

The Curricular Implications of the German Language
Needs of Irish Industry

by

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I hereby declare that none of the material contained in this Thesis has been used
in any other submission for any other award. Further that the contents of this
thesis are the sole work of the author, except where an acknowledgement is
made for assistance received.

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I hereby certify that this material which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of MA in Applied Languages is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of such work.

Signed Anne O'Connor

ID No. _____

Date 3.2.97

'Language does not exist apart from culture'.

Edward Sapir, 1921.

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Dedication

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Abstract

The objective of this thesis is to explore the German language needs of Irish industry and to draw implications for German for Business curricula development at Third Level.

The dramatic increase in the need for foreign language knowledge in Europe is analysed. Specifically, the upsurge in demand for German in Ireland is put in context. On the supply side, the type of courses where German is offered by the various strands of Third Level institutions (RTCs, DITs, Universities and Private Colleges) is reviewed.

General and Special Language are contrasted and the relative weighting of Language for Special Purposes is then examined.

Drawing on research studies and on the literature, an attempt is made on the one hand to pinpoint the nature of the special German language skills necessary for Irish Exporting Industry. Three interwoven strands emerge as essential: general language skills, mastery of commercial tasks and the hitherto under-recognised area of intercultural competence. From these findings, implications are put forward for an approach to the content of German for Business curricula which meets the challenges of the multicultural European business environment.

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Chapter One

Trends in foreign language learning

1. *Outline of thesis*

This thesis seeks to provide some answers to the following two questions: What are the German needs of Industry in Ireland and what are the curricular implications of those needs ?

Chapter 1 gives a broad overview of the issues central to language needs in Europe, with particular reference to the Irish situation. Trends in foreign language demand are observed and the benefits of multilingualism are established. The extent of the present Irish industrial need for German is explored, as is the current response of our Third Level Institutions. A cross-section of courses which contain language is outlined. However, an analysis of course content and methodology of such courses is not undertaken as this would entail extensive primary research and is outside the scope of this work.

The situation with regard to the importance of LSP-Language for Special Purposes (German for Business in particular) is introduced in this chapter.

The chapter defines the position of LSP vis-à-vis General Purpose Language, and considers theories relevant to each. In this way, the relative importance of LSP is assessed. Furthermore, the case of German for Business is investigated and teacher requirements are discussed as part and parcel of LSP.

Chapter two seeks to resolve the question posed at the outset as to the German language needs of Irish industry. The significance of needs analysis is first

highlighted. Various studies dealing with European and Irish needs are discussed. The author's focus group study on industrial German needs is woven into this treatment to give a descriptive rather than prescriptive account of real 'on-the-job' requirements. From the literature review and exploratory research, a representation of the linguistic needs of Irish industry is prepared. The crucial importance of combining intercultural skills with language courses emerges. These findings form the basis for the presentation of a theoretical model of the language needs of Irish industry.

Chapter three uses these findings to draw curricular implications for German for Business courses at Third Level and current German for business textbooks are analysed in the light of the model.

The concluding chapter presents a summary of the thesis findings and the limitations of this research are outlined. Suggestions for future research in this area are brought to view.

1.1 Trends in foreign language needs in Europe

Clearly 1992 and the Single European Market heralded deep-seated change in the attitude to foreign languages. Knowledge of the languages of the Community is fundamental for completing the internal market. There are forty main and regional languages in the European Union. In total, 60 European languages exist. At present, around 1500 translators in the European Commission translate approximately one million pages per year in the 9 official languages of the European Union. [Bauer 1994, pp. 3-10].

Especially for a heavily export dependent country like Ireland, it is extremely valuable to educate people to overcome language barriers. Traditionally, much of Ireland's export trade was done with the UK. However, since Ireland joined the European Community in 1973, trade with other member states has steadily increased, and with it the need for foreign language knowledge. The Single European Market on the one hand offers vastly improved opportunities to Irish industry. In tandem with these opportunities is the intense competition existing in this market. The Irish firm which possesses foreign language competence and related cultural know-how will be much better equipped to deal with such competition. Indeed, the quality of human resources can be a comparative advantage as understanding a country's culture can lead to rewards in the area of developing and sustaining strong business relationships.

Within the context of the Single European Market, all business executives need to understand the European environment in which they operate. Europe is a multilingual business environment wherein one language will no longer suffice for companies with international aspirations.

As a consequence, language skills required by graduates have changed over time both in terms of the level and type of knowledge needed in industry. The heightened awareness of the importance of linguistic ability has accompanied the changes in trade within the European Union and beyond. More than ever before, industry seems to perceive that foreign language skills are not a bonus, rather a necessity in doing business abroad.

It has been said that while English is the leading language in science and technology, it has been steadily losing ground to other European languages in the field of commerce and industry. [Owens 1992, p.125]

A 1988 study conducted by the (then) Newcastle on Tyne Polytechnic showed that a severe shortage of staff speaking European languages was costing British industry millions of pounds on lost contracts each year. (Ibid)

The poor linguistic skills in the UK have traditionally been mirrored in Ireland, as we see in the table below.

Table 1: Foreign language knowledge in Europe

Percentage of people who can follow a conversation in another language

Country	Number of Languages			
	0	1	2	3+
Belgium	50	22	18	9
Denmark	40	30	25	6
Germany	60	33	6	1
Greece	66	27	5	2
France	67	26	6	1
Ireland	80	17	3	-

Italy		76	19	5
Luxembourg	1	10	47	42
Netherlands	28	29	32	12
Portugal	76	14	8	2
Spain	66	26	5	1
UK	74	20	5	1

Source: Eurobarometer 1989

[Welford 1994, p.198]

The prevalence of foreign language ability evidently leaves room for improvement.

In the light of the above, it comes as no surprise that the teaching of foreign languages in Europe has undergone a change from the focus on grammar and reading and writing skills towards an approach characterised by an emphasis on communicative ability in the language.

Language courses were reviewed in the seventies and found to be lacking in job relevance and over-preoccupied with grammar and stylistic features. The grammar-translation method was criticised and it was suggested that the aims of foreign language teaching be drawn from the areas of activity of careers using

foreign languages. Consequently, the philological tradition in language teaching has largely given way to practically based language syllabi with communicative competence as a primary aim. [Bausch 1989, pp. 84-89]

A practical approach to language may be seen in the introduction of oral and aural examinations in Ireland for foreign languages at Leaving Certificate (1986, Department of Education) and in the inclusion of languages in business courses and other disciplines at Third Level.

Specific language needs are furthermore being recognised and catered for. Language for Special Purposes appears on almost every Irish Third Level diploma or degree programme, regardless of discipline, as we shall see below. Languages have sprung up in Third Level courses on a large scale, not only as addenda, but as integral modules as in the Degree in International Marketing and Languages at Dublin City University, which started in 1981.

The educational correspondent for the *Irish Times* also notes the trend towards multiskilling or the inclusion of languages in diverse disciplines.¹ This need for students with language skills is also reflected in the fact that FÁS, in association with the IDA, is currently compiling a register of candidates fluent in foreign languages. The idea is that the register should act as a source of suitable employees for companies considering establishing a base in Ireland. Foreign languages are thus in high demand, particularly when combined with the study of professional areas like law, business, engineering and so forth. The parallel trend in foreign language acquisition is that the number of students in Europe

¹ *Irish Times*, 23rd January 1995.

learning General Purpose German is yielding to those studying the language for practical reasons. [Buhlmann 1987, p.7] Through import and export and face to face contacts in the world of business and technology, the need for a new paradigm has been established. The trend is towards Language for Special Purposes, which covers a multitude of areas.

This heightened need is naturally not only found in Ireland but in all EU states. In order to increase mutual understanding the EU initiative SOCRATES, the successor to ERASMUS, states that the promotion of language skills is a 'key factor' in strengthening interaction between the peoples of the European Union and the EU actively supports language learning. For example, EU programmes such as SOCRATES or LINGUA [Lingua Compendium 1992] have been set up with the aim of increasing student mobility within Europe and funding European projects. The central role played by student mobility in the realisation of the European Dimension needs little advocacy as the impact of the period of study abroad has been well documented by the ERASMUS (the forerunner to SOCRATES) monographs and is reflected in employers' testimonials and students' own experience.²

The number of ERASMUS students receiving a national or inter-institutional degree or diploma in addition to that from their home university is increasing.

Indeed, Article 26 of the Treaty of Maastricht stated that the aim of General and Third Level education is to develop a European dimension in education, *especially through the teaching of foreign languages.* [Bauer 1994, pp.3-10]

² *How study abroad affects young peoples future* Erasmus Newsletter no.18, 1993.

From the above, we may conclude that foreign languages have become extremely important. The reasons for this include the possibility for mobility of labour within the Single European Market (hereafter SEM). For example, in a survey of employment obtained by award recipients in 1992 at the Regional Technical College, Carlow, it was noted that:

" the increase in fulltime employment which has taken place among the award recipients is probably due to their increased willingness to seek opportunities abroad" [Fox 1992, p.6]

Those responsible for planning education are therefore increasingly aware of the importance of foreign languages and are making them more accessible across the curricula. To take one example, the government reforms in the United Kingdom for Secondary Level made the study of one language compulsory, with a recommendation for a second language. [Kloss 1989, pp. 211-224].

In summary, the major current trends in foreign language learning are that languages feature much more often in the curricula than previously. Beneke refers to this phenomenon as the vertical expansion of languages [Beneke 1993, p.6] We will test the truth of this with respect to the Irish situation in Section 1.3.1 below.

Allied to this trend is the heightened interest in Languages for Special Purposes (LSP). Beneke notes that languages are taught in ever more disciplines and calls this the horizontal expansion of languages.

A third trend is the intercultural dimension which is gradually making its way into language courses. [Ibid]. As we shall discover, this latter area has overwhelming significance for the future of LSP course development.

1.2 The benefits of Multilingualism

If, as seems reasonable, we accept that the aforementioned trends stem from perceived real benefits of multilingualism, it becomes necessary to further explore what these are.

On a social dimension, it has been suggested that multilingualism broadens attitudes thereby helping to achieve a true European co-ordination. [Dalby 1992, Preface]. Dalby argues that opening young people to a study of other languages is vital in denationalising education and leading to cultural understanding.

" Les pays de l'Europe peuvent profiter des experiences d'application d'une politique plurilingue."

The notion that non-tarif barriers to trade continue to exist despite the dropping of trade barriers is not new. [Foley 1990]

Indeed, Zeyringer [Zeyringer 1991, pp. 7-10] notes that the language diversity in Europe constitutes a formidable barrier to communication and understanding:

" Und diese Grenzen, die der Sprachen, können nicht per Dekret abgeschafft werden. Sie werden trotz vielfältiger Bemühungen weiterhin Kommunikationsgrenzen bleiben."

The social benefits of multilingualism have been expressed elsewhere [Wille 1992, p.1]. Education does not aim only to provide a service to industry and commerce:

"It is concerned with helping students develop analytical skills and personal autonomy as they acquire knowledge (...) and the learning of a language is an activity whose human dimensions are paramount."

Furthermore, decisions made in Brussels increasingly determine the business and social environment in the Member States. The happenings in the European Parliament, Court of Justice and Council are relevant to our lives as EU members. Ultimately, a knowledge of the languages and cultures must be of advantage in appreciating the European political environment. Language students are enabled to acquire a greater depth of vision, to 'see' through two languages.

If the social and personal benefits of learning a language are somewhat difficult to discuss in quantitative terms however, this is not the case in international trade. Here the benefits are well documented. There are more than 300 million potential consumers in the SEM and we are moving toward a global economy. The Euromanager, ideally, should be able to negotiate in two foreign languages. [Prendergast 1994, pp. 114-25]

Liston and Reeves express some of the benefits below:

"The ability to meet a trading partner on his own linguistic territory, to converse and so lay the foundations for a relationship of mutual trust, to discuss a product

in its technical detail and so inspire confidence in company and product alike, to negotiate and so be sure there are no fundamental misunderstandings- these are some of the immense advantages that accrue to the executive with foreign language competence when he's operating an overseas market ." [Liston and Reeves 1986, p.77]

The challenges and pressures to compete resulting from the SEM have thus initiated a new enthusiasm for Foreign Language learning and increased the demand in the workplace for proficiency in foreign languages as the businessperson who must rely on translators in dealing with international sales or negotiations is at a marked disadvantage. In fact, the British Overseas Trade Board suggests that linguistic ability can mean the 'difference between a contract won and a contract lost.' [Kloss 1989, p.217]

For example, in 1983, Jaguar, the British automobile manufacturers began an in-house German language training programme. Jaguar sales in (then) West Germany jumped a dramatic 60 percent against local competitors, Mercedes and BMW. [Ferraro 1994, p.43]

Perhaps because as Zeyringer has observed, the knowledge of the language of your client has benefits beyond its utilitarian function. It also shows interest and competence:

" Wer auf die Sprache des anderen eingehen kann, zeigt, daß er sich für die entsprechende Kultur und damit auch für ihre Produkte interessiert. Wer um

sprachliche Kompetenz bemüht ist, wird sich auch in anderen Bereichen bemühen."

[Zeyringer 1991, p.8]

A third benefit of multilingualism which has been addressed is the possibility that knowing a language may, per se, open new markets. It draws on the theory that if someone is capable of using a foreign language in his or her work, he will attempt to seek a means of doing so.

