

# Kansas and Foreign Language Study

## THE CHANCELLOR'S COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY

AGNES M. BRADY, Romance Languages

CYRUS DeCOSTER, Romance Languages

GEORGE W. FORMAN, Mechanical Engineering

OSCAR M. HAUGH, Education

SIDNEY M. JOHNSON, Germanic and Slavic Languages

ROY D. LAIRD, Political Science

J. O. MALONEY, Chemical Engineering

CHARLES H. OLDFATHER, Law

ROBERT W. RIDGWAY, Education

REINHOLD SCHMIDT, Fine Arts

THOMAS R. SMITH, Geography

JACK D. STEELE, Business

W. STITT ROBINSON, History (chairman)

## INTRODUCTION

For several years administrators and faculty members of the University of Kansas have been discussing the role of the University in foreign language study in Kansas. To focus sharper attention upon this problem, Chancellor Franklin D. Murphy appointed a committee in November, 1957, consisting of representatives from the departments of geography, German, history, political science, and romance languages from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in addition to representatives from the schools of Business, Engineering, Education, Fine Arts, and Law.

Many aspects of the study of foreign languages were considered in the frequent committee meetings that followed. As a crystallization of ideas and majority opinions began to emerge, the committee found themselves ready to present, in writing, a résumé of their deliberations. The topics that follow indicate some of the issues with which they were concerned: Why study foreign languages? What do American leaders say of the need for foreign language training? What is the extent of language training in our colleges? in our high schools? What is the best way to learn a foreign language? What recommendations can we as a committee make to stimulate foreign language study? The reader will find the committee's answer to these questions in the pages that follow.

September, 1959

# Kansas and Foreign Language Study

## I

### THE NEED FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING

Throughout the history of our nation the ultimate aim of education has been to broaden and deepen the understanding and practice of the democratic way of life. The challenge to preserve and perpetuate the ideal of American democratic society in these new and revolutionary times has led Americans to realize the contribution which foreign language training can make. Leaders in all fields—business and industry, government, the armed services, the professions, service and civic organizations, and education—have urged better foreign language training to provide Americans with at least one language in addition to their own.

In the present state of world tension the Russians effectively employ linguistic abilities in spreading their political doctrines and influence throughout the world. Radio Moscow sends out over the air waves the "message of militant Marxism" in more than a hundred languages. Approximately 10,000,000 Soviet students are studying English, while a publication from our State Department in 1957 indicated that only 165 of the 1,800 colleges in the United States were teaching Russian to a total of only 4,000 American students. The complexity of the linguistic problem in international relations is magnified further when we note that 72% of the world's population or some 1,900,000,000 people, speak a native language other than the ones generally taught in colleges and universities of the United States: English, French, German, Italian, Russian, and Spanish.

In the area of international understanding, as stated by William Riley Parker in *The National Interest and Foreign Language* language study "may, and often does, prevent misunderstanding. Starting from good will, foreign language study makes possible the ready and more nearly perfect communication between peoples upon which mutual understanding depends. Starting from indifference foreign language study makes possible, through better communication, the discovery of good will." As Secretary of State John Foster Dulles has observed: "Interpreters are no substitute. It is not possible to understand what is in the minds of other people without understanding their language, and without understanding their language it is impossible to be sure that they understand what is on our minds."

## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
THE NEED FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING	3
THE SITUATION IN KANSAS—COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES	8
THE HIGH SCHOOL	11
THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL—THE FLES PROGRAM	15
THE MODERN APPROACH TO LANGUAGE LEARNING	17
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS—AGREEMENT ON PRINCIPLES	20
THE ROLE OF STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES	22

At the official opening of the Language Sound Rooms of the University of Kansas on November 23, 1957, Chancellor Murphy stated: "I have the very firm personal conviction that in these times when we very properly talk about the importance of mathematics and the physical sciences for our national defense as well as for the expansion of our economic frontiers, we must, with the same vigor and determination, talk about the importance of making the American people an articulate people. We cannot hope to play an effective rôle in the world unless we can communicate with the people whom we propose to influence, and communicate with them not only by way of *our* language but by way of *their* languages as well."

By acquiring a speaking and reading knowledge of a foreign language, we are brought face to face with the diversity of other peoples and cultures. Here lies the significance of the oft-repeated phrases "he doesn't speak my language" and "now you're talking my language." In the transition from the first statement to the second the foreigner becomes a neighbor. The common language of the English-speaking peoples has a great deal to do with the tendency toward the peaceful settlement of disputes between these peoples.

Jacob Ornstein, author and research associate at Harvard University, has described the United States as the "lame horse in the language race" and as "many noses behind in the language sweepstakes." As stated by Ornstein, the "Arabic tongue, key to the culture and peoples of the entire Middle East, is studied by no more than 85 students in all our universities. Chinese, spoken by 650 million people in Mao's militant state, is offered by only 35 of our higher institutions, mostly to small classes."

