

## Book Review

### Foreign Language Education in America<sup>1</sup>

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*Perspectives from K-12, University, Government, and International Learning.* Steven Berbeco (2016). London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

*Learning a foreign language not only reveals how other societies think and feel, what they have experienced and value, and how they express themselves, it also provides a cultural mirror in which we can more clearly see our own society.*

--Edward Lee Gorsuch, Chancellor of the University of Alaska-Anchorage

Foreign Language Education in America is edited by Steven Berbeco, the supervisor of two language programs (Japanese and Korean) at the US Department of State. This edited volume scrutinizes both the historical and current state of foreign language education in the United States from K-12 and university levels to governmental institutions in the United States. Organized in three parts, the book includes 12 chapters revisiting the diversity of foreign language education in the United States and dares readers to understand perspectives from, preK-12, post-secondary, the federal government, and international learning.

In Chapter 1, "Foreign language education in America", Berbeco overviews the wax and wane of foreign language learning programs in the United States and how world events affected this process. Berbeco then highlights multiple socioeconomic and political factors, which play a role in foreign language education in the United States. For instance, he sheds light on World War I as to how it translated into a sudden escalation of racial intolerance in the United States, which inherently affected the rise of foreign language learning. Consequently, he mentioned that a drop of German programs between World Wars I and II was evident. Throughout this chapter, the author draws readers' attention to important factors that have a strong impact on foreign language education in the United States such as socioeconomic and sociopolitical factors. Investigating the timeline in this chapter confirms that the resistance against foreign language education in the 19th Century has been replaced with governmental funds and public interest in learning a foreign language at schools. For instance, the demolition of the twin towers on September 11, 2001, also known as 9/11, surprisingly affected foreign language learning in the United States. Enrollment in Arabic programs rocketed and reached an all-time high at more than 2% in 2001 from 0.1% in 1998.

Overall, Chapter 1 provides readers with rather prolific information concerning foreign language learning in the United States. In this sense, having read Chapter 1, readers will develop an in-depth understanding that contributes to understanding the determining factors why foreign language education in the United States is of importance. Chapter 1 sets the tone and piques the interest of readers to read the other chapters of the book. In what follows, I will primarily detail Part I of the book, which consists of four chapters and focuses on foreign language learning in K-12.

In Chapter 2, "Elementary school foreign language program in the United States", Curtain, Donato, and Gilbert address foreign language learning in elementary schools. It is a sensitive topic since it attends to the psychological and cognitive development of children at a rather early period of life. The authors explain different types of programs such as one-way and two-way immersion in detail. One-way immersion programs include students in the United States and Canada who are studying a new language. However, two-way immersion programs (dual language) include students who are native speakers of the target language and native speakers of English. The focus in these programs is learning subject matter content (e.g., math, history) through the target language. Considering access to different programs, the authors argue challenges for early language programs including the lack of time and funds for foreign language instruction at elementary schools. The authors conclude the chapter with different types of curriculum and teaching methods used in different programs. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an

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important part of many language programs. CLIL supplies learners with an authentic context of foreign languages for learners. This authentic context encourages students to learn languages in context, which is both engaging and motivating. In terms of assessment, Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) has been widely and successfully employed in elementary school language programs. IPA holds promises for an authentic assessment in English as Foreign Language programs in the United States. This type of assessment is a curriculum-based and standard-focused method to improve language proficiency outcomes.

In Chapter 3, "One middle school's approach to language learning – Inquiry, ethos, and the spirit of culture", Davis stresses the importance of foreign language education in middle schools. The author portrays International Baccalaureate programs in the middle schools in the United States and how it challenges students to confront real-world issues. The author then provides the readers with samples of 90-minute lessons to be used when teachers have enough time to practice subject matters and English. The overarching goal of these lessons is language proficiency. Additionally, they are crafted in a way to engage students at a maximum level. In this regard, lessons which include the development of the four skills are engaging and motivating.

In Chapter 4, "The high school challenge", Linda Egnatz argues that only few schools across the nation have the programs to educate students in learning a critical foreign language. Critical foreign languages are the languages that are vital to the national security of the United States such as Arabic, Chinese, Persian, Hindi, and Turkish. The author then presents the number of participants in foreign language programs in the United States compared to those in Europe. Furthermore, she discusses how these teachers are educated, recruited, and supported. She concludes the chapter with current best practices as well as a practical sample of her own classroom.

The four chapters that follow in Part II provide insights into post-secondary education. As such, the chapters discuss various programs including STARTALK, Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP), and Language Boot Camp at institutions including Boston University (BU), American community college, and Middlebury language schools. In Chapter 5, "The STARTALK experience", David Ellis exemplifies a successful summer program (STARTALK) at the K-12 level. STARTALK program was announced and funded by President George W. Bush's administration. The major objectives and tenets of this program were to increase the number of students, languages educators, and pertinent authentic materials so American students learn critical languages. The STARTALK program includes teaching ten critical languages in 50 states. As such, it was deemed that the STARTALK program will aid in the expansion of the international ties, higher national security, and economic competitiveness in years to come. Initiated in 2006 with 34 programs in solely Chinese and Arabic, STARTALK was implemented across 21 states with 874 high school students and 448 teachers. Including both heritage and non-heritage speakers of the critical languages, STARTALK students were in kindergarten to tertiary education.

In Chapter 6, "The emergence of global language programs at Boston University—Bridging the cultural divide", Gisela Hoecherl-Alden focuses on critical language learning at BU and how the infusion of audio-visual instruction turned into a priority. BU was founded in 1839 and parallel to many other universities worldwide, BU was considered a biblical institution. Currently, languages, which are considered critical by the national security agency are taught in this university as well as some less taught languages including Asian and African languages. These on-campus programs are coupled with abroad and external programs to better familiarize students with cross-cultural issues in the target countries when accessible. The first strategic enormous funding for language teaching was the ASTP. This program is considered the first significant shift toward spoken language in collegiate instruction. The intensity of the program and time commitment make this program inapplicable for post-war instructional context. The reason behind this spoken curriculum after the war is students' demand for high-level oral proficiency. Post-war curricula are informed by multiple factors such as skill-based language courses and technology-assisted language practices. In the last few decades, the incorporation of technology has facilitated online, hybrid, and flipped classrooms. These technologies have alleviated the pressure and forged more collaboration. BU has supplied faculties with substantial instructional technologies, so they can be afforded with authentic audio-visual materials. Faculties are also provided with funds through the Digital Learning Initiative to support incorporating emerging technologies at BU. Students can benefit from out-of-class practices to have less pressure.

In Chapter 7, "World languages in the American community college", Laura Franklin explains that students can benefit from affordable tuition in community colleges. Moreover, classes are available in a wider schedule

to accommodate students who work in the morning. Another noticeable benefit that enriches a community college is the presence of people with the required expertise besides novice students. These experienced people can range from the retired people in the Army to retired school teachers with a myriad of experiences. Utilizing new methods for language learning such as Teletandem, experiences where students meet online to practice language with other students in other parts of the world—makes community colleges a unique experience for language learners. Accordingly, students benefit from peer-correction and when the pressure of teacher feedback is removed. Another key value of the community college is the diversity of students including age, ethnicity, and language experience. On closer scrutiny, this chapter details that a common thread amongst all community colleges is the student's success. In this regard, offering courses to make students successful on the job market is a concerted effort being made in community colleges.

In Chapter 8, "Language Boot Camp: 100 years of Middlebury Language Schools", Michael Geisler details the main incentive for writing the chapter is the 100th anniversary of the establishment of Middlebury Language School in the United States. The founding father of the school is Dr. Lilian Stroebe who was a professor of German language. Language pledge was a significant contribution of Dr. Stroebe to the world. Language pledge explains the commitment of the language learners to speak the language in and out of the classroom. The curriculum contains in-class instructions as well as out-of-class experiences. This state-of-the-art curriculum has contributed to enriching language learning in this school. The instructors, predominantly, employ communicative language teaching. This method is interspersed with constant practices in four skills. As for the future of the language school, the incorporation of high-tech and cutting-edge technology together with developing hybrid courses are of top priority. It seems online courses can be harnessed to strengthen the language program and appropriately cater the needs of students. The term language boot camp is metaphorically utilized to accentuate the way language is learned and taught in this school. Vocabulary, grammar drills, and the frequent practice of foreign language provide an authentic language environment in and out of the class and make it an intensive program—a language boot camp.

Expanding upon the previous discussions of Part I and II of the book, Part III dives into courses for adult learners. As such, Chapter 9 and 10 delineate two institutions that adult language learners study foreign languages harnessing Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). These chapters explicate the modus operandi of the teaching and learning process in these two schools.

In Chapter 9, "Language learning at the Foreign Service Institute", David Red and James North discuss the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) as a successful language learning program in the United States. Authorized by the US Congress in 1946, FSI aims to furnish and cater to officials who may need to know a foreign language. This school serves as the official center to educate governmental staff so that those who are required to be in close contact with foreigners can learn the language to communicate with them. TBLT is the dominant approach, which is currently employed in this school. As such, pedagogical instructions fulfill daily communication as well as job-related functions. Students study 5 hours a day and 5 days a week to fully get acquainted with both the language and culture. FSI is located in the suburb of Washington—a multicultural and multilingual city—, so students are frequently taken to field trips and immersed in the target language by going to restaurants and other social places. Speaking and reading are the two major skills reiterated in this school based on the learners' needs. The curriculum is tailored and calibrated based on the students' needs. In this regard, individualized teaching has helped students learn the language as soon as possible through their own learning style. The use of authentic material, formal feedback, and teacher-made materials are key to the success of this school. Language educators are educated based on the FSI standards and in line with the state-of-the-art approaches in language teaching. Constant supervision and consultation with both teachers and students have guaranteed the FSI success.

In Chapter 10, "Language at the point of need – The Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center" by Thomas Coakley, is another must read section not only because it familiarizes the reader with Defense Language Institute (DLI) but, more importantly, because it also gives a comprehensive account of the output of DLI as a military organization. Beginning with the history of the emergence of DLI, the reader is immediately immersed in DLI statistics such as the number of students enrolled, critical languages taught, and graduates. Coakley thereafter attempts to portray the participants of DLI and explains how language acquisition is facilitated through task-based learning. Taking student assessment into consideration, Coakley concludes this chapter with challenges and opportunities regarding DLI. DLI graduates approximately 70% of language learners who first enrolled. With an overall 30% attrition, half of the students (15 %) leave the program owing to the rigors of the academic program. Embracing TBLT, academic programs in the school require students to engage their critical thinking skills. In this sense, the school has earned a reputation for

helping learners develop linear modes of analytical thinking and logical problem solving in the absence of their emotions. What makes language learning a unique experience at DLI is that it dares learners to foster global modes of thinking, a culturally sensitive mode of thoughts. However, the author mentions that a major challenge at this school occurs when DLI is solely viewed as a technical school rather than a school that supplies learners with academic programs.

In Chapter 11, "The Teachers of Critical Languages Program", Zara Hovhannisyan presents ideas as to how teachers expand their knowledge of methodologies, gain state-of-the-art tools to leverage learning process and enhance their understanding beyond the language in culture, norms, and society. This chapter deals with the Teachers of Critical Languages Program (TCLP). This program is under State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), which is designed to teach critical languages in the United States. This program is implemented by American Councils for International Education to enable schools to teach Arabic, Chinese, and Mandarin. Schools offer the program in different phases. This phase-based program is employed to ensure teachers feel prepared for the coming phase. The first phase takes two weeks. It is designed for teachers' adaptation to the culture. This phase contributes to appease the teacher to have some time to assimilate with the society. The second phase is educational. During this phase, teachers start working closely with students under the supervision of the mentor teacher. The last phase involves participants' autonomy. They work with the mentor and construct an independent teacher identity. During TCLP, the host schools provide teachers with hands-on experience so that teachers gain an in-depth understanding of language teaching in the United States through constant observations.

In Chapter 12, "ESL in the private sector for a globalized twenty-first century", A. Clive Roberts explains how sociopolitical events affect foreign language education in the United States. For example, how the attacks of 9/11 led to an increase in the enrollments of the Arabic language. This event displayed the lack of fluency in the United States which made the federal government draw a roadmap to develop foreign language learning capabilities to tackle the inherent danger of American monolingualism in critical times such as national and international threats of terrorism. The author explains how the fall of communism together with the establishment of the European Union opened the borders between Eastern and Western Europe. This together with the advent of the Internet forged a socially globalized world where communication is an integral part of learning. English Language Services (ELS), accordingly, reiterated on writing curriculum and textbook development for Teaching English as a Foreign Language. In 1961, ELS opened the first US-based branch in Washington. Over the following 50 years, ELS built a network of 68 centers in different countries such as America, Australia, China, France, to name but a few.

The book has an all-encompassing title covering different age groups. As the title unfolds, the authors encapsulate foreign language education from different perspectives including public and private schools, college and other post-secondary programs, and courses for adult learners. This edited volume includes an in-depth account of school programs together with the best practices of foreign language education in the United States. Having reviewed this book, educators will gain an insight into underlying reasons behind policies and practices for foreign language instruction in the United States. The examples of the best programs such as STARTALK experience and Language Boot Camp will help readers better digest the subject through a first-hand account. Above all, not only does this book present in-depth theories, but also it includes bountiful merits in pedagogy.

There exists a common thread among different educational levels in the United States, standards. This volume discusses different standards in different chapters of the book so educators in and out of the United States become familiar with this topic. English language teaching curricula are informed with these standards. It is thus evident that language educators and/or curriculum developers need to familiarize themselves with these standards. In this regard, this edited book delineates the standards that lie behind different language learning programs at different levels. For instance, Chapter 2 argues that there is a paucity of standards for preschool and elementary schools owing to the fact that these standards' lowest level is the secondary school. Accordingly, elementary school language learners are disregarded. Additionally, in Chapter 4, the author discusses that in recent years, American high schools have undergone a proficiency-oriented movement. The major features of the movement are manifested in teacher education, curriculum design, assessment, and evaluations. As such, multiple nationwide standards such as National Council of State Supervisors of Languages (NCSSFL) and American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) have changed their directions towards proficiency. Notwithstanding the content of these standards, informing readers about the changes in standards in the United States helps them enhance their knowledge about the impact of the standards on their daily practices in classrooms.

The developmental stages of teachers proposed by Khoshnevisan (2017) postulates that teachers, by and large, experience five prominent stages to shape their professional identity (Also see Khoshnevisan, 2018b). During the second stage (recognition), teachers encounter the realities of physical classrooms for the first time. This is, however, not to say that the expectations of preservice teachers tally with the realities of classrooms. Khoshnevisan (2017) argues that field experiences play a vital role in developing teachers' identity. Field experiences bridge the gap between teachers' expectations and the realities of physical classrooms. In this sense, teachers need to observe more classes, acquire the required instructional strategies, and hone their skills to manage their own classrooms. Parallel to the developmental stages that teachers experience, this volume presents an array of practical ways to do this. Expressed another way, during the second and third stage of the developmental stages of teachers (recognition & learning novel instructional strategies), teachers can read this volume to acquire the needed skills to serve as a catalyst for their journey to professionalism. This book reviews and revisits the affordances of instructional strategies in different programs. Accordingly, having read this book, teachers can equip themselves with different working strategies from different programs. This volume is helpful for pre/in-service teachers to collect the whole arsenal of instructional strategies that are conducive to language learning.

Technology has plagued the field of language education. In recent years, multiple studies have harnessed a variety of technological tools to facilitate the process of language learning: audiotaped dialogue journal (Rashtchi & Khoshnevisan, 2008); augmented reality (Khoshnevisan & Le, 2018); animated pedagogical agents (Khoshnevisan, 2018b); idiomaticity and web-based learning (Khoshnevisan, 2019a); technology and language education (Khoshnevisan, 2019b). However, this volume takes into account the technological tools exploited in different programs across the United States. This unique feature of this edited book will help readers enhance their understanding about how to incorporate technological tools in their practices. For instance, in chapter 6, the author details how technology afforded the language learning process. The author explains how technology-infused courses informed post-war curriculum and fostered collaboration among students. Similarly, Chapter 8 delineates how Middlebury language schools aim to integrate emerging technologies and hybrid courses in the foreseeable future. As such, this volume encompasses the technological aspects of different language programs in the United States. These strategies can be adopted by language teachers to facilitate the process of language learning.

This volume is a practical guide that bridges the theory-practice gap for instructors, researchers, and administrators. However, there are some shortcomings that need to be addressed. The contributors represent much of the profession, yet contributions do not include voices from heritage learners and English language learners. Wiley, Peyton, Christian, Moore, and Liu (2014) highlighted that "Although the United States is often characterized as an Anglophone country, it has a rich multilingual legacy" (p. 3). Valdés (2000) posited that heritage speakers are "individuals raised in homes where a language other than English is spoken and who are to some degree bilingual in English and the heritage language" (p. 1). Kagan and Dillon (2008) introduced, detailed, and provided readers with in-depth understanding about different thorny issues that heritage language learners may encounter to learn English. In this regard, Kagan and Dillon (2008) noted that the most prominent difficulties for this field of study is the improvement and development of language-specific curricula and instructional materials. Accordingly, it would be useful for readers if Berbeco could include a specific section regarding heritage language learners. Moreover, discussions about church-related organizations that support language programs seem to be absent. Finally, a discussion about study abroad programs and policy organizations such as TESOL International Association appears to be missing. Accordingly, had Berbeco included these topics, readers would have a more comprehensive guide concerning foreign language education in the United States.

To conclude, many books have been authored regarding foreign language education in the United States. However, a historical overview coupled with current research and successful practices make this book a perfect fit for a graduate-level course text. Both American and international students who are unfamiliar with the above-mentioned programs in the United States as well as other stakeholders such as teacher educators and instructors and professors of English for Speakers of Other Languages will assuredly benefit from this edited volume. I recommend this book as a reference book for both educators and researchers in the field of second language acquisition. In short, anyone interested in the field is hard pressed to ignore the in-depth concepts of this volume.

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