffectual both in the administrative phase and in achievement, died with the coming of World War I. The rise of the new FLES movement began during World War II and has been gaining impetus ever since.

This movement gained impetus in 1952 because of the support of Dr. Earl J. McGrath, then United States Commissioner of Education, and the organized support of the Modern Language Association of America. In 1958, the United States Congress passed the National Defense Education Act, which furnished financial support to foreign language study in the American schools and further stimulated the new FLES movement.

Both cultural and practical aims are to be considered in establishing a foreign language program in the elementary school. Foreign language study in the elementary school could equip the elementary school child with a potential practical mastery of a specific foreign language and could develop his understanding of other cultures.

Public opinion affects the establishment of a foreign language program in the elementary school and favorable public opinion is recommended (37:521).

Continuity is an essential factor in the foreign language study in the elementary school. Provision must be made for adequate continuity of the foreign language study from its conception through high school for the training to be of value (2:282; 16:374). The learning in the foreign language study must be progressive academically (4:36; 47:297; 60:29-30).

Certain other factors must be considered when choosing a foreign language to be taught in the elementary school. The choice of foreign language should conform with the needs of the children and community, with the purposes and goals of the school district, and with the needs of the United States Government insofar as feasible (64:157-158; 16:374; 60:13).

Teaching methods are an important consideration in the development of a foreign language program in the elementary school. The most commonly used methods are the aural-oral approach and the reading-writing approach.

Research has shown that the best age to start foreign language study is before the child is eleven years old (24:138; 16:374; 4:28). The physiological, psychological, and sociological development of children influence the period of best foreign language learning ability and the susceptibility to the new attitudes and habits of intercultural sympathy and understanding (4:11).

The prospective pupils for a foreign language study in an elementary school must be determined. The selection may be determined by their I. Q. and by the philosophy of the individual school district.

Problems arise in the field of practical administration of the foreign language study in the elementary school. The school district must provide time in the elementary

school curriculum for the foreign language instruction, funds for the expenses involved in administering and carrying out the foreign language program, and qualified teachers to teach in the foreign language program.

II. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions are presented by the investigator of the findings in this study:

1. Each individual school district needs to consider carefully the aims and goals of its foreign language study before instituting a foreign language program in the elementary school.
2. The favorable support of the community is one of the important factors which affect the success or failure of a foreign language program in the elementary school.
3. Continuity is an essential factor in the practical mastery of a foreign language, and unless continuity can be provided from the conception of the foreign language study through the end of high school, practical mastery of a foreign language should not be an aim of the foreign language program in the elementary school.
4. A foreign language study, integrated with other areas of the elementary school curriculum, seems to be the most effective means of mastering the essence of an alien way of life and thought for the elementary school child.

5. The aural-oral method seems to coordinate best with the abilities of the elementary school child.

6. Each elementary school child has the right to participate in a foreign language program if a foreign language study is offered by the school district.

7. Research does not justify the exclusion of children from the foreign language study on the basis of I. Q.

8. The best time to start a foreign language study is in the early elementary school years if practical mastery of the foreign language is the goal.

9. Elementary school children need to hear the native or near-native pronunciation of the foreign language to reproduce the sounds correctly and to acquire functional mastery of the foreign language.

10. The school district has the responsibility of providing qualified foreign language teachers before instituting a foreign language program in the elementary school.

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