The importance of Chinese and also of Russian to the scientist and engineer has been emphasized by Joseph C. Shipman of Linda Hall Library in Kansas City. Writing to the University of Kansas Committee on Foreign Language Study on November 26, 1957, Mr. Shipman stated: "At the present time we are subscribing to or receiving on exchange nearly 300 Russian scientific and technical periodicals and almost as many more from other behind-the-curtain countries. We have noted for several years a consistently rising interest in these publications, as evidenced by the steady increase in the number of interlibrary loan requests which we have received for them. Private agencies and government agencies have become increasingly interested and concerned, to the extent of launching a large number of translated versions of Russian journals. This has



Chancellor Murphy  
the University of Kansas language lc

presented us with a number of problems, based largely upon the fact that the translations are usually very expensive. . . . Facing us in the not-too-distant future is the growing problem of the Chinese technical literature. . . . A visitor here in the library a few weeks ago pointed out to us, in a current Chinese chemical journal, an article dealing with an identical problem he and his colleagues had been working on for more than a year. In the over-all confusion existing in the dissemination of scientific literature this is not particularly surprising, but it is significant that the Chinese are beginning to contribute to the confusion—in Chinese. . . . It seems to me that someone should be put to work immediately to spark a program to encourage and develop Russian, and even Chinese language training, wherever graduate work is done in the sciences. In the long run this will provide the only real solution to the problem."

Pointing out the need for improved education for all students, President Eisenhower in his Oklahoma City Address of November 13, 1957, stated: "Young people now in college must be equipped to live in the age of intercontinental ballistic missiles. However, what will then be needed is not just engineers and scientists, but a people who will keep their heads and, in every field, leaders who can meet intricate human problems with wisdom and courage. In short, we shall need not only Einsteins, but Washingtons, and Emersons."

Foreign language study has long been a traditional part of a liberal arts education. The ability to read and converse in a foreign tongue opens broad vistas for new knowledge and understanding which do not materialize for the person bound by the restrictions of one language. Language training also provides a discipline that is valuable in other intellectual activities, and study of most foreign languages improves our own use of English. Professor Robert Ulich, Conant Professor of Education at Harvard University, has said that the study of foreign languages is "instrumental for the educated layman, for he can develop a finer sense for modes of expression if he acquires some insight into the style of other languages."

The need for foreign language training also has been emphasized for other areas of activity of Americans. In the armed forces in 1956, for example, approximately 1,370,000 of the 3,000,000 Americans on active military duty were stationed in 900 foreign installations. General Matthew B. Ridgway, while Chief of Staff of the U. S. Army, declared: "The value of a knowledge of foreign languages is nowhere more apparent than in the military profession. . . . My own military

experience has repeatedly demonstrated that when allies can communicate with each other in a common tongue, their effectiveness is greatly increased."

For the American traveler, the value of foreign language training is obvious. As stated by Mrs. Margaret Thompson Biddle, noted traveler and journalist: "If the American traveling abroad is able to talk with the people of other countries in their own language, he gains a much broader and deeper understanding of their problems and attitudes." The number of American tourists definitely is on the increase. In addition to those who may visit Canada, Mexico, and the West Indies without visas, the Passport Office of the Department of State expects to issue a million passports in 1960. In the international exchange of persons, there now are approximately 50,000 American students who travel abroad annually with an estimated 7,000 of them enrolling in foreign universities.

For American citizens trained in foreign languages, economic opportunities have increased with the upswing of American investments abroad. By 1956 private United States investments abroad were approximately \$30 billion, an increase of \$2.5 billion over the preceding year. A more detailed look at Latin America reveals that we purchase \$3.5 billion in goods from Latin America annually, and in return these countries buy about the same amount from us. This combined trade is greater than our trade with any other part of the world, representing more than 27% of our imports and over 34% of our exports. Commenting on the value of foreign language training for the overseas career employee, Roger Hagans of the Creole Petroleum Corporation stated: "The monolingual who works and lives abroad is at a basic disadvantage. . . . His job efficiency probably is directly proportional to his command of the language of the country where he works. . . . Both the recently graduated engineer and the manager who are at home in the language of the host nation acquire considerable stature and command a degree of respect that they might not otherwise have."

These various opinions of American leaders demonstrate clearly the need for expanded and improved foreign language training. Considerable progress is now being made throughout the nation at all levels of education, but much remains to be done. Let us turn in the following chapter to the situation in Kansas to see the challenge we face in the area of foreign language study.

## II

## THE SITUATION IN KANSAS

## A. COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Of the twenty-one four-year colleges and universities in Kansas only seven—the five state institutions plus the municipal universities of Wichita and Washburn—have more than fifteen hundred students. Their enrollments range from the University of Kansas with more than nine thousand to Washburn with about seventeen hundred. The fourteen denominational colleges are much smaller; only three of them (Baker University, Friends University, and St. Benedict's College) have more than five hundred students. Small enrollments limit the course offerings and also the staff available to teach these courses.

With only two exceptions these twenty-one institutions all offer work in French, German, and Spanish; one college teaches no German, another no Spanish. In addition, Latin and Greek are offered in slightly more than half of the colleges, while Hebrew, Portuguese, Italian, and Swedish are taught in two or three schools each. One of the most promising recent developments is the tremendous increase in the interest in Russian. It has been taught at the University of Kansas since 1942; recently Kansas State, Kansas State Teachers College at Emporia, Washburn, Wichita, and Bethel have added Russian to their programs. Enrollments everywhere have increased by 100% or more. At the University of Kansas, Kansas State, and Fort Hays State College enrollment is divided about equally among the three major languages, French, German, and Spanish. In the southern part of the state at Wichita and Pittsburg, Spanish is the most popular language; at the Catholic girls' schools it is French; and at some of the Protestant colleges (Bethany, Bethel, College of Emporia, and Kansas Wesleyan), German.

