

What Do They Know of English, Who Only English Know? Ascertaining Attitudes Toward Foreign Language Study Using Q Methodology in a Public Relations Framework

Leonard J. Barchak
Russell (Gene) Marshall
McNeese State University

ABSTRACT: In an era of decreasing interest in foreign languages, the goal of this research is to acquire and retain foreign language students at the university level. To achieve this the researchers used Q methodology. Two different outlooks are discovered and examined in light of previous research and the current situation. The authors then propose that this ongoing project, which is a collaboration between professors of public relations and of foreign languages, could move into the program stage employing Q in a public relations framework. Feedback meetings with respondents are to be arranged followed by briefings to University administrators, who will be offered the opportunity of proceeding to a proactive program of communication.

Introduction

Despite exhortations by academic and political authorities, foreign language study is dwindling to marginal importance in U.S. education compared to its place in other nations' educational systems. This exploratory joint project by professors of public relations and foreign languages seeks to identify attitudes toward foreign language study that might help answer why this is so. In a later phase, these attitudes will be utilized to further the acquisition and retention of foreign language students at the university level.

Q methodology is employed to search out and segment present and potential foreign language "audiences" according to self-expressed understandings, rather than collapsing all of one "group" into the same demographic classification. The goal is to discover an expected limited number of "outlooks" or attitudes toward foreign language study and to address the needs of these differing types. Preconceived demographic categories — like race — recede before the operantly discovered "outlooks."

Authors' Addresses: Barchak, Dept. of Speech & Theatre, McNeese State University,
Lake Charles, LA 70609-0420; barchak@mail.mcneese.edu
Marshall, Dept. of Languages, McNeese State University
Lake Charles, LA 70609-0420

The steps used to provide the data are: 1) Select participants, e.g. high school, university students or graduates of foreign language programs. 2) "Mine" discourse, primarily through a review of the existing literature. 3) Choose statements according to a theoretical model. 4) Conduct the Q sorting. 5) Process and factor analyze the data. 6) "Name" the factors, i.e. reach a comprehensive understanding of the "outlook" of each factor type.

7) Communicate the results.

The McNeese approach can provide a preliminary "type" strategy for reaching individuals through the channels of communication that are most appropriate, e.g. mass media, direct mailings, interpersonal gatherings. Some media are quite expensive and may be totally ineffective — despite their glamour appeal — for certain types of students. Moreover, the current project can provide an introductory research-derived plan for the construction of suitable messages for each audience type. In this way, messages created at great cost to the university that would fall on unreceptive ears and eyes can be minimized or avoided. Without suitable research, foreign language educators may be tempted to employ messages that they have lovingly created for themselves rather than for prospective students. And, then, enthusiastic over their self-directed but unresearched message, they might honestly, but wastefully, oversell that message to the institution paying for it. The ultimate goal of this project is to develop strategies for acquisition and retention of foreign language students, tailored according to their special "outlooks" — but, at the lowest cost possible.

Previous Foreign Language Learning Studies

"English is not just the lingo of international airline pilots; it is also a common tool of commerce, statecraft, entertainment and scholarship and the dominant language on the Internet. British experts estimate that by 2000, more than one billion people on the planet — that's about one out of six — will be speaking or studying English." (Watson 1997, 51) And the other five billion? In an article extolling the opening of adventurous young Americans' interest in an international existence, *Newsweek's* reporters reflect the American unwillingness to deal with the reality that most of the world's people do not speak English. Maybe a few of those five billion have something of importance to say to the American who can understand them.

In the last 40 years, many researchers have addressed the question of American attitudes toward foreign language learning. Thus far, all the studies have followed standard R-methodology, yielding information about how many people study a foreign language and whether they like or dislike the experience. Such studies, however, tell us nothing of the intensity of these feelings or the underlying reasons.

Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert pioneered the study of motivation in foreign language learning. In a 1959 article in the *Canadian Journal of Psychology* and their 1972 book, Attitudes and Motivation in Second-Language Learning, they identified the two main motivations for foreign language study: professional advantage called *instrumental*, and interest in other cultures called

integrative. A third, obvious motivation for study — *graduation requirements* — appears in an article by Christopher M. Ely (1986). Ely suggests that strength of motivation is also important, regardless of its kind. He makes the telling observation that “there exists a lively debate over use of self-reporting in research on affective states in language-learning.” (p. 28, 32) He is referring to the Likert scale that was devised to measure foreign language attitude with author-generated questions in an R-study. For his own investigation he used student-generated “reasons” for foreign language, an element shared with Q methodology.

