An Analysis of Washington State Elementary Teachers’ Attitudes toward Foreign Language Instruction in the Elementary School (Files)

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AN ANALYSIS OF WASHINGTON STATE ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD FOREIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (FLES)

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington State College

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

by
Thomas H. Nelson
August, 1968
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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Within the past ten years there has been an increase in the amount of foreign languages taught in the elementary schools of the United States. This increase could be explained by the interest of parents, administrators, and teachers in furthering the education of students in an area of the curriculum previously set aside for students in the secondary schools. To do a more effective job of foreign language training, many have felt that the instruction should begin in the early years of schooling.

Problems have arisen regarding cost of the program, selection of students, time for a foreign language class, scheduling of students, administration of the program, and the competency, willingness, and enthusiasm of the teachers directly or indirectly involved in the program.

So far there have been few, if any, attempts made to determine the feelings of the teachers toward teaching a new, and to many, a strange subject. No evidence has been submitted, at this point, to support the theory that teachers will be willing to accept the responsibility of teaching a foreign language (2:15).
I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

The purposes of this study were (1) to ascertain the attitudes and opinions of 125 teachers in first class districts in the State of Washington toward the teaching of a foreign language in elementary schools; and (2) to present a summary of literature on FLES to reveal the thinking of those involved in FLES programs.

Importance of the Study

The enthusiasm of the instructor toward the subject he teaches is a factor in the success or failure of that subject (2:15). Before starting a program of foreign languages in the elementary school, an assessment of teacher attitudes seemed necessary.

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis was that there would be no differences in the attitudes and opinions of the responding teachers toward foreign languages in the elementary school (FLES). The theoretical hypothesis was that the responding teachers would be in favor of a foreign language program in the elementary school.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to first class districts in the State of
Washington. No attempt was made to select particular districts. The questionnaires involved in the study were sent to 125 elementary schools only.

The teachers involved did not necessarily have to be teaching a foreign language nor were they required to have a foreign language background. A possible weakness of the study might be present because the principals of the schools participating chose the respondents.

The study was limited to teachers' attitudes and opinions and was in no way meant to analyze the school district's policies toward FLES.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES)

Because school organization varies somewhat with location, foreign language in the elementary school (FLES) is interpreted as meaning the teaching of a language other than English to students in a graded structure, i.e., grades one through six.

FLES Specialist

A person who is considered to be a specialist in the teaching of a foreign language in the elementary school is one who has: (1) the skills required to teach elementary school age students; (2) the capability to speak and understand a foreign language when spoken at a normal rate
of speed; (3) the ability to read and write a foreign language with immediate comprehension and without translation first into English (7:199).

Aural-Oral Skills

The primary methodology of a program of FLES includes those skills involving listening and speaking. The initial stages of second language learning include the accomplishment of conversation fundamentals through the use of these skills. "Other terms for aural-oral are audio-lingual and audio-oral" (7:201).

Classroom Follow-up

When a foreign language is taught by either a specialist, regular teacher, or mechanical means (ETV, tapes, radio, etc.), classroom follow-up activities are those experiences "... such as drills, songs, and dramatization of dialogues in which children participate in order to practice language items that have been presented" (7:203).

Articulation

The sequential grade by grade progression of foreign language instruction from elementary school through high school is one of the objectives of a good foreign language program.
III. ORGANIZATION OF REMAINDER OF THE THESIS

Chapter II contains a review of literature. Through this review the arguments for and against FLES are presented. Some problems and suggestions for solutions are included. A summary of the direction and progress of FLES is given.

Chapter III contains a brief summary of the procedure followed in obtaining data. Discussion of the methods used in drawing the sample is undertaken.

Chapter IV reveals the results of the questionnaire. The questionnaire is discussed and the null hypothesis, that there would be no differences in the opinions of the responding teachers toward FLES, is tested for acceptance at the .05 level of significance. Some remarks by the respondents are also included.

Chapter V presents a summary of the thesis. Conclusions are stated, implications are suggested, and recommendations are given.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Many articles and a few books have been written about FLES. During the growth of FLES, mistakes have been made, resulting in valid arguments for and against a program of second language instruction in the elementary school. There are problems which must be solved if FLES is ever to be considered a full-fledged part of the elementary school curriculum. The progress of FLES, arguments for and against FLES, and solutions to some of the problems associated with FLES will be reviewed briefly in this chapter.

I. PROGRESS OF FLES

The idea of foreign languages in the elementary school is not a completely new educational innovation. As stated in the publication of the Modern Language Association of America (MLA), languages "... have been taught at this level in European schools for generations" (2:3). Even in this country seven programs had been started in the 1920's and by the beginning of World War II some twenty additional programs had begun.

During the 1940's and the early 1950's, 145,000 elementary school children in thirty-three states were involved in learning a foreign
language. "By the end of 1954, nearly every state was represented in the movement" (2:3). By 1957, 27,000 public school children were receiving foreign language instruction in the elementary school. According to William R. Parker, director of the Foreign Language Program of the MLA, "... those 270,000 are already more than one-third the total number studying modern foreign languages in all our public schools" (18:1).

Such a rapid growth of FLES programs left disappointment and waste in its wake. Between 1956 and 1961, many districts ignored the warnings issued by the MLA. Districts started programs in a haphazard, unprepared fashion. The movement took on a faddish aspect. The result was that many citizens felt they had been misled in the "nature and value of foreign language learning" (14:1). Consequently, the MLA issued a statement of policy in 1961. In it the Association defined FLES and made their position clear in relation to priority, articulation, experimental programs, and the teacher. One section reaffirmed the stand made earlier in rebuking the "bandwagon" type of FLES advocates. The report listed seven cautions in starting a second language in the elementary school. Section H of the revised statement read:

A FLES program should be instituted only if: (1) it is an integral and serious part of the school day; (2) it is ... part of the total foreign language program in the school system; (3) there is close articulation with later foreign language learning; (4) there are available FL specialists or elementary school teachers with an adequate command of the foreign language; (5) there is a planned syllabus and a sequence of materials; (6) the program has the support of the administration; (7) the high school teachers of
the foreign language . . . recognize the same long range objectives and practice some of the same teaching techniques as the FLES teachers (14:2).

It was hoped by the MLA that because of these warnings FLES advocates would slow down their attempts to start their programs until they had taken stock of their resources.

In 1959, at the Northeast Conference on Teaching of Foreign Languages, Filomena C. Peloro, Chairman of the Elementary and Junior High School Curricula Committee and five other foreign language specialists realized that although many mistakes had been made:

... in some instances foreign languages has been added to the elementary school curriculum by flexible, interested administrators who realize the importance to the child and to a good high school program of an early beginning in the grades. These administrators also know that the grade school instruction requires a teacher who is a competent speaker of the foreign language, who understands the elementary school child, and who keeps abreast of the developments in this changing field (16:1).

In the committee's report, they attempted to (1) give a description of a realistic, workable FLES program, (2) relate the problems following grade school, and (3) submit a proposal for solutions to the problems.

Six objectives for a sound FLES program were given. The first dealt with the idea that the language should be taught as though a foreign child of the same age were speaking it. It was felt that "The spontaneity and vitality of the language as a means of expression and communication should not be sacrificed to the teacher's unwarranted concern for the
sequence of grammar points as they are treated in the traditional text books" (16:2). A real language situation should be presented. Natural spontaneous comments useful to the child were thought to be the most beneficial and of primary concern.

The second objective dealt with aural comprehension, accomplished through the use of "... pictures, gestures, intonation, contextual inference, and other clues" and not through translation to and from English (16:3).

Because near native pronunciation by the teacher was deemed of extreme importance, the third objective dealt with the weaknesses of interested teachers and the correction of these weaknesses. Thanks to the National Defense Education Act of 1958, institutes were made available for these interested teachers.

The importance of pupil-to-pupil communication rather than teacher-pupil dialogue was made the next objective.

Cultural awareness of the country and customs from which the foreign language came was included as the fifth objective. The committee felt that if the students could identify themselves with the natives of the foreign country, the children would be motivated toward learning about the country and gain respect for the customs of the country.

To prepare the students for more difficult work at the junior high level, reading of the language was to be introduced in the sixth grade.
This would not terminate the use of the aural-oral approach but would be the next step in an orderly sequence (16:4).

Between 1959 and 1964, FLES spread very rapidly. H. H. Stern, in his paper read at the International Conference on Modern Foreign Language Teaching, stated:

The teaching of foreign languages in the primary school arouses widespread interest today. It is significant that in the present series of talks at this congress, no other stage of language teaching . . . has been singled out in a similar fashion and has a complete . . . session exclusively devoted to itself (22:201).

He added that ten years earlier FLES had been a minor topic. So rapidly had FLES grown that many questions concerning its growth had been raised. "In the United States," emphasized Stern, "the inadequacy of language courses at the secondary stage has been criticized for many years and experiments to start languages in elementary schools go back at least to the twenties" (22:202).

By 1961, reports from various countries had filtered into the UNESCO Institute of Education. The reports ranged from established practices in FLES to experimental approaches. It was found that experiments and reforms had been carried on over large areas in fourteen countries, including Canada, United States, Russia, England, and others. The outcome of the various reports was that in all the countries there was "... a marked demand for better knowledge of other languages, and with this demand has come the study of the problem of introducing these
languages into the education of children at an early age" (22:204).

FLES was defined by Nelson Brooks of Yale University. He stated:

FLES is essentially an adaptation of a supreme psychological fact clearly demonstrated in the learning of one's mother tongue: that any child can learn any language with nothing to go on save what he is born with and the "language in action" of those about him (3:1).

He added that the progress of FLES had led to a basic philosophy:

Language is first of all something we say.

Reading and writing must wait until hearing and speaking are well established.

The learner must be involved in the three-fold interplay of hearer, speaker, and situation.

Nobody talks in single words: the memorization of word lists is a waste of time.

It is better for the student to think of language not as a problem but as habit formation.

Language functions essentially by analogy rather than by analysis. To dismantle an instrument is instructive, but one cannot take it apart and play it at the same time.

At the start, the learning of forms and syntax should be maximized while vocabulary is minimized.

Until the learner is well along in his control of the new language, translation (by him) from one language to another is not only pointless but often detrimental.

No skill once developed should be allowed to fall into disuse (3:3).
II. ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST FLES

Arguments in Favor of FLES

The most used arguments in favor of FLES, according to Stern (22:206), are "making too much of the linguistic potentialities of young children. 'Children learn languages so easily.' 'They are less self-conscious than adolescents.' 'They have a better memory.'" Stern reported that these arguments are at best half truths. He prefers to argue that second language learning has far reaching socio-political considerations. That is, with the ever-shrinking world, we will be coming into closer contact with bordering countries as well as distant ones. Eventually, he felt, it will be a matter of course that one will command a second language. With regard to the national interest, it will be imperative that the society in general be qualified to speak a language other than the native tongue.

Stern's second argument for FLES centered around the changing appearance of the elementary school curriculum. As an example he cited the recent change in the approach to mathematics. He further stated (22:208) "There is a movement towards a richer, more positive education at the primary stage and rigid distinctions between what is appropriate for the primary school and what is right for the secondary school are disappearing."

He argued that the addition of a second language would be a valuable contribution on the grounds that: (1) It is a worthwhile...
experience, (2) the time needed for mastery is lengthened and deepened, (3) children and teachers gain time, and (4) students are given a chance to learn a second foreign language when they reach high school (22:206-210).

Proponents of FLES were given another argument when Dr. Wilder Penfield published *Speech and Brain Mechanisms*. The eleventh chapter dealt with the capacity of brain-damaged patients to recoup their loss. He also cited a timetable for language learning, which placed the optimum age for starting a second language at between four and eight. Between the ages of nine and twelve, he is capable of learning two or three languages as easily as one. As far back as 1939, Dr. Penfield noted,

> It has been said that an Anglo-Saxon cannot learn other languages well. That is only because, as he grows up, he becomes a stiff and resistant individualist, like a tree—a sort of oak that cannot be bent in any graceful manner. But the Anglo-Saxon, if caught young enough, is as plastic and as good a linguist as the child of any other race (20:1).

Physiological and psychological factors given by Penfield seem to indicate that man's mind becomes less flexible and "... that for the purposes of learning languages the human brain becomes progressively stiff and rigid after the age of nine" (20:1).

**Arguments Opposing FLES**

There are also arguments in opposition to FLES. They seem to revolve around three main positions. The first is the lack of adequately
prepared teachers. William R. Parker, although an advocate of FLES, stated that the bandwagon acceptance of FLES had caught educators unprepared. Interested parents, administrators, and teachers would defeat their purposes if they did not "... restrict the growth of this educational trend to the supply of adequately prepared teachers" (18:1-2).

The second argument in opposition was inadequate preparation for articulation. Filomena and Guillermo del Olmo found that a sequential, continuous program from grades three through twelve had one big drawback. In a study done in 1958, it was found that when FLES students reached the seventh grade, rather than continuing at their level of ability, they were grouped in beginning foreign language classes. They reported:

This situation forces us to admit that our accomplishment in FLES programs does not completely do its part in providing the beginning steps in language learning and that a cumulative plan for a long-sequence program has not yet become standard practice in most school systems" (5:1).

The third argument in opposition concerned the amount of time needed to teach a foreign language adequately. Correspondingly, some of the subjects in the daily schedule would lose some of their allotted time. If a program of foreign languages were taught for a period of fifteen to twenty minutes a day, the time spent on one or all of the other subjects would have to be shortened (12:16).
The three arguments mentioned did not complete the opposition's stand. Other arguments included the lack of materials, high cost of the program, lack of provisions for evaluation, and others. Although these arguments present problems, solutions to them can probably be found.

III. SOLUTIONS TO FLES PROBLEMS

Using inadequately trained teachers was a serious problem and one that needed a solution. However, until specialists could be trained by colleges, a number of interim measures were suggested. Carlyle G. Hoyt, Superintendent of the Fairfield, Connecticut, schools stated that although there was a real and serious problem, "a number of stopgap measures had been initiated." He stated:

We started using one or two persons who traveled about teaching nothing but the language in a number of grades. We currently are using some junior high and senior high teachers who are taking on a few assignments in the elementary grades (9:3).

The solution lies in the hands of the colleges. Hoyt continued, "In the final analysis . . . the liberal arts schools have refused to accept the responsibility for preparing teachers . . ." and should be blamed for "an over emphasis on method" (9:3).

Another step toward solving this problem was mentioned by William Parker. He remarked that administrators must encourage "prospective teachers to seek this new kind of training" (18:2). But in
lieu of trained foreign language teachers, he continued, instruction should come from persons who understand young children and who can speak and understand the language.

Staffing the University of Chicago Elementary School's FLES program was fairly easy as a result of the proximity of the college. Part-time instructors were hired who were all native speakers of French. During the first two years of their five-year study, French was taught by Roger Pillet, Chairman of the Foreign Language Department of the University Laboratory School. During the third year, a second teacher was added. Although she had no previous teaching experience, she was a native speaker. In the fourth year, two more part-time instructors were added. One was a high school foreign language teacher, who later resigned because he did not like teaching young children; the other was a graduate student from the University.

Because Pillet and Dunkel (12: Ch. 2) felt that their staff should be specialists, this type of stop-gap measure seemed appropriate until regular teachers could be trained. In addition, they recommended four possible types of personnel to be used on either a full or part-time basis. The first was ideally "a native speaker with proper academic background and experience for teaching at the elementary grades"; second, "a native speaker without formal training or experience"; third, teachers borrowed from other levels; and fourth, graduate students from nearby colleges.
As Parker stated, "... the teachers are coming. Communities like ... Seattle have introduced programs of in-service training. Many ... colleges are taking steps to meet this exciting demand" (18:2).

For the second problem, inadequate articulation with secondary schools, there were also suggestions for solutions. The MLA Second Statement of Policy stated that articulation required:

(1) a foreign-language program in grades 7 and 8 for graduates of FLES, who should never be placed with beginners at any level;
(2) a carefully planned coordination of the FLES and secondary school programs; (3) a frequent interchange of visits and information among the foreign language teachers at all levels; (4) an overall coordination by a single foreign language supervisor or by a committee of administrators. These cooperative efforts would result in a common core of language learning that will make articulation smooth and effective (14:1).

Mary Finocchiaro submitted a possible solution in the form of a guide worked out by administrators and teachers. In the guide, the total scope and sequence of the foreign language program should be outlined in detail. She stated that in order to have a "... continuous foreign language program articulated with the secondary schools, formal measures of evaluation should be cooperatively evolved" (7:140–141). She indicated that these measures should be cooperatively prepared with the secondary school personnel.

Finocchiaro further added that even if it is necessary for FLES students to be put in a beginning high school language class, their language experience can be used in various ways.
The teacher can ask them to participate more quickly in oral reading and role playing. He can ask them to help their school-mates. He can enlist their assistance in asking questions, in grading papers or homework, or in serving as group leaders of games (7:15).

The third problem dealt with the appropriation of time during the school day in which to teach a foreign language. Most experts agreed that fifteen to twenty minutes a day in the first three years was an adequate and acceptable amount of time for foreign language instruction. By reducing the time spent on the seven or eight other subjects during the day by two or three minutes, provision for a foreign language period could be made. "Certainly this could be done without serious damage to the other subject areas!" Finocchiaro further pointed out, "Routine matters can be relegated to routines" (7:12).

Funkel and Pillet followed essentially the same course. In a staff meeting held at the beginning of program planning, the teachers were asked for solutions to this problem. They suggested that each teacher try to include it into his schedule in any possible way that he could. Dunkel stated that "Time was found. As the period for foreign language instruction became longer for the later grades, other devices were used such as squeezing the lunch hour or extending the school day" (12:16). They found that in no case was another subject omitted or deleted from the curriculum.
Hoyt's solution to the problem and answer to the question regarding which subject was cut in the Fairfield, Connecticut, schools was,

None! . . . We have no evidence to indicate that any of the major tool subjects has suffered. If anything, there is more interest in other subjects. Finally, a fifteen minute daily schedule is so small a period that careful planning can easily provide for it" (9:3).
CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES USED FOR OBTAINING DATA

A questionnaire was designed and sent to 125 elementary schools to obtain data that could be used in an analysis of teacher attitudes and opinions toward FLES.

Design of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire (Appendix A, page 44) contained a preliminary section in which the respondent was to give some personal information about his involvement with foreign languages. Following the preliminary information was a section which included twenty statements concerning FLES programs. Five choices were given the respondent: (1) strongly agree, (2) agree but with some reservations, (3) no opinion, (4) disagree but with some reservations, (5) strongly disagree. Each statement was to be checked to indicate the way the respondent felt.

Test Used

Because the data received were no higher than ordinal level, the chi square statistical test was chosen to test the hypothesis. The null hypothesis was stated: there would be no differences among the teachers in regard to how they feel toward having a FLES program. The theoretical hypothesis was stated: elementary school teachers approve of a FLES program.
The chi square test was chosen because the data fall into various categories. It involves a one sample case; differences are seen between the observed frequencies and expected frequencies. The 5 percent level of significance was chosen.

Sampling Distribution

The sampling distribution was drawn from the Washington Educational Directory, 1966-1967. Using first class districts only, the writer numbered each elementary school in order as they appeared in the directory. Then, through the table of random numbers, 125 schools were selected for the sample (25:285-290).

Choice of Respondents

When the schools had been selected, letters of introduction were sent to the principal explaining the project (Appendix B, page 47). It was requested that the questionnaire be given to a teacher in his building. After the teachers had received the questionnaire, they were requested to respond and to return it to the sender in a stamped, self-addressed envelope provided by the writer.¹

¹For the letter of explanation to the teacher, see Appendix C, page 48.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire sampling the attitudes and opinions of 125 elementary school teachers in first class districts of the State of Washington was sent to secure data relating to the teaching of FLES. The survey materials were sent to fifty (79%) of the sixty-three first class districts within the state. Forty-seven districts (94%) of those contacted responded. Of the total number of first class districts, 75 per cent were represented by those districts answering the questionnaire. Of the 125 questionnaires sent, 110 (88%) were returned. No follow-up letter was sent to those schools which did not respond. It seemed that any additional responses would not affect the outcome of the analysis to any great extent.

Preliminary Section

The questionnaires were fairly evenly distributed among grade levels. The largest percentage of the questionnaires (57.2%) went to the upper grades, i.e., fourth, fifth, and sixth. The majority (21.8%) of the questionnaires were completed by the sixth grade teachers. The second highest percentage (18.2%) went to the fifth grade teachers, followed closely by the fourth (17.2%).
Fifty-nine per cent of the teachers responded with "no" when asked if a foreign language were being taught in their school. Thirty-six per cent indicated a foreign language was being taught, but it was not ascertained if the teaching was done in an organized FLES program.

Where a foreign language was a part of the curriculum, the language taught most was Spanish. Several teachers indicated that more than one language was being taught. Five teachers indicated French while three responded that German was taught. No other language was represented. It was not ascertained whether Spanish was chosen because of community preference or because of more adequate teaching preparation in this area.

The question, "Do you teach a foreign language?" was asked the respondent to see how many were involved with a foreign language and to reach a comparison between those involved and those not involved in regard to their responses to statement one of the questionnaire. Twenty-three (74%) of the thirty-one respondents who taught a foreign language were in strong agreement that FLES was a good idea. Six (19%) were in favor but with some reservations, and only two (6%) had no opinion.¹ There were none opposed to FLES. Although twenty-nine teachers involved with foreign languages were in favor, there were

¹The percentage of responses may not equal 100% because some statements brought no response.
sixty-five teachers who, though not involved with a foreign language, still indicated agreement with starting a program.

Half (51%) of the questionnaire responses showed college training, with many indicating they had had either some in-service work or some type of post-graduate exposure to foreign languages.

Analysis of Questionnaire Regarding Different Aspects of FLES

The first statement of the questionnaire was used to test the null hypothesis. The statement was, "It is a good idea to start teaching a foreign language in the elementary school." The responses were grouped into three categories: (1) favorable response, (2) no opinion, and (3) unfavorable response. To reject the null hypothesis, chi square had to be equal to or greater than 3.841 with one degree of freedom. Consequently, in accordance with chi square, a one by three table was set up. Table I shows the data collected on statement one of the questionnaire and the resulting analysis. Chi square turned out to be 77.04, which meant that the probability of the null hypothesis occurring would be less than once in a thousand.

Statement two of the questionnaire was used to ascertain the importance the respondents places on the use of specialists as instructors. As indicated in Table II, 64 per cent agreed that a specialist should teach it. Twenty-five per cent indicated that they would disagree with this
**TABLE I**

DATA COLLECTED ON STATEMENT ONE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND THE RESULTING ANALYSIS (1 X 3 TABLE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Favorable</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Unfavorable</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observed Frequencies</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Frequencies</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E} \]

\[ O - E = \]

\[ (O - E)^2 = \]

\[ \frac{(O - E)^2}{E} = \]

\[ \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E} = \]

\[ X^2 = \]

\[ 77.04 \]
method of teaching FLES. Ten per cent had no opinion and 1 per cent did not answer.

**TABLE II**

PERCENTAGES OF RESPONSES TOWARD TYPES OF TEACHERS PREFERRED IN FLES PROGRAMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Teacher</th>
<th>In Favor</th>
<th>Opposed</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Teacher</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher untrained in foreign languages</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item three sought information regarding teacher opinion in the use of regular classroom teachers as foreign language teachers. Table II shows that 70 per cent of the respondents agreed that this would be appropriate if the teacher were trained and used aids such as television. Opposing this method were 21 per cent of the respondents. No opinion brought 6 per cent of the replies.

Sixty-seven per cent of the respondents disagreed with the statement that FLES could be taught by a teacher untrained in a foreign language, even though he used teaching aids such as educational television. Eighteen per cent felt it could be done, while 10 per cent held no opinion. (See Table II.)
If a foreign language program were started in the elementary school, as shown in Table III, 59 per cent of the respondents favored having it taught daily. Twenty-six per cent disagreed and 13 per cent marked no opinion.

**TABLE III**

PERCENTAGES OF RESPONSES REGARDING TIME ALLOCATED FOR THE FLES PERIOD OF INSTRUCTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Allotted for FLES Period of Instruction</th>
<th>In Favor</th>
<th>Opposed</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirty minutes or less</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated with social studies period</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasted time; used better on regular subjects</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eighty-five per cent of the respondents agreed that a period of thirty minutes or less was the greatest amount of time that should be used for the teaching of a foreign language. Four per cent disagreed with using that amount of time and 8 per cent had no opinion. (See Table III.)

As shown in Table III, 40 per cent of the respondents were in favor of having a foreign language integrated with the social studies period. Twenty-five per cent opposed this way of teaching foreign language. Thirty-three per cent had no opinion.
Table III shows that 67 per cent of the respondents disagreed with the statement that the time spent on FLES could be used to better advantage on the basic subjects. Sixteen per cent agreed and 13 per cent had no opinion.

As shown in Table IV, 48 per cent of the teachers responded that FLES was necessary for a well-rounded educational program. There were 22 per cent who had no opinion, and 25 per cent of the respondents disagreed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>In Favor</th>
<th>Opposed</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good idea to start FLES</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necessary for educational program</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLES is a frill</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign language should wait until high school</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 110 respondents, 82 per cent were of the opinion that FLES was not a frill, and that it did have benefits in an educational program for children. Five per cent of the respondents thought there were very few benefits to be derived from a FLES program.
As also seen in Table IV, 82 per cent opposed postponing foreign languages until high school. Twelve per cent of the respondents were in favor and 4 per cent had no opinion.

As can be seen in Table V, 59 per cent of the respondents favored total class involvement in the study of a foreign language. Twenty-six per cent opposed and 13 per cent had no opinion.

TABLE V

PERCENTAGES OF RESPONSES REGARDING STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN THE FLES PROGRAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Participation</th>
<th>In Favor</th>
<th>Opposed</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole class</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior student</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High interest student</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teaching only the superior student brought 21 per cent of the respondents in favor. However, 66 per cent were opposed and 11 per cent had no opinion.

The teaching of classes composed of students having a high interest in foreign languages was rejected by 45 per cent of the respondents. Thirty-nine per cent were in favor and 13 per cent had no opinion. (See Table V.)
With regard to the grade level for beginning a FLES program, the responses showed better than a three-to-one ratio of agreement over disagreement that FLES should be started by the time the child reaches the third grade. Sixty-seven per cent agreed to a third grade beginning. Only 18 per cent disagreed and 12 per cent had no opinion.

Seventy-nine per cent of the respondents favored a continuous program of foreign languages through high school. Nine per cent disagreed and 10 per cent had no opinion.

Of those responding, 75 per cent felt that some type of credit should be given to high school students who had been participating in a FLES program. To qualify for these credits, the student must pass an examination. Five per cent disagreed and 16 per cent had no opinion.

As can be seen in Table VI, 74 per cent of the respondents disagreed with the idea of using commercially prepared FLES materials as their only means of teaching a foreign language. Four per cent thought it was a good idea. The converse was indicated by the responses to the questionnaire item requesting attitudes toward the use of teacher-made materials. Seventy-four per cent agreed that teacher-made materials should be included in their store of supplies, while only 6 per cent were opposed.

When it came to giving report card marks to students in FLES, there was little agreement of opinion. Forty-one per cent of the
respondents agreed to giving marks while 30 per cent disagreed. Twenty-six per cent marked no opinion.

TABLE VI

PERCENTAGES OF RESPONSES REGARDING TYPES OF MATERIALS USED IN FLES PROGRAMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Materials</th>
<th>In Favor</th>
<th>Opposed</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercially prepared materials</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher made materials</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some type of in-service training was deemed important by 95 per cent of the respondents. They indicated that foreign language training should be offered for interested teachers. Only 2 per cent disagreed with in-service work of this type.

Comments by the Respondents

Over half (59) the teachers answering the questionnaire made personal and somewhat candid remarks about FLES. These comments generally fell into five categories: (1) open opposition to FLES; (2) problems relating to FLES programs; (3) planning of the program; (4) articulation with the secondary schools; and (5) FLES used for enrichment.

Three of the fifty-nine respondents opposed FLES. One stated, "Most schools hardly have time for more than required subjects. Time-
wise FLES is a frill." A first-grade teacher responded, "I feel that there aren't enough hours in the day to get in the basic requirements without adding more to our curriculum." From a fifth-grade teacher came the remark, "I think foreign languages are important, but no more so than industrial art, home economics, woodshop. I see no reason why it should be started in elementary school, just because they can learn it. Let's have more music and art and other preparatory programs for leisure time activities."

Many comments regarding the FLES programs and the problems encountered by some teachers in connection with them were included. Some commented that TV was probably the worst approach to the teaching of a foreign language because, as one person stated, "Too much vocabulary introduced on TV at too rapid a rate destroys completely teacher effectiveness and student interest." Another wrote, "I found the lessons went too fast--too much material per lesson presented for those with a meager background of foreign language teaching." One teacher explained that a specialist was used three days a week and TV was used two days a week in his school's experimental Spanish program. Teaching by television turned out to be a failure and therefore the specialist was required to come for all five days. Another commented, "Most students have told me they have lost interest in foreign language because of the use of television."
Other problems developed because untrained teachers were used. Some stated that using untrained teachers was "foolish." And as one teacher commented, "Some of the students know more than the teachers." Two other problems were, "The program will never get off the ground unless specialists are used in all classes daily," and "The age of specialization is here!"

Another problem that several teachers noted was the need for articulation from grade to grade within the elementary school as well as with the secondary schools. One teacher commented, "We begin each day with 15-20 minutes of Spanish. It seems a shame the practice is not continued the following year." To allow for continuity from grade to grade, stated another, "... it is necessary to have the full support of the administration." In a case where a continuous program was not available, one teacher stated, "I have had students (in high school later) tell me they took Spanish because of an interest started in my room."

Some comments were made that could be used in the planning of a FLES program. The comments fell roughly into three main categories: (1) when to start a foreign language, (2) need for a specialist, and (3) teacher enthusiasm as a key factor for success.

In the first area the most common remark was that foreign languages should begin in the early primary grades. Two people commented that they thought it should start as early as kindergarten. The reason given was that,
"Small children learn pronunciation much easier than older ones. They are natural imitators."

The second area that needed to be planned for was the availability of specialists. Eleven teachers stated essentially the same thing, that is, having a foreign language taught by untrained teachers would be a colossal mistake. Some of the reasons given were: "The specialists can be more creative and keep the interest at a high level"; "Not enough classroom teachers can teach it properly because they lack years of training"; "Teachers should have a speaking knowledge of the language as well as the reading ability."

The third area dealt with teacher enthusiasm. One teacher summed up this important factor by stating: "The important thing in a FLES program is the enthusiasm of the teacher. A teacher who lacks the desire to teach a foreign language can impart this to the children and do more harm than good."

Foreign languages used for enrichment activities brought many comments. Rather than having an organized articulated program of foreign languages, the comments revealed a "fun" type approach. For example, "I believe that foreign language should be made a fun type unit without heavy stress made upon it." Another teacher stated, "Not all teachers have the interest or aptitude for learning and teaching languages nor do all children have the interest to learn. This program might well be
on an enrichment basis employing programmed materials in conjunction with educational television."

Different approaches to languages as enrichment included using games, songs, and the various opening activities that take place every morning, e.g., attendance, milk and lunch count, etc. One teacher exposed her class to Spanish while teaching units on South America and Central America. She used television, records, filmstrips, and daily classroom activities to reinforce the exposure. Still another stated, "A foreign language is a tremendous way to get a better understanding of our own language even if none of the other is retained."

The number and type of comments made by the respondents to the questionnaire seemed to reveal a definite interest in second language learning in the elementary school. It also seemed evident that teachers were aware of the problems inherent to starting a FLES program. At the same time, many teachers gave possible solutions to the problems.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The teaching of a second language in the elementary school might one day be an organized, undisputed addition to the elementary school curriculum. This might be the case if many of the problems associated with FLES were ironed out before any attempt at experimental programs were to start.

I. SUMMARY

Problem

To have a successful foreign language program in the elementary school, a high degree of teacher willingness and enthusiasm was felt to be necessary. It was the purpose of this study to learn how 125 classroom teachers in first class district elementary schools felt toward having foreign languages taught in the elementary schools. The theoretical hypothesis was that the respondents were in favor of a FLES program. The null hypothesis was that there were no differences in the way 125 teachers felt toward a FLES program.

Current Trends

There seems to be an increasing awareness among teachers, parents, businessmen, and interested groups toward the need for increasing
the amount of foreign languages presently being taught. Perhaps this awareness is due to the excitement aroused in the past few years by the advocates of FLES. Since before World War II, when it was seen that a knowledge of a foreign language would enhance one's position, a growing need for an early beginning resulted. Foreign language programs sprang up almost overnight in communities all over the United States. When the Modern Language Association noted that many of these programs were started haphazardly and without sufficient planning, they stepped in and tried to help stabilize them. They issued policy statements and recommendations in the hope of leveling off the bandwagon approach to FLES programs.

In the past few years, the warnings have begun to take effect. Colleges are beginning to realize the importance of making available foreign language courses designed for the elementary school teacher. The language specialist is becoming more and more in demand by school districts wanting a good program. Solutions to the problems of time during the already crowded school day have been found. Materials for foreign language classes are being made commercially.

One of the hardest problems to solve in many regions has been provision for articulation. Serious limitations to FLES programs have resulted from insufficient planning.
Procedures Used in This Study

The procedure used in the study was to send to a sample of schools, chosen at random from the first class districts in the State of Washington, a questionnaire requesting teacher attitudes and opinions about FLES. The questionnaires were sent to 125 schools and then passed on to 125 teachers. Chi square was used to test the significance of the null hypothesis.

II. CONCLUSIONS

1. A significant number of the teachers responding to the questionnaire were in favor of having a foreign language program in the elementary school.

2. A majority of the respondents indicated a preference toward having a specialist teach the foreign language.

3. In cases where a specialist was not available, the majority of respondents agreed that a regular teacher could teach a foreign language if he had some foreign language background.

4. A majority of the respondents felt that a teacher untrained in foreign language should not teach in a FLES program, even with the use of educational television.

5. Total class involvement of students was preferred by a majority of the respondents over classes with superior student or high interest grouping.
6. Articulation through junior and senior high school was approved by an eight to one margin. A majority of the respondents favored a continuous program of foreign languages through high school.

7. The use of teacher-made materials was preferred by a majority of the respondents over the use of commercially prepared FLES materials only.

8. A majority of the teachers responded that in-service training in foreign languages should be offered to teachers interested in FLES programs.

III. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There were some implications suggested by the study. These will be listed below along with some resulting recommendations for additional studies.

1. The respondents may not have been picked at random by the principal. It is recommended that future FLES studies use a different method for selecting respondents.

2. Some respondents suggested that it was best to begin a foreign language earlier than the third grade. The most appropriate grade level to begin a foreign language should be ascertained.

3. Other questions concerning FLES included articulation, selection of pupils, the use of educational television, commercially prepared
materials, and administrative opinion. It is recommended that future studies of FLES include:

a. advantages and disadvantages of television teaching;
b. availability and use of commercially prepared materials;
c. problems associated with articulation;
d. administrative opinion;
e. the opinions of FLES teachers only;
f. standards for evaluation of pupil progress.

Other Recommendations

Although unsubstantiated by the study, the following recommendations should be included:

1. A more comprehensive guide for instituting FLES programs should be prepared.

2. A local director should be appointed to oversee the organization and planning of a new program. A committee should be selected from the teachers of foreign languages to evaluate and help the director solve problems that arise.

3. A study of the programs available for teachers interested in teaching FLES is recommended. The study should include college courses, in-service workshops, night classes, etc.

4. Finally, it is recommended that school districts include FLES programs in their curriculum.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX A

THE QUESTIONNAIRE
FLES SURVEY

The following survey is concerned with attitudes toward having a foreign language taught in the elementary school. The study is being made to collect data from a representative sample of elementary school teachers from the state of Washington. It is limited to teachers in grades one through six. Please be candid in your response.

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

1. What grade or grades do you teach?_____________________________________.

2. Is there a foreign language taught in your school? Yes____ No_____

3. If yes, please indicate the languages: German____, Spanish____,
   French____, Russian____, Other________________________________________.

4. Do you teach a foreign language? Yes____ No_____.

5. What amount of foreign language background do you have?
   a. None____
   b. Spoken by parents____
   c. High school____ Amount____________________.
   d. College____ Amount____________________.
   e. Other______________________________________.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Explanation for completing the questionnaire: Please indicate your attitude toward foreign languages in the elementary school (FLES) by marking the box which most reflects your opinion.

Box number 5 should be marked if you strongly agree.
Box number 4 should be marked if you agree but with some reservations.
Box number 3 should be marked if you have no opinion either way.
Box number 2 should be marked if you disagree but with some reservations.
Box number 1 should be marked if you strongly disagree.
1. It is a good idea to start teaching a foreign language in elementary school.

2. A foreign language, if taught in the elementary school, should only be taught by a specialist (a person who has studied and worked intensively in one field and has attained a high degree of proficiency).

3. A foreign language could be taught by a regular classroom teacher with language background using educational television and classroom follow-up.

4. FLES could be taught by a teacher untrained in languages using educational television with classroom follow-up.

5. A foreign language should be taught daily to the whole class.

6. A FLES program should be taught in periods of thirty minutes or less.

7. Having a FLES program is necessary for a well-rounded educational program.

8. A foreign language program in the elementary is just another "frill" with very few benefits.

9. Foreign languages should be taught to only the superior academic student.

10. A foreign language should be taught to only those students who show a high degree of interest.

11. A foreign language should be integrated with the social studies program.

12. The time spent on a foreign language could be used to much better advantage on our more basic disciplines.
13. Foreign language instruction should wait until high school. .......................... [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

14. A foreign language program should be started at least by the time a child is in the third grade. ............................... [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

15. A foreign language program started in the elementary school should be a continuous program through junior and senior high, but only on an elective basis on the upper levels. [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

16. Students who have taken part in FLES should be given some credit in foreign languages in high school, providing they qualify through testing. ................................. [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

17. Teachers in a FLES program should use commercially prepared materials only........... [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

18. Teaching materials for FLES should include teacher made materials. .................... [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

19. A report card mark should be given to those students participating in a FLES program..... [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

20. In-service foreign language training should be offered to teachers who are interested in working in a FLES program....................... [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

21. If you have any additional comments that you would like to make, please feel free to state your opinions.

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

22. If you would like a resume of the completed study, include your name and address.

_____________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX B

LETTER TO PRINCIPAL
Dear Sir:

I am conducting a survey of teacher opinions and attitudes toward foreign languages in the elementary school (FLES) in conjunction with my graduate work at Central Washington State College.

Enclosed is a questionnaire that is being sent to one hundred twenty-five schools in nearly forty first-class districts throughout the state.

My wish is that you would pass the questionnaire to one of your teachers. It need not necessarily be someone who teaches foreign languages, nor does the grade level matter. However, if the teacher does have some background in languages, the questionnaire will be easier to complete. Preferably, it would be given to a teacher whom you feel will fill it out and return it promptly.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

/s/ Thomas H. Nelson

Thomas H. Nelson
Maplewood Elementary School
Puyallup, Washington
APPENDIX C

LETTER TO TEACHER
Dear Fellow Teacher,

In working toward the fulfillment of my graduate work at Central Washington State College, I am conducting a study of the attitudes and opinions of teachers toward having a foreign language program in the elementary grades (FLES). I feel that if all the school districts of the state ever had in mind starting a foreign language program, the teachers would be the ones to either make the program a success or failure. Therefore, it is to you that I am addressing this questionnaire.

When the surveys are returned, I will compile the responses and attempt to derive some conclusions as to the way elementary teachers feel toward foreign languages in grade school.

The questionnaire should not take more than 15 minutes of your time. If you feel that you cannot answer some of the items, leave them blank. It is hoped that the questionnaire will be returned by April 14th. A self-addressed envelope is included for your convenience. Your promptness will be sincerely appreciated.

When the study has been completed, a copy of the findings will be sent to you with the hope that it will be of interest to you and your fellow workers.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

/s/ Thomas H. Nelson

Thomas H. Nelson
Maplewood Elementary School