

The Dynamics of Language Program Direction

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The Dynamics and Visibility of the Postsecondary Foreign Language Enterprise: A Five-Year Survey of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*

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Today's graduate teaching assistants (TAs) in PhD-granting departments will become tomorrow's foreign language faculty in American higher education. Then they will play a dual role as both foreign language professionals and members of the American professoriate. Whether they will have gratifying careers in the three to five decades of their professional lives will depend not only on the quality of their teaching and the productivity of their research, but on the health of their field, the public awareness of that field as worthy of support, and the esteem in which they and the subject they profess are held by society at large and especially by faculty in other disciplines. In short, their career success will depend on the dynamics of the factors that contribute—or fail to contribute—to their “visibility.”

In an attempt to assess the visibility of foreign languages and literatures—and especially their language component—within American higher education, I intend here to report on a systematic survey of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* conducted from September 1987 through August 1992. Before presenting and analyzing the results of the survey, I will attempt to explain the importance of visibility, to expand on the notion of visibility as it can be applied to academic fields, to assess the *Chronicle* as a

barometer of visibility, and to estimate the size of the American foreign language professoriate compared to that in comparable liberal arts disciplines in order to determine whether persons in foreign languages have achieved visibility in proportion to their numbers.

The notion of visibility in the sense defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (s.v., “visibility, the degree to which something impinges on the public awareness”) has enjoyed considerable currency in the institutional and disciplinary politics of American higher education:

1. A senior resident historian at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum wrote that “serious scholarly consideration of the Holocaust . . . has been far less visible” than its treatment in popular culture (Milton, 1993).
2. A paper on the future of the Fulbright program signed by eight former presidents of the Fulbright Commission noted with displeasure that the program “has been all but invisible in more than half the countries where it has functioned” (Watkins, 1993: p. A40).
3. When a new president took the helm at EDUCOM, he was quoted as saying that “there’s lots to do to raise the visibility of EDUCOM among [higher education] organizations” (DeLoughry, 1992: p. A18).
4. The then president of the Society for the Scientific Study of Sex said in 1987 that his goal was “to increase the visibility of the society” (McDonald, 1987: p. A4).
5. A sociologist at Berkeley lamented in 1989 that “sociologists have been virtually invisible” in research on the AIDS epidemic (Coughlin, 1989b).
6. The American Sociological Association recently “initiated a program to improve the visibility of sociological research, especially among policy makers and news organizations” (Coughlin, 1992: p. A7).

Yale Germanist Jeffrey Sammons (1976) gave his provocative essay on the field of German in America the title “Some Considerations on Our Invisibility.” Sammons noted that Germanists have suffered from a “relative absence from the general American community of the educated and from the consciousness and respect of [their] fellows,” and that this “consciousness and respect” among peers in other disciplines is crucial for the health of an academic field (pp. 18, 21).¹ Though Sammons was mainly concerned with the literary component of his branch of the foreign languages and literatures, his essay causes one to wonder whether the situa-

tion he identified can be generalized to all the language and literature components of *all* the languages taught in American colleges and universities.

As defined in the sociological literature, a learned profession is an occupation requiring “formal technical training,” based on knowledge that is put to “socially responsible uses” in the solution of problems (Parsons, 1968: p. 536). The academic profession is unified in terms of holding faculty appointments in institutions of higher education but is so radically divided by specialty as to comprise as many professions as there are disciplines (Light, 1974: pp. 10–12). For each academic field an important dimension of its visibility is the perception that the discipline is a repository of expertise based on knowledge that is useful to society for the resolution of social and intellectual problems and questions. This view is widely internalized among academic disciplines. Certainly it is implicit in the program of the American Sociological Association cited above “to improve the visibility of sociological research *especially among policy makers and news organizations*” (emphasis mine). It is also exemplified very clearly in a *Chronicle* story (Monaghan, 1989) describing an attack by the Australian anthropologist Derek Freeman on the validity of Margaret Mead’s research in her *Coming of Age in Samoa*. Catherine Bateson, Mead’s anthropologist daughter, called the controversy “destructive and subversive of the possibility of using anthropological data responsibly in making societal decisions” (p. A6).²