" Je mehr Sprachen jemand kann[...], desto mehr wird er bestrebt sein, diese Sprachen auch beruflich fruchtbar zu machen. [Dies bedeutet], daß zusätzliche Fremdsprachenkenntnisse tendenziell neue Märkte eröffnen." [Handler 1991, p.80]

In sum, benefits accruing from multilingualism include an increased intercultural empathy and political understanding, a greater probability of success in overseas markets through selling in the language of the buyer and in some cases an impetus toward new markets.

1.3 German in Ireland

The demand for German language training has increased world-wide in recent times, with German for Business occupying a particularly important position. [Schneider 1989, pp. 150-76]

The three high usage languages in European companies which are in common use beyond national borders are English, German and French. A recent CII

survey [CII 1993, p.10] found that German is more widely used than English or French in European companies. The lack of German was also found to pose the major barrier to trade in Northern England.³

92 million people speak German in Europe and 23% of all EU citizens have German as their mother tongue. But how important is German for Ireland ? There are strong arguments indeed for the desirable position of German language skills in Ireland. Firstly, Germany plays a major role in Irish overseas trade. In fact, Germany is our second most important trading partner (after the UK) and that trade is in surplus, as may be seen in the table below.

³ *The European Dimension in Management Education*, p.47 European Commission July 1995.

Table 2

Balance of Irish Trade with Germany

Year	Imports in IR millions	Exports in IR millions	Surplus
1988	.880	1,369	481
1989	1,075	1,610	536
1990	1,041	1,681	640
1991	1,0578	1,906	849
1992	1,104	2,122	1.019
1993	1.108	2.623	1.520
1994	1.218	3.222	2.004
1995	1.407	3.945	2.538

Source: Central Statistic Office Figures

Ireland's exports to Germany over the 1988-1995 period show a steady increase. Although our imports have increased over the same period, the balance of trade has been consistently in surplus, reaching a peak in 1995. The overall percentage increase in exports between the 1990-95 period was 145%.⁴

Since reunification, the German market consists of approximately 81 million consumers. The 1987 study by the CII suggested that if Ireland could achieve the

⁴ Information received from Herr Haas, German Embassy, November 1996.

market penetration that it has done already in the UK, it would result in an increase of about 25% in industrial output and could result in 25,000 new manufacturing jobs. [CII 1987].

It is not just exports to Germany which are important, however. German investment in Ireland is very significant. Professor Nigel Reeves, in his 1984 address [Reeves 1984, pp. 7-29] noted that 122 German companies were located in Ireland. Today, that figure has risen to over 200 German companies. (German-Irish Chamber of Commerce, 1994).

Germany is the third most important source of overseas investment after the United States and United Kingdom. [Reeves 1984, pp.7-29]

These companies, noted Reeves, need a cadre of Irish management trained in German and familiar with the German business culture. [Reeves, N.1984, pp. 7-29].

The Irish companies exporting to Germany need personnel with language skills in order to " successfully introduce Irish products into the German market ". Reeves also points out that the regional nature of the retail distribution network in Germany means that contact with many outlets becomes necessary and therefore, by the same token linguistic skills. For example, in 1991, G and M Ltd, a cleaning materials manufacturing company which is one of the market leaders in the sector in Ireland, decided to export to Germany. The Managing Director, Audrey Glynn, found it necessary to take night courses in German in

order to build good relationships with the company's main distributor, Jutta Weberei in Münster.⁵

The German market has indeed proven itself a valuable one for the Irish exporter. Our food image is particularly advantageous, with brands such as Kerrygold and Baileys thriving in Germany. Sales of Kerrygold butter are double of the total butter sales in Ireland - over 90 million packets were sold in Germany in 1993. While food products are our principle exports to Germany (milk, butter, cheese, meat and meat products), raw materials (ores), chemical products and finished goods (clothing , leather shoes , knitted goods and so on) also represent an important part of Irish export trade with Germany. These three areas (Food, Electronic Engineering and Chemicals, Clothing and Footwear) tally with the industrial sectors most likely to employ German graduates as we shall see below (p.46)⁶ Although the tourism sector is also an important employer of German language graduates, it is not reflected in the table above as it is a service industry.

It would seem clear, in the light of the above, that the language training of Irish home based management and of export personnel should be a priority. The tourism industry in Ireland is a case in point. It is currently the focus of plans to prolong the season and emphasise the attraction in Ireland. For example, less than 10 per cent of the business of CIE Tours International is with Irish travel consumers taking inclusive tours in Ireland; the remainder comes from attracting

⁵ Taken from student paper in a course on Exporting to Germany taught by the author.

⁶ *Sunday Business Post*, October 1994.

foreign visitors to Ireland. So marketing people with language skills find particular favour with the company.

A recent survey by the Financial Services Industry Association of Ireland [FSIA 1994] has pinpointed this priority. In view of the international nature of the Financial Services Centre, the FSIA decided to carry out a language survey of its members.⁷ One of the questionnaire objectives was to examine whether there is an existing deficiency of foreign language skills among IFSC companies.

The findings are shown in the pie charts below and have dramatic implications. Figures 1-3 show that the German language emerges as the language most frequently required and most often deficient in the respondent companies.

59% of the respondents said that they had had, at some stage, difficulty in recruiting suitable personnel with a combination of business and language skills. 59% provided language training for their staff, with local language schools being the most popular location for this training to take place.

⁷ A response rate of over 50% was achieved.

Fig 1 Foreign language skills in Ireland

Figure 1.
How would you rate foreign language skills in this country?

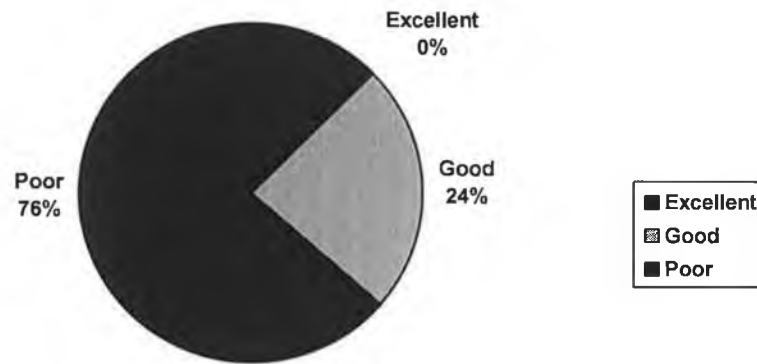


Fig 2 Deficiencies in foreign language ability

Figure 2.
Do you recognise there to be a deficiency of foreign language ability in your company?

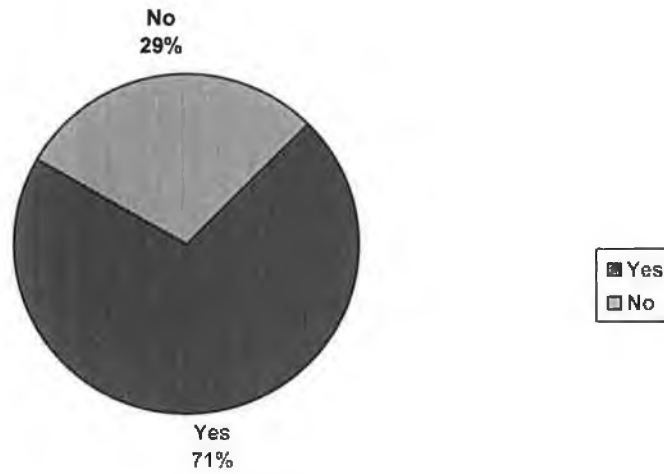
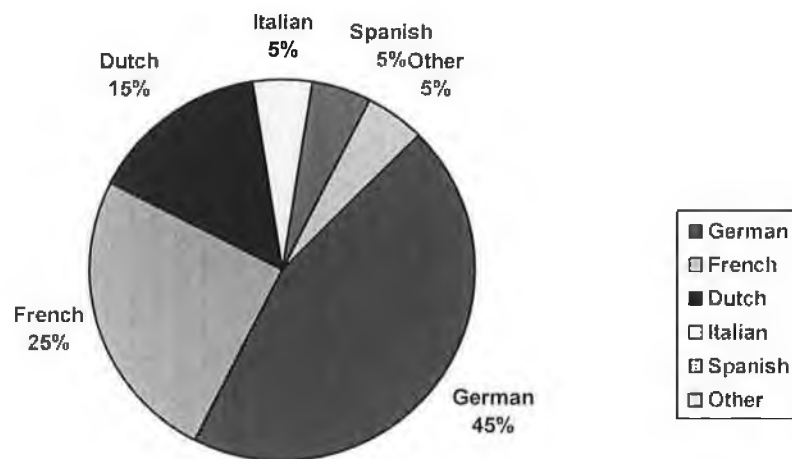


Fig 3 Distribution of deficiencies

Figure 3.
If so, please indicate where deficiencies exist.



The German-Irish Chamber also conducted a Business German survey (German-Irish Chamber of Commerce, May 1994) of the demand for Business German among its members.

There were 80 respondents in total and the main findings confirm the results of the FSIA survey above.

- *When asked if German was needed in their work, 61 respondents replied in the affirmative.*
- *The importance of oral German skills superseded the need for written German.*
- *When asked if they would participate in a part time German course, 40 respondents (50%) replied that they would, and the remainder said that they might.*

It is evident that the population in question, members of the German-Irish Chamber of Commerce, are more likely than randomly chosen Irish firms to require German. Furthermore, as with many surveys, this one was carried out by a body having an active interest in the importance of German. Notwithstanding these limitations the findings on the importance of oral German are interesting and are supported by other studies.

The Goethe Institut carried out a comparable survey [Wille 1992, p.12] with the help of Professor Konrad Schröder of the University of Augsburg. The sample was taken from Irish exporting companies and from all companies trading with

Germany. We shall examine below in Chapter 3 the specific uses to which German is put in everyday practice, according to the survey. However, the findings also contribute to establishing the need for German in Ireland today.

Findings:⁸

- *54% said that German is their most important language.*
- *The need for German is not dependent upon firm size, 82% of firms with <20 employees say they need German.*

Most respondents foresaw an increase in the need for competence in German.

A further study completed by Dr Schröder and Fionnula Kennedy, Waterford RTC, on students' attitudes revealed that 63% of Irish students stated that they would like to learn or improve their German, if they had time over the next three years. [Kennedy, F. 1992, p.23]

In considering the political and economic significance of English, French and German- German was in second place, next in importance to English. English was rated at 92, German at 78 and French at 74. It is interesting that, when asked to rank the same languages in terms of cultural significance and influence, the same students chose: English, French and German in that order. And so it appears that German is increasingly seen as the language of industry, while French is perceived to be of greater cultural import.

⁸ The response rate was 32%.

The author conducted a focus group study of firms exporting to Germany in the period August to November 1994. The selection method was based on a convenience sample of companies in the Carlow region which export to Germany. It is therefore not claimed that the study is in any way representative of the entire population. However, it is hoped that the study has some qualitative value since it was intended to be descriptive rather than prescriptive. Each of the five firms interviewed exports to Germany.⁹ The type of German skills needed is examined below. Here it is relevant to present how important German was perceived to be.

Table 2

Company	Area	Importance of German Trade	Language Used
Burnside Ltd	Engineering	Extremely Important	German
Lapple Ltd	Engineering	Important	German
Tanco Ltd	Engineering	Important	Mainly English
Wesel Ltd	Construction	Important	German
Mergon Ltd	Plastics	Extremely important	German

Source: Focus Group Interviews using Survey Instrument, 1994

(Questionnaire in Appendix A)

In the context of the perceived importance of German, it is further noted that:

⁹The survey questionnaire instrument used as an interview tool is Appendix A below.

The CEO of Burnside Ltd. speaks fluent German and was the interviewee. This company was awarded Supplier of the Year in 1994.

The respondent for Tanco Ltd was an ex European Orientation Programme¹⁰ graduate. He is now based in Germany doing Technical Sales and considered 'very true' the statement: " It is very true that a knowledge of German on the part of the marketing staff makes it easier to penetrate the German market."

The respondent from Wesel observed that translations had to be done at considerable cost out of house before her appointment to the Sales and Marketing Division.

The Mergon respondent illustrated the need for German in her work through the following example: a colleague, who does not speak German, was unable to get a quotation from a potential German supplier when sourcing components. The response was, " Sorry, we are not speaking English ". The respondent, a fluent German speaker, subsequently received the quotation after one telephone call.

It is recognised that the opinions of those employees who use German will perhaps be biased in favour of the importance of German language skills. Such employees naturally take pride in their language-related achievements and furthermore, it is they who use the language in everyday work. Nonetheless,

¹⁰The European Orientation Programme, initiated by the Food, Drink and Tobacco Confederation, is jointly funded by the State and private enterprise. In this programme a participant company undertakes to employ a graduate for one year work experience, of which a period of 6 or more months is spent abroad, either researching the potential market or working in an affiliated company. Language skills are therefore an integral part of the assessment of graduate suitability.

these respondents are the most suitable for a survey of this kind¹¹, as only they know how much German is used.

The picture emerging from all the studies above is that German is clearly needed in doing business with Germany. It is somewhat disheartening to observe that a content analysis of job advertisements does not tally with this apparent need. A perusal of the appointment section of any newspaper will reveal that language is not as frequently stipulated as a requirement in the area of Sales/Marketing as one would imagine. The observations of one executive may be telling in this regard:

" The poor response to our recruitment advertisements when we include a language requirement has led us to think that to do so is counter-productive. The vast majority of good marketeers do not have a language and are therefore deterred from applying. So a vicious circle is started. To get good people drop the language qualification ? Drop the language qualification and you are less equipped for the key task of export."

[McQuillan 1984, p.37]

These comments are a further convincing plaidoyer for including a language in Business disciplines and indeed, recent years show a positive trend in this direction.

¹¹Konrad Schröder recommended questioning the employee who uses German, if one is seeking to discover the need for German and/or the type of German needed [Schröder, K. 1992, p.15]

1.3.1 The response of Third Level education in Ireland

It might be expected that the increase in the need of industry for German should be reflected in a drive towards languages in the courses on offer in Third Level institutions in Ireland and indeed this seems to be the case. Students now have a high level of Higher Education establishments from which to choose. These include five universities in the NUI, two new universities and 11 Regional Technical Colleges (RTCs) - two more are planned for 1997. There are also a number of private colleges, mainly specialising in areas of business and accounting. The 1990 survey carried out by the Goethe Institut [Kennedy 1992, pp. 36-40] found that German was included in courses offered at 25 Third Level institutions. The main study areas found to include German were: Business and Humanities, Engineering, and Hotel/Tourism, with German for Special Purposes most often included in Business and Commerce.

Priority in teaching was given to business language for :

- Negotiations

- Product presentations

- Correspondence (Telephone and Fax)

- German media

- Analysis of graphs, diagrams and tables relating to subject area

Another objective was to provide students with " the language required to understand social, political and economic structures of German speaking countries." (Ibid)

The desirability of these objectives will be examined below in Chapters two and three, where the expressed linguistic needs of Irish industry are investigated and methodological implications are discussed.

The survey of Third Level institutions outlined above provides a thorough analysis of all the courses in the Republic of Ireland offering German . The data is from the Spring of 1991. Since the focus of interest in the present study is German for Business and Marketing, a repeat of this project is outside its scope. The reader is referred to the 1991 study available from the Goethe Institut. [*German in Ireland* 1992 p.30-44] However, below a sample of institutions from each of the four strands¹² of Higher Level Education is assessed, with an eye to any changes which may have occurred in the interim period. Account is not taken of future curriculum planning, only the courses offered in 1994 are noted. Furthermore, the table concentrates solely on where German is included in the Business disciplines. A look at the aforementioned Goethe Institut study, however, reveals that language is offered across a multitude of courses, not merely in tandem with Business or Marketing. It was not thought necessary to include every Regional Technical College as Certificate and Diploma courses tend to be quite standardised in this sector.

¹²The Universities, Regional Technical Colleges, Institutes of Technology and Private Colleges.

Table 4 Third Level response to the demand for German

College	Full-time Business Courses with German	
	1991	1994
UCC	Commerce BA	Commerce BA ¹³ , BA, Lang/Cultural Studies
Trinity College	Business Studies and German	As 1991
DCU	International Marketing and Languages	IML and Business Studies/German
UCD	Business Studies and German	As 1991
UCG	B.Comm/German	As 1991
DIT Kevin St.	Certificate Language and Business	Diploma Language and Business.
RTC Carlow	Certificate in Business Studies/German	National Diplomas Marketing - Purchasing/Int. Business with German.
RTC Waterford	National Diploma in Marketing/German	National Diploma in Business Studies ¹⁴ .
RTC Athlone	Certificate in BS/German National Diploma Marketing/German	As 1991
RTC Tralee	Certificate in BS/German	National Diploma in BS/German

Source: Institution Brochures¹⁵

¹³In the UCC handbook 1994 it is stated that languages may be studied up to and including fourth year. Language strengths are cited as particularly relevant in the context of the SEM after 1992.

¹⁴ Languages and Marketing, French Major and German Minor

¹⁵ The new RTC in Tallaght operates an obligatory foundation course on all first year courses.

1.4 Language for Special Purposes

" In der Experten Sprache liegt ihre Macht; sie sitzen an Schalthebeln, die nur sie bedienen können, in dieser Sprache und dank dieser Sprache können sie über andere verfügen ".[Hess-Lüttich 1986, pp. 134-150]

The area of LSP has excited much interest in recent years. The findings of needs analyses have largely been responsible for this interest. [Pfeiffer 1986, pp. 193-203] It has been said that " most adult learners of German do so for career reasons" [Eggers 1986, pp. 73-82] It was seen in section 1.3.1 above how German has steadily gained admission into Third Level business courses. The Goethe Study (1992) revealed that German has likewise become accepted into other (scientific) disciplines, at least as a course option.

As we have observed above, the internationalisation of economic life has increased the need for language knowledge and language courses at Third Level are coming to be associated with the learner's specialised subject. We now define what constitutes a special language and to examine the issues central to Language for Special Purposes with particular reference to the language of business.

1.4.1 What is LSP ?

Definitions of Special Languages tend to be related to their function. They are often investigated, for example, on the basis of the frequency of stylistic and syntactic features. [Spillner 1986, pp.83-97]

Hess-Lüttich has observed the tendency to examine Special Languages according to the socio-linguistic differentials in the milieu in which the Special Language is used:

" Ihre Mitglieder ließen sich auffächern nach Berufen und Positionen innerhalb eines Berufes. Ihre Sprache sei fachorientiert." [Hess-Lüttich 1986, p.136]

Special languages are thus used by doctors, engineers, executives, physicists; by groups which are homogenous in their education, skills and work methods.

The discussion above sought to clarify the importance of language for trade and export. We have observed how the European Union represents a linguistic challenge for those organisations who wish to compete overseas. Practical subject-related language courses prepare the learner for a career in such organisations and therein lies the importance of LSP. The notion expressed by Hoberg seems particularly apt.

“Kommunikationsorientierter Fremdsprachenunterricht ist in der Regel berufsbezogener Unterricht, und daraus ergibt sich, daß die Frage der Fachsprachen für den Fremdsprachenunterricht fast ausschließlich in berufsqualifizierenden Studiengängen relevant ist.”

[in: Pfeiffer 1986, p.195]

But how may we define the Special Language used in a given context ? The definition of Hoffmann(1976)is widely accepted in the literature.

" Fachsprache, das ist die Gesamtheit aller sprachlichen Mittel, die in einem fachlich begrenzten Kommunikationsbereich verwendet werden, um die Verständigung der dort tätigen Fachleute zu gewährleisten"

[quoted in: Pfeiffer 1986, p.194]

From the above definition it becomes clear that Language for Special Purposes (hereafter LSP) is not just the sum of its parts i.e. does not differ from General Language merely through specialised terminology. LSP is rather the totality of the means of communication conventional in a given area. As such LSP can clearly be said to be a subset of General Language¹⁶, with its own terminology, stylistic features and conventions of form.

As the introductory quotation to this chapter indicates, the group dynamics within an expert group can lead to an increase in the use of LSP from personal motives. Hess-Lüttich refers to Enzensberger in support of this phenomenon. The latter dubbed scientists' Special Language as 'abracadabra' language.[Hess-Lüttich 1986, p.140]. This notion has passed into the German language as 'Fachchinesisch'- the language behind which expert knowledge may be less accessible to the layperson and would seem to indicate that LSP is completely

¹⁶Special Languages are a subset of General Language as no Special Language can function in the absence of basic vocabulary." Ohne die Zuhilfenahme gemeinsprachlicher Elemente kann man in einer Fachsprache überhaupt nicht kommunizieren" [Pfeiffer, W. 1986, pp193-203]

different to GPL. How does LSP differ from General Purpose language however?

1.5 Language for Special Purposes (LSP) and General Purpose Language (GPL)

Although LSP overlaps with (GPL) in many areas the differences are not merely terminological but also in the various linguistic elements. LSP may thus be differentiated from GPL through variations in the existence, frequency, distribution and function of linguistic elements. For example, the passive tense is a typical structure found in more scientific than in GPL texts.

Spillner defines the communicative parameters of a LSP as both subject internal and subject external. Subject internal communication can take place between experts in the same fields (intradisciplinary) or between experts of different subject areas (interdisciplinary). We can distinguish between these two LSP situations and communication between experts and laypersons. Spillner speaks of subject external parameters. [Spillner 1986, pp. 83-97] One fundamental distinction between LSP and GPL is therefore that LSP is the mode of communication between experts.

Buhlmann notes some other distinguishing features, principally as they relate to course content GPL vis-à-vis LSP. Text production and information retrieval strategies are an integral part of LSP courses because of the job-oriented nature of LSP and to compensate for gaps in general language respectively. Furthermore, definitions are not usually necessary for everyday survival in the language, although they may often form part of the LSP curriculum, being

particularly prevalent in scientific language. LSP curricula also tend to be problem-oriented unlike general language. Obviously, no prerequisite knowledge is required to learn GPL; the same cannot be said of LSP.[Buhlmann 1987, p.82]

In summary, unlike GPL, LSP relates to the thought processes of the special subject area and uses language appropriate to these processes. Special terminology and communicative structures in the subject area are often dictated by convention. These differences are thus illustrated in the usual approach to curricula development in GPL and LSP courses.

1.5.1 Relative Weighting of GPL/ LSP

If a Special Language is a subset of General Language, it is logical that a Special Language cannot be taught in its absence. As a Special language can clearly not function without some basic vocabulary, GPL, then, is a necessary part of the Special Language course, although there are some exceptions. For example, some Third Level computer courses include a German option where students learn only to translate technical manuals from the German. The aim of such a module is clearly not to prepare the students for a career in Germany, but rather to facilitate the understanding of foreign computer literature. There has been some contention as to the relative weighting of LSP and GPL in Special Language courses. However, there is widespread agreement that the aims of the language course should determine this relation. [Boelcke 1989, p.270].

If the student of a subject area is to be capable of communication with his counterparts through German, the need for general language skills arises. Conversations between experts are rooted in general language. In the words of one individual using a foreign language in his work:

" Bevor ich überhaupt in das Fachgespräch einsteigen kann, muß ich erst einmal Wärme ins Gespräch bringen." [in: Beneke 1980, p.188]

We suggest therefore that it is GPL which is needed to enable social rapport to be established. However, just as the relative weighting given to LSP and GPL will depend on the course aims, so too will the best time to introduce the LSP vary with these aims. If as in our example above, the learner needs mainly to have the ability to read Special language texts, then the LSP can be begun immediately. If however, the learner is to be prepared for a career in Export/ Marketing to Germany, a foundation in GPL for everyday situations is necessary.

Indeed, it could be argued that GPL must hold a substantial weighting in German for Business, as the language used in face-to-face dealings is seldom technical, although some specialised terms will probably be used. The language needed is the language of working together. It could be argued further that an entirely LSP centred approach context would be in danger of 'turning off' the learner as it can hardly be assumed that the business students is only interested in business related topics. In fact there is some disagreement as to whether German for Business can be regarded as a Special language at all.

1.6 German for Business-a Special Language or not ?

It has been pointed out above that all special languages include some general language. Perhaps this is nowhere more true than in the case of Business German. Business Studies are concerned with practical issues in the world of industry and commerce. Areas of Business Studies and Marketing are quite accessible to the lay-person: the suitability of advertising campaigns, importance of exporting and so forth. Everyday knowledge generally tends to pertain more to business than to other areas, for example chemistry or computer science. Furthermore, business language contains a higher proportion of general language than other special languages and it combines a multitude of subject areas as is manifest in the following observation:

“Die Wirtschaftssprache umfaßt im weitesten Sinne die gesamten Fachsprachen, welche sich auf die verschiedenen Fachgebiete des Handels und der Industrie beziehen, dieser Fachsprache bedienen sich Unternehmer, Verhandlungspartner, Mitarbeiter [...] um zu informieren und zu verhandeln, um Absatz oder Dienstleistung zu verbessern.” [Meyen 1989, p.232]

This diversity of subject areas within the umbrella term Business Studies has led to doubts as to whether German for Business can be described as a Special Language at all. As we have observed, business dealings are usually couched in the ordinary language of working together- it is difficult to imagine a discussion on product strategy being unintelligible to the layperson. (Leaving aside technical specifications, which the business graduate will most probably have to learn on-the-job). However, in her paper on this question, Buhlmann uses 13

general statements on special languages and 'tests' the validity of each statement for language for business. The Hoffmann definition of LSP is found to be adaptable to language for business. The adapted definition, according to Buhlmann, is:

" Wirtschaftssprache, das ist die Gesamtheit aller sprachlichen Mittel, die in einem fachlich begrenzten Kommunikationsbereich, nämlich dem der Wirtschaft, verwendet werden, um die Verständigung der in diesem Bereich tätigen Menschen zu gewährleisten." Furthermore, like all Special Languages, German for Business is a subset of General Purpose Language.¹⁷ However, two statements cannot be directly ascribed to German for Business.

Special Languages are characterised by certain stylistic features.

Scientific discourse is a universal mode of communication, or universal rhetoric.

Statement one does not hold true for German for Business, proffers Buhlmann, as a vast diversity of stylistic features and cultural influences are to be found in a business text.

Neither can the second statement be said to be true of German for Business. Buhlmann contrasts a business dialogue with a financial text (both are German for Business texts). [Buhlmann 1989, pp. 82-108]

¹⁷Beneke also states that languages for use in a job (Berufssprachen) are subsystems of General Language and are characterised by a job relevant lexicology.[Beneke, J. 1993, p.10]

Although Business Language is a kind of LSP therefore, we would agree that the language used differs greatly across the business disciplines and that we therefore cannot speak of the universality of German for Business.

The text types in German for Business range from business communication (letters, faxes, order forms etc.) to current information (advertising texts, business news, trade fair agendas and so forth). Therefore, we can conclude that although German for Business shares most characteristics with other special languages, it is set apart by the diversity of topics in its domain. Buhlmann notes that a consequence of this it that a higher standard of GPL is required for the field of Business. LSP for Business is most meaningful when GPL has been understood. [Buhlmann 1987, Ibid].

So German for Business is the sum of its own parts, the totality of all the special languages used in Business.:

" Was als Fachsprache Wirtschaft bezeichnet wird, [ist] die Summe der in der Wirtschaft bzw. in der wirtschaftsbedingten Kommunikation benutzten Fachsprachen." [Buhlmann, R. 1989, p.86]

This diversity clearly has implications for the expertise required of the teacher of German for business and we now turn our attention to this subject.

1.6.1 The teacher's role in German for business

Much of the literature on LSP considers the role of the teacher. This indicates that the teacher may be presented with challenges peculiar to the field of LSP.

The situation of the LSP teacher can generally be depicted as follows:

1. The teacher is usually not an expert in the subject area.
2. The teacher generally has had no training as a Special Language teacher.
3. Often the teacher experiences difficulty in finding sufficient and satisfactory material in the LSP area.

[Buhlmann 1987, p.8]

The above problems can lead to a reluctance on the part of the teacher to take LSP classes. Buhlmann's work seeks to provide some assistance for the LSP teacher in setting aims of the Special Language curriculum and gives an overview of LSP didactics.

Of the three problem areas identified above, the first and third appear less relevant for the German for business teacher. The area of business, unlike Science or Engineering, is generally reasonably accessible to the lay person. For example, it seems logical that the linguist could read 'into' the subject of advertising or channels of distribution in Germany.

While a business degree is hardly a prerequisite to teach business German therefore, it is nonetheless probably a decided advantage to the Business language teacher to have some knowledge of the business area. The language instructor who has such experience in the field or theory of business is more likely to have a strong concept of the type of language required. Put otherwise, the choice of texts, the emphasis on certain situations, the teacher's ability to shed light on the German business environment will benefit from experience in

this domain. Though the teacher need not always be an expert in the business area (indeed a combined business and language qualification was rare up to recently), the pure philologist will not always know what is relevant to the workplace and the preparation of practically oriented courses becomes more difficult. The text might fulfil the role in some cases where the learner is familiar with the subject area but this is probably a poor substitute for teacher competence in the area. However, Beier and Mohn suggest that ESP (English for Special Purposes) teachers do not need to learn specialist knowledge but rather possess a knowledge of the fundamental principles of the subject area and a positive attitude towards the ESP content. [Beier , R. & Mohn, D. 1987, p.62]

We conclude that the teacher has to have sufficient knowledge to choose appropriate material for the target group and that further knowledge of the business area will greatly facilitate the development of industry relevant courses.

The third issue alluded to by Buhlmann is no longer problematic for the German for Business teacher. The Business German teacher is fortunate in that there is now a relative abundance of material from which to teach in this area; special textbooks, German business publications, business sections in newspapers, to name a few.

The second problem, that the LSP teacher is often not specifically trained indicates that caution must be exercised by LSP teachers in the business area. The core subject (business) teacher may view the language teacher as somehow 'encroaching' on 'their territory'. In Boelcke's terms " als Wilderer in ihren

Jagdgründen". [Boelke, J.& Thiele, P. 1989, p.281]. We suggest that a close cooperation between the subject and special language teacher is appropriate to allay fears of this nature and to design complementary curricula, the cornerstone of a multiskilled course.

1.7 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to outline the trends in foreign language learning in Ireland and in some other European countries. The benefits of foreign language knowledge were appraised and the specific importance of German for Irish companies described. The business courses currently available at Third Level were outlined and some theoretical issues pertaining to LSP and GPL were discussed before narrowing the focus to German for business. It was argued that any Irish company not equipped to deal abroad was limited in its opportunities and viability. We now progress to a consideration of LSP curricula requirements by analysing the language needs of the workplace.

Chapter Two

The German language needs of Irish industry

2. Introduction

The overall purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the significance of needs analysis as an approach to Language for Business curriculum design. Its specific purpose is to investigate what the needs of industry employees are in relation to German. Some of the points drawn from the literature on linguistic on-the-job needs will be supported by the finding of a focus group study conducted by the author. (Appendix A)

2.1 Why needs require assessment

Although the wider aim of a third level language course is to satisfy the learner needs and help develop social and cultural skills, it is nonetheless true that Business and Language courses cannot be planned without reference to the needs of the workplace.

" Planning language courses without a clear view of the actual needs for language in the workplace would have been a foolish undertaking " [Wille 1992, p.3]

Those responsible for curricula development need to determine the professional utility of the language skills taught. Beier and Mohn state that the investigation of needs is one of the fundamental principles of special language methodology. [Beier& Mohn 1987, p.38] To this end many studies have sought to discover the positions and tasks in industry which demand German language skills. We now turn our attention to these. In the light of these data, an attempt is made to

describe what linguistic needs consistently arise in the workplace, firstly in a European context and then with reference to the Irish situation. Precedence is given to more recent studies (where these are available) as industry needs are dynamic.

2.2 Some research studies on the linguistic needs of industry

German linguists are among those who have been active in the research of industry language needs. Beier and Mohn in their 1986 paper concentrated on the task areas for which foreign languages are needed in trade and industry.

10 broad task areas emerge from analyses conducted in Germany on foreign language needs in industry and commerce.

1 Negotiating with suppliers¹⁸

2. Giving presentations

3. Setting out prices

4. Interpreting Data

5. Using Telephone/Fax

6. Offering/Ordering goods

7. Receiving guests

8. Visiting/ dealing with clients

¹⁸This was also pinpointed as a foreign language requirement of industry by Schröder, K 1986.

9. Giving instructions

10. Closing contracts

Beier and Mohn conclude that the above task areas require the four skills (aural, oral, reading and writing) and add interpreting and translating as important skills for the foreign language user in the workplace. Specifically, this list of 8 tasks is distilled from the needs analyses studies:

Order confirmation, commercial correspondence, answering advertisements, taking dictations, taking minutes of negotiations, taking telephone messages, assessing specialised literature and giving oral reports. [Beier& Mohn 1987, p 43].

These were found to be the tasks most often completed in the foreign language. Only brief comment is called for here. Firstly, it is not surprising that all the usual commercial activities (correspondence, reports) will need to be conducted by the organisation through the target language. Secondly, the significance of telephone skills is paramount. This is also predictable, given that 70% of all business contacts begin on the phone. [Braun 1992, p.21]

Kloss draws similar conclusions in his 1989 paper. 45% of the respondents in one study stated that telecommunication was the skill most often needed. He also refers to Longton's study of 35 sales executives' German needs. The most common activities requiring German were:

Travelling abroad, reading of reports and correspondence, reading of instruction manuals, understanding proceedings at official meetings, using the telephone and reading technical magazines/newspapers. [in:Kloss 1989, p.219]

As in the other studies, oral skills were found to outweigh written skills in frequency of use. This is supported by a recent study of 1000 foreign companies in Germany. Oral communication was found to assume far greater importance in business than written communication. The study shows that the productive skills are required in the following order of frequency:

1. *Telephone Correspondence*

2. *Customer consultations*

3. *Written communication*

4. *Internal discussions*

5. *Informal conversation*

[Prendergast 1994, p.120]

For Beneke, a central need which must be met by language for business curricula is “Berufliche Handlungsfähigkeit in der Fremdsprache Deutsch” which might be translated as the ability to conduct commercial activities through German. Beneke developed a German for Business course (Zertifikat Deutsch für den Beruf-ZDföB) around these activities. The sections of the course tally with the needs of industry as outlined in the studies above:

Table 5 **Routine commercial activities**

Topic	Content
1. Developing social contacts	Introductions, small talk
2. Travelling (business)	Making arrangements, accepting invitations
3. Client communication	Telephone and business letter/fax
4. Sales negotiations	Prices, product specifications
5. Business procedure	Placing orders, delivery times etc.
6. Finance	Opening accounts, payment procedures
7. Marketing	MR, advertising campaigns, trade fairs
8. Production, Distribution	TÜV, DIN, logistics
9. Organisational structure	GmbH, AG , structure explanation
10. Political and Social environment	Political situation, media, economic system, demographics etc.

[Beneke 1993, p.95]

Most of the commercial tasks above require general language skills and cultural know-how. Before we examine how these skills are necessary to perform business tasks, we need to assess whether the tasks for which German is used in Ireland are similar to those in European industry.

2.2.1 The tasks for which German is used in Ireland

The findings of the European studies are indeed corroborated by the major Irish study undertaken by the Goethe Institut [Wille & Rott 1992, p.14] which employed essentially the same approach. The question : 'Who uses German and for what purpose ?' led to a list of tasks and situations which were intended to

help in curricula development. Clearly, the tasks depend on whether the employee is based in Ireland or in a German-speaking environment. The studies below concentrate on the former group, though visits to Germany indeed form part of their job responsibilities. Irish exporting firms were used as the population from which a representative sample was drawn. The results described the following activities as requiring German most often:

Doing liaison work with suppliers, customer contact, negotiating, using the phone, attending trade fairs and writing technical procedures.

All these and others were included in the focus group study already outlined in Chapter one and the categories the respondent companies found German to be most useful for were: translating foreign correspondence/ technical documentation, preparing price quotations and writing German letters or faxes.

We can conclude that the Business Studies student learning German is to be capable of conducting the above commercial activities through the language. It is however clear that all the skills which might be called on in the workplace cannot be predicted by a language curriculum. The tasks for which German is needed will be as diverse as the occupational positions a business graduate is qualified to fill. However, the activities above have proved important from the viewpoint of industry and should therefore be viewed as central to German for Business curricula.

One further important consideration in determining industry's German needs is concerned with industrial area. The business graduate who finds employment

with plastic container manufacturers, for example, will probably be called on to write/translate technical specifications although a graduate using German in the FMCG (fast moving consumer goods) area will probably not. How can a Language for Business course take account of this ? Or should it be required to, given that telephone, presentation skills and the like will be equally useful wherever the graduate finds employment ? While this is true, it seems worthwhile to bear in mind which industries employ language/business graduates most often, when choosing texts and situations.

The Goethe Institut study outlined above, found that German was widely required in the following industries:

Manufacturing sector

- Engineering
- Chemicals/Plastics
- Electronics
- Clothing and Footwear
- Food

Services sector

- Leisure / Tourism
- Financial Services

it is interesting to note that these sectors represent Ireland's principle exports to Germany as established above. (p.46) A recent Irish Times supplement [Irish Times December 1994] identified a foreseeable growth in the following sectors. We include only those sectors where language proficiency was stated by industry members to be of advantage.

The Leisure and Tourism sector in the Republic is forecast to provide about 6,000 new jobs a year between now and 1999. Language skills are of direct use in the promotion of Ireland to our foreign counterparts, as a of Bord Failte job advertisements for Marketing executives reveals. Furthermore, language skills can be stated to be of particular relevance to the services sector in general as it is concerned with providing intangibles whereby human skills and therefore the language dimension, are crucial. The importance of German for this sector is reflected in the statistics. In the last five years, the growth in tourists from Germany has doubled. In 1992 230,000 German tourists came to Ireland and spent IR£88.1 million. [Source:Bord Fáilte Statistics 1996]

The localisation of software (its adaptation for use in overseas markets) is also a rapid growth area. For this specialised computer work, a mixture of linguistic and software engineering skills is required. Kevin Neary of Fitzwilliam Executive Search has stated that there is a "healthy demand for computer literate graduates with language proficiency".

A third growth sector with relevance to language proficiency pinpointed in the report is telemarketing. The current surge is expected to continue in the medium

term. Although telesupport and telemarketing are relatively new to Ireland, the industry now employs close to 2000 people. Telemarketing companies which expand into European markets need graduates who can take enquiries from foreign customers. UPS (United Parcel Service), the largest freight courier in the world, has 185 employees taking calls in German for their German customers. [More jobs ? We're talking telephone numbers. IT 13/2/96]. Gateway 2000 is likewise expecting substantial growth in its French and German markets in 1995 and this should translate into further positions at the company's European Headquarters in Dublin.

With regard to manufactured goods, the pharmaceutical sector is presently an important growth area in this country. Prospects for graduates are numerous as 16 of the 20 largest pharmaceutical companies in the world have operations in Ireland. As with any commercial activity, Sales/ Marketing is a key area and so languages will give applicants a competitive edge.

There are two implications for German language curricula from the above trends. Firstly, German is a desirable element of Tourism, Science and Computing courses to improve graduates job prospects. Secondly, since Computing and Pharmaceutical sectors require Sales and Marketing staff, (who need not necessarily have a scientific background) it is suggested that a German for Business curriculum could take these employment opportunities into account by incorporating pharmaceutical and computing texts. Marketing courses often seem to concentrate on the FMCG sector, and yet many graduates end up in industrial marketing.

It seems beneficial to include texts from specialised disciplines (e.g. Computing) in language for business curricula because of the job opportunities for business graduates in these areas. Specialised language exercises taking in the commercial activities can profile technical companies for example. The Burnside CEO, in the focus group study (Survey instrument Appendix A) noted that Sales and Marketing staff with language are not prepared for technical terminology.

A proficient German speaker can perhaps fill gaps in knowledge by using specialised dictionaries. However, if product/company descriptions are to be employed in the language course, it seems desirable to broaden students' vocabulary base by including texts of a technical nature.

Carrying out commercial tasks through the language requires certain skills beyond a perfunctory knowledge of specialised terminology, however. As we observed above, the majority of these situations entail customer contact and therefore general language becomes compellingly important.

2.3 *Aren't the mountains lovely ?-the need for general language skills*

Learning a language for business requires more than the mastery of business terms and procedures through the language. In situations where there is a high interpersonal context, communicative ability will depend on GPL knowledge.

" We all know of the non-native teachers with advanced degrees who are so concerned with errors that they are all but speechless in informal encounters with native speakers."

[Beneke 1979b, p.109]

Such reluctance might be observed where the expert who can cope with special language situations is at a loss for words in an everyday situation. Since people of different nationalities who communicate as experts in their fields always encounter one another as humans, they obviously require the linguistic resources for general contact as well as expert discussion.

General language is required, too, to establish a rapport:

" da hilft mir die Kenntnis meiner chemischen Fachausdrücke nicht." [Beneke 1979a, p.62]

Notably, a lot of business jargon and technical terms used by Germans is in English. This is particularly true of Marketing where most terms are loan words from the English. Moreover, a deficiency in General Language skills can lead to a difficulty in expressing one's personality, which depends in part on mannerisms and turns of phrase often difficult to 'translate' when one is speaking in a foreign tongue. In one case study involving executives from a Multinational company who had spent time at a foreign sister company, Beneke was told by one executive of his embarrassing experience during a business trip with his foreign partner:

" Wenn man z.B mit jemandem vier Stunden im Auto durch die Gegend fährt und der dann etwas über die Schönheit der Berge sagt, dann muß man etwas dazu sagen". [Beneke 1978, p.119]

The respondent from Mergon International Ltd., a participant of the focus group study (Appendix A), echoed this executive's words with the following observation:

" It would be impossible to have the same rapport with a client if you couldn't *chat* in German. You don't talk about plastics or polymers over a meal."

In Beneke's 1980 paper on Danes, French and Italians using English in the workplace, 40 executives were interviewed. The importance of Language for Special Purposes (in this case ESP) was investigated as were the social situations where communication takes place. Most of the respondents had an academic qualification in Business Studies or Law. There were four principal findings:

Firstly, respondents generally agreed that LSP was not the principal problem area. This was explicable through the limited nature of LSP, its frequent use and its familiarity. Reading LSP texts was not seen as problematic either. On the one hand, because of the respondents' expert knowledge of the subject area. Secondly, because the level of the language in such texts is simple (apart from some special terms which can often be understood from context).

It was also felt that LSP should not be introduced too early, as one cannot predict in what area one will later work and flexibility is demanded of professionals. The respondents' main criticism of the teaching they had received was that the ability to speak spontaneously was not developed.

Finally, most respondents expressed the need to be able to speak idiomatically in English in a 'normal' fashion. " Sonst fühlt man sich amputiert."

Literature in the target language was felt to be a worthwhile element of LSP courses. Such knowledge is also valuable for conversations with native speakers.

[Beneke 1980, pp.182-200]

The overall message from this survey appears to be that respondents did not feel comfortable in the foreign culture and expressed the need for normal conversational skills in dealing with their foreign counterparts.

We conclude that oral practice on general topics is a necessary element in German for Business curricula. It is realised that time constraints and the large volume of language for business skills which need to be covered make such oral work difficult to fit in the time schedule. However, expressing friendliness and forming relationships through the medium of a foreign language is also difficult and the student needs to acquire the ability to do so.

Structures like 'I don't follow you' or 'what do you mean ?' are commonly heard in conversations between native speakers. Non-native speakers therefore require a set of metalingual skills, both to keep abreast of what is being said and compensate for gaps in their vocabulary in the foreign language. This is essential in social contact and in typical problem scenarios encountered in commercial trade.

Beneke considers metacommunicative ability highly important. He defines it as the 'why' (for example: 'ich habe das nur aus Spaß gesagt.')

" Die Verfügung über die sprachlichen Mittel zur aktiven Gestaltung der Metakommunikation sowohl in sozialem Kontakt als auch in typischen Störfällen

der beruflichen Handlungsrouninen gehört zu den wichtigsten Lernzielen eines auf Kommunikation abzielenden Fremdsprachenunterrichts." [Beneke 1993, p.16]

A lack of ability in this area handicaps the non-native speaker when a response is needed quickly. Some further examples of the range of metalingual speech are:

'Sie haben sicher in dem Punkt recht, aber andererseits...'

'Als Techniker würde ich dazu sagen'

'Wie hast du das gemeint?'

'Was verstehst du unter 'teuer'?'

'Ja, ich buchstabiere'

[Beneke 1993, p.29]

Such standard phrases are needed in discussion and can of course, be learned. They are useful for asking for clarification, making excuses, giving opinions, making corrections, and in avoidance strategies (expressing something a different way to compensate for gaps in knowledge). Furthermore, unfortunately, (from the viewpoint of the learner) the standard German (Hochdeutsch) common on aural cassettes and taught from textbooks may not be the only language form which will be encountered in dealings with the German speaking world. Regional dialects abound in Germany, for example, Bavarian German can be very difficult to reconcile with Hochdeutsch. Swiss German presents an even

greater difficulty and has words and phrases of its own. Some examples of regional variations are:

Table 6 **Regional variations from High German**

Regional	Hochdeutsch
(South)	
arg	sehr
eh	ohnehin
das Mädél	das Mädchen (North)
(North)	
das Abendbrot	das Abendessen
kucken	sehen (Centre/South)
(Centre/South)	
daheim	zu Hause
heim	nach Hause
gell	nicht wahr

Accents can cause misunderstandings and malcomprehension and thus the student needs to be exposed to as many accents and dialects as possible in the course of the language course. Students need to be prepared for the regional vernaculars they are likely to encounter if they visit Germany.

It may seem superfluous to suggest that grammar is required in a German for Business curriculum at Third Level. However, the emphasis on oral fluency, favoured by the direct method currently popular may be at the expense of grammar. It is sometimes felt that oral competence is more important than grammatical accuracy but a lack of knowledge of grammatical structures can impede understanding even where the individual words of a sentence are understood. An anecdote related by Beneke illustrates this point. A group of computer operators, proficient in English computing terminology had great difficulty because of the occurrence of the English phrase 'You must not' in a computer manual. This was understood to be the equivalent of the German ' Sie müssen nicht ' and was therefore interpreted as meaning 'Sie müssen nicht, *können aber jedoch*' which would correspond to the English 'you don't have to'. It took several hours to find the computer problem because of this. [Beneke 1978, p.123]

While it is essentially unrealistic to expect the non-native speaker to always be aware of the appropriate phrase, GPL is nevertheless so important for successful communication that it is a requirement for the professional performance of commercial tasks and for less formal encounters in the business environment. Hence it should not be neglected in developing Language for Business curricula.

The third strand in foreign language skills necessary in the workplace is the intercultural area. We will now seek to establish that intercultural knowledge has an important place in German for Business courses, that it should in fact be an integral component of this discipline.

2.4 *The Need for Intercultural Knowledge*

Effective communication (which accomplishes its goals), even in a monocultural setting, is not easy. Persons from different cultures have furthermore different assumptions, perceptions and attitudes. Hence, the possibilities for miscommunication increase dramatically in a multicultural situation. As Farb (1979) observes:

‘Between the grammar of my language and its expression in audible speech lies the filter of the social system in which I live.’

[in: Ferraro 1994, p.55]

The filter of which Farb speaks is culture. While there is no single view within anthropology of what is meant by culture, it is generally agreed to be a system of things taken for granted, acquired through social learning. For its members, culture 'makes sense of the world'. [Beneke, 1991, p.iii]

As there is no universal agreement on how culture should be defined, we adopt here the definition of culture as ‘ a historically transmitted system of symbols and meanings identifiable through norms and beliefs shared by a people.’ [Gudykunst 1983, p.99]

From this definition, it becomes clear that there are sources of conflict in multicultural situations where the meaning systems are different and each

individual is communicating out of his culturally based beliefs. Intercultural communication occurs when persons from different cultures communicate with each other. We can identify several potential sources of intercultural conflict arising from these differences. One such source of conflict is sociolinguistic transfer. Miscommunication can occur when one person is speaking a foreign language but employing the rules of his native language. For example, his intonation may mirror his mother tongue or phrases may be directly translated thus making no cultural sense in German. Wyler refers to this phenomenon as speaking a “reduced language”. [Wyler 1994, pp 35-42]

A further potential source of misunderstanding is non-verbal communication. This silent language is very important because non-verbal clues will often be relied upon in international business: clothing, facial expression, space usage, gestures and so on.

Lack of knowledge of business and social norms can also cause problems for the non-native. Our dress codes, our thinking, our behaviour in a particular setting is indeed largely determined by our cultural environment. As Randlesome observes, this is also true of the business environment. Randlesome has defined Culture as ‘the state of intellectual development among a people’. He believes it takes in the ‘beliefs, attitudes and values that underpin commercial activities and help to shape the behaviours of companies in a given country’. [Randlesome 1994, preface]

If someone behaves differently there is a tendency to evaluate this as 'wrong' from the vantage point of our own cultural norms and thus the foreign behaviour is treated ethnocentrically. The fact that culture is acquired through learning has important implications for the conduct of business. Differences in cultural backgrounds are the rule in international business and it is also here that they are often of crucial importance. Clearly, in doing business with German persons, the English native speaker can no longer rely on the things taken for granted in the home culture, the codes and rules of behaviour have shifted now, the frame of reference not the same. In the absence of cultural know-how, uncertainty will result. Unless the setting is monocultural, a store of cultural learning is needed to cope with the demands of the (business) situation.

Hence, linguistic competence is no longer sufficient in today's complex and competitive business environment. A person who had only linguistic competence- who knew only the denotative meanings of words- would not know what phrase to choose from a repertoire on any given occasion. He would effectively be a kind of 'cultural monster'. [Beneke 1981, pp 73-94]

Thus we understand the term intercultural knowledge to refer to information and understanding about the foreign culture, with particular reference to the differences between the Irish and German cultures.

“[Es] muß ein Wissen über fremde Wertsysteme, außersprachliche Verhaltensweisen und Interpretationsrahmen in der zu erlernenden Sprache und der dahinter stehenden Kultur aufgebaut werden.” [Prendergast 1994 pp. 114-25]

After all, as Prendergast points out, executives with language skills require more than a proficiency. They must understand the nuances of the language and the vagaries of custom determined by culture. Otherwise great insecurity can be experienced by the non-native speaker. Beneke speaks of the

" (...) allgemeine Unsicherheit der Sprecher darüber, ob und inwieweit ihre eigenen, kulturgeprägten Rollenkonzepte und Szenarien in die kulturelle Überschneidungssituation übertragen werden können." [Beneke 1993, p.45]

As language forms have their roots in the philosophy of the cultural community, misunderstanding about the meanings of language are common in the intercultural setting, even if the words are understood. As Wyler points out: "Cultural characteristics directly influence verbalization" [Wyler 1994, p.39] For example, in English, the implied meaning tends not to be articulated, whereas in German cultures the message usually contains most of the information. We can distinguish between high and low context cultures. High context cultures are characterised by subtlety and a more oblique style. The meaning is not obvious by the words alone but by the context. Japanese culture, for example, is marked by the necessity to interpret cultural cues which politeness would prevent from being mentioned directly. Low context cultures, on the other hand, tend to use more explicit messages, the meaning can be inferred from the words used. The figure below categorises several cultures in high or low context.

- **High Context Cultures**
- Japanese
- Arab

- Greek
- Spanish
- Italian
- English
- French
- American
- Scandinavian
- German
- German/ Swiss

Low Context Cultures

[Samovar 1994, p.23]

The distance between English and German along the continuum might be expected to cause communicational difficulties. The reserve more common among the European English speaking community can lead to misunderstanding statements such as “your product is not bad at all”. [Wyler 1994, p.38] A German might see a negative implication where none is intended. Reluctance to seem overbearing leads to phrases like ‘I believe’ which might indicate doubt to the German speaking community as the following example from the world of international business depicts. " An Englishman working under a continental department head prefaced his statements of fact which he had researched by phrases like 'I think it is...' or ' I believe...' whereupon his boss burst into anger saying ' We are not in a church here. You should not believe but know."

[Benecke 1983, p.129]

The boss was not familiar with the convention that facts (according to a particular set of English cultural norms) should be introduced in a tentative manner. This can be explained by the fact that German is generally believed to be a low context language- the mass of the message is vested in the explicit code- whereas English tends to use higher context communication as we observed above. A sensitivity to the German culture and mentality and an understanding of the implications for business relationships is thus of extreme importance for the Business Language learner. The fact that culture is acquired through learning has important implications for the conduct of business as a community's culture will impact upon negotiation strategies and other business methods.

The successful executive clearly needs to understand the cultural 'rules' governing corporate culture, work practices and consumer values.- the aspects are after all the consequences of culture and so cross cultural business situations are fraught with these difficulties. The usefulness of linguistic and cultural knowledge is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the area of Branding. Numerous examples of disasters related to brand names exist. 'Irish Mist' in Germany or the General Motor's 'Nova' car in Spain (literally the car that 'doesn't go' in Spanish) provide an indicator as to the desirability of a culturally and linguistically competent marketing team. Another such example is cited in Ferraro (1994): “ An American ink manufacturer attempted to sell bottled ink in Mexico while its metal outdoor signs told customers that they could “avoid embarrassment” (from leaks and stains) by using its brand of ink. The embarrassment, it seems, was the ink company's. The Spanish word used to

convey the meaning of “embarrassed” was “embarazar” which means “to become pregnant”.” [Ferraro 1994, p.43]

Randlesome outlines clear-cut benefits of cultural knowledge for the marketing executive. If one is required to develop a marketing plan for Germany, the evaluation of market potential for the product requires demographic and cultural knowledge. For example the popularity of environmentally-friendly products will influence packaging and promotional decisions.

The planning of an effective promotional campaign also requires knowledge of the media and of advertising trends. As in other EU states, there are restrictions on the advertising of certain products. Facts like the high cost of television advertising or the increasing popularity of the specialised press will directly impact promotional decisions.

Pricing policy decisions will require an understanding of the value/price relationship perception by the German consumer and of the correct procedure of making price quotations to German wholesalers.

Due to the regional diversity of Germany, a distribution network may involve more than one agent and knowledge of central buying organisations, supermarkets, 'Drogerien' and pharmacy chains is invaluable when choosing a distribution policy.

The non native speaker needs socio-cultural knowledge for everyday and for business communication. Difficulties occur in choosing the appropriate form of address ('du' or 'Sie') and in greeting and taking leave of a counterpart.

A difficulty is likewise posed by the understanding of customs and traditions (at holiday times for example).

Expressing emotion (determining emphasis and tone) and in non-verbal communication is also a problematic area for the non-native speaker.

Other typical culture-related communicational difficulties are mentioned by Schröder, [Schröder 1987, pp. 148-58]

These points represent some of the problems which a cultural ignorance can incur, but there are many others. It is said that one knows when one is 'fluent ' if one can understand jokes in the language and perhaps there is truth in this claim. Humour and irony are not universal and the failure to understand irony can easily impede understanding of the tone of a remark.

We have observed that there are rules governing patterns of argument and business negotiations which must be recognised if one is to use the appropriate language. The following quotation illustrates this diversity in a stereotypical fashion.

"In Britannien ist alles erlaubt, mit Ausnahme dessen, was verboten ist. In Deutschland ist alles verboten, mit Ausnahme, was erlaubt ist; und in Frankreich ist alles erlaubt, selbst das, was verboten ist." [Prendergast 1994, p.116]

Further examples from everyday business contacts abound; to understand the tone of a remark, to know whether flowers should be given, the routine of shaking hands; for all these situations socio-cultural knowledge is required.

The above is obviously only a scratch on the surface of the cultural considerations necessary in dealing in the German market. The German Irish Chamber of Commerce prepared a document which splits intercultural knowledge into various categories. (*Communicating with the Germans*, Klaus Rolicke, 1996).

Table 7 **Communicating with the Germans**

Business Activity	Intercultural Skills Required
Presentations	Knowledge of German rhetoric style. Clear, factual, pragmatic arguments
Dialogue	Behavioural norms, Punctuality, Setting agenda, Little small talk, Cost awareness
Correspondence	DIN norms, Reference, title

So important is this type of knowledge that Beneke recommends regular staff exchange in Multinationals. The experiences of exchange staff should then be used in the firm. [Beneke 1983, pp.127-138]

As behaviour and cultural norms are partly explicable through the geography and history of a country (*Landeskunde* in German), these aspects should not be neglected either in the language curriculum. For example 'une grève' in French is not just 'ein Streik' in German, but demands background information. [Boelke 1989, p.273]. A contrastive approach to the historical and geographic background is therefore necessary after basic language has been grasped. Such broad understanding of the foreign culture can lead to greater tolerance of

cultural differences, a prerequisite for effective intercultural communication in the business setting. The tendency to be ethnocentric is reduced and the German business partners can be better understood in the context of their unique historical and cultural background.

The non-native speaker needs socio-cultural knowledge for everyday and for business communication. Concepts like 'Kaufhaus'(department store on many floors, self-service etc.) or 'Messe'(the particular importance of trade fairs in the German economy) require explanation and students need information about the functions of language.

“Ohne solche kulturellen Kenntnisse wäre ein situationsgerechtes Handeln nicht möglich.” [Lüger 1993, p.25]

We conclude that cultural knowledge with particular reference to the business environment is an essential requirement of German for Business courses to enable the graduate to establish and maintain good business relationships with customers and suppliers and develop cultural specific marketing plans. In sum, if intercultural communication is the interface between two culture systems it follows that intercultural knowledge is necessary to communicate in the intercultural situation.

It seems clear from our discussion above that intercultural competence can improve market possibilities. Indeed, the increasing internationalisation of business and the demands this places on the executive makes intercultural competence a crucial element of the language for business curriculum. A caveat

in introducing an intercultural dimension- where we define intercultural as “those activities between or among heterogeneous humans” [Sarbaugh 1988, p.143]- to the language lesson should be mentioned, however. What is required is a 'feeling' for culture and specific know-how. Care should be exercised to avoid generalisations and stereotyping as in the quotation from Prendergast above. Just as it would be unwise to place too little emphasis on cultural information, it is inadvisable to be overly dependent on such knowledge. Cultural facts can only indicate tendencies at the negotiating table, they cannot predict how individual Germans will behave. Care should be taken to avoid conveying prejudices about the people and countries where German is spoken.

Furthermore, communicative competence in German does not imply that the non-native speaker must forego his cultural identity- Beneke refers to this as evolving into a kind of cultural mimic [Beneke 1981, pp.73-94]- rather what is required is the ability to negotiate common ground in the light of cultural awareness to speak to the German counterpart in a comprehensible way. In other words, it is neither necessary nor desirable to 'play at being' German.

Although one does not have to come across as being German, intercultural know-how will be invaluable in most business situations as is portrayed in our examples above. A random approach to giving the student information about the German culture is unlikely to be sufficient however. Also, knowing 'what to expect' may serve to reinforce preconceptions and stereotypes which would hinder effective intercultural communication. Stereotypes fulfil the function of reducing the threat of the unknown by making the world predictable [Becker

1986, p.341] but do not foster understanding. A better approach would seem to be the study of geography, political structure and other building blocks of culture in order to enable the learner to become sensitised to intercultural issues rather than develop attitude stereotypes. Our goal is to develop intercultural communicative competence in the learner which Samovar defines as: “the overall capacity of an individual to manage key challenging features of intercultural communication, namely cultural difference and unfamiliarity, intergroup posture and the accompanying experience of stress.” (p.345)

If we wish to teach intercultural knowledge in a systematic manner, it becomes necessary to categorise what areas fall within its scope. Intercultural learning has been stated to be concerned with the learning of principle characteristics of another culture and the way in which the learner progresses from ethnocentric behaviour to an appreciation and acceptance of the other culture.:

“L’apprentissage intercultural peut évoquer

-l’apprentissage des principales caractéristiques d’une autre culture

-la manière dont l’élève progresse de l’ethnocentrisme à l’appréciation et l’acceptation d’une autre culture.” [Keller1994, p.3]

Any attempt to categorise culture into sub-areas must be somewhat subjective. However, we argue that the categories of intercultural knowledge and skills put forward below, while not exhaustive, contain the most pertinent themes to facilitate an understanding of culture/ the business environment. All

accompanying definitions, unless otherwise stated, are taken from the Concise Oxford Dictionary 1995 (Oxford Press 1995).

As we have already noted, intercultural knowledge is needed to perform commercial tasks well and some of the categories reflect this. 'Kultur' in German speech communities is often understood to refer to phenomena beyond the necessities of life such as Art, Music or Literature. These categories are not included in our typology as it could not be expected to find them treated in any depth in German for Business textbooks. Thus we concentrate on the narrower scope of culture with a small 'c' (customs, geography, business practices and so on) rather than Culture, although politics are included as an understanding of the political system is essential to understand the economic climate.

1. Demographic

Demographic is defined as 'statistical data relating to the population and groups within it used especially in the identification of consumer markets.' Although it is debatable whether demographics have any place in our definition of culture, nonetheless, their study is important for an understanding of the business environment. It is noteworthy that this definition of 'demographic' specifies the use of demographics in market identification, thus supporting our contention that the study of this area is of importance for students of German for Business.

2. Topographical

We contend that topographical knowledge is essential for the learner for orientation purposes and for location decisions, as well as for general conversation with native Germans. The definition with which we are working is : ‘detailed description, representation on a map etc., of the natural and artificial features of a town, district, etc.

3. Political

The affairs of government must be understood in order to achieve a state of cultural knowledge. Political is understood as : ‘of or concerning the state of its government of public affairs generally.’ We argue, that an overview of the political parties in Germany is an integral part of cultural knowledge.

4. Economic

We understand economic to relate to ‘ the production and distribution of wealth’. Clearly, the study of the economic culture in Germany has significance for the German for Business learner as does a study of economic history i.e the development of the German economy after World War II as this explains much about German behaviour and attitudes to work. This latter area is outside the scope of German for Business textbooks however, and would have to be dealt with using supplementary materials.

5. Media and Advertising

The media play a central role in reflecting the culture as does advertising. We describe media as ‘ the main means of mass communication regarded collectively’. As with the political system, we contend that an overview of the German media as well as information on newspaper and magazine buying habits of the Germans is essential to development of intercultural knowledge.

6. Attitudes to work

Clearly, the attitudes of Germans to any number of issues could be argued as relevant. It would be impossible to be exhaustive in studying attitudes and work is chosen because apart from its relevance as an indicator of culture, the attitudes to work are of primary interest to the German for Business learner, where attitude is defined as the “way of thinking about (work) and behaviour reflecting this.”

7. Non verbal communication

Non-verbal communication is defined as “ actions and attributes with a socially shared meaning” [Jandt 1995, p.410]

These areas should be thematised as they are also a prerequisite of intercultural awareness. The areas therefore provide both a framework from which curricular implications can be drawn and a yardstick by which to assess the attention paid to intercultural knowledge in contemporary German for Business textbooks.

We shall investigate below whether current textbooks meet all of the above needs and some didactic consequences will be put forward.

2.5. Conclusion on needs identified

This chapter had as its major objective the establishment of the German language needs of Irish industry. The three strands which emerge as necessary to meet industry language requirements are LSP, GPL and Intercultural knowledge.

With regard to LSP we have evidenced that the business procedures or situations requiring the use of German most frequently are customer contact, negotiating, phone skills, trade fair attendance and the writing of technical documents. The latter use may reflect the tendency for sectors like pharmaceutical and engineering industries to require language graduates.

GPL skills were found to be paramount in contact with foreign business counterparts and studies show that graduates of business language courses have found the training to be less than adequate in developing the ability to speak fluently.

We also discovered that mutual comprehension in the intercultural situation may be impeded- not because of poor grammar but because of the many sources of misunderstanding presented when the dialogue partners do not share a common culture. Intercultural knowledge is indispensable in the German for Business curriculum to enable business relationships to be made and maintained and to develop workable marketing plans. As intercultural knowledge is open to many forms of interpretation, we put forward seven subgroups of intercultural knowledge which would enable intercultural competence, according to our definition, to be attained. The seven categories are demographic, topographic, communication. We now turn our attention to how existing texts of German for

Business at Third Level meet the needs. The three foci provide the basis for a model of course needs which in turns serves as a framework in which the response of the texts is studied.

Chapter Three

Curricular Implications of Industry Needs

3. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to sum up the principal areas of German language needs in industry and to develop a theoretical model for German for Business curricula at Third Level which embraces these needs. The second aim is to assess the currently available German for Business textbooks in the light of the model.

One contention that has informed this work is that curricula should be derived from industry needs or indeed from the various functions that the German language will have for the student target group. The starting point, therefore, is our data about the uses of German in the area of interest. It is from this data that the model is derived.

3.1 Presentation of a theoretical model to meet industry needs

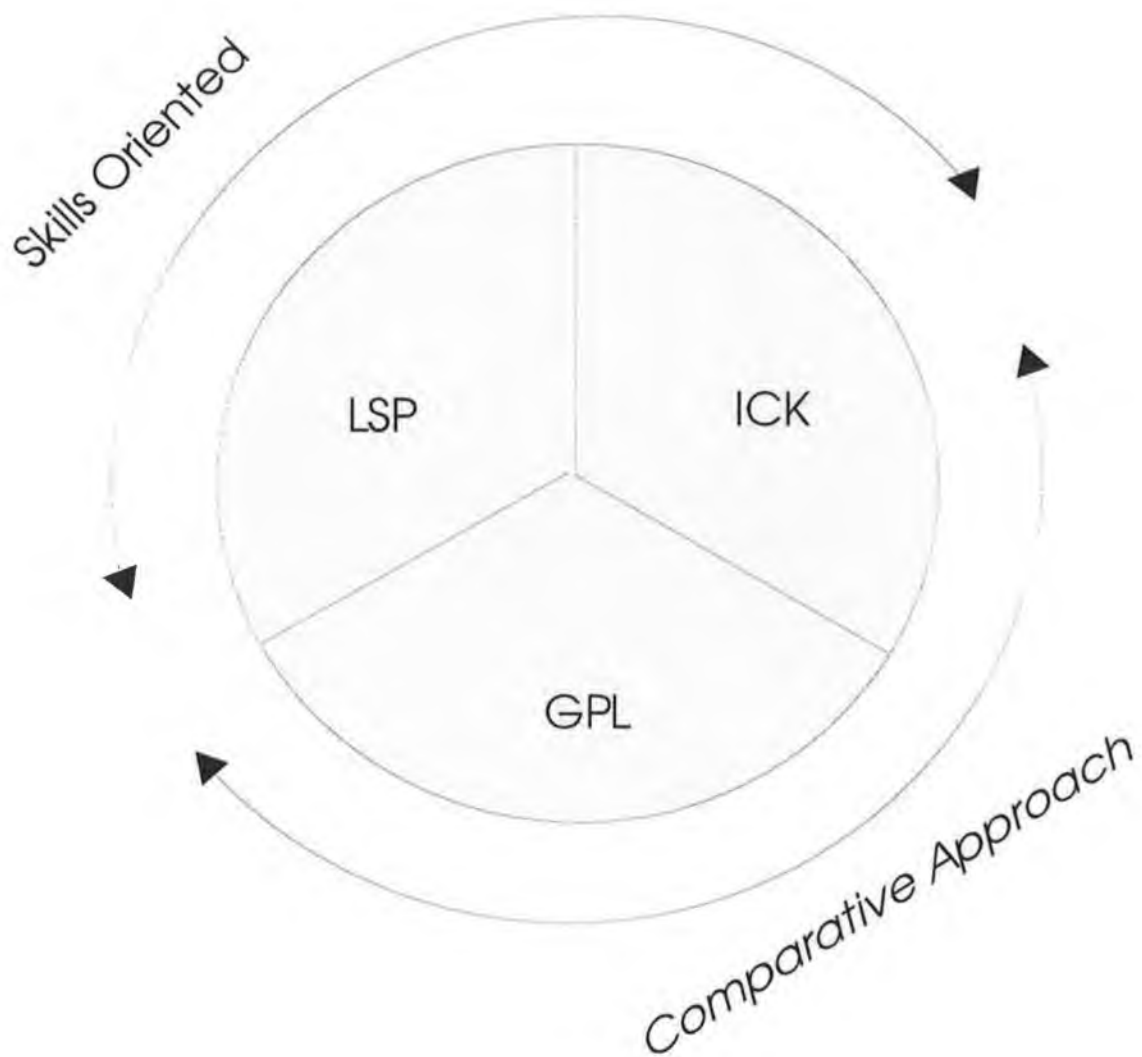
The studies discussed in Chapter two obviously point to the necessity of performing commercial tasks through German in the workplace. Two related factors emerge as essential to carrying out business with Germans. Firstly, the businessperson needs to have a command of general conversational German, as this is the bedrock on which face-to-face business communication rests. Secondly, we have concluded that intercultural competence is vital to conducting business with foreign counterparts and that therefore language and culture learning should go hand in hand. It is noteworthy that there are presently no

explicit Department of Education guidelines for Third Level German curricula.¹⁹

The model below is intended to serve as a yardstick against which to measure current textbook practices. Questions of implementation are dealt with at the end of this chapter.

Figure 4

Model of Curricular Requirements



¹⁹ Information received from Jürgen Posset, Department of Education, September 1996.

The three strands GPL, LSP and Intercultural Knowledge (ICK), can be represented as a circle composed of the three areas and teaching techniques. The three areas are depicted as being of equal size, implying that they are equally important, although the amount of time devoted to each will clearly be determined by the particular course requirements and by the students prior knowledge. The elements are portrayed as mutually reinforcing; neither GPL nor LSP can be taught without reference to the intercultural issues which permeate general conversation and business practice. The methodology depicted is skill orientated and relies on a skills oriented and comparative approach, where the latter applies to cultural studies and GPL teaching and skills development is relevant to each area of competence. It is relevant to note that it is important to study the home culture before differences between it and the German culture can be appreciated. The mutual support of each third of the circle is represented by the double headed arrows. Our course aims may now be set around this model, bearing in mind the profile of the learner.

3.2 Setting Curricular Aims

The initial step in setting curricular aims is clearly to consider the goal of the course with reference to the learner group and the desired end qualification. As Beier and Möhn observe: “ the learner’s needs and objectives are fundamental to the specification of curriculum content”. [Beier and Möhn 1987, p.38]

Factors such as the learner's existing language knowledge, level of specialised knowledge, and stage in the Third Level system determine how the course content and structure is developed.

Likewise, the end qualification requirements (whether Diploma or Degree, whether the graduate will possibly work in a German-speaking environment) will all have significance. One could also differentiate between students who need German as a means to integrate in German society and those who will use the language as a medium for career motivated contacts of limited duration, although it may not always be possible to determine this.. With regard to the first student category, the aim of the course would be guided by the necessity for the graduate to achieve cultural acceptance in a German environment, to become integrated into the foreign culture. A thorough preparation for the experience is necessary. The graduates based in Ireland, however, have somewhat different linguistic needs. If German is to be used in the Irish work context, the course must be task oriented as the ability to perform standardised commercial tasks will be essential for this group of students. Nonetheless, a cultural element in the course is also of importance for the executive whose time is spent predominantly in Ireland with occasional visits to Germany to attend trade fairs for example. There are two principal reasons for this. Firstly, it is our contention that a familiarity with the culture of the trading partner is always a vital asset for the home-based executive. Secondly, it is always possible that the linguistically able graduate may choose to seek work abroad.

Our discussion below is considered with the Irish-based language and business graduate in mind as the majority of graduates operate from here and the also as the author is familiar with the preparation and course development for this target group.

In addition to the learner level and end qualification requirements, course aims must reflect the three related strands which we have concluded to be so important. For illustrative purposes, the level assumed is Business Diploma level with the Regional Technical College system. Students have, on average, 500 hours of previous tuition in German and most will use the language in the Irish workplace. It is envisaged that the course should enable the graduate to take up a position in the Marketing, Sales or Export Department in an Irish firm with trade relations with Germany or with one of the 200 German firms currently in this country. The graduates should be able to deal with their German counterparts in business situations and apply their knowledge of the German market and culture to real life market and export planning and decision making. Based on the target group as outlined therefore, the aims of the course are as follows:

1. The student will acquire the ability to perform a variety of commercial tasks through German.
2. The student's general language skills will be improved .
3. An awareness and appreciation of the German culture, society and business environment will be developed in the student, with particular reference to intercultural differences.

More specifically, it is hoped that the curriculum should reflect the need to develop in the student an empathy for the German culture and a perception of similarities and differences between the innate and the foreign culture,

specifically as they relate to business practices. It is intended to lead the learner toward an avoidance of ethnocentric behaviour, which might lead a person to make negative judgements on different behaviour/ characteristics, rather than making an effort to understand, on the basis of intercultural divergences, why the behaviour is different. It is also hoped to help develop in the student the ability to establish more than superficial relationships with persons from the German culture.

4. The student will acquire the skills to continue to develop his or her German language knowledge and to deal with the difficulties which arise due to gaps in language or cultural knowledge.

Having defined the target group and set course aims, the next step is to choose a textbook relevant to the former. We will clearly require a textbook designed with the Business and Marketing area at the required level in mind. We now progress to assessing how the textbooks in this category meet the demands of the model.

3.3 German for Business Texts at Third Level

Most of the textbooks available today will fulfil some of the model criteria, and an appealing layout and authentic material is happily becoming the rule for such publications. They do not all provide scope to meet all the requirements of the model and course aims, however. The following analysis is intended to assess the textbooks in the light of the model of curricular needs and to examine what areas require improvement.

The four principal texts used at Third Level (for learners with prior knowledge of the order described in the target group profile above) are : *Working With German Level 2*, *Business auf Deutsch*, *Marktchance Wirtschaftsdeutsch* and *Unternehmen Deutsch*. Others, such as *Deutsch im Beruf* or *Hotel Europa* are aimed at beginners in the language and are therefore not relevant to the present discussion.

A textbook is required which provides a basis for communicating the receptive and productive language skills (specifically LSP) and intercultural skills which we have concluded to be necessary for the business graduate.

3.3.1 Assessment Criteria

The three areas under analysis are GPL, LSP and Intercultural Knowledge. The texts could be analysed as being satisfactory or less satisfactory within the three categories. However, in order to lend more objectivity to the conclusions the following weighting system is used.

With regard to GPL, we argue that at least 5 different general situations/ texts should be contained in the textbook. 1 mark is allocated per situation which has an accompanying exercise, 0.5 if no such exercise accompanies the situation or if it is inadequate to give the student an opportunity to practise GPL and 0 where there is no such general situation contained in the textbook. To meet our definition of a general situation, general language outside of the field of business must be evident. For example, exercises on eating at a restaurant or discussing

leisure interests with Germans would fall into this category. The total marks possible for the GPL part of the analysis is thus 5.

In the LSP area, each of the 5 topics derived from our study of Irish needs analyses in the last chapter²⁰ is investigated: Customer contact, Negotiating, Telephone skills, Trade fairs and Technical documents. In this case also, 1 mark signifies that a text and exercise are present relating to the particular topic, 0.5 is allocated where there is a text but no exercise and 0 where the topic is not covered. Corresponding to the areas, the total number of possible marks is 5.

With regard to the field of Intercultural Knowledge, the mark allocation is carried out in exactly the same manner as for GPL and LSP . Hence one mark for a particular category indicates that a text and exercise on that topic category are to be found in the textbook. We concluded above that rather than presenting stereotypical knowledge of German culture, a better approach would be to study political structures, media and other aspects on which culture rests. Despite many alternative ways of categorising the domain of ICK, we put forward the following areas as they are inherent in the definition of culture we adopted: Demographic, Topographic, Political, Economic, Media and Advertising, Attitudes to work and Non-verbal. We stress at this point that the exercise type is also of significance. For example, our definition of political knowledge in the last chapter states that an overview of the German political system is necessary. Where an overview is absent, a 1 mark allocation will not be made. Hence, the Intercultural Knowledge analysis section leans heavily on the definitions of the

²⁰ The topics reflect the business tasks for which German is most frequently required.

categories outlined in the previous chapter. As 7 categories of Intercultural Knowledge were proposed the total number of marks is correspondent.

3.2.2 Assessment Calculations

Working with German Level 2

GPL

There is very little general vocabulary in this textbook, most of the situations are based on typical business situations such as placing an order or sending a telefax. It is notable that the shortest chapter (Chapter 8) in the textbook is the one which deals with booking entertainment. Greetings are also covered in the first chapter.

Therefore, 2 marks are allocated in the GPL category.

Subtotal:2 marks

LSP

- Customer contact -1
- Negotiating-0
- Telephone skills-1
- Trade Fairs-1
- Technical documents-0.5 (There is a text on procedures with poisonous substances on page 50, but no accompanying exercise)
- Subtotal:3.5 marks.

- **Intercultural Knowledge**
- Demographic-0

- Topographic-0
- Political-0
- Economic-1 (there is one chapter on currency and means of payment)
- Media and Advertising: 0
- Attitude to work: 0
- Nonverbal:0

Subtotal: 1 mark

Total: 6.5 marks

Business auf Deutsch

GPL

There are many exercises in this textbook but these concentrate more on vocabulary expansion rather than oral practice. There is little attention paid to everyday situations (visiting a restaurant etc.) . However, telephone skills are covered for the general as well as the business context and travel vocabulary is also thematised.

Subtotal: 2 marks

LSP

- Customer contact- 1
- Negotiating -0
- Telephone skills-1
- Trade Fairs-1

- Technical documents-0

Subtotal: 3 marks

Intercultural Knowledge

- Demographic-0
- Topographic-1 (p.192, chapter 6)
- Political-0
- Economic-1
- Media and Advertising-.5 (no overview of German media)
- Attitudes to work-1 (p. 184 German business travellers attitudes are presented and comparisons with the home attitudes are invited).
- Non-verbal communication-0

Subtotal: 3.5 marks

Total: 8.5

Marktchance Wirtschaftsdeutsch

GPL

This textbook follows the attempts of two fictional characters to set up their own business. This provides a framework for all the common business tasks and these are thoroughly covered. The situations are concrete and the student can identify with the stages in the business plan of the two protagonists. General language is largely absent however. The final chapter contains the following exercise:

“ Frau Artmann and Herr Härtler haben sich lange nicht mehr gesehen. Wie könnte die Begrüßung und der Smalltalk zu Beginn ihres Gesprächs laufen ?”

Unfortunately, the text has given the students no preparation to reply.

Subtotal:1 mark

LSP

- Customer contact-1
- Negotiating-.5 (p.142) There are no examples of price negotiations, which the need studies find important.
- Telephone skills-1
- Trade Fairs-1
- Technical documents-1 (the product motif is a soap item. This lends itself to technical descriptions and is valuable in the light of the relevance of German language skills to the pharmaceutical industry as discussed above.)

Subtotal:4.5 marks

Intercultural Knowledge

- Demographic-0
- Topographic-1
- Political-0
- Economic-1 (industrial sectors and organisational forms are covered. p.16 and p.24).
- Media and Advertising-.5 (no overview of German media is presented.)
- Attitudes to work-.5 (The prestige of various professions in Germany is thematised and comparisons are elicited. There is no discussion of German attitudes to work situations however.)

- Non-verbal communication-0.

Subtotal: 3 marks

Total: 8.5

Unternehmen Deutsch

GPL

Chapters one and three are principally devoted to general purpose language, albeit within the realm of the business environment. The first chapter presents topics discussed when making small talk with a German client on the way from the airport. Chapter three includes a visit to a restaurant and discussing leisure activities. This textbook best reflects the need for businesspersons to engage in general conversation.

Subtotal: 5 marks

LSP

- Customer contact-1
- Negotiating-1 (Exercise 9.3)
- Telephone skills-1
- Trade Fairs-1
- Technical documents-1 (p. 33, 60, 107, 111.)

Subtotal: 5 marks

Intercultural Knowledge

- Demographic-.5 (there is some demographic information in the first chapter, but there are no details on demographic trends and no accompanying exercise.)
- Topographic-1 (p.49, 50, 97, 100) This textbook alone clearly recognises the need for the learners to be able to read area maps, find their way and have some knowledge of the geographical features of Germany.
- Political-.5 (while there is a short political quiz and some information on political parties in Germany, there is no overview of the political system).
- Economic-1
- Media and Advertising-0
- Attitudes to work-1 (p. 65 presents survey results on Germans attitudes to work and suggests that students assess the similarities and differences in their own attitudes.)
- Non-verbal -0

Subtotal: 4 marks

Total: 14 marks

Table 8 Overview of Textbook Analysis

Textbook	GPL	LSP	ICK	Total
Working with German 2	2	3.5	1	6.5
Business auf Deutsch	2	3	3.5	8.5
Marktchance Wirtschaftsdeutsch	1	4.5	3	8.5
Unternehmen Deutsch	5	5	4	14

It is apparent that while commercial tasks are well met by the current textbooks, general communicative competence is much less thoroughly covered, with the exception of *Unternehmen Deutsch*. The same can be said of the intercultural dimension, which is not comprehensively dealt with by any of the textbooks at hand. Although *Unternehmen Deutsch* acknowledges the need for intercultural knowledge, no overview of the German political or advertising environment is given. The importance of non-verbal communication in intercultural encounters is not mentioned in any of the textbooks. According to our criteria, at best just over half of intercultural knowledge areas are met (*Unternehmen Deutsch*); at worst only one of the seven areas is covered (*Working with German*). Since we established the importance of intercultural knowledge above, we contend that the need for intercultural skills is not adequately met by the current German for Business textbooks and that supplementary material and exercises are vital in fulfilling the course aims above and meeting the demands of the model of curricular needs.

3.4 Some didactic consequences of the model

This thesis has had as its focus German for business language needs and curricular implications. Hence methodological considerations fall outside the scope of the work. However content and methodology are interrelated and changes in emphasis in curricular content require changes in teaching methods. The methodology depicted in the model of course needs presented in this chapter leans on a comparative and skills oriented approach. We now address why this approach is suited to meeting the three need areas.

Firstly, a comparative methodological approach is necessary to alert the learner to the difficulties intercultural situations present. The learners must gain insight into assumptions on which their own behaviour rests and compare this behaviour with German cultural norms in order for cross cultural understanding to be expanded. By discussing comparable situations in Ireland and Germany the students' eyes are opened to the pervasiveness of the effects of culture and to the need to adapt their own communicative style to meet the demands of the intercultural situation. If a comparative approach is needed to alert students to the differences between the cultures, a skill oriented approach is necessary to teach them how to work within these differences. After Samovar, we define skills as "any repeatable goal oriented actions". [Samovar 1994, p.352]

Thus, coping strategies need to be taught if intercultural competence is to be attained. For example, asking for information about what is appropriate for a member of the German culture is an effective tool in becoming interculturally competent as is explaining why you behave in a certain way. Asking questions can be a sign of courage rather than incompetence. In sum, the students need to be given the tools and transferable skills to function in the intercultural environment. The implementation of these methods could involve techniques such as intercultural model dialogues, role play activities, audio-visual exercises and student discussion of the differences between German and English language use and behaviour.

3.5 Conclusion

The second chapter of this thesis provided a description of the principal skill business linguists require. Three interwoven strands were identified in the web of language for business teaching. This chapter proposed a simple model for curricular content based on the three areas and examined how current German for Business textbooks meet the requirements of the model. While it is relatively straightforward to assess whether general communication skills and commercial tasks are covered by a textbook, this is not the case with intercultural knowledge. Hence it was necessary to categorise intercultural knowledge in 7 sub areas. This methodology made the task of analysing the texts more structured and lent objectivity.

The analysis revealed that while commercial activities are adequately covered by the textbooks, the significance of the areas of GPL and intercultural knowledge is not reflected. The third course aim as outlined could not be met by reliance on the texts. We have evidenced in the last chapter that the home based executive who is responsible for exporting to or importing from Germany requires a sensitivity towards the prevailing business culture norms and a knowledge of the mindset of the German buyer and consumer. We conclude that the lack of attention paid to intercultural issues in the textbooks represents a major oversight and that their scope needs to be expanded to include this important and complex area.

Chapter Four

4. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to sum up the main points discussed on the German language needs of Irish industry and to suggest further avenues of research in this area.

This paper has set out to examine how German for Business curricula can meet the needs of the workplace. The logical starting point was to observe the broad trends in foreign language learning in Europe and specifically the position of German in Ireland. We concluded that the benefits of foreign language knowledge in business have become widely recognised and that this is reflected in the demand for language within the education system, the response of Third level and in the many EU initiatives to encourage language research. Moreover, as a small open economy, we are heavily dependent on export. Consequently, although Ireland's track record does not indicate a high level of multilingualism, this is changing. As Germany is our second most important trading partner, German is an important language for the Irish businessperson. All strands of Third Level education have responded by offering German integrated with business disciplines, but we have seen that industry demand for linguistically able graduates still outstrips supply.

We then set out to examine the specific German language needs of the workplace. This investigation prompted us to take a closer look at the

relationship between GPL and LSP and to conclude that while specialised language is a necessary element of the Business German curriculum, (in particular, that which pertains to routine business tasks) GPL is the bedrock of all communication. Furthermore, it became necessary to review whether German for Business is a LSP at all, given its relative accessibility to the layperson and the high proportion of GPL in most business situations. We found that language for business is not characterised by one set of stylistic features but rather contains a diversity of styles. Neither can it be deemed universal as it varies across business disciplines. We therefore argued that ‘specialised language’ of business is more accurately described as job-oriented language. Consequently, it was to be expected that our analysis of a business person’s linguistic needs in chapter two would reveal a high demand for GPL competence and the studies indeed tended to confirm this thesis. In fact, oral skills emerged as assuming greater importance in business than written communication. We therefore surmised that metalingual phrases are of much value in enabling the business linguist to overcome the gaps that inevitably exist in their language knowledge. The desirability of teaching a repertoire of such gambits, in addition to exposing the learner to varied accents and dialogues was outlined.

We also scrutinised the role of the LSP teacher and deduced that some business knowledge is a decided advantage in implementing the German for Business curriculum. Under these circumstances the teacher will be more likely to have a clear idea of the type of language required for business situations and will be able to give the student an insight into the German business environment.

Obviously, the business linguist needs to perform a variety of routine commercial activities through the foreign language. The needs analyses (European and Irish) revealed the most common commercial tasks for which the foreign language is utilised in the workplace. On the whole, there was a parity between the findings needs studies in Ireland and abroad. These routine situations clearly must be covered thoroughly in the German for Business course. We likewise noted the branches of industry which have particularity good prospects for language graduates in Ireland and recommended that these areas be given attention in the curricular content. Our focus group study gave further insights into the German language needs of Irish businesspersons and corroborated the evidence from European studies that all three elements: commercial tasks, GPL and intercultural skills are needed. Indeed all studies agree on this latter point: linguistic knowledge is clearly insufficient in today's complex and competitive business environment. The difficulty for the non-native speaker interpreting cultural cues is well documented. The thesis developed in this paper has argued that intercultural knowledge is not merely a desirable but a crucial element in German for Business programmes.

We have described intercultural issues as falling into demographic, attitudinal and political categories and in chapter three, we contended that Intercultural Competence must be incorporated into language teaching. A model was presented to reflect the three necessary areas of curricular content: GPL, LSP and Intercultural Knowledge. Although a detailed focus on the methodology suited to developing Intercultural Competence was outside the scope of this

work, the philosophy expounded was that a valuable approach is skill based and contrastive. An integrative skill based approach deals with intercultural skills on an ongoing basis, rather than as an isolated module. Words are thus explained in their cultural context, dialogues explored for intercultural pitfalls and the learners are encouraged to use their knowledge of the German consumer and marketplace. Since selection is inevitable, one criterion is the text contribution to the mastery of multicultural situations.

A contrastive approach was concluded to be valuable because in order to appreciate the diversity of the foreign culture the learners must first be sensitised to their own layers of identity. Comparative techniques described draw the learner's attention to how their own culture acts as a prism through which the German culture is perceived, so that the 'other' can be viewed more objectively.

The analysis of current German for Business textbooks concentrated on the extent to which the three needs areas was being met. We concluded that GPL and Intercultural Knowledge requirements are not adequately covered in the publications. In particular the Intercultural dimension was found to be under-recognised and we argued that this represents a serious oversight in the curriculum.

No research of this nature can claim to be faultless and certain caveats must be taken into account. The limitations of this research are in fact threefold. Firstly, the studies on which we based our conclusions have limited prescriptive value. For the most part, our literature was based on European studies and these were

extrapolated to include the Irish situation, under the assumption that foreign language needs of the workplace transcend national boundaries. However, this assumption was largely borne out by the similarity of the Irish Goethe Institut study of German language needs of Irish industry to the findings of the foreign studies.

It must also be noted that our focus group study was drawn from a sample of linguistic employees known to the author and is therefore not statistically significant. Related to this limitation is the fact that the respondents, as linguists, would be expected to attach greater importance to German language ability than other employees so that generalisations cannot be made lightly. Nonetheless, the focus study was helpful in obtaining first-hand information on German language needs. Furthermore, we expect that every situation encountered by this group of business linguists will display universal characteristics. Interesting insights were gained through the interviews and certain comments led us to explore the key areas of GPL and intercultural competence further.

Secondly, the analysis of the current German for Business textbooks was by its nature somewhat subjective. Any analysis of this kind can only be approximate and the categories of LSP, though drawn from the studies in chapter two are not exhaustive. This applies also to the categories of Intercultural Knowledge put forward. Although the division of Intercultural Knowledge into various subsections was intended to lend more objectivity to the textbook through the tightened framework, it is acknowledged that different categories could have

been included. The areas which make up an understanding of culture are open to discussion, however, the categories were carefully chosen to mirror the definition of culture adopted in the paper.

The third limitation is that our paper focused on what to include in German for Business courses rather than on how. Put otherwise, our concern has been the implications for curricular content while a methodological approach could not be dealt with exhaustively.

From these limitations, we can draw some recommendations for future research. Firstly, in Ireland little research to date has been undertaken on the German language needs of the workplace in specific industry sectors.

While some industry specific needs are clear e.g. telephone skills are of particular relevance to the direct marketing sector for example, other segments will have less obvious skill requirements. A typology of tasks/ needs in those areas which tend to employ linguistic business graduates as outlined in chapter two would be valuable and could be used to tailor German curricula for specialised courses in tourism and other areas. In practice, there exists little scope at Third Level to tailor business courses to suit individual linguistic needs and it is furthermore impossible to predict where the graduates will find themselves. Nonetheless, we recommend that material be drawn from texts relevant to those areas for which German is known to be important.

An in-depth study of the intercultural skills required in Irish trade with Germany currently represents a gap in the literature. These skills clamour for our attention.

After all, we believe intercultural competence (IC) to be as important for the business linguist as the ability to complete routine commercial tasks. Consequently, it is logical that a systematic typology of IC skills, similar to that of business tasks would be enormously valuable in course design. For example, the University of Hildesheim has developed an instrument for self-monitoring of foreign assignments of business executives called an intercultural diary. The idea is to help business people to monitor their own development. A statistical analysis of such diaries of Irish businesspersons working with Germans would be enormously helpful in compiling a skills typology and in developing a comprehensive theoretical model embracing language and culture teaching. Another research opportunity in the same field is provided by the recent EU SOCRATES intensive programme development initiative. The principle of this programme is that participating institutions put forward an idea for a co-operative curriculum, which is then developed with foreign partners to lend a truly European flavour to the resulting curriculum. Such a polyglot and multicultural approach is ideal for developing a IC skills curriculum, particularly if input into this rich and complex area were sought from experienced businesspersons by way of guest lectures. There could hardly be a more effective method of preparing a IC skills typology reflecting the reