

The Multilingual Advantage: Foreign Language as a Social Skill in a Globalized World

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Abstract

In an increasingly globalized and interconnected world, a multilayered contact of local, regional, international languages and linguae francae is the norm, rather than the exception. Much has been written about the bilingual advantage, but beyond the bilingual advantage lies the multilingual advantage, both for the individual and for society at large. Foreign language skills are the ultimate 21st century social skill, and those who do not possess these skills risk being left behind, in the global marketplace of ideas, in the workplace, and even in social and personal life. Americans are among the least likely in the world to learn a foreign language and have the most to lose in the developing global linguistic scenario. This article examines the nature and importance of multilingualism in a globalized world and the potential consequences for individuals, organizations, and societies who remain resolutely monolingual..

Keywords: multilingualism, global citizenship, creativity, social skills, cultural intelligence.

1. Introduction

While it is easy to think that English is the global *lingua franca*, 75% of the world population does not speak English (British Council, 2013) at a time when an interconnected, globalized world makes effective communication more important than ever before. Stated differently, if 100 people were randomly assembled from around the world, 75 of them would not speak English, and this reality, which would be somewhat startling to many English-speakers, reinforces the importance of foreign language skills as a social skill both in our individual personal and professional lives as well as in our role as global citizens addressing complex global issues. French and English are spoken around the world and are widely considered to be the two global languages. The United Nations has six official languages, and the European Union has 24 official languages and three working languages. Multinational corporations often choose one language for international meetings and need to develop a language strategy (Neeley and Kaplan, 2014) and in the U.S., over 60 million speak a language other than English in the home (Census, 2013).

While the UN has embraced multilingualism, including the use of 6 official languages to facilitate effective communication on a broad array of global issue, and the European Union has embraced multilingualism as a core value, with 24 official languages, (Gunesch, 2009) examined the role of language in the development of cosmopolitanism as a global personal cultural identity, empirically finding that knowledge of languages certainly facilitates a broader worldview. Most importantly, foreign language skills tend to make us more tolerant and open to other ideas. The video, *How Learning a New Language Makes You More Tolerant*, released by the (World Economic Forum, 2017) highlights the fact that language learning makes us more comfortable with new experiences and situations, increasing our ability to effectively navigate encounters with new ideas and new ways of doing things. In a multilingual and multicultural world, foreign language skills and knowledge of other cultures are the essential global competency and social skill.

Language skills are the ultimate 21st century social skill, linked to creativity, problem solving, and the ability to effectively communicate. Much has been written about the bilingual advantage, which has been associated with problem-solving skills, creativity, higher SAT scores, and even with staving off dementia, as well as with intercultural competence. Foreign language skills, whether acquired in the classroom, through study abroad, or as a heritage language, are also a definite career advantage.

However, while bilingualism and the bilingual advantage continue to be studied, in an interconnected and globalized world, knowledge of an additional language is often discussed in terms of multiple languages, to varying degrees, and in varying contexts. The United Nations, with six official languages and communications in many more, has been a proponent of multilingualism in order to increase participation among nations. The European Union, with its goal of plurilingualism firmly rooted in its core value of multilingualism, accepts varying levels of skill and proficiency in at least two additional languages. In a plurilingual context, language skills, a goal of foreign language instruction and learning, lead to use of language skills to live together, work together, and to achieve solutions to complex issues affecting the broader and global communities.

The multilingual advantage includes foreign language skills, intercultural and international awareness and knowledge, appreciation and understanding of other cultures, and the critical thinking, analytical, and communicative skills that are among the learning outcomes of foreign language education in alignment with the goals of translingual and transcultural competence as articulated in *Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World* (MLA, 2007).

According to the (OECD, 2016) "global competence requires numerous skills, including the ability to: communicate in more than one language; communicate appropriately and effectively with people from other cultures or countries; comprehend other people's thoughts, beliefs and feelings, and see the world from their perspectives; adjust one's thoughts, feelings or behaviours to fit new contexts and situations; and analyse and think critically in order to scrutinise and appraise information and meanings." In two U.S. states, job postings have clearly demonstrated the bilingual/multilingual career advantage. In New Jersey, in 2014, jobs for bilingual workers represented at least 1 in 5 online job postings at many of New Jersey's top employers. In Massachusetts, between 2010 and 2015, demand for bilingual workers in Massachusetts more than doubled. The number of online job postings for bilingual candidates in Massachusetts increased from 5,612 in 2010 to 14,561 in 2015 (Biliteracy, 2016).

U.S. government departments and agencies at all levels attempt to fill positions requiring foreign language skills, U.S. companies attempt to fill positions requiring global talent, including foreign language and cultural skills, and opportunities for U.S. workers go to others with the needed foreign language skills. On an individual level, monolingual English-speaking Americans remain separated from information and culture from around the world and in their own communities unless it is translated into English. Yet Americans are relatively unaware of the importance of foreign language skills. Foreign language skills are the missing dimension in the U.S. workplace, our educational system, and the public conversation. This globalized world will require a new approach to foreign language learning by educators, students, and government, prioritizing language as a tool and developing a framework to plan, define, and assess language competency – beyond foreign languages, as Language 2.0.

The State of Languages in the U.S. (American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2016) examines "the disparity between our goals—most notably the preparation of citizens who can thrive in the twenty-first century—and the nation's current capacity in languages."

2. Multilingualism as a 21st Century Tool Multilingualism, Internationalism, and Global Citizenship

In an interconnected and globalized world, foreign language is a global competency, and multilingualism is an essential social skill. Multilingualism plays a significant role in developing the intercultural skills necessary for global talent in a globalized workplace, for an effective and engaged cosmopolitan global citizen, and it is an essential tool in addressing complex global issues. A specific example of the importance of multilingualism in developing a global citizenship mindset and values and in developing global solutions would be the role of multilingualism in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Sustainability and sustainable development are global issues, and the critical nature of language skills in effectively addressing this global problem cannot be overstated.

2.1 Many Languages One World (MLOW)

The Many Languages One World Essay Contest and Global Youth Forum (MLOW) is a wonderful example of a language enterprise partnership of education, academia, and government working together to highlight the role of multilingualism in global citizenship and its importance in developing multilateral solutions to complex global issues (*Many Languages One World*). Students enter by writing an essay in a learned second language that is also one of the 6 official languages of the UN.

Student winners, typically 10 for each language, are then brought to New York for a weeklong youth forum, culminating in presentations at the UN General Assembly, in the language of their winning essay. The camaraderie and teamwork among these student winners from around the world is inspirational. The essay and presentation topics have included multilingualism and global citizenship, the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) Principles and the Post-2015 Global Development Agenda Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Many Languages One World (MLOW) is a wonderful example of a language enterprise partnership in support of multilingualism in action. In addition, multilingual, immersion and heritage language programs such as the ELAN (*Ecoles et langues nationales en Afrique*) program and the *révolution bilingue française* in New York City are examples of multilingual education in action.

It is the juxtaposition of multilingualism within the context of an international organization and multilingualism as an integral part of individual, personal cultural identity as a global citizen that is exemplified by the Many Languages One World (MLOW) Essay Contest and Global Youth Forum. Many Languages One World (MLOW), organized by the UN Academic Impact and ELS Educational Services, is a wonderful example of the interconnectedness of multilingualism, global citizenship, and the effective in the solving of complex global issues, in this case, through the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

2.2 Multilingual Education

Some of the world's most disadvantaged populations are speakers of local, or minority languages, not generally the languages of instruction in local schools. Multilingual education typically introduces instruction in the student's mother tongue in order to ensure that early skills are firmly established before introducing an additional language. Multilingual education, with mother tongue first, has been linked to improved learning outcomes. The ELAN program is a wonderful example of a research-driven bilingual program designed to establish early skills before introducing the second language of instruction. The *révolution bilingue française* and French heritage language programs in New York City are wonderful examples of communities coming together to support dual language immersion and heritage language education in a U.S. public school setting.

2.3 The Sustainable Development Goals

The globalized, interconnected world faces complex issues requiring buy-in and engagement from multiple stakeholders around the world, and nuanced communication among many different linguistic and cultural groups. Yet, at this time perhaps more than at any other time in our history, foreign language study and skills in the U.S. subsist at lower levels than in much of the world, are not required, and are not prioritized and supported by policy, legislation, and funding.

3. The Benefits of Foreign Language Skills, Bilingualism, and Multilingualism

Foreign language skills, bilingualism, and multilingualism, bring benefits to the individual in personal and professional life, and to society in terms of global talent and global citizenship. In addition to the ability to communicate and interact with those from other cultures and to understand literature, news, movies, and vocal music in the original, benefits to the individual extend to cultural, creative, and emotional intelligence, and regular use of more than one language has even been shown to stave off dementia. Bialystok and Hakuta, (1994) have examined the concept that knowledge of more than one language is greater than the sum of its parts, that knowledge of more than one language makes us more sensitive to linguistic, social, cognitive, and communicative elements that we might not be aware of otherwise.

Bilingualism, multilingualism, and foreign language learning have benefits for the individual for our society, and the range of benefits and the degree to which they impact specific individuals varies from case to case. However, in a globalized world, knowledge of more than one language is considered an advantage, and the term bilingual advantage is often used when referring to a constellation of cognitive advantages enjoyed by students who speak more than one language. According to *The Benefits of Second Language Study* (NEA, 2012), "second language study benefits higher order, abstract, and creative thinking." Grosjean (2010) wrote that "bilinguals use their languages for different purposes, in different domains of life, with different people." Vygotsky (1962) wrote that "the child's strong points in a foreign language are his weak points in his native language, and vice versa." Knowledge and use of other languages has been linked to personal benefits such as the ability to enjoy literature and film in the original language, to enjoy travel, more fully, and to be able to communicate with people who may not speak English, whether around the world or right here at home.

Personal benefits have also included cognitive benefits, creativity, problem-solving, divergent thinking, and social skills. Career benefits include increased employability and earnings. In addition, as we tend to like and to even be attracted to people like ourselves (Brogaard, 2015), use of a common language can potentially lead to buy-in and consensus on both personal and professional matters. Much like mirroring an individual's body language increases the odds of an agreeable solution and conversation, a common language increases the likelihood of a collaborative solution.

Cognitive benefits have included enhanced knowledge of our first language and language in general also referred to as metalinguistic awareness, multi-tasking, perspective-taking, analytical cognitive strategies and cognitive control, improved financial choices, creativity and divergent thinking, and delayed onset of Alzheimer's disease and/or dementia. Academic benefits have included higher SAT scores for K-12 foreign language students.

Knowledge of other languages, offering insights into other cultures and key to appreciation and understanding of other cultures is also key to the interdisciplinary area of global understanding and intercultural competency and the sign of a well-educated global citizen. While the exact nature and extent of the multilingual advantage is still a subject for study, the impact of an early start in terms of language exposure and/or study has been shown to have a positive impact on language skills overall.

3.1 Multiple Intelligences

In response to the wide range of human talent and ability beyond that which was routinely measured by intelligence (IQ) tests, the theory of multiple intelligences, introduced in *Frames of Mind*, (Gardner, 1983) originally included linguistic intelligence which is the one most often associated with foreign language learning, musical intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, and personal intelligences. The original idea and framework for multiple intelligences has been refined and expanded by Gardner himself and by others to related areas, including but not limited to, emotional intelligence, cultural intelligence, and even creative intelligence.

3.2 Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

Widely discussed in terms of *Emotional Intelligence* (Goleman, 2005), EQ includes aspects of leadership, empathy, and more. In *Emotional Intelligence 2.0* (Bradberry and Greaves, 2009) place EQ squarely among the skills critical to success, with 4 core skills – self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. EQ also sits squarely within the communicative environment, as does the use of multiple languages.

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is "the ability to identify and manage your own emotions and the emotions of others" (Psychology Today). While it is certainly easy to imagine numerous workplace and social situations where emotional intelligence would be a useful skill, it has also been linked to successful foreign language learning.

In (Oz, 2015), there is a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and attitudes toward foreign language learning. According to (Goleman, 2011), although emotional intelligence may not directly impact the cognitive aspects of language learning, it may make it easier for a learner to forge relationships with others, including native speakers of the target language, thus facilitating learning. According to Cialdini's key principles of influence, the importance of liking is highlighted, as we are more easily influenced by people we like. In addition, according to (Cialdini, 2009), "we like people who are similar to us," including those who may speak our language. Foreign language skills may facilitate communication and relationship-building.

3.3 Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

While cultural intelligence may at first appear to be akin to intercultural competence, it encompasses intercultural competence and an action-oriented approach, often in a business or management setting. (Earley and Mosakowski, 2004), defined cultural Intelligence (CQ) as "an outsider's seemingly natural ability to interpret someone's unfamiliar and ambiguous gestures the way that person's compatriots would." Cultural Intelligence (CQ) has been described by (Livermore, 2011) as having four components -- CQ drive, CQ knowledge, CQ strategy, and CQ action. While the desire to learn about another culture and to learn how to interact more effectively may stem more from a person's nature and circumstances, knowledge is often language-based, and strategy and action in intercultural settings is often facilitated by knowledge of the language of the other. Cultural intelligence has become more and more important as transnational, multilingual, multicultural teams have become the norm rather than the exception in the workplace.

In addition to knowledge of other languages – i.e., the languages of co-workers, clients, suppliers, the local language, and the official corporate language(s), clarity of language is so much more important due to the lack of shared cultural and historical context.

3.4 Creativity and Intelligence -- Creative Intelligence (CQ)

Creative Intelligence also referred to sometimes as CQ, has been described by (Nussbaum, 2013) with "creativity is an undervalued skill that anyone can cultivate," and in terms of the competencies of creative intelligence, its economic value, and its future. [25]

Merriam-Webster defines creativity as "the ability to make new things or think of new ideas." Creativity and innovation share common elements, they are often used in different contexts. While we often speak of innovation, in terms of innovative companies and cities, and even in terms of disruptive innovation, creativity is more fundamental and impactful, reaching far beyond improvement of a product, service, or technology.

According to the *Global Innovation Index 2015*, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Netherlands, USA, Finland, Singapore, Ireland, Luxembourg, and Denmark are the top 10. According to the *Innovation Cities 2015 Index*, London, San Francisco-San Jose, Vienna, Boston, Seoul, New York, Amsterdam, Singapore, Paris, and Tokyo are the top 10.

The correlation of innovative countries and multilingualism is demonstrated by the presence of Switzerland, Singapore, and Luxembourg among the top 10. In addition, Sweden, Netherlands, Finland, and Denmark generally begin foreign language education at an early age. The correlation of innovative cities and multilingualism is less revelatory in terms of foreign language proficiency as 4 of the top 10 are in predominantly English-speaking areas, the U.S. and the U.K.

Some correlation of innovation and foreign language skills may be inferred from EF English First's *English Proficiency Index*, with Sweden, Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Slovenia, Estonia, Luxembourg, Poland, and Austria the top 10, with 5 of the most innovative countries among those with the highest English-language foreign language proficiency.

According to the *Global Competitiveness Report*, the most competitive global economies are Switzerland, Singapore, United States, Germany, Netherlands, Japan, Hong Kong SAR, Finland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Although competitiveness does not equal creativity, creativity and innovation are definitely factors in economic competitiveness. There is, again, some correlation between foreign language proficiency and competitiveness, with 3 of the top ten in the top ten of the *English Proficiency Index*. In fact, EF has even found a correlation between English (aka foreign language) proficiency and economic and social development.

Language also shapes thought, so it is likely that bilinguals and multilinguals have different ways of envisioning the world and reacting to situations at their disposal than monolinguals. However, as (Sternberg and Kaufman, 2006) have highlighted, creativity is perceived and studied differently in different parts of the world. Multilingualism and creativity have been linked in a number of intriguing studies, including the *Study on the Contribution of Multilingualism to Creativity* (European Commission, 2009) and *Multilingualism and Creativity* (Kharkhurin, 2012). (Ghonsooly and Showqi, 2012) demonstrated that foreign language learning "significantly enhances all four divergent thinking abilities, i.e., fluency, elaboration, originality and flexibility." This study is especially interesting in that it examines foreign language learning as opposed to bilingualism.

In addition, diversity, including linguistic diversity and creativity has been linked in Richard Florida's (2002) work on the creative class, beginning with *The Rise of the Creative Class*.

Creating Minds: an anatomy of creativity seen through the lives of Freud, Einstein, Picasso, Stravinsky, Eliot, Graham, and Gandhi (Gardner, 1993), offers an interesting perspective on multilingualism and creativity. Of Gardner's subjects, all but one (unless you consider dance an additional language for Martha Graham) spoke more than one language. In *Geography of Genius: A Search for the World's Most Creative Places from Ancient Athens to Silicon Valley*, (Weiner, 2016) identified those places throughout history where genius and creativity have thrived, many of them at the crossroads of languages and cultures. [36] In the classroom, teachers can encourage student creativity. In *Creative Schools: The Grassroots Revolution That's Transforming Education*, (Robinson, 2015) wrote that, "we have created sophisticated languages...we literally create the world's that we live in, and the worlds that different cultures inhabit are often strikingly opposed."

3.5 Problem-Solving

Defined as "the process or act of finding a solution to a problem," by *Merriam-Webster*, problem-solving may well be the most complex intellectual process, involving intense communication in every step of the process, from identifying the problem and possible solutions, and evaluating and selecting one or more possible solutions, to selecting a solution and implementing it with the monitoring, assessment, and reporting involved. Multilingualism has been cited as an element in effective problem-solving, for reasons ranging from increased buy-in, or greater acceptability of a solution or process that is presented in a language or languages understood by all parties, to differences in memory among multilinguals. However, the most compelling reason is buy-in and acceptability, enhanced by use of the languages of the parties involved.

3.6 Careers

Foreign language skills also enhance employability and earnings.

According to the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, employment in translating and interpreting is predicted to increase faster than average. According to the (*Economist*, 2014) foreign language skills may be worth over \$100,000 in earnings over a lifetime. Over 6 million U.S. workers are employed by foreign-owned companies, and 12 million U.S. jobs are directly or indirectly dependent on foreign companies (Trade.gov, 2016).

4. The U.S. Foreign Language Deficit the Current Status of Foreign Language Skills in the United States

However, in this increasingly multilingual and interconnected world, Americans are among the least likely in the world to speak an additional language, and this has had an impact, not only on our economic and national security, but on our emotional intelligence, our cultural intelligence, our creativity, our problem-solving ability, and even our long-term mental acuity.

According to the *State of Languages in the U.S.* "while English continues to be the lingua franca for world trade and diplomacy, there is an emerging consensus among leaders in business and politics, teachers, scientists, and community members that proficiency in English is not sufficient to meet the nation's needs in a shrinking world." According to a Gallup survey (McComb, 2001), only one in four Americans is able to converse in another language, and if recent immigrants are subtracted, the actual number of Americans able to hold a conversation in another language stands at around 10%. This compares to 54% of Europeans able to hold a conversation in one additional language, 25% in two additional languages, and 10% in at least three additional languages (Eurobarometer, 2012).

Despite globalization and an even more interconnected world, Americans are not closing this gap through foreign language study, as only 18.5% of U.S. K-12 public school students are studying a foreign language (ACTFL, 2008), and only 8.1% of college and university students are enrolled in a course in a language other than English (MLA, 2015).

Government and institutional policies do not foster foreign language learning, as fewer than half the states have a foreign language requirement for high school graduation, and only fewer than a quarter of U.S. colleges and universities have a foreign language entrance requirement (MLA, 2012). Not only have numerous research studies and government reports and hearings failed to increase foreign language enrollment, but foreign language enrollment has actually decreased from 8.6% to 8.1%. The situation is no better in the workplace, with U.S. workers not studying foreign languages even when they are aware that they are needed. According to *The State of Languages in the U.S.*, "by several measures, the United States has neglected languages in its educational curricula, its international strategies, and its domestic policies."

4.1 The History of the U.S. Foreign Language Deficit

Although much has been written about the U.S. foreign language deficit, little progress has been made. While Gilbert Kettelkamp wrote "A Factor in Promoting Our Product" as early as 1940, Theodore Huebener wrote in his 1961 *Why Johnny Should Learn Foreign Languages* on the benefits of foreign language study for U.S. students, Mario Pei wrote *How to Learn Languages and What Languages to Learn* in 1973, and the article "Why Johnny Doesn't Want to Learn a Foreign Language" was published in 1974, the real beginning of the current conversation on foreign language learning in the United States was the 1979 Report of the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies, *Strength through Wisdom: A Critique of U.S. Capability*, which was closely followed in 1980 by Senator Paul Simon's *The Tongue-Tied American: Confronting the Foreign Language Crisis*

Numerous reports, studies, and hearings followed, most notably, the 2003 NAFSA report *Securing America's Future: Global Education for a Global Age*; the 2005 - Defense language Transformation Roadmap; the 2006 Committee for Economic Development's *Education for Global Leadership: The Importance of International Studies and Foreign Language Education for U.S. Economic and National Security*; the 2007 Modern Language Association report *Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World*; the 2007 National Research Council's, *International Education and Foreign Languages: Keys to Securing America's Future*, the Language Flagship's 2009 report, *What Business Wants: Language Needs for the 21st Century*; the 2010 Senate Hearing, *Closing the Language Gap: Improving the Federal Government's Foreign Language Capabilities*; the 2012 Senate Hearing *A National Security Crisis: Foreign Language Capabilities in the Federal Government*; the 2013 *Languages for All?: The Anglophone Challenge Conference* and subsequent report; the 2014 American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages *Global Competence Position Statement*; and the 2015 creation of the American Academy of Arts & Science *Commission on Language Learning*, which released a statistical report in December 2016, with the full report to follow in 2017.

Yet during the same period, from 1960 until present, the percentage of college and university students enrolled in a course in a language other than English has declined from 16% to 8.1%.

5. The Challenge -- Foreign Language Skills, the Missing Dimension

Foreign language skills provide an advantage in so many areas, both personal and professional, yet relatively few Americans speak or study another language. There are career and profession opportunities available for those with foreign language skills, but many students do not have the linguistic, cultural, and technological skills needed. This chronic deficit will only become more pronounced as globalization continues to affect virtually every aspect of personal and professional life. Access is an important issue, as many students do not have access to foreign language education, and many students interested in foreign languages do not have access to programs that prioritize pre-professional skills. In addition, *Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World* (MLA, 2007), with its goals of translingual and transcultural competence, highlighted the need for a new approach to foreign language education, including multiple pathways to the major.

In alignment with the report, closer collaboration between foreign language educators at the K-12 and postsecondary level and collaboration with relevant professional associations and prospective employers would enhance the career options of both current and future foreign language students. As foreign language educators, we can work together to develop the foreign language skills and intercultural needed for the globalized and multilingual workplace. In addition, we can work together to develop career pathways and language enterprise partnerships to bridge the gap between the foreign language classroom and the global marketplace, empowering our students to have transnational careers around the world or right here at home. The importance of foreign language knowledge in so many areas, the reciprocal impact of support of foreign language learning and support for global citizenship, creativity and innovation, and intercultural skills makes the level of foreign language skills in the U.S. a serious challenge.

6. Conclusions

Increasing the number of foreign language learners of all ages is of primary importance, and foreign language education grounded in the recommendations for translingual and transcultural competence of the MLA report, *Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World*. To effect a paradigm shift in foreign language learning in the United States, the public conversation needs to highlight the wide array benefits of foreign language learning for the individual, including but not limited to, fulfilling academic requirements and providing career advantages. In order to appeal to the millennial learner, an individualized approach is needed, emphasizing the opportunity for personal growth and for the development of a global mindset and values in addition to the development of the linguistic, intercultural, and technological skills needed to maximize one's potential to play a global role through one's chosen profession. Access to foreign language education, whether in the classroom or online, and the education and training of qualified teachers are essential. The method itself is not as important as the message - that a multilingual education and mindset benefits language learners in the present, and will continue to do so in the future.

7. Future Directions

The MLA report, *Foreign Languages and Higher Education*, provided the framework and foundation for the current conversation. At this time, disruption and a paradigm shift are urgently needed.

The *Languages for All?* report, the ACTFL *Global Competence Position Statement* have built upon this. The work of the Commission on Language Learning, and Department of Education *Framework for Developing Global and Cultural Competencies to Advance Equity, Excellence and Economic Competitiveness*, initiatives such as the CLAC (Cultures and Languages across the Curriculum) Consortium, the CIBERs (Centers for International Business Education and Research), and leading examples of professionally oriented foreign language programs like the Professional Masters in French at the University of Wisconsin, and language enterprise partnerships such as Many Languages One World (MLOW) have kept foreign languages in the public conversation.

8. Concluding Thoughts

The current conversation of foreign language education in the United States began with the 1979 report of the President's Commission, *Strength through Wisdom*, followed by the publication of Senator Paul Simon's *The Tongue-Tied American* in 1980.

A paradigm shift in terms of attitudes toward foreign language learning and access for all to foreign language education is necessary. Programs intended to foster and encourage biliteracy and heritage language skills must be accompanied by programs designed to encourage foreign language study for all Americans with a goal toward building the foreign language capacity needed in a globalized world.

The first step in the campaign for foreign languages is to create "a sense of urgency" (Kotter, 2008) to bring the multilingual advantage within reach of all Americans.

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