A discipline feels that its visibility needs improvement when those who profess it are insufficiently consulted on matters germane to its concerns. Indeed, as evidence for the invisibility of Germanists, Sammons (1976: p. 18) notes that they have not been asked to review books on German topics for the *New York Times Book Review*, the *New York Review of Books*, or *New Literary History*—in marked contrast, one might add, to the situation in German history, where Gordon Craig, the dean of American historians of Germany, has written regularly for the *New York Review*. When it comes to visibility within the academy, Sammons’s (1976: p. 18) definition, restated in positive terms, is an improvement over that in the *Oxford English Dictionary*: visibility is the visible presence of some discipline in “the general American community of the educated and [in] the consciousness and respect” of persons in other disciplines. Here disciplinary visibility takes on the additional dimension of intellectual significance and ferment, which, together with societal visibility, can play a crucial role in the competition among disciplines for resources within universities, and in the competition among universities interested in creating prestigious departments. Senior administrators want to know which horses to back. When an endowment

campaign made significant resources available to Duke in the mid-1980s, administrators bypassed Senior faculty in the existing English Department, described as offering “a tired and traditional program,” and appointed the high-profile Stanley Fish to head and reconstruct the department by hiring young poststructuralists of various stripes (Heller, 1987a: p. A12).

The *Chronicle* is American higher education’s newspaper of record. It is widely read by faculty members looking for jobs or interested in academic politics, by administrators at all levels and from all specialties, by the staffs of academic professional associations, and by grant-making agencies and their program officers. It is cited in sufficient volume to warrant being held on microfilm even in relatively small academic libraries. Its circulation is listed as 88,600 (*Ulrich’s International Periodical Directory*, 1991–92: p. 1589). To visualize what this figure means, if we were to assign 8,600 copies to foreign and off-campus subscribers and those in two-year and small specialized institutions, that would leave an average number of 42.4 copies for each of the 1,926 four-year institutions in the United States.³ The number of copies sent weekly to such academic addresses as Ann Arbor or Chapel Hill could well number in the hundreds.

The *Chronicle* publishes an immense amount of material. Two dozen assistant editors and regional correspondents supply the bylined stories in the United States. International news is supplied by another two dozen stringers in various countries (“Masthead,” 1992). Receiving favorable extensive mention in the *Chronicle* is something of a coup for faculty and administrators. Members of the higher education community themselves supply the weekly back-page Point of View essay as well as the Opinion essays and Letters to the Editor that, together with the announcements of job openings, comprise the *Chronicle’s* Section 2 (page numbers with a B preface). Here the visibility of an academic field depends on the capacity and inclination of its members to participate effectively in the discourse on matters of concern to those in American higher education. For the rest, the *Chronicle* seems to rely heavily on press releases.

As for the populousness of foreign languages compared to other fields, to my knowledge no single reliable breakdown of American faculty members by discipline exists. *The Digest of Education Statistics* (National Center for Education Statistics, 1992: p. 226) lists the population of “full-time regular instructional faculty in institutions of higher education” as 489,000, but makes no breakdown by field beyond such broad categories as humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. To arrive at the figures in Table 1, I made a closely estimated count of the listings under selected

fields in the *Faculty White Pages* (1989), a directory classified by subject that lists “more than 533,000 teaching faculty at over 3,000 US colleges, universities and other institutions of higher learning” (p. xi).⁴ That the *Faculty White Pages* includes 44,000 more listings than the *Digest of Educational Statistics* can be attributed to different counting methods and to the inclusion of some nonregular and part-time faculty.

Table 1

Teaching Faculty by Selected Fields

English	37,070
Sociology (includes social work)	18,290
History	15,270
Foreign languages	14,683
Political science	11,617
Anthropology	4,253

Unfortunately, the editors of the *Faculty White Pages* lump sociology faculty together with faculty in social work, which greatly inflates the combined figures. In schools of social work, practicing social workers are enlisted as field instructors, and it is common for them to hold adjunct appointments at nearby campuses. For the purposes of comparison of visibility, then, foreign languages combined are 40% as populous as English, more populous than political science or anthropology, slightly less populous than history, and probably slightly more populous than sociology without social work (80% as populous if social work is included).

Survey Design

To conduct the survey, each issue of the *Chronicle* for a five-year period was scanned in hard copy for mentions of foreign languages; volumes 34 (1987–88) through 38 (1991–92) were covered. The *Chronicle* is published weekly except for the last week in August and the last two weeks in December. This arrangement resulted in 49-issue volumes in 1988–89 and 1991–92. An atypical beginning-of-year almanac issue in 1991–92 was excluded, resulting in a total of 241 issues surveyed. The results were recorded in an informal database record for each issue, listing the major *Chronicle* departments, such as In Brief, Portrait, Scholarship, Personal and

Professional, Information Technology, Opinion, and Letters to the Editor (Section 2), and the back-page Point of View essays. Mentions in the International department were noted only if there was some language-related involvement of American colleges and universities. Whenever a mention was discovered, extensive notes and summaries were entered into the database. Throughout, I attempted to err on the side of inclusiveness, so that many passing mentions buried deep within stories were identified and recorded.

Table 2 charts the “hits”—from passing mentions to feature stories—and gives them an initial classification. A total of 242 hits were recorded. Note that no mention at all of foreign languages was found in 91, or 30%, of the issues surveyed.

But a number of issues contained several mentions, which explains the fact that the number of hits was about equal to the number of issues despite the large number of issues with no mention. Table 2 shows a marked jump in “More significant, nontechnological” mentions from 6 in 1987–88 to 25 in 1988–89. One can assume a time lag before the *Chronicle* began to reflect the increased interest in foreign languages expressed in the 18% increase in enrollments between the 1986 and 1990 Modern Language Association (MLA) surveys (Brod & Huber, 1992: p. 6). The attention generated in the wake of a feature story on the 1988 ACTFL convention was also a significant factor, as noted below. Some of the mentions under “Brief or in-passing” shade over into the “More significant, nontechnological” category.

Table 2
Stories Mentioning Foreign Languages in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*

Volume	No. of issues	Issues with no mention	Technological mentions	Brief, or in-passing mentions	More significant nontechnological mentions	Total mentions
1987–88	48	28	8	13	6	27
1988–89	49	15	9	14	25	48
1989–90	48	14	11	20	22	53
1990–91	48	18	18	9	23	50
1991–92	48	16	30	24	10	64
TOTALS	241	91	76	80	86	242

Results

Technology-Related Mentions

These mentions fall into a distinct category deserving separate treatment. They represent the major bright spot in the visibility of foreign languages. Of the 76 technology-related mentions in the survey, 43 appeared in the subdepartment New Computer Software; these were listings of various software programs, usually about one column inch each, with the subject identification in bold type (for example, **Spanish**) at the beginning of each item. Ten other mentions were for awards for educational computer software, of which six were gleaned from a multidisciplinary list ("Descriptions of 101 Successful Uses of Computer Technology in College Classrooms," 1991). Three hits were mentions in passing as part of multidiscipline stories. In two other stories Romance linguist James Noblitt was mentioned for two column inches in 1988 and again in 1992, by which time he had become director of the Institute for Academic Technology at the University of North Carolina. In this latter story Noblitt is identified as the author of the prize winning program *Système-D* and is cited as pointing out the potential for using video for teaching authentic speech in a foreign language (Noblitt, Solá & Pet, 1992; Watkins, 1992).

Five mentions were brief single-campus news releases, for example, "Students at Lehigh University Can Watch Live Broadcasts in Thirty Languages in a New Television Lounge Called the World View Room" (1992). An additional nine were major announcements, such as a story headlined "Satellite TV for News from France" (1988), describing a project supported by multiple grantors for disseminating "France-TV Magazine," with accompanying exercises, through the University of Maryland in Baltimore County. This story is among only 11 technology-related hits that gave foreign languages prominent mention in the headline.

The remaining four stories could be considered major mentions. A story in the Scholarship department ("Humanities Researchers Experience a 'Sea Change' in the Use of Computers in Their Disciplines," 1989) on the use of computers in the humanities mentioned the computerized corpus of the Treasury of the French Language, which contains more than 150 million words of text from 1600 to the present, as well as a book on literary computing by a Gallicist in Canada. A front-page story continued to the Personal and Professional department (DeLoughry, 1988) reported on the efforts of the computer consortium EDUCOM to create a peer review system for academic computer programs in four disciplines, including lan-

guages, in an effort to secure more recognition in the reward structure for authoring such programs. Three persons in languages were mentioned in the story, including the coordinator for languages, who was quoted repeatedly. A major bylined story under Information Technology (Wilson, 1991) described a project, headquartered at the University of Maryland, for allowing students to simulate international negotiations using an international computer network. The project had a foreign language dimension of unspecified scope, but some negotiating positions were described as being translated. The political scientist codirector of the program (the other codirector was a Slavacist) described it as linking "issues of substance to foreign-language learning," a linkage which, perhaps not atypically for a social scientist, he considered otherwise lacking. Another bylined story (Watkins, 1991) reported on a project at the University of Pennsylvania in which German feature films are mastered onto laser videodisks and worked up for interactive use in a system that allows for random replay of selected conversational exchanges, transcriptions of the dialogues, and annotations of the films as cultural artifacts.

Brief, In-Passing Mentions

The eighty mentions in this category contribute only marginally to the visibility of foreign languages. All are brief, and any connection to foreign languages as a subject is not highlighted. The exceptions fall into two subcategories. The first is the annual listing of Fulbright and Modern Language Association awards. The Fulbright Awards produced ten tabulated mentions, five for the graduate fellowships and five under the Fulbright scholar program. The graduate fellows were identified by the subheading "Languages and Literature," followed by the name of the recipient in bold type, the name of his or her university or college, and the name of his or her destination country. Fulbright faculty awards were listed alphabetically by field, with the relevant subheading being "Language and Literature (Non-US)." Again, the name of the recipient was set in bold, followed by the person's title, identifying department or discipline, affiliation, and country of destination.

Announcements of MLA awards appeared in four of the five survey years, accounting for six tabulated mentions. Four of the awards were for the "outstanding research publication in the field of teaching foreign languages and literatures." Two additional awards were for work in Italian and Hispanic literatures, respectively. The MLA awards were included in a box

labeled “Fellowships and Awards” together with awards from other professional associations. Each award received about seven lines of print, with the name of the award coming last, so any reference to foreign languages was deeply buried.

Three stories in the In Brief department—one folkloric, two scandal-related—comprise the second subcategory of mentions more visibly related to foreign languages. University of Virginia Slavist Natalie Kononenko was featured in a story (“Virginia Professor Teaches Art of Egg Dyeing,” 1992) about a community workshop on Easter-egg decorating, with a color photograph of Kononenko, in Ukrainian costume, holding up an Easter egg. On the very same page was a story (“Professor Removes AIDS–Awareness Poster,” 1992) of six column inches about a teaching assistant in the Spanish department at the University of Texas at Austin who displayed a sexually explicit AIDS–awareness poster in his office. And when someone at Iowa showed the film *Taxi zum Klo* in a German language class, students were scandalized by the explicit scenes of homoerotic activity, and the instructor was denounced by the administration and the governor (“Two Governors Question Sexually Explicit Material,” 1991).

Twenty-five brief, in-passing mentions were attributions—for example, a letter writer or someone active in an institutional dispute is identified as being a language person, but in a context unrelated to foreign languages. Included here were five attributions to persons in positions of leadership in higher education, as in a Portrait piece (Mangan, 1991) on Manuel Pacheco, the president of the University of Arizona, who was described as holding a doctorate in foreign language education from Ohio State. When foreign language persons attain such positions of leadership, they reflect favorably on the field as a whole.

Thirty-six hits were mentions in-passing that fit two patterns: brief stand-alone mentions and mentions within a series of disciplines. An example of the former occurred in the middle of a back-page Points of View essay (Banner, 1990) by a historian on the occasion of the 25-year-anniversary of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH): “One peril [to the NEH]—imitation—is a tribute to the endowment’s success. The proposed national endowment on foreign languages and international studies—not a very good idea—would . . . promote new competition for federal money.” A typical example of the second category occurs in a story (DeLoughry, 1989) on the Charlottesville education summit of 1989. In a list of six goals that Democrats put forward for the summit, the fourth is cited as “improving math, science, and foreign-language programs” (p. A30).

More Significant, Nontechnological Mentions

In the fall of 1988, someone persuaded the *Chronicle* to send a reporter to cover the 1988 joint ACTFL meeting and file a professional-meeting story of the sort the *Chronicle* regularly publishes for other disciplines. That feat resulted in a major story on the teaching of foreign languages that appeared in the Personal and Professional department (Watkins, 1988b). Watkins came away with so much material that she filed an even longer story (1989b) the following February. This story ran for six column inches on the front page and was continued to the Personal and Professional department, for a total of fifty column inches, with an additional twenty-two column inches in a box listing the various methods of language instruction, “from Audiolingual to Suggestopedia” (p. A14). The new willingness to run long feature stories on foreign language as language was reflected in a story (Oberlander, 1989) in August 1989 on the Indiana University summer institute for East Asian languages, and again in 1990 with a story (Watkins, 1990) on the “Foreign Language in the Disciplines” program at St. Olaf College. It also resulted in a major story (Monaghan, 1992) in the International department in July 1992 on the key role of languages at the Monterey Institute of International Studies.

The two stories by Watkins in the 1988–89 volume seem to have emboldened persons in foreign languages to submit opinion pieces and letters to the editor, for they resulted in a letter of nine column inches making reference to Watkins’s long reports, a letter touting the TV series “Contact French,” and a major back-page Point of View essay on the need for increased U. S. language proficiency (Shanahan, 1989), which in turn was rebutted by a letter questioning the value of foreign-language study. This trend continued with a Section 2 essay by Gallicist John Bednar (1990) on the importance of foreign languages to programs in international business, and a Section 2 essay arguing that “Languages Must Be Taught ‘Across the Curriculum’” (Straight, 1990), with Bednar’s essay triggering two letters to the editor in response.

In the meantime, the 1990–91 volume opened with the announcement that Lehigh University, running counter to the general trend, had dropped its language requirement “without apologies” (“Lehigh Drops Its Foreign Language Requirement for Undergraduates,” 1990). This decision elicited so much criticism that David Pankenier, who chaired the department at Lehigh, published an essay of thirty-four column inches attacking language requirements (Pankenier, 1990). The essay attracted two rebut-

ting letters to the editor and a counterrebuttal by Pankenier. The immediate wake of the Persian Gulf War, meanwhile, inspired S. Frederick Starr—historian and Russian studies expert, then president of Oberlin College, and a member of the Advisory Council of the National Foreign Language Center—to publish a Section 2 essay titled “Colleges Can Help America Overcome Its Ignorance of Arab Language and Culture” (1991). The story on the 1988 ACTFL convention and the pieces that more or less followed it account for twenty-one of the eighty-six mentions in the “more significant” category, not all of which can be discussed here.

Foreign Languages and International Studies Mentions

In the 1987–88 and 1988–89 volumes, six mentions—of which five are clearly identified as coming from circles close to the Joint National Committee on Languages, on the one hand, or Richard Lambert of the National Foreign Language Center, on the other hand—were evidence of active promotion of foreign languages and international studies. An additional seven mentions involved grants and government support, such as the story (Desruisseaux, 1991) on the passage by Congress of the National Security Education Act in support of study abroad and graduate fellowships in “international and area studies and foreign languages.” A further seven mentions were based on institutional initiatives and press releases, such as two stories on a report by a self-designated consortium of 52 international liberal arts colleges.

Miscellaneous Mentions

Seventeen hits fit into a broad miscellaneous category, ten of which are discussed below. As Sammons (1976) has forcefully argued, an academic field gains prestige and visibility when some of its members can participate in an effective and articulate fashion on issues considered important to their society. The same is true when they attain positions of leadership in higher education, or when they engage in other initiatives that reflect favorably on their field. Two Germanists—Sol Gittleman, also provost at Tufts University, and Stanley Corngold of Princeton—participated in the discussion occasioned by *Chronicle* stories concerning Paul de Man’s wartime collaborationist writings (Gittleman, 1988; Corngold, 1988). Romance linguist John Joseph (1990) wrote an articulate letter in response to an “Opinion” essay in which Reaganite Linda Chavez described being disin- vited from giving a commencement speech in Colorado. John Ellis, author

of *Against Deconstruction* (1989) and professor of German at Santa Cruz, published a lead “Opinion” essay on “The Origins of PC” (1992) arguing from German intellectual history in a critique of multiculturalism.

When Claire Gaudiani became president of Connecticut College, she was featured in a Portrait piece (Watkins, 1988a) that mentioned her educational interests and her background as a Gallicist and foreign language educator. The academic alliances with teachers in the schools, which Gaudiani founded in 1981–82, became the subject of a major story (Watkins, 1989a), with Gallicist Ellen Silber, the coordinator for the alliances in foreign languages and literatures, being extensively quoted. Silber (1989) and Gallicist Clara Krug (1989) each wrote letters championing alliances and addressing the problem of their uncertain place in the academic reward structure. In 1991 two foreign language educators were prominently featured in a lead Personal and Professional story (Blum, 1991) on a meeting of the then four-year-old Textbook Authors Association. Joel Walz and Kathy Heilenman were interviewed, and Heilenman was pictured in a photograph. At issue was the place of textbook authorship in the reward structure of research universities, where so many directors of lower-division language programs are heavily engaged in writing textbooks. Finally, Dartmouth Slavicist Deborah Garretson became the subject of a Portrait piece (Mooney, 1991) for becoming qualified as a State Department interpreter, a qualification she acquired as a hedge against being passed over for tenure.

Foreign Languages and the Humanities: NEH and MLA Mentions

This classification was given to 11 finds. When languages are mentioned in stories emanating from NEH and Lynne Cheney, its chairman during the survey years, they typically come last—and almost as an afterthought—in a long series of fields that fall within the NEH’s responsibility; for example, “To improve humanities education, Cheney recommends that more time be devoted to the study of history, literature, and foreign languages” (“Humanities Chairman Criticizes Schools for Emphasis on Skills,” 1987). The 1988 biennial report of the NEH was reprinted in full in the *Chronicle*. When speaking in disciplinary terms, the reference to foreign languages is omitted, and the humanities are referred to as “such disciplines as history, literature, and philosophy,” a formulation occurring repeatedly in the report. The report stated that in 1988 it was possible to earn a bachelor’s degree from seventy-seven percent of the nation’s colleges and uni-

versities without taking a foreign language ("Text of Cheney's 'Report to the President, the Congress, and the American People' on the Humanities in America," 1988: p. A18). In a story (Watkins, 1989b) four months later, an NEH survey was reported as finding a modest increase in core fields required for a bachelor's degree in 14 subjects, including foreign languages. Cheney commented optimistically that if the trend continued, it would be "very difficult to get a baccalaureate degree without studying English, history, philosophy, and foreign languages" (p. A28). Another story (Heller, 1989: p. A1) described a report by Cheney recommending "a structured core [at the college level] that includes two years each of foreign-language study and one year each of the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the basic methods of mathematics." An excerpt from the report itself reads: "FOREIGN LANGUAGE/12 HOURS. A two-year requirement; it is recommended that students fulfill this requirement by taking more advanced courses in a language they have studied in high school" (Heller, 1989: p. A15). In an earlier story ("Humanities Chairman Criticizes Schools for 'Emphasis on Skills,' 1987), Cheney is cited as follows: "While noting a revival of interest in foreign languages, she criticized what she called a 'vocational' approach to language study."

Cheney's tenure at NEH was characterized by feuding between her and academic humanists as represented by the MLA and the American Council of Learned Societies. For all this feuding, the two parties to the conflict were in agreement about one thing: neither spoke as if the language component of foreign language studies was worthy of enjoying disciplinary status or as being included in the humanities. In January 1989 the *Chronicle* carried the "Text of 'Speaking for the Humanities,' a Report from the American Council of Learned Societies," in which academic humanists were defended against attacks by Cheney, William Bennett, and Alan Bloom. Authored by five Anglicists and by Gallicist and comparatist Peter Brooks of Yale, the report made no mention of foreign languages. Rather, the humanities were defined as the study of texts, both written and visual. In exactly the same fashion, the 1988 NEH report describes the humanities repeatedly as the study of texts ("Text of Cheney's 'Report to the President, the Congress, and the American People' on the Humanities in America"). By this definition, the literature and film studies components of foreign language studies are humanities, but the language component is not. Visibility and disciplinarity are denied through an act of classification.

MLA executive director Phyllis Franklin was the subject of a Portrait piece in 1987 (Heller, 1987b). In 30 column inches of text, 36 words were

devoted to foreign languages and literatures. Otherwise, a large professional association such as the MLA rated convention stories in the *Chronicle* in three of the five years of the survey. None of them make any mention of foreign languages. The only related mentions were the six awards for research in foreign languages and literatures tabulated above under “Brief, or In-Passing Mentions.”

Tying the foreign language enterprise to the study of literature has resulted in some negative publicity in the *Chronicle*. In a lead Section 2 piece (Lauer, 1990), a psychologist-administrator responded to Cheney’s proposal for a core curriculum by asking, “What evidence do endowment officials have that the study of ancient civilizations or foreign languages produces any increase in self-knowledge, critical thinking, or sense of community?” In the Portrait piece on Phyllis Franklin (Heller, 1987b), Franklin is reported as citing a convention session on “Ghosts in East Asian Drama” as an example of the innocuously exotic to counter the perception that MLA convention programs are dominated by a radical obsession with race, class, and gender. And in a back-page Point of View essay (Barnett, 1992) arguing the incompatibility of teaching and research, an “academic program administrator” cited a 400-level course at Rutgers on “The Seduced Maiden Motif in German Literature” as an example of faculty members inappropriately teaching their esoteric research interests. While little visibility is derived from harnessing foreign languages in the service of literature in the original, that arrangement frequently results in charges of exotic irrelevance.

Two finds were in response to the invisibility of humanists during the breakup of the Soviet empire because area specialists in the social sciences were called on for expertise, not humanists. The editors aptly caught the spirit of a letter (Levine, 1990) by a Slavicist when they headlined it proudly: “Not All Scholarship on East Europe Was Shaped by the Cold War.” And in a back-page Point of View essay (Connor, 1990), the director of the National Humanities Center attempted to argue that our failure to understand and predict the upheavals in Eastern Europe was connected with “our neglect of the humanistic factors underlying international politics.”

The Scholarship Department Mentions

Three language-related titles rated short reviews in the now discontinued Scholarship subdepartment of Books: an edited collection on *The Art of Translation* (Winkler, 1989), a book on Grimms’ fairy tales by Germanist Maria Tatar (Winkler, 1988), and a volume of utopian and working-class

fairly tales and fables from Weimar Germany translated and edited by Jack Zipes (Coughlin, 1990). In a later feature story on children's literature, Coughlin (1991) interviewed Zipes for his expertise. During most of the survey period the *Chronicle* carried a subdepartment called Research Notes containing items gleaned from scholarly journals apparently sent to the *Chronicle* for the purpose. Two stories there appeared in the survey. An article by a Slavist rated a story of nine column inches headlined: "Pushkin's Popularity Seen Tied to Search for Russian Identity" (1991). One of eight column inches was on an article by "a German-studies scholar" on the German cabaret movement in the interwar period ("German Cabaret Tried to Reconcile High Art and Popular Culture," 1992). The first article was newsworthy because of contemporaneous events in Russia, the second because of the film *Cabaret*.

For an academic specialty, the most desirable form of visibility in the *Chronicle* would have to be a major feature article in the Scholarship department. In the five years of the survey, foreign languages and literatures together rated one such article, a lead story on the seventeenth-century Mexican poet Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (Paul, 1988). As with the Zipes volume, the story became newsworthy because of translation, in this case the impending publication of two translations: A Sor Juana anthology and Octavio Paz's book on Sor Juana. In highly research-oriented departments, a translated book is hardly considered a flagship publication, but the visibility of the non-English-language subdisciplines of literary study depends precisely on the willingness to mediate the target literature for an American audience, not on publishing abroad in French, German, or Spanish for audiences in those language territories. Jeffrey Sammons (1976: p. 17) makes this very argument

The New Scholarly Books subdepartment of the *Chronicle* has carried subheadings from time to time under dance, film studies, women's studies, cultural studies, and rhetoric (composition studies) but none under foreign languages, either individually or collectively. Books in the literature component of foreign-language studies are classified under literature; books in the applied linguistics aspect of the language component are classified under linguistics. One find, a book subtitled *Toward an Intercultural Theory of Foreign Language Education*, was carried in the Personal and Professional department under the heading "New Books in Higher Education" (1991). This practice of subsuming foreign language titles under literature, linguistics, or education results in sharply decreased visibility for foreign languages and literatures. Since the present survey is primarily concerned with the

language component, I decided not to include literature titles in the database, but to include linguistics titles relevant to foreign languages, such as the book by Terence Odlin on *Language Transfer: Cross-linguistic Influence in Language Learning* ("New Scholarly Books," 1990). Nine items fell under this category, including the book under Personal and Professional. An additional item was the announcement of a new scholarly journal, for a total of 17 items under Scholarship.

DISCUSSION

Is the glass half-full or half-empty? Is the visibility of foreign languages as evidenced in mentions in the *Chronicle* about what could be expected? One could argue that a number of factors, many of them inherent in the nature of foreign languages and literatures, militate against a high degree of visibility. As scholars of literature, many of our number publish abroad and in languages other than English, as Sammons (1976) noted, and many of the writers and works of literature we study and write about are necessarily perceived as exotic even within our own borders.

While information technology is the major bright spot in our visibility, even there only eleven of the seventy-six hits mention foreign languages prominently in the headline. The late 1991 story on using laser videodisks for selectively accessing feature films exploits a technology demonstrated by language faculty at the Air Force Academy in 1983 (Schrupp, Bush & Mueller). As noted earlier, I attempted to be as generous as possible in including mentions in the tabulations. With this in mind, let us go through the data, rigorously taking stock of the most important aspects of nontechnology-related visibility in the five-year survey.

1. One feature article in the Scholarship department.
2. Two major bylined stories under Personal and Professional that deal with the entire field of language teaching: the story on the 1988 ACTFL convention and its spinoff.
3. A half-dozen other bylined stories, including especially the story on the Monterey Institute of International Studies.
4. A half-dozen people with the ability and inclination to address intellectual and professional issues in an articulate and effective manner (Corngold, Gittleman, Ellis, Joseph, Starr, Bednar).
5. One university and two college presidents (Pacheco, Starr, Gaudiani). Pacheco was identified with foreign languages only in passing; Starr is

a Russian studies specialist for whom proficiency in another language is a prerequisite for access to source materials.

6. A handful of persons active in various newsworthy initiatives (Noblitt, Silber, Krug, Heilenman, Walz).

The ACTFL convention story was the only such story in five years. A retrospective check on microfilm through 1982–83 revealed no other stories devoted to ACTFL meetings. There were no stories on the separate conventions of the AATSP or AATF during the survey period.

The one ACTFL convention story was not carried under Scholarship, as most convention stories are, but under Personal and Professional as a story on the convention of the American Council *on the Teaching of Foreign Languages*. Similarly, only one technological hit—and in the nontechnological area only one feature story and five shorter stories—were classified under the Scholarship department. The editorial policy of the *Chronicle* reflects the conventional view represented by, among others, the NEH: the literature component of foreign-language studies is classified under the discipline of literary study, for which persons in English, in actual practice, are presumed to represent the discipline as a whole.⁵ To the extent that work in the language component can be considered scholarship, it is subsumed under a subdivision of applied linguistics. Otherwise, the language component is considered a mere school subject without disciplinary status, hence its classification under the Personal and Professional, Students, and International departments. By contrast, a convention story (Heller, 1988) on the meeting of college-level composition teachers in English was carried under the Scholarship department. As I have pointed out elsewhere (1988), composition teachers in English departments are significantly ahead of their language-component counterparts in foreign language departments in constituting themselves as a discipline and claiming disciplinary status for their subject.

I made a systematic retrospective analysis by discipline of the feature stories in the Scholarship department for the five survey years from 1987 to 1992. The life sciences, including biomedical research, rated 104 feature stories, while the physical sciences and engineering rated 95. The stories identified as devoted to selected traditional disciplines outside the natural sciences are as follows: history, mainly current history, 40; social anthropology, 19; sociology, 18; political science, 11. In feature stories under Scholarship alone, these disciplines with faculty numbers equivalent to those in foreign languages (anthropology is substantially less populous)

rated more bylined stories than foreign languages rated in all *Chronicle* departments combined. Feature stories under Scholarship were devoted to cultural studies, film studies, and theomusicology (“the study of theological themes in popular music” [Coughlin, 1988a]). Foreign languages and literatures rated the story on Sor Juana.

One must conclude that despite the 242 hits in the survey, the visibility of foreign languages as evidenced in the *Chronicle* still leaves a great deal to be desired. If one accepts this conclusion, one must ask what can be done to improve matters and what are the underlying causes of our low visibility. Royer and McKim (PR Prototypes, 1980) published a useful guidebook for promoting foreign-language study with emphasis on the K–12 level. Benseler (1980) saw the fragmented nature of the foreign language profession as a major factor in our “lack of visibility” and proposed the formation of a unified American Language Association for all languages at all levels, a proposal that unfortunately has never become reality. As Benseler noted, a single, unified professional association would increase our visibility by giving representatives of government, the media, and educational organizations a central and easily identifiable source to turn to for needed information. In my own view, our field is in desperate need of a multi-target-language “conference”—a professional association within a larger, unified professional association—devoted to the language component of foreign language studies at the college level. The model for such an association can be found with our counterparts in English, who in 1949 created the “Conference on College Composition and Communication” as a professional association within the all-level National Council of Teachers of English, thus providing for both unity and diversity (Lide, 1988: p. 44). A multilanguage association at the college level is more likely to achieve visibility in higher education circles, and in disciplinary rather than school-subject terms.

Our broad-scope associations—ACTFL, JNCL, NCFLS—need to devote greater effort toward achieving visibility for foreign languages at the postsecondary level. The *Chronicle* story on the 1988 ACTFL convention did not happen by accident; it came about at the instigation of someone in the ACTFL or JNCL leadership. Unfortunately, that story has remained a one-time event over the last decade. Also, members of the profession at the college level should bear in mind that the *Chronicle* is the major vehicle for our visibility within higher education. It should be aggressively exploited whenever we do anything newsworthy.

An underlying structural cause of our low visibility is the three-way subsumation of foreign language studies under literature, linguistics, and

pedagogy. Another is the tradition of harnessing the enterprise to literature rather than to business, journalism, policy studies, and communicating across language barriers. Repeatedly, the survey produced evidence of visibility for foreign languages in connection with business and public policy versus invisibility or negative publicity in the service of literature in the original language. But probably the most important reason for our invisibility is the failure of those who profess the language component to constitute their field as a discrete discipline. If film studies, composition studies, cultural studies, and theomusicology can enjoy disciplinary status, why not the language component of foreign-language studies?

Notes

1. Sammons has argued the continuing validity of his thesis since he first advanced it two decades ago; he reiterated it at the 1989 meeting of the American Association of Teachers of German.
2. A number of the *Chronicle* stories mentioned in this chapter do not refer to foreign languages. These are not included in the tabulations in Table 2.
3. Number of four-year institutions based on Table 2 in the Carnegie classification (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1987: p. 4).
4. The *Faculty White Pages* give no count of the number of faculty by subject field. My figures were calculated using the following system, uniform for all fields. The *White Pages* list names and addresses in five columns, each full column containing 58 entries (plus or minus a few, depending on the number of lines per entry). The publication assigns the first page for each field a recto page with a uniform number of column inches estimated by count as containing 225 entries (again plus or minus). The second through the penultimate pages for each field were assigned 290 entries (58×5). On the last partially filled page for each field, each full column was assigned 58 entries, plus an actual count of the entries in any partial columns. Then 100 entries were subtracted for the four-entry gap taken by each of the initials B through Z. The formula, then, is: population = $225 + 290 \times \text{number of interior pages} + \text{final page} - 100$.
5. In a 1992 essay Jeffrey Peck writes, "Why do discussions of literary theory, pedagogy, and politics so often exclude the foreign languages? The answer certainly has to do with the way English departments in

America dominate and even territorialize all literary, theoretical, and cultural domains that are taught or written about in English" (p. 11).

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