U.S. National Security and Government Language Assessment in Public Schools

~Dr. Theresa Ulrich
December 5, 2019
Objectives

★ Learn the history of language acquisition perspectives through U.S. Government eyes.

★ Discuss documents created by the Foreign Service Institute which influenced language assessment in public schools.

★ Understand the connection between U.S. Government, public schools, and language policy formation.
Does this Look Familiar?

*Original FSI Language Proficiency Scale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>No Proficiency – No communicative ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Limited Proficiency – Courteous language, i.e. vocabulary related to travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Limited Working Proficiency – Language of daily routines related to social and work-related contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Full Working Proficiency – Accurate language and usage for informal, formal, and professional occasions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Advanced Working Proficiency – Full professional working proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Educated Native Speaker – Language is of the level comparable to and fully accepted by native speakers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Post World War II Mission

★ U.S. Lieutenant Commander Johnson of submarine *USS Segundo* and his crew was charged with rounding up rogue Japanese submarines.

★ For several days, the mission carried on without event.

★ Suddenly, August 29, 1945, 13 days after Japan had announced its surrender, a huge blip appeared on the radar screen (Geoghegan, 2008).
Post World War II Mission

★ The massive object was 25% longer than the *USS Segundo* and weighed twice as much (Geoghegan, 2008; Manley, 2014).

★ Gordon Nesland, a crew member of the USS Segundo, said the vessel looked like a monster. It was longer than a football field and was like nothing the sailors had ever seen (Rddad, 2015).
Post World War II Mission

★ The crew couldn’t identify the massive object initially.
★ This was the largest submarine in history.
★ The submarine was heavily equipped with weaponry and contained floatplane attack bombers. It was the first submarine designed to simultaneously act as an aircraft carrier (Geoghegan, 2008).
Japanese I-400 Series Super Sub

Water-tight hangar for floatplane bomber

Catapult for the plane

Matrek/Wikimedia commons: interesting engineering.com
Post World War II Mission

★ The U.S. crew managed to board the super sub.
★ Once on board, they quickly realized that the sophisticated technology needed to be kept out of the hands of the Russians, as it was a game changer.
★ The U.S. crew began negotiating terms for surrender with the Japanese sub’s commander Captain Arriizumi and Chief Navigator Captain Bando (Geoghegan, 2008).
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study is to explore the impact of the FSI’s language proficiency assessment framework on policies and decisions that led to its integration into public schools.
Research Questions

1. What historical and political thematic patterns are found within FSI documents during the period that the FSI developed the country’s first language proficiency framework?

2. How have the thematic findings in Government documents and related legislation and policy influenced the formation and practice of language assessments in K-12 public schools?
Rationale for Period of Study

★ Historical primary source documents were studied for the period beginning 1947 and ending in 1968.

★ This encompasses the birth of the FSI until the end of its role as the primary contributor of the Government Military language proficiency assessment framework.
National Archives

at College Park
3601 Adelphi Road
The Archival Research Process

★ National Archives Research Administration (NARA) – College Park, MD – Location of Department of State documents

★ Original primary source documents 50-80 years old

★ Access to more than 35,000 pages of documents

★ Took home approximately 1,500 images

★ Selected a total of 59 complete documents of varied genre and classification using a sampling approach
Copy Request with Notes
Memorandum – Alien Interpreters

The Office of International Information is in urgent need of aliens to assist in its great volume of work in foreign languages. The attached proposed Foreign Service Personnel Circular outlines the policy and procedure whereby such persons are to be recruited and sent to the United States. Aliens will be recruited only for those positions for which qualified United States citizens are not available.

It will be appreciated if you will expedite the issuance of the circular, as it is necessary that this important work go forward without unnecessary delay.

Attachment
Circular Draft – Confidential

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

CONFIDENTIAL

FOREIGN SERVICE
PERSONNEL CIRCULAR NO. 52
January 16, 1951

SUBJECT: Recruitment of Aliens for Employment with the Office of International Information

1. Purpose

This circular announces the policy of recruitment of aliens for foreign language work with the Office of International Information and establishes the procedures governing this recruitment.

2. Authority

The supplemental appropriation act providing for the expansion of International Information and Educational Activities of the Department (Public Law 739, 83rd Congress) permits the recruitment of aliens abroad for foreign language work in the United States as follows:

"That funds appropriated under this head shall be available for employment of aliens outside the United States, without regard to the civil service and classification laws, for services in the United States relating to the translation or narration of colloquial speech in foreign languages and for travel expenses of such aliens and their dependents to and from the United States, and such aliens shall be investigated in accordance with procedure established by the Secretary of State and the Attorney General."

In addition, the International Information and Educational Act appropriation (Public Law 739, 83rd Congress) provides for advances of funds as follows:

"... advances of funds notwithstanding 'Section 3546 of the revised statutes as amended..."

3. Policy

The authority to recruit aliens will be used only where it is demonstrated that qualified United States citizens are not available.
Memorandum – Professionalism

Memorandum

TO: O/PSI - Mr. George A. Morgan
FROM: O/PSI - W. W. Chapman, Jr.
DATE: April 12, 1965

SUBJECT: Professionalism and Foreign Service Training.

With reference to your request for comments on the draft of 4/12/65 entitled "Professionalism and Foreign Service Training", I believe the opening paragraphs may be misunderstood by readers where the Foreign Service is referred to as "both less and more than a profession". Law and medicine do rest on a legal monopoly; however, isn't it true that they would still be professions even though there were no legal monopoly, which, in effect, merely assures minimum standards for the practice of these professions in public. Basically, the word "profession" implies high standards of scholarship plus ability to use skillfully pertinent knowledge and skills. These qualifications apply equally to law, medicine, diplomacy, teaching, and other endeavors considered to be professions.

In the last paragraph on page 1, would it be better not to equate professionalism with competence; for, although competence is assuredly implied by the word professionalism, the latter connotes much more than competence alone.

Jumping to page 6, "Thus, there can be no '100% professional' in foreign affairs". I feel there can be a '100% professional.' It may be quibbling, but I would prefer to rephrase the sentence, "Thus, there can be no professional who is 100% qualified in all phases of foreign affairs."

O/PSI:WWChapman:gf

Attachment — particularly the last page.

White
NATIONAL SECURITY ACTION MEMORANDUM NO. 163

JUNE 6, 1962

CONFIDENTIAL

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

SUBJECT: Training Objectives for Counterinsurgency

The President has noted with approval the establishment of an interdepartmental seminar on counterinsurgency at the Foreign Service Institute entitled “Problems of Development and Internal Defense.” This five-week course will commence on June 11 and will be repeated through the year.

The seminar has been established, in accordance with Paragraph 1 d of the National Security Action Memorandum 131, to offer instruction on the problems faced by the United States in dealing with developing countries, including special area counterinsurgency problems, for the benefit of middle and senior grade officers (both military and civilian) who are about to occupy important posts in underdeveloped countries.

It is the wish of the President that key military and civilian personnel assigned to positions of responsibility at posts within Latin America, Africa, the Near East and Southeast Asia attend this five-week course prior to departing for their stations.

McGeorge Bundy
Memorandum – Secret (Coded)

O/PSP – Dr. Kossig
February 18, 1964

A/FSP – George A. Morgan
MEAN 283 – Internal Defense Training

It is my understanding that FSI compliance with MEAN 283 is provided for by A-701 with regard to Training Policy and Objectives II B.1., and by A-700 with regard to II, C.

Please make sure that A-100, A-200 and A-300 comply on a continuing basis with II, A., and that A-300 also complies with II, B.2.

In order to avoid undue overlap between their respective seminars the Coordinator of A-300 should keep in touch with the Coordinator of A-200. Some overlap is inevitable, given the way the MEAN is written, but by strong differences of emphasis I believe this problem can be kept within bounds. If this proves impossible please let me know.

cc: Mr. Moore
Mr. Mattison

O/FSP: GAMorganize

DECLASSIFIED
October 12, 1967

Honorable George W. Bush
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Bush:

I have received your recent communication requesting information on behalf of Mr. R. J. Wittwer concerning texts and tape recorded lessons in Bahasa Indonesia and Spanish.

The Foreign Service Institute has not prepared materials in Bahasa Indonesia for public sale. However, the attached list of Foreign Service Institute materials available from the Government Printing Office contains information about several Spanish texts. These may be obtained from the Superintendent of Documents. Tape recordings to accompany these texts are also available as indicated on the attached list prepared by the Center for Applied Linguistics.

The Department of Defense has available a basic course in Indonesian in 11 volumes. These may be obtained from the Defense Language Institute, West Coast Branch, Presidio of Monterey, California at prices ranging from 55¢ to $1.30 per volume. Tapes to accompany these materials are available from the same source at $2.15 per reel. There are 95 reels for the entire course. Your constituent would be well advised to correspond with the Defense Language Institute, West Coast Branch, concerning the scope of these materials before deciding how much of the course he might wish to purchase.

In addition to the Spanish materials listed on the attached documents, the Government Printing Office has also recently published the first volume and Instructor’s Manual of a new ESL Programmatic Spanish course. The Instructor’s Manual is priced at 75¢ and Volume I at $2.25. Both are available from the Superintendent of Documents. Accompanying tape recording
1. **Purpose**

   This circular describes the new Japanese and Korean language-and-area training program for Foreign Service officers, explains the method by which such officers may request training, and outlines the basis that will be used for selection.

2. **Description of Program**

   a. The Japanese language-and-area training program, the first class of which will begin on April 1, 1955, is divided into five phases. Phase I, at the Foreign Service Institute in Washington, consists of three months of intensive training in spoken Japanese with a small amount of area background instruction. Those who show satisfactory progress in Phase I will proceed to Phase II, also at Washington for three months, which continues spoken Japanese instruction at a reduced rate, begins training in the written language, and provides instruction in Japanese history, geography, culture, politics, economics, and relations with the United States. Phase III, of six months duration, at the Foreign Service Institute branch in Tokyo, will continue instruction in spoken and written language at a higher level; it will be supplemented by field trips, and will include a period of residence in a Japanese community, away from English-speaking contacts. Phase IV, open to those who demonstrate particular aptitude, will be an additional 12 months of instruction in spoken and written Japanese. Phase V will be an assignment at a post within Japan, during the first six months of which the officer spends half of his time on language study or on work involving constant use of the language. The total length of the training program is, therefore, eighteen months for those trained as speakers of Japanese, and thirty months for those trained as readers and interpreters of Japanese.
FSI Foreign Service Institute

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 90/1993

THE FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE TESTS LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

STATE DEPARTMENT EXAMINES GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL

By Frank A. Rice, FSI

(This article has been reproduced from The Linguistic Reporter for May 1939)
March 12, 1960

MEMORANDUM

HNR - Ray H. Kohler

Russian Language Training in the Foreign Service

I have read with great interest your memorandum of March 8 and its enclosure dealing with Russian language training in the Foreign Service. In general, this Bureau supports the position taken by the Institute, and I personally am very much in favor of these proposals in principle. I would like to make a few comments about the specific details.

1. The designation of Russian as a "world" language by Department.

I agree that as the range of interests of Soviet society broadens and deepens, material published in the Russian language is of interest to a growing number of Foreign Service personnel, and that Russian is increasingly used as a diplomatic language in Eastern Europe. I would certainly favor the classification of Russian as a world language for the reasons cited in the enclosure to your memorandum, and I see no objection on political or other grounds to this proposal.

I am not sure that it is advisable to make a conspicuous public announcement of our reclassification of Russian as a world language. While we could point to our present reservoir of Russian language skill, I fear that the public impact would be that we were "finally" starting to do something about Russian. Moreover, such an announcement might cause misunderstanding abroad concerning our decision. There is no objection to making the fact public in the normal course of events (such as the announcement of acceptable languages for the Foreign Service exam), but I question whether we should draw particular attention to it.

2. The enrollment of four to six officers every six months in a six-months intensive Russian language course at PSI.

In the light of the desirability of a wider knowledge of Russian in our Foreign Service, the proposal to train eight to twelve officers per year does not seem unduly ambitious. However, I would like to point out, as I am sure Aaron Brown will wish to emphasize, that to spare this many man-years of time, largely of experienced PSI officers, will pass a considerable strain on our resources in personnel, already very tight.
May 18, 1954

Dear Mrs. Kornblum,

In reply to your letter of May 14, the Foreign Service Institute does not "plan and administer programs" in teaching English as a second language. The Institute has acted in an advisory capacity to the English Teaching Section of the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) in the preparation of texts in eleven languages for use in programs conducted by them. These texts have been prepared under the auspices of the Committee on the Language Program of the American Council of Learned Societies, of which I am a member as part of my official duties at the Foreign Service Institute. I suggest you write to Mr. William Kramer, English Teaching Specialist, English Teaching Program of USIA, Health, Education and Welfare Building, Independence Avenue and 3rd Street, N.W., Room 2323, Washington, D.C. You may wish further to address Dr. Martin Jones, American Council of Learned Societies, 1113 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., concerning the nature and composition of the texts referred to.

Sincerely yours,

Henry Lee Smith, Jr.
Chief
Language Training Branch
Foreign Service Institute

Mrs. Daniel Kornblum
150-95 Beech Avenue
Flushing, New York City
New York
Letter – Language Aptitude

Dear Jean:

This is a much belated answer to your letter of October 29 in which you refer to the one-hour, tape-recorded version of the aptitude test you are having produced. It seems that we can expect to have about 15 new NWO trainees at the institute by the middle of the month, and that we may be able to detail about 30 additional booths for testing. I cannot tell as yet when any of the latter will be going into language training, in other words, their suitability for aptitude testing purposes is open to some question.

As soon as we get your tapes and instructions we can schedule a test and then determine how many useful examinees we can assemble. It will help us if you will indicate your minimum acceptable number of individuals to be tested so that we may, if necessary, postpone the test until we have enough people on hand to proceed. If you decide to come in person, please let us know the date as soon as possible so that we can get busy with the arrangements.

No use here has come up with a simple, pleasing suggestion on testing aptitude for pronunciation. The consensus seems to be that an examinee who makes a satisfactory score on the test as now constituted can be expected to possess also the requisite coordination for pronunciation. My personal opinion is that we just don’t know enough as yet about these things. For one thing, it often takes weeks and sometimes months for a student to master a pronunciation point. In the other hand, a student may bring to class a certain facility for mastering new sounds, but never achieve as much as the slow learner. Therefore, one-shot test would not seem to be conclusive.

Best regards from all of us here and PSI.

Sincerely,

Fritz Frauschiger
Associate Professor of Linguistics
School of Languages
Foreign Service Institute

Professor John B. Carroll
J.H. Highman House
Cambridge 38, Massachusetts
Theme Organization

★ Themes were organized from greatest frequency to least frequent within the period of study.

★ The pattern analysis revealed 7 major themes and 4 minor themes.

★ Themes that occurred 50% or more over the course of the study period were classified as major themes.

★ Themes that occurred less than 50% over the course of the study period were classified as minor themes.
Major Themes

- Political Agenda and Policy Formation
- FSI Validation and Budgetary Concerns
- FSO and Interpreter Quality
- Language and Area Training
- Military Connection
- Role and Expansion of FSI
- National Security
Minor Themes

- Public Education Connection
- USSR/Soviet Relations and Communism
- Presidential Directives
- Dependents Training
Themes were developed based on their frequency, patterns of occurrence, and representation of authors’ voices and organized into a color-coded matrix to more easily track patterns.
Example of Political Statement

Crew (1947, June 18) recollects a conversation with President Theodore Roosevelt regarding this topic:

“Crew, you are making a serious mistake; I put you in the diplomatic service because I believe in you, but it's all politics and when I leave the White House my successor will most certainly throw you out and you will have simply wasted your time.” (p. 5)
Contextualizing Themes

★ According to the Department of State, the time frame of this study is divided into three distinct periods:

★ 1945-1952: The Early Cold War
★ 1953-1960: Entrenchment of a Bi-Polar Foreign Policy
1945-1952: The Early Cold War

★ Post WWII, the U.S. is a superior political, economic, and military power.
★ The U.S. rebuilt economies in Europe in Asia.
★ The Truman Doctrine was created to provide aide to countries potentially threatened by Communism.
★ The National Security Act was passed, resulting in the formation of the CIA.
1945-1952: The Early Cold War

★ The unveiling of the FSI
★ Collaboration with universities for language learning in order to build Foreign Relations – National Security.

★ Foreign affairs and defense
★ FSI relationship with the military was symbiotic yet competitive – criticism and budget.

★ The elite FSOs
★ FSOs were intended to be high quality, skilled Diplomats.

★ Foreign Service Compromised
★ Promotional practices and underfunding.
Period Summary

**The FSI was designed to ease foreign affairs tensions but functioned more in fortifying the military.**

**Foreign service suffered from underbudgeting and FSO promotions based on political affiliations.**

**The FSI resorted to recruiting aliens to meet interpreting requests.**

**By design, the FSI built relationships with universities and education organizations.**

- Collaborative instruction
- Recruitment resources
- Language instruction advancements
1953-1960: Entrenchment of a Bi-Polar Foreign Policy

★ The U.S. became focused on Soviet influences and the spread of Communism in Asia and Eastern Europe.

★ U.S policy was developed to contain Communism and prevent further international expansion.

★ Africa and Asia were in turmoil dealing with challenges to local government.
1953-1960: Entrenchment of a Bi-Polar Foreign Policy

★ Foreign perceptions of U.S.
  ★ Policies and practices for relations aboard.

★ Military relations and FSI expansion
  ★ FSI language development based on Military.

★ Shifting role of universities
  ★ Emerging language course needs (Japanese).

★ Overcoming budgetary challenges
  ★ FSI expands despite fiscal limitations.

★ Rising pressures
  ★ Poor interpreting, Sputnik, and Communism.
Period Summary

★ Foreign Relations and language programming are directed by U.S. Policy and Military agenda.
★ Promotional practices and budget constraints impacted the number of quality FSOs.
★ Communism was a growing threat and more quality recruits had to be acquired.
★ World affairs result in Military and Government subtly dictating what is taught in public schools – competition with the USSR.
★ Math, Science and Language instruction is promoted in public schools.
★ Universities are the primary FSI recruitment source.

- Presidents become more involved in the role of the FSI, directing collaboration with the CIA and secret training.
- Russian language is used as defense against Communism.
- Dependents and certain members of Congress are permitted to study language courses through the FSI programs.

★ FSI and Military relationship shifts
  ★ Collaborative internal defense and counterinsurgency.

★ Ramping up
  ★ Turmoil: North Vietnamese tensions, Communism, National Security, Civil Rights Movements.

★ Urgency
  ★ Vietnamese, unmet demands, U. of Hawaii.

★ Desperation
  ★ Conflict, FSI and Military for National Security.
Period Summary

★ FSI competed for budget.
★ Presidents involved FSI in matters of National Security.
★ Language and area training was directed by the Military.
★ FSI became more military-like.
★ The need for Vietnamese speakers force the FSI and the Military to seek creative options for recruitment.
★ Civil rights promote Federal interest in bilingual education for English learners.
★ Government policy in public schools groomed students for service, foreign or military.
Study Summary

★ FSI originally formed to conduct foreign affairs.
★ Political promotions and budgets presented challenges.
★ Despite challenges, the FSI expanded, made advances in language instruction, and supported the Military, National Security, and American Pride.
★ The FSI was always linked with public education.
★ World affairs resulted in Government policy that impacted public education (Selective Service).
★ FSI and Military developed a language assessment that ended up in public schools.
★ Public schools became a pool of future recruits.
Implications

★ More than mandates –
★ Power of the Government runs DEEP!

★ U.S. knows best
★ Lens of Crisis– National Security
★ Early 1900s – English only
★ 1950s-60s – Sputnik, Communism –
  ★ Science, Math, and Language, selective service
★ 1960s-70s – Civil rights –
  ★ Push for bilingualism in public schools
★ 1980s-Today – Language and assessments for Global Citizenship – dual language
★ What are we really preparing students for?
References


The Influence of the Foreign Service Institute on US Language Education: Critical Analysis of Historical Documentation

Routledge Research in Language Education series, tentatively spring 2021