The University of Kansas offers a Ph.D. in French, German, and Spanish; Kansas State University an M.S. in the three languages, KSTC at Emporia an M.S. in French and Spanish. With four exceptions all of the colleges offer a major in one or more of the languages, frequently in all three of them. In a few cases only one or two years of the language is offered, but usually two introductory years are given regularly and a variety of advanced language and literature courses are offered on a rotating basis. The larger institutions are able to provide a wider variety of offerings, but few of these advanced

courses in any of the schools have an enrollment of more than ten and many of them have fewer than five students. It can be said that in most cases the opportunity exists for the student to study the language of his choice (or at least a language) as far as he wishes to go. But relatively few students take advantage of this opportunity. Each year fewer than sixty language majors are graduated from all the institutions in Kansas. Only a small number of these go on to graduate school or go into high school teaching.

Most of the institutions require for the B.A. degree from eight to twelve hours of a foreign language, although in some cases there are options or students can apply for exemption. Three colleges have a language requirement for English majors only. Only two colleges have no requirement at all. Another promising development is that several schools have recently increased their requirement or are planning to do so. During the spring of 1959 the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Kansas increased its graduation requirement for the B.A. degree from 10 semester hours or its equivalent to the following:

Proficiency in one foreign language; "proficiency" is interpreted to mean a command of the language sufficient to enable a person to live in a foreign environment without suffering unduly from a language handicap (or a comparable ability to absorb and associate concepts and ideas in one of the classical languages). This proficiency shall be demonstrated by an examination which tests, where applicable, the ability of the student to hear, speak, read, and write. Students may, if they wish, be excused from the examination upon the completion of sixteen semester hours (or the equivalent) of college level work in a foreign language.

This same requirement has been adopted in principle for B.S. degrees by the College at the University of Kansas, although individual programs may vary slightly. While most institutions in the state have a foreign language requirement for the B.A., there frequently is none for the B.S. degree; consequently, a substantial number of the college graduates in Kansas have not been exposed to any foreign language either in high school or in college.

The institutions with large enrollments have good-sized staffs, and the teachers can concentrate on the language in which they primarily are interested and competent. In the smaller institutions one teacher occasionally will have to teach as many as three languages; at times a teacher of another subject entirely will teach a language on a part-time basis. Increased language enrollment would help alleviate this problem by allowing greater specialization. Only three institutions

report that they have had difficulty in finding competent language teachers, although as enrollments increase this problem is certain to become aggravated.

Few colleges keep statistics on the percentage of entering college freshmen who have studied a foreign language in high school; estimates at the various institutions vary widely, with the average around 35%. Students at the Catholic girls' colleges, many of whom come from parochial high schools, have the best linguistic preparation. Dean George B. Smith of the University of Kansas made a recent study of high school preparation in English, foreign languages, mathematics, and science of 1124 freshmen entering the University from Kansas high schools in the fall of 1956. Forty-six percent of the students took no foreign language in high school; 20% took one year of a language; 26%, two years; 5%, three years; 2%, four years; and 8% of the students studied two different languages. Of those who studied a language in high school, 57% took Latin, 32% Spanish, 9% French, and 2% German. Many students, of course, come from high schools which offer no foreign language. There are no reliable figures on the percentages of college students who continue a language begun in high school and who begin a new one. Most colleges report that the two groups are divided about equally. Certainly students should be encouraged to continue one language until they have achieved a reasonable degree of proficiency in it before embarking on the study of a second one.

Most college language teachers place principal emphasis on learning to read the foreign language, but all spend a certain amount of time on hearing and speaking. Several institutions use primarily a conversational approach. About half of the schools have a sound laboratory of some sort, and most of the others are planning to install one. This indicates an increase of interest in teaching the students to speak and understand the language as well as to read it.

The language problem facing most of the junior colleges is similar to that of the smaller four-year colleges but even more acute. Although the catalogs frequently announce courses in two languages, seldom is more than one taught, and this is usually Spanish. Only one year of the language customarily is offered, and the instructor teaches another subject as well. In the junior colleges there is, of course, no language requirement, but students in pre-liberal arts, pre-medicine, pre-law, and pre-music usually are advised to study a language. Enrollment, however, almost universally is low.

The most encouraging aspect of the picture is that almost without exception the universities and colleges report that interest in the study of foreign languages is increasing in Kansas as in the rest of the United States. Ten years ago there was a strong movement to abolish or at least to weaken the language requirement. The trend has been reversed. Several institutions have strengthened their language requirement or are planning to do so. Instructors in other fields are more aware of the value of language study; administrations in general are more friendly. A good deal of money is being spent to install language laboratories and other audio-visual devices to further the conversational approach and to make the study of languages more vital and interesting. Language enrollment in many institutions has begun to increase. With the great influx of students forecast for the next decades, the big problem is going to be how to obtain teachers to staff the bulging classrooms.

#### B. THE HIGH SCHOOL

*Kansas has been far below the national average in the study of modern foreign languages in the high schools.* Statistics published in *The National Interest and Foreign Languages* (1957) by William Riley Parker placed Kansas 41st among the 48 states with only 19.3% of its public high schools offering modern foreign languages. In the percentage of students taking modern foreign languages in these schools, Kansas ranked in the lowest group along with North Dakota, South Dakota, Mississippi, and Alabama, having only two to three per cent of its students enrolled in these subjects.

Information released by the State Department of Education in Topeka reveals a more recent picture of foreign language instruction in Kansas as shown in Table I and Figure A. This survey for 1957-58 includes private and parochial, as well as public schools, but not the junior high schools in the state. Out of 645 high schools, 404 (63%) offered no foreign languages during the academic year 1957-58. Among the foreign languages offered in the other 241, Latin was most frequently given and had the largest enrollments. A total of 154 schools (24%) offered Latin with 7121 students enrolled; 122 schools (19%) offered Spanish with 4884 enrollments; 35 schools (5%) offered French to 1289 students; and 13 (2%) offered German with 301 enrolled.

The University of Kansas Committee on Foreign Language Study examined the status of foreign language instruction in Kansas high

TABLE I  
KANSAS HIGH SCHOOLS, 1957-58  
FOREIGN LANGUAGE  
(Exclusive of Junior High Schools)

Size of School	Number of Schools	Number Offering Latin	Enrollments in Latin			Number Offering Spanish	Enrollments in Spanish		
			I	II	III		I	II	III
0-50	196*	19	179			6	45		
51-100	197†	25	312	101	1	13	116	3	
101-300	168‡	54	1264	497	26	17	705	171	3
301 & over	84§	56	2708	1898	102	56	2780	988	73
Totals	645	154	4493	2499	129	122	3646	1162	76

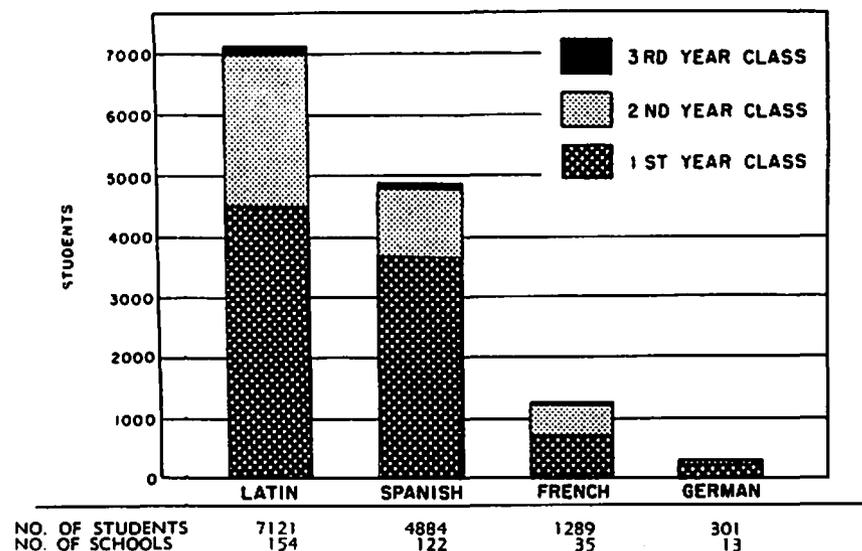
Size of School	Number of Schools	Number Offering French	Enrollments in French			Number Offering German	Enrollments in German		
			I	II	III		I	II	III
0-50	196*	1	5			1	4		
51-100	197†					4	76	5	
101-300	168‡	12	103			2	12		
301 & over	84§	22	626	499	56	6	151	43	10
Totals	645	35	734	499	56	13	243	48	10

\* 170 of the 196 schools offered no foreign language.  
 † 158 of the 197 schools offered no foreign language.  
 ‡ 73 of the 168 schools offered no foreign language.  
 § 3 of the 84 schools offered no foreign language.

schools in the North Central Association of Secondary Schools for three different time periods to determine trends in foreign language instruction since 1950. The academic years 1950-51, 1954-55, and 1957-58 were selected. As revealed in Table II and Figure B, there has been no appreciable increase in the percentage of students enrolling in foreign languages. For the Kansas high schools in the North Central Association that were checked for 1950-51, 131 of 222 schools offered foreign languages with 16% of their students enrolled in these courses. For 1954-55, 131 of 221 schools offered foreign languages with 15% enrolled. And for 1957-58, 129 out of 225 high schools provided foreign languages with enrollments of 16% of their students.

Several factors operate in Kansas to make it difficult to realize an optimum program of instruction in foreign languages. Among these are school size and teacher supply. Equally important is the fact that many students do not continue beyond the first year of language study.

FIGURE A  
STUDENTS ENROLLED IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE COURSES  
BY LANGUAGE AND BY YEAR  
645 KANSAS HIGH SCHOOLS, 1957-1958



As shown in Table I for 1957-58, out of 196 high schools having no more than 50 students, 170 (87%) offered no foreign language. For 197 high schools with a total enrollment between 51 and 100, 158 (80%) included no foreign language instruction. Even when offering foreign languages, such schools seldom are able to assign to them the full-time of a teacher; in fact, most teachers in high schools of this size teach two or three different subjects. When teachers must be responsible for instruction in several fields, they frequently do not have the depth of preparation needed for good language instruction.

During the school year 1957-58, 143 junior and senior high schools in Kansas employed 177 foreign language teachers. In this group, 19 were employed to teach modern foreign languages *only*; another 10 taught Latin in addition to a modern language. All others taught in at least one additional subject.