Before proceeding it should be noted that motivation and attitude are entwined with one another in many discussions of the problem. It is sometimes difficult to see where one ends and the other begins. Bacon and Finneman (1990) investigated both. They used the self-report methodology referred to by Ely and arrived at the same conclusions regarding motivation as Gardner and Lambert. But they did not really address attitude as distinct from motivation or learning styles. Other studies are aimed more specifically at attitudes. Moskowitz (1981) investigated activities to foster self-esteem in the foreign language classroom. The R-study using a questionnaire she devised is one that measures any positive change in attitudes toward language study, whether due to supportive teaching methods or to changes in underlying attitudes.

Examining student beliefs toward their initial foreign-language experience, Horowitz (1988) notes “The understanding of student expectations of commitment to, success in, and satisfaction with their language classes...remained relatively unexplored (p. 283).” She developed the “Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory” (BALLI) to remedy this lacuna. She used this instrument to discover different attitudes and commonly held beliefs among students of French, German and Spanish. The results were interesting, but provided no key to understanding the number or nature of core attitudes toward language learning.

Probing the personality correlates of foreign-language learning, Moody (1988) uses the test called “the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator” to seek out relationships between language learning and student personality (extraverted or introverted, sensing or introspective, thinking or feeling, judging or perceiving). His attempt looks more deeply into the question than previous research. However, he still uses *a priori* assumptions and R-methodology rather than allowing the interviewee to control the responses more fully. Stone and Rubinfeld (1990) try to define the slippery term “attitude.” They assert that “attitude represents a response by the individual to a social object, and... this response has three components: (1) one’s belief about the object; (2) the degree to which one feels positively or negatively toward it; and (3) the behavior manifested toward it (p. 429).” Their R-based study of business students confirmed previous findings regarding instrumental and integrative motives in those taking a foreign language as well as time constraints or general lack of interest in those not studying another language (the majority).

Roberts (1992) surveyed Michigan State University freshmen to determine, first, students’ “perception of the importance of FL [foreign language] study: and

second, to determine if students' perceptions appeared to differ substantially according to their: 1)... SAT... scores; 2) amount of previous high school FL study and the perception of success in that endeavor; 3) sex; 4) racial/ethnic heritage; 5) initial declaration of major; and 6) anticipated study... of FLs at the university level (p. 275)." This R-survey thus assumed that people could be understood in terms of demographic group adherence rather than by attitude or "outlook." Again, integrative and instrumental motivations were the two important factors in a study that purported to measure attitudes.

Gardner, whose pioneer work with Lambert influenced so many researchers, has since modified his beliefs and asserted that integrative motivation was neither essential nor meaningful. He now sees motivation as composed of four parts: a goal, a desire to attain the goal, positive attitudes toward learning the language and effortful behavior to that effect (in Oxford and Shearin p. 13)."

The core attitudes and beliefs, positive or negative, were not clearly discovered through the survey methods used. There still exists the question of what these attitudes are and how to measure them. To decide which, if any, of Gardner's or his colleagues' beliefs about language learning is operant requires a methodology with self-assessment at the center. The present paper is an attempt to use Q methodology to discover the operant attitudes toward foreign language learning by students. Advancements in teaching strategies will follow therefrom.

Methodology

Statement Selection

Our foreign language concourse is drawn more from prominent texts, less from personal interview. *Language in the Modern World*, by the noted British linguist Simeon Potter, gave a substantial part of the original concourse and provided the wonderfully projective: What do they know of English, Who only English know? For many years, Potter's work was a mainstay of numerous European university linguistic and language programs and is pregnant with insights and illustrations for such a small volume. Of particular interest to our study is Chapter 9, "The Practical Study of Languages." The word "practical" had a much broader meaning for Potter than chatting up the locals or hawking one's wares, though this too must be countenanced. Two other works add as much to the concourse as Potter's, perhaps more. *Why Johnny Should Learn Foreign Languages* by Theodore Huebener and *The Case for Foreign Language Study* — a collection of articles edited by James W. Dodge — were both written when American academicians as a whole had a rising interest in the study of foreign languages. From these works were extracted approximately 120 statements with a few additional suggested by students and the researchers. Nothing was intentionally overlooked or set aside for political or social reasons. Subsequent Q sorting by more than 100 persons elicited no new statement suggestions.

The Q Sample

In the current study, the statements were examined at length and provisionally found to speak about foreign language learning at three separate levels, i.e. the practical, the abstract, and the affective. It was then supposed — following current learning theory — that every statement at each of these levels might exemplify either 1) awareness of the possibilities of foreign language study; 2) awkwardness in the attainment of proficiency; 3) self-conscious skillfulness; or 4) integration, which is the self at play, smoothly competent but unaware of one's own actions (adapted from Adler and Towne, 1996, pp. 37-38). A study of this kind based on Q methodology not only allows for a direct test of the adequacy of current learning theory, but also provides, through the factor structure, grounds for the emergence of a more adequate theory. The design of the 48-statement Q sample is summarized in Figure 1. There are 24 different combinations of levels by effects, 12 are positive and 12 negative, viz.

Students and Teachers: The Respondents

Students were self-selected from three courses taught by the investigators in Spring, 1997. For Dr. Marshall, this was beginning Spanish and fourth semester French. For Dr. Barchak, it was a junior-sophomore level Introduction to Public Relations. Dr. Barchak made a 20 minute presentation to each class, explaining the methodology, fielding questions, and requesting participation with an "extra credit" inducement. Five of seven foreign language professors participated. A demographic breakdown is provided in the Interpretation section.

Q Sorting Conditions

Subjects received a deck of 48 statements, place cards, response sheet, and step-by-step Instructions for Q-Sorting©, in pictures and words (Nesterenko and Barchak 1976). The individual sorting was to be performed under the following Condition of Instruction: "Please sort these statements about Foreign Language Study from your own point of view."

More than 35 persons returned sorts, including five professors who cover all areas of foreign language training at McNeese, i.e. French, Spanish, German, and Latin. At present, McNeese has no general language requirement. Language student respondents are fulfilling a humanities requirement or taking the language for personal improvement or degree credits. A few intend to use language in their careers, including one prospective teacher. Public Relations students were included because they might be less concerned about providing socially acceptable responses than language students. Two improperly completed Q sorts were omitted. All five foreign language professorial sorts are included along with those of the principal investigators. A total of 37 Q sorts, which falls within the 30-50 range where stable factors are expected, were then prepared for analysis.

Figure 1: FISHERIAN BALANCED DESIGN

LEVELS						
EFFECTS	Positive (a)			Negative (b)		
	Practical (g)	Abstract (h)	Affective (i)	Practical (g)	Abstract (h)	Affective (i)
Awareness (c)	Practical/ Awareness (agc)	Abstract/ Awareness (ahc)	Affective/ Awareness (aic)	Practical/ Awareness (bge)	Abstract/ Awareness (bhc)	Affective/ Awareness (bic)
Awkwardness (d)	Practical/ Awkwardness (agd)	Abstract/ Awkwardness (ahd)	Affective/ Awkwardness (aid)	Practical/ Awkwardness (bgd)	Abstract/ Awkwardness (bhd)	Affective/ Awkwardness (bid)
Skillfulness (e)	Practical/ Skillfulness (age)	Abstract/ Skillfulness (ahc)	Affective/ Skillfulness (aic)	Practical/ Skillfulness (bge)	Abstract/ Skillfulness (bhc)	Affective/ Skillfulness (bic)
Integration (f)	Practical/ Integration (agf)	Abstract/ Integration (ahf)	Affective/ Integration (aif)	Practical/ Integration (bgf)	Abstract/ Integration (bhf)	Affective/ Integration (bif)

Results of Statistical Analysis

All Q sorts of students, faculty and researchers were processed through PCQ3.¹ Nine centroid factors were extracted of which four had eigenvalues greater than one, an indicator that there may not be more outlooks or attitudes toward foreign language learning present in this P-set. Application of the standard error rule-of-thumb suggested that three or less factors are present in the current data set (Stephenson, 1976; Barchak, 1977).²

Twenty-six persons defined Factor 1, one person Factor 2, and one person Factor 3. In addition to those persons loading exclusively on one factor, there were also a number of mixed factor sorts, five for Factor 1, two for Factor 2, two for Factor 3 and one for Factor 4. There are no other significant loadings on the unrotated centroid factor matrix. With this information in hand, clock-watching researchers might have immediately interrupted the investigation by declaring that a broad universal understanding existed among this group of students and teachers. Factoring experience and personal knowledge of the respondents suggested that the researchers should seek at least a second factor, which likely would correlate highly with the first.

Rotation of the Factors

Because repeated varimax rotation attempts resulted in numerous mixed factor sorts, judgmental rotation was employed to reach "simplest structure" (Brown, 1980, p. 22). Two strategies in deriving operant factors were suggested by an inspection of the data. First, the large clustering of Factor 1 was rotated into the positive-positive quadrant so that its highly significant extremities could be treated as two differentiated modes of understanding. Second, an attempt was made to bring some of the three unassigned and five mixed factor Q sorts onto a single factor. Rotation proceeded along these lines, differentiating Factors 1 and 2, which are correlated 0.61. After 27 rotations, every respondent was exclusively assigned to either Factor 1 or 2 with the exception of No. 23 who was isolated on a third factor. Subsequent interpretation of this factor proved very difficult and close inspection revealed that the Q sort was of doubtful authenticity. Because there were no other respondents tending toward this factor, it was dropped from the final interpretation.

¹ PCQ3 is available from Michael Stricklin, 3234 South 17th St., Lincoln, NE 68504 or mstrick@unlinfo.unl.edu.

² Calculating factor significance for the unrotated centroid factors in this way employs the Guilford-Lacy criterion. If the product of the two highest loadings — ignoring signs — on a factor falls below the standard error, then a factor is not likely significant. In the present case, one divided by the square root of $n-1$ (where $n = 48$, the number of Q statements) is 0.15, when rounded off. The products are: Factor 1 [$0.87 \times 0.92 = 0.80(\text{yes})$]; Factor 2 [$0.41 \times 0.52 = 0.21(\text{yes})$]; Factor 3 [$0.41 \times 0.45 = 0.18(\text{yes})$]; Factor 4 [$0.33 \times 0.37 = 0.12(\text{no})$].

Broad Considerations

A loading of greater than 0.38 is considered statistically significant for the present study, so long as a respondent has less than this on any of the other factors. With this in mind, Factor 1, now called Factor A, has 28 Q sorts on it, and Factor 2, now called Factor B, has 8 Q sorts. All of these are in simplest structure. Each sort loads significantly on one and only one factor.

Interpretation of Factors

As in any proper Q study, the goal was to account for every statement and to see the thread that runs throughout. The theoretical Q Sorts are shown in Tables 1 and 3, and the table of Q statements with factor scores is in Appendix 1. Examination and reflection upon these led us to designate the more populated Factor A, "Soul-Searchers" and Factor B, "Desperately Seeking Success."

Our review of the literature of foreign language learning uncovered 20 or more variables put forth as "explanations" for student attitudes. A study "testing" these could easily conclude with a 20 X 20 matrix of variables or 400 different answers. The researcher would then need to impose order on this surfeit in an attempt to explain the meaning of such an unwieldy table. Instead, the use of Q has left us with just the two factors. Several language researchers, it must be admitted, have arrived at something similar to our own conclusions, but this became clear only after Q had put out of doubt which of the many *ad hoc* hypotheses was on the right lines. While others have arrived at similar conclusions, the use of Q vastly simplifies the task and provides explanations of more depth.

Table 1: Factor A - Soul-Searchers

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
9	20	27	33	47	3	13	7	46	28	19
29	25	44	4	32	14	40	37	22	30	10
18	21	16	43	12	2	35	17	48	36	38
	1	5	15	8	45	42	11	26	34	
			39	23	41	6	24			
					31					

Categorical explanations of attitude and behavior are not applicable. Reference to Tables 1 and 2 shows that Factor A cannot be explained by major, race, or sex. Individuals loading on this factor include 8 beginning Spanish students, 6 advanced French students, 8 Public Relations majors and all 6 professors. The student proportions of blacks/whites and males/females in Factor A (18 white, 4 black, 6 male, 16 female) were similar to their representation in the classes. Four respondents were freshmen, 2 sophomores, 8 juniors, 7 seniors and 1 auditor.

Through teaching and testing of the students on this factor, we have ascertained that these individuals can be described generally as persistent, very good or even excellent in our specialties. Though the professors notably loaded very highly on this factor, many students did also. Six of the top seven loaders were students, so this is clearly not a case of professorial domination of expressed outlook.

Factor A respondents have a thematic interest in engaging the whole person in learning a foreign language (19, +5). They even consider this an ethical issue (28, +4). They are not pedantic, though, and sound quite democratic in outlook believing that all students should have a chance to learn a foreign language (10, +5) and not be deterred by initial difficulties which may be more apparent than real (38, +5).

**Table 2: Factor A Sorts with Significant Loadings
Selected Characteristics - Reordered by Loading**

Age	Sex	Race	Yr.	Subject	Sort	Load
	m			Prof.	35	+83
20	m	w	3	PR	30	+80
17	m	b	1	French	16	+78
24	f	w	3	PR	29	+78
20	f	w	3	French	13	+76
50	f	w	1	Spanish	6	+75
32	m	w	4	French	15	+74
52		Gene Marshall			32	+74
	m			Prof.	33	+74
52		Len Barchak			31	+73
	f			Prof.	34	+73
20	f	w	3	French	18	+69
27	f	b	4	Spanish	2	+68
20	f	b	2	Spanish	8	+68
21	f	w	1	Spanish	7	+64
68	f	w	A	French	12	+63
21	f	w	3	PR	21	+62
19	f	w	1	Spanish	3	+61
21	m	w	4	PR	26	+61
24	f	b	3	PR	37	+59
	m			Prof.	36	+55
21	f	w	4	Spanish	4	+52
25	f	w	4	PR	20	+51
19	f	w	2	PR	28	+51
46	f	w	4	Spanish	9	+48
20	f	w	3	Spanish	11	+47
21	m	w	3	PR	24	+46
23	m	w	4	French	14	+39

Factor A doesn't deny the practicality of language study (7, +2) but places that below its worth as an intellectual expression (34, +4). When the word "business" rises high in its Q sort (30, +4), it is related to corresponding with people of another culture rather than making a profit (items 6, 7). Turning to the extreme disagree end of the Q sort, these respondents highly value the worth and enjoyment of studying a foreign language (9, -5; 29, -5; also 44, -3). They want to study with an instructor, though, not through correspondence courses or quickie summer learning (5, -3; 4, -2). Understanding and engagement of others and their values and concerns is the main objective rather than mastery of the language (31, 0). Factor A places little value on reading either literary masters in the original language (32, -1) or timely translations of scientific information from other cultures (31, 0). This seems surprising for a group that contains a fair number of professors, considering how strong their loadings on Factor A.

No special gift is cited as essential to learning a foreign language (14, 0), but it requires effort and problems of adult learning must be overcome (4, -2; 15, -2). Factor A recognizes that learning a foreign language can be anxiety producing, even for the self-assured learner (17, +2). They exhibit neither joy nor offense at rote memorization (41, 0), realizing its necessary place in foreign language learning. These people accept that languages come easier to some than to others (13, +1). Language is not a special gift but an acquired ability. Besides, it's "good for our character" (24, +2). They feel that you can, so to speak, gain another soul (48, +3) from the process though it is still possible to become competent at one's own language without knowing another language (35, +1). This reference to "soul" has nothing to do with religion as the query from one professor clearly demonstrates: "[Statements] 21 and 48 were unclear to me. Were they jokes or actually references to persons who are planning missionary work?" The "soul" one is gaining, in the secular parlance of foreign language learning, is another self (25, -4), not an immortal soul.

One, of course, needs to be cautious in accepting this provisional understanding. It may be that the foreign language students on the factor are merely giving the socially acceptable answers they think the researching professors want to hear. If this is so, then how does one explain the public relations students on this factor? If the language students are just giving the academy its due, it is evident they know what is expected.

Demographic categories are of no more use in understanding Factor B than they were for the Factor A. (Refer to Tables 3 and 4.) Three individuals on this factor are Spanish students, 2 study French and 3 study Public Relations. None is a professor. There are 6 white and 2 black students as well as 2 males and 6 females. Three are sophomores, five juniors but no freshmen or seniors. We know, from observation, that most of these are hardworking students from modest backgrounds.

Table 3: Factor B - Desperately Seeking Success

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
12	4	43	29	23	39	3	19	14	30	7
20	15	27	21	40	31	24	28	6	33	17
5	48	9	25	11	16	22	34	38	26	10
	32	18	35	45	47	37	44	8	13	
			2	1	41	46	36			
					42					

Table 4: Factor B Sorts with Significant Loadings
Selected Characteristics - Reordered by Loading

Age	Sex	Race	Year	Subject	Sort	Load
25	m	w	3	PR	25	+69
20	f	w	3	French	17	+64
19	f	b	2	PR	22	+47
44	f	w	3	Spanish	1	+46
19	f	b	2	Spanish	10	+44
25	m	w	3	PR	27	+42
22	f	w	2	Spanish	5	+41
20-5	f	w	3	French	19	+40

These people think the primary benefit of language study is to "make the sale" (7, +5). They believe all should have the opportunity to study languages, regardless of background or ethnicity (10, +5). Further, language learning is not fun; it produces anxiety even for the most self-assured individuals (17, +5). This must be accepted as part of the price of success (23, +4). Compared to the play or communication pleasure viewpoint of Factor A, Factor B experiences language learning as work or communication pain (Stephenson, 1967, pp 57-60). They do not see themselves as good at foreign language (13, +4), but believe it is needed for business correspondence (30, +4). Regardless of their skill, language training would have the virtue of showing foreign business partners they are "respectful" people (26, +4).

This push-pull struggle with language continues with these respondents recognizing the difficulty of acquiring a new language (14, +3) yet determined to overcome it (38, +3). Otherwise, they reason, it will not be possible to compete with other nations by English alone (6, +3). All the while, they continue to focus on the utilitarian nature of foreign language learning, rather than viewing it as something that will become part of them (8, +3).

Statements 19, 28 and 34 (+2) seem to be the first acknowledgement of the values and belief systems of others that preoccupied Factor A. It seems almost an afterthought. Additional statements in the pile revisit the travails of learning a

foreign language 44 (+2); while 36 (+1) asserts the difficulties must be overcome. Other items in the +1 pile replay these themes.

On the other hand, Factor B highly rejects the siren call of language learning on the cheap (5, -5; 4, -4) and the thought that the existence of foreign languages is a sinister plot (20, -5). It is a bit too much of protest. They very strongly expect that Americans will need other languages to get ahead in the world of business (12, -5). Their feelings are stronger on these statements than Factor A, which is dotted with language professors.

A lot is learned from Statement 48 (-4). This short and simple Czech proverb was found in a business book advising how to get a better job in 28 days: "Learn another language, gain another soul." The powerful rejection of this truism seems to bode that Factor B respondents are uninterested in gaining another language or insight into others, except as business and economic dealings require.

We would venture that Factor B respondents want to share themselves when abroad (43, -3). They want to fit in and not be noticed as foreigners, but do not place a high value on doing so (40, -1). Learning a language does not include delving into its literature (32, -4) or the science of another country. Rather, language is useful for the cultural (primarily economic) advantage it offers, not for its intrinsic value (11, -1). It is a practical necessity (2, -2).

In sum, Factor B demonstrates power of the cognitive will over the natural desire to avoid the pain of learning a new language. These respondents are quite anxious about studying foreign language, yet see it as an unavoidable extension of the business world, i.e. useful in getting a good job or client. Foreign language learning is seen as mere training. This outlook is quite self-conscious. These individuals hardly notice that the playful process of getting to know other "selves" — and thereby enlarging one's self — is a primary gain of foreign language education. From a play theory point of view, Factor B believes that learning a foreign language requires denial of self.

What the Factors Share

Although quite separate in outlook and intent, the two factors share an important orientation, especially for a university department hoping to attract foreign language students. Both groups believe that knowledge of another language is important. Factor A sees foreign language study as an opportunity to engage one's whole self in the values and beliefs of another culture. Factor B views language as a formidable tool to make one's fortune in the modern world of international commerce. None of the respondents finds reason to dismiss foreign language, something unexpected as we set about this research.

It can also be noted that our factors bear a resemblance to the integrative and instrumental motives discovered by Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972). But where their "motive" designations are vague and diffuse, the factors in this Q study are more expansive and in-depth. One can almost know "Soul-Searchers" and "Desperately Seeking Success" as characters in a novel. This is particularly

engaging because we did not know the literature of instrumental vs. integrative motives when we undertook this study or even when the Q sample was prepared. The factors were not put into the Fisherian design in order to be taken out at the end. Rather, they forced themselves to our awareness, pushing aside learning and linguistic theory.

Implications and Possibilities

According to a 1996 report published by the Institute for International Education and based on data from more than 1,000 U.S. accredited colleges and universities, a rising number of U.S. College students study overseas with many traveling far afield to Africa, Asia and the Middle East. An important percentage of U.S. students still choose places like Britain or Australia, where language is usually only a minor problem. The rest, however, need and apparently are receiving foreign language training, either to acquire a "career asset" or only "to order off a menu."

At McNeese and elsewhere in Louisiana, the trend is away from foreign languages. As recently as October 1997, the State Board of Regents announced that state universities in Louisiana could no longer offer a minor for areas where no major exists. Locally, this means the abandonment of quite a few Liberal Arts minors, including German and Latin. Currently school officials do not see this as leading to the elimination of courses, but the trend is in that direction.

What is to be done by the Department of Languages? One of the options, in the face of overwhelming adversity, is to fall back and conserve one's force to fight another day. Our research shows that this is illogical. It is unnecessary to surrender to the anti-foreign language forces before it is learned what students really feel, want and need.

Our Q research suggests that student interests neither desire nor require the diminution of the foreign language requirement. Both discovered "outlooks" — Soul-Searchers and Desperately Seeking Success — support and advocate the continued education of students in foreign languages. Moreover, there is no known force of disgruntled students pushing to abandon foreign languages.

The time has come to concentrate on what is, rather than what might be, in order to serve students foreign language needs and desires. This can all be done by employing Q in a modern public relations structure of 1) Research, 2) Objective Setting, 3) Program Implementation, and 4) Follow-through Evaluation, the so-called ROPE method detailed by Hendrix (1998). Important modifications are necessary, however, even if we ignore practical and economic matters. We substitute Q Methodology for the agenda-setting survey and historical research phase (serendipitously called R) that conceptualizes 1) the client or organization, 2) whether the situation is a problem or an opportunity, and 3) the various audiences or publics. (see Stephenson, 1963). Our Soul-Searchers and Desperately Seeking Success factors give deep-structure answers to the question: Who are the publics?

Contrary to prevailing opinion, our research shows that the current situation is not a problem or a crisis, but an opportunity. Q can be used to detail the client's understanding of student outlooks. Examining the attitudes of the foreign language faculty was a beginning step in this direction. Future Q research could include potential learners of foreign languages, either already enrolled students or high school juniors and seniors from our primary recruitment area. If this work is to be successful, however, it may be necessary to use Q to understand those most concerned administratively, i.e. the head of the department of languages, the dean of liberal arts, and the vice president of academic affairs. Informational, attitudinal and behavioral goals can be established more sure-footedly after considering the several "selves" elucidated by Q. The top rated Q statements shown to be salient by "prior analysis" (Stephenson, 1953) can be used to establish what is effective communication for each of the student Q Factors. This information can then direct the theme, actions and media employed in the programming phase.

During the programming stage, language professors need to be educated about the Q factors to better serve their students. In the evaluation phase, a simple tally of students may tell whether the recruitment program will survive, but additional Q research can assess whether the program is on track with students, professors and administrators. All of this can then be fed back into the never-ending ROPE cycle.

Lately, the university has been making it simpler to ease out of foreign language requirements, even as our research shows that some students may actually need their feet held to the fire.

Both language teachers and students believe that students want and need foreign languages, no matter what their outlook. Q suggests it may be time to stand behind the professoriate when they call for performance and achievement from their students. Educators are unlikely to be opposed by those "Desperately Seeking Success," who anticipate a practical payoff. Facility in foreign language can grow along with self, if professors and others skillfully employ the Q factors to help Factor B discover that language learning does not require self-denial. As for "Soul-Searchers," a typical woman student remarked, "I have always admired people who learned a foreign language and can speak it fluently." Or another: "I... truly appreciate the opportunity [we] Americans have and the freedom to learn any language and feel we should take advantage of that." Q guides us to all this in a way that 40 years of traditional research never did.

Appendix

Item Scores for Factors A and B

No.	Statements	Factor:	
		A	B
1	We can always rely on interpreters.	-4	-2
2	Knowledge of a foreign language is a cultural luxury; it is not a practical necessity.	0	-2
3	Continued language study should be provided only for the relatively few who are interested or competent.	0	+1
4	All anyone has to do, who finds need of a foreign language, is take a summer course to acquire sufficient facility in the tongue.	-2	-4
5	A correspondence course is sufficient to be successful in a foreign language.	-3	-5
6	We simply cannot compete with other nations if we rely on English alone.	+1	+3
7	A knowledge of the customer's language has a distinct sales value.	+2	+5
8	The knowledge of a foreign language is an asset, but of minor consideration.	-1	+3
9	Valuable school time should not be wasted on the study of foreign languages.	-5	-3
10	All students should have the opportunity to study a foreign language	+5	+5
11	It is quite evident that the study of a foreign language is a unique experience in itself — quite independent of the cultural advantages.	+2	-1
12	Fortunately, very few Americans will ever need a second language.	-1	-5
13	There are good students who simply do not "get" foreign languages.	+1	+4
14	Acquiring another language is a special gift most people do not have.	0	+3
15	It is easier for children than for adults to learn a second language so why try to learn a language after childhood.	-2	-4
16	It may be possible to become fluent in a second language, but it's not worth my time.	-3	0
17	Even the most self-assured individual can find second language communication anxiety-provoking.	+2	+5
18	The student's main task is to squeeze through the language skill courses with as little effort as possible.	-5	-3
19	Achieving a high level of competence in a foreign language engages one's whole person and necessitates realizing that a value and belief system significantly different from American standards is operating throughout other societies.	+5	+2
20	The fact that there are different languages is the most sinister fact in the world.	-4	-5
21	If English was good enough for Jesus Christ, it's good enough for me.	-4	-2
22	To know a language is to join the others who know it.	+3	+1
23	There can be no more important experience in education than learning another language.	1	-1
24	Studying a foreign language is good for your character.	+2	+1
25	To submit oneself to the discipline of studying another language in detail is a renunciation of your self.	-4	-2
26	Even if we never master another language, our study has the high virtue of treating with care and respect those whose language it is.	+3	+4
27	Fluency in another language does open us to another world, but it denies the language world we were brought up in.	-3	-3

Item Scores for Factors A and B — continued

No.	Statements	Factors:	
		A	B
28	The value of language study is fundamentally ethical. It is an act of self-restraint, an acknowledgment of other people and of the validity of their perspective.	+4	+2
29	The only reason to study a foreign language is because an examination is coming up.	-5	-2
30	Men and women of business need a foreign language since they may have to deal directly or indirectly with foreign correspondence.	+4	+4
31	The advantage of mastering a foreign language is that you can read the latest accounts of advances made in a subject as soon as they are published in foreign journals, without waiting for a translator.	0	0
32	To be a student of foreign languages must surely mean reading the masters at first hand, e.g. Montaigne, Pascal, Rousseau; Calderon, San Juan de la Cruz; Dante, Leopardi, Croce; Goethe, Schiller, Rilke; or perhaps Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, and Chekhov.	-1	-4
33	Learning a new language well enough to be able to understand it when heard, to speak it, read it, and write it, is a demanding discipline that requires a strong urge that I don't have.	-2	+4
34	To satisfy your intellectual curiosity and lively interest in the endless ways in which human ideas may be expressed is a good reason to study foreign languages.	+4	+2
35	What do they know of English, Who only English know?	+1	-2
36	We should not be deterred from attempting to learn something about a language on the grounds that we cannot hope to master it completely within the time at our disposal.	+4	+1
37	In some sense, all linguistic knowledge, even that of our native tongue is imperfect and fragmentary so I say go ahead and begin foreign language study.	+2	+1
38	We should never be deterred from foreign language study on the grounds that the language of our need or choice is difficult; the difficulty may be more apparent than real.	+5	+3
39	Some languages are easy and some hard so if you have to master a foreign language, choose the easy one.	-2	0
40	Whether one is ever mistaken for a native — even a native from some obscure place up country — should not be regarded as a prime consideration in learning a foreign language.	+1	-1
41	You can derive much pleasure from learning by heart the days of the week, the months of the year, and the numbers from 1 to 10 and beyond.	0	-1
42	Rote memorization should never be entirely divorced from the study of syntactic structure and function.	+1	-1
43	If for some reason I had to go abroad, I certainly wouldn't want to share information about my life — my interests, my family, my tastes, my plans — with foreigners in a foreign language.	-2	-3
44	Studying a foreign language is just not enjoyable. You appear silly, you make mistakes, and it's hard to laugh at yourself.	-3	+2
45	Who wants to anticipate conversations and prepare foreign sentences in advance. It's artificial to try to work them into your conversation.	0	-1
46	Nothing ventured, nothing gained. Foreign language study might pay off in future work or travel, and I'm willing to take the gamble.	+3	0
47	Teachers expect us to use what we learn in foreign language class when meeting fellow students outside class. What a ridiculous idea.	-1	0
48	Learn another language, gain another soul	+3	-4

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