Commenting on the problem of school size, Dr. James B. Conant in his recent report on *The American High School Today* states: "The enrollment of many American public high schools is too small to allow a diversified curriculum except at exorbitant expense. The prevalence of such high schools—those with graduating classes of less than one hundred students—constitutes one of the serious obstacles

to good secondary education throughout most of the United States. I believe such schools are not in a position to provide a satisfactory education for any group of their students—the academically talented, the vocationally oriented, or the slow reader. The instructional program is neither sufficiently broad nor sufficiently challenging. A small high school cannot by its very nature offer a comprehensive cur-

TABLE II  
LANGUAGES TAUGHT IN KANSAS HIGH SCHOOLS  
NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION

Year		Spanish			French			
		1	2	3	1	2	3	
1950-51	S	94	55	5	8	4	1	
	P	2545	964	67	143	61	9	
1954-55	S	92	52	3	15	8	1	
	P	2432	844	27	413	202	10	
1957-58	S	84	62	5	24	16	2	
	P	2792	959	152	597	470	29	

Year		German			Latin				total
		1	2	3	1	2	3	4	
1950-51	S	5	3	2	101	59	11	3	
	P	105	45	24	2395	1102	111	18	7590
1954-55	S	8	2	1	87	60	11	1	
	P	145	31	17	2594	1189	106	6	8016
1957-58	S	5	5	0	91	70	10	2	
	P	159	48	0	3364	1885	127	5	10587

S—Schools offering a course.

P—Pupils enrolled.

riculum" (p. 77). He adds at another point that "*I should like to record . . . my conviction that in many states the number one problem is the elimination of the small high school by district reorganization*" (p. 38).

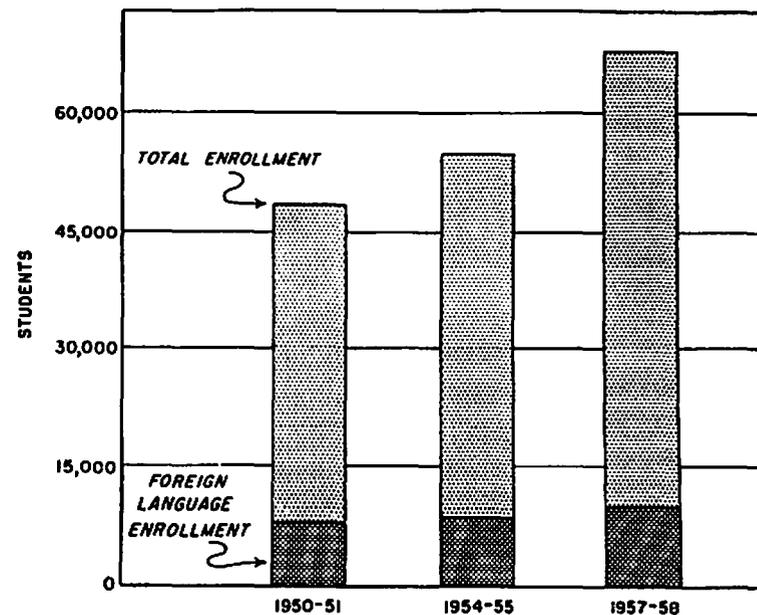
The second factor, the shortage of qualified teachers, has been and continues to be a problem in foreign language in Kansas. Even where schools have found it economically possible to add foreign language teachers, there has not been an adequate supply. In a poll of high school principals taken during the spring of 1957, Professor Minnie M. Miller of Emporia State Teachers College found a demand for 87 qualified teachers of foreign languages. In the same poll, 17 schools reported that they would add *any* language for which

qualified teachers were available; 18 would have introduced Spanish or Latin; and 32 would have started Spanish.

The third factor which influences foreign language offerings is the failure of students to continue beyond the first year. In many instances average enrollment losses between the first and second year of the study of a foreign language approximates fifty per cent, even

FIGURE B

TOTAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE ENROLLMENT  
KANSAS HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION  
OFFERING FOREIGN LANGUAGES



where the advanced instruction is available. This dwindling of interest in language training poses serious problems for the high school. The question of whether it is economically feasible to provide foreign language instruction beyond the first year must be considered; and at the same time attempts should be made to achieve the goal of continuity in language instruction which will lead the student to proficiency in a second language. There is a genuine need for wise counseling as well as provision for good instruction in the foreign language offered at the high school level.

### C. THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL—THE FLES PROGRAM

One interesting and significant development in the area of foreign language instruction has been the increased enthusiasm for the

teaching of Foreign Languages in Elementary Schools (FLES). As stated in *The National Interest and Foreign Languages*, in 1955-56 modern foreign languages were being taught below grade seven in the public elementary schools of approximately 400 cities and towns in 44 of the 48 states and in the District of Columbia. This represented an increase from only 33 states in 1953. At least 2,000 different schools and approximately 300,000 elementary pupils were receiving foreign language instruction in the public schools in 1955-56.

The desirability of starting foreign languages in the elementary schools has been urged by many scientists. In 1953 Wilder Penfield, Director of the Montreal Neurological Institute, stated that the physiological development of the "organ of the mind causes it to specialize in the learning of language before the ages of 10 to 14." And in 1956, Dr. Arnold Gesell and Dr. Frances L. Ilg of the Gesell Institute of Child Development 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 young child enjoys language experience. . . . With favorable motivation he is emotionally amenable to a second and even a third language."

Kansas has made a promising start with the FLES programs. While there are no official reports available to give a complete list of elementary schools offering foreign languages in Kansas, programs are known to have existed during the academic year 1958-59 in Baldwin, Derby, Emporia, Hutchinson, Kansas City, Lawrence, Mission, Neodesha, Pittsburg, Topeka, Wichita, Barton County, and Cloud County.

Specific information is available about the FLES program in the public schools in Lawrence, Kansas. It illustrates the extent to which training can be started effectively in the lower grades. Inaugurated in 1949, the program first offered Spanish in the elementary schools. Interest and enthusiasm gradually increased among classroom teachers, parents, principals, the superintendent of schools, and the school board. Special teachers were employed for Spanish, later for French and German; and these instructors along with several volunteer teachers moved from school to school to offer the languages in the fifth and sixth grades. In 1958-59, for example, in the fifth and sixth grades in Lawrence, instruction in Spanish was given to 692 students, in German to 114, and in French to 31, giving a total of 837 students receiving instruction in one of three foreign languages.

During the same year, 1958-59, instruction in Spanish has been introduced in the St. John's School, local Catholic school in Lawrence. Instruction has been started on an experimental basis for 32 students in the first grade with plans to provide continuity in subsequent grades, and for 38 students in the sixth grade who will continue Spanish at the junior high school level.

These are hopeful signs for the growth of foreign language instruction. But expansion, it seems, should be made in full cognizance of the following admonition of William Riley Parker: "I want to caution enthusiastic parents, administrators, and foreign language instructors that we shall defeat our purposes if we do not restrict the growth of this educational trend to the supply of adequately prepared teachers. For the surest way of discrediting language instruction—causing the public to doubt its value and relevance—is to have it done by teachers who are not qualified."

### III

#### THE MODERN APPROACH TO LANGUAGE LEARNING

In recent months a great deal has been said and published about the importance of foreign languages and the need for language study on the elementary, the junior and senior high school, and the college level.

Representatives from foreign language departments of some institutions of Kansas have participated in recent years in conferences planned by the United States Office of Education in Washington and the Modern Language Association of America in New York. All were agreed that the two-year, or ten-hour, sequence usually given to language study is woefully inadequate to train students to communicate directly with their neighbors abroad or to understand what these neighbors have written. There was agreement, too, that the traditional—"Old Key"—methods of teaching languages have been ineffectual. Far too many teachers have been trained in the grammar-translation method where final grades were based upon the successful memorization of verb forms and grammar rules stated in English and with no language analysis or spoken drill. Most of these teachers deplore this situation and agree that the newer methods which are being advocated are long overdue. This modern approach has been called "The New Key." The methods suggested are advised for beginning classes at all levels, from elementary school through university:

1. The elementary language course, at whatever level, should concentrate at the beginning upon the learner's hearing and speaking the foreign tongue. Throughout later stages, the student should have considerable practice in maintaining his hearing and speaking skills.
2. Learning to read a foreign language, the third phase of the hearing-speaking-reading-writing progression in the acquiring of language skills, should aim at the ability to grasp the meaning directly, without translating. Translation, to be used only in rare instances as a device for teaching reading, comes later as a meaningful literary or linguistic exercise.
3. Writing is the fourth stage in the early acquirement of language skills; the student should write only what he can already say correctly. Topics should be so defined as to enable him to make maximum use of the vocabulary and speech patterns he has acquired.
4. In addition to the progressive acquisition of a set of skills providing a new medium of communication, the study of a foreign language should be a progressive experience enlarging the learner's horizon through the introduction to a new culture. (There is needed not only verbal communication, but communion between individuals. This is *conversation*, with stress on the *con*, which means "with.")
5. Along with an expanding knowledge of foreign people and, as a consequence, a better understanding of American culture, the student of a foreign language should gain awareness of the nature of language and a new perspective on English.
6. At any point the progress made in language should have positive value and lay the foundation upon which further progress can be built, but the students should be able to continue the study long enough to make real proficiency possible. Continuity from the elementary school through the secondary school is desirable.

In some schools of Kansas, as in most of the other states, it has been found (through questionnaires and reports) that a third or more of the foreign language teaching is being done by teachers whose principal field of study was in another subject, and that, unfortunately, many of those who specialized in the languages were trained in the old methods. They do not have the competency needed for communication in today's small world. Teaching methods and materials—especially textbooks—should be revised at all levels. Textbooks for children of the elementary and junior high school levels desperately need to be provided. Kenneth Mildenerger, former Director of the Foreign Language Program of the Modern Language Association, in one of his many articles states: "A modern curriculum can no longer tolerate a course which features the memorizing of columns of vocabulary, the chanting of grammatical paradigms, and the tortured, word-by-word translation of carefully simplified, sterile reading matter. Furthermore, the cultural content of the language course must be shifted away from concentration on monuments, mu-

seums, quaint peasant costumes, and dramatic geographical features. In the place of picturesque points of interest for tourists and nice national stereotypes, the new course must provide the student with insights into the people themselves—their everyday existence, their means of livelihood, their beliefs, their aspirations—in short, into all the little things that will make the student understand that these are fellow human beings with their own way of life that has integrity for them and is not funny because it is 'foreign.' " Textbooks that stress the "exotic," either in the text or in the illustrations, should not be tolerated.

Another committee of the MIA has adopted a statement of recommendation for a college textbook in beginning Spanish. Through a generous grant furnished by the Rockefeller Foundation this manual has been completed and is to be published in December, 1959. The criteria could apply equally well to elementary or secondary school texts:

1. The approach should be oral-aural, that is concentration at the beginning should be upon the learner's *hearing* and *speaking* the language.
2. Reading should be introduced on two levels:
  - a. After each segment of material has been thoroughly drilled orally, the learner may be permitted to see the written representation of that material and to read it aloud as he has heard it. This level of reading may begin early in the course.
  - b. Reading of previously unheard material should begin only when the student has reasonable control of the pronunciation and the principal structural patterns involved in the material. Translation should be used sparingly as a device in teaching reading.
3. Writing should also be introduced on two levels:
  - a. After each segment of material has been thoroughly drilled orally the learner may be permitted to write this material.
  - b. When a sufficient body of material has been learned, the student may extend his writing to the reproduction of texts already learned orally or to other controlled forms of composition based on familiar situations.
4. Cultural values and patterns of behavior should form a significant part of the book.
5. In conclusion, reading materials must be produced for their cultural—literary, social, historical—value. The language must be simple, but the presentation must not be for the "simple-minded."

Kansas is becoming increasingly alert to the changes in contemporary needs for foreign language study. In addition to teacher-training and area programs on the secondary and college level, a new Major in FLES (Foreign Languages Elementary Schools) has been announced by the School of Education of the University of

Kansas. It plans to give the teacher-in-training skills in the categories of 1) Aural Understanding, 2) Speaking, 3) Reading, 4) Writing, 5) Language Analysis, 6) Professional Preparation, and 7) Civilization of the countries whose language is that of the major (Spanish, French, German).

The entire program stresses our need to present a picture of the normal, contemporary life of the peoples of other countries and to teach our pupils to speak with them directly.

The modern approach to language learning stresses the inseparability of language and culture. There is overwhelming evidence that oral methods of teaching at all levels can be successful.

#### IV

##### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the research and discussion of the Committee on Foreign Language Study, the members have given attention to instruction at all levels of education. We have been interested in the elementary and secondary schools as well as the colleges and universities. We also have been concerned with the attitude of the lay public, of school administrators, and of government officials at the local, state, and national level. We have been aware of the need for both moral and financial support for successful foreign language programs at any level of education. Our conclusions and recommendations, therefore, concern principles supporting foreign language training and suggestions for the cooperation of state educational agencies.

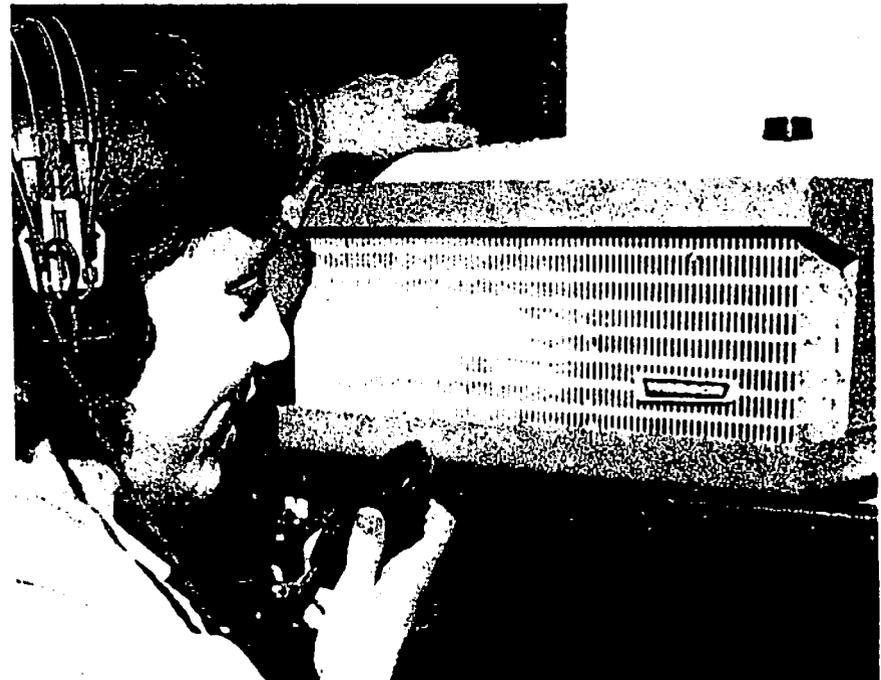
##### A. AGREEMENT ON PRINCIPLES

The committee as a whole reached agreement on the following points:

1. The present world situation, our role in international affairs, and the need to work for world peace all demand increasing attention to the study of modern foreign languages.
2. Modern technological advances in transportation and communication make the study of modern foreign languages as necessary and practical as other subjects of the curriculum.
3. The study of foreign languages, both classical and modern, contributes to the liberal education of the individual.
4. The teaching of modern foreign languages should be done in the best, new methods with emphasis upon the oral-aural approach.
5. Continuity should be provided in the study of one modern foreign language at all levels of education from elementary through college or university training.



University of Kansas students learn how to speak and understand a foreign language in this modern laboratory.



6. The student should gain reasonable fluency in *one* modern foreign language before beginning a second one.
7. *Every college or university student should attain proficiency in at least one foreign language before graduation.*
8. *The citizens of Kansas should be profoundly concerned that modern foreign language training in their public schools is far below the poor national average. Kansans should realize that their children will be seriously handicapped unless extraordinary measures are taken to improve and extend foreign language training.*

#### THE IDEAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM

In reaching agreement on these principles, the committee considered the following characteristics of the Ideal Foreign Language Program:

The ideal foreign language program provides initial experience with a modern foreign language in the elementary grades with emphasis in the beginning upon hearing and speaking the foreign tongue.

The ideal program then will provide continuity in the same language in both junior and senior high school through the twelfth grade. Advanced work in the same language then may be continued at the college or university level.

Gifted students and students displaying special aptitude for foreign languages will be able to begin a second foreign language in the junior or senior high school.

Where the student's vocation demands training in still other foreign languages, study of these may be started at the college or university level.

#### B. THE ROLE OF STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES

Improvement and extension of foreign language training in Kansas and the adjacent region requires the cooperation of most of the educational agencies of the area. The University of Kansas Committee on Foreign Language Study respectfully solicits the assistance of these educational agencies in the ways listed below.

##### 1. *What the State Department of Education of Kansas can do.*

- a. Provide state aid to public schools to help them start and maintain a foreign language program.
- b. Establish the position of Consultant in Foreign Languages in the State Department of Education. The duty of this official would be to provide professional leadership in curriculum and instruction in languages, to stimulate schools to start new foreign language programs, and to improve the effectiveness of the programs that already exist.

- c. Provide a workable teacher exchange plan so that qualified teachers from foreign countries would be able to teach foreign languages in the public schools for limited periods of time.
- d. Urge the State Board of Education to arrange for secondary school foreign language teachers, after appropriate course work, to be certified to teach foreign languages in the elementary school.
- e. Utilize the established media of communication to acquaint the lay citizens and the local school administrators with the importance of increased modern foreign language training.

##### 2. *What the elementary and secondary schools can do.*

- a. Provide opportunity in the curriculum for the study of a modern foreign language early in the student's training, in the elementary school if possible.
- b. Provide as much continuity as possible for training in the same language with a carefully developed program progressing from the elementary through the secondary to the college or university level.
- c. To meet the need for additional foreign language teachers, the following suggestions are submitted as possible temporary solutions:
  - (1) Canvass the local community to determine whether there are lay citizens who can aid effectively in the school's foreign language program. Such individuals should be encouraged to take additional courses to qualify for a teaching certificate. If this is not possible, application for a temporary teaching certificate could be submitted to the Department of Certification, State Department of Education.
  - (2) Small schools that are close enough could join together to provide full-time employment for a qualified teacher of foreign languages. This arrangement might be made between two or more high schools; or, after certification has been arranged, between the elementary and secondary schools of the same town or community.
- d. Allocation of money by local school boards for the purchase of adequate teaching materials such as tapes, tape recorders, and other equipment for a language laboratory. Some money will be available under the "National Defense Education Act of 1958."
- e. Encourage teachers to attend foreign language institutes, either summer or full academic year, sponsored by colleges or universities.
- f. Require students who are planning to enter college to have a minimum of two years, preferably three, of *one* foreign language in high school. Students who have had pre-high school training in one foreign language and display outstanding linguistic ability in their continuation of this language should be encouraged to add a second foreign language during their junior or senior high school program.

##### 3. *What the colleges and universities can do.*

- a. Provide improved teacher training programs in both content and method for teachers of foreign languages, including adequate instruction in teaching in the improved, new methods.
- b. Provide institutes (both during the summer and regular academic year) to aid foreign language teachers to gain or improve their proficiency. Scholarships for participants should be provided and

training should be directed toward three levels of instruction: elementary, secondary, and college. Some money for institutes will be available under the "National Defense Education Act of 1958."

- c. Provide opportunities for extension study of foreign language in off-campus centers throughout the state for teachers, high school students, and the lay public.
- d. Provide correspondence courses aimed at the high school level which could be established for schools unable to support an adequate foreign language program. These courses could include tapes and films and would provide an opportunity for foreign language study not only for college preparatory students but also for those who do not go on to college.
- e. Develop materials which may be used in the public schools including textbooks in the new methods, records of pronunciation, tapes of recorded conversation with explanations, etc.
- f. Consider the use of radio and television for providing foreign language instruction as well as informing the lay public of the need for foreign language training.
- g. Encourage cooperation between the institutions of higher education with the elementary and secondary schools by providing foreign language staff members both time and travel expenses to visit the public schools to aid in starting and carrying out effective programs of foreign language instruction. Such visits should be made in coordination with the Consultant in Foreign Languages in the State Department of Education.
- h. Re-examine graduation requirements to assure adequate provision for foreign language training for all students. Consideration should be given to the possibility of requiring a reasonable command of a foreign language which could be satisfied by a proficiency examination in hearing, speaking, reading, and writing rather than a mere designation of credit hours.
- i. Strongly recommend the completion in high school of at least two, preferably three, years of a foreign language before admission to college and consider the possibility of requiring at least the two years for admission as soon as practicable. Cooperation among the colleges and universities in the state in requiring preparation in foreign languages for college work would contribute more than any other single factor to the improvement of foreign language training in secondary schools.

Printed at The University of Kansas Press. Additional copies may be secured from University Relations, The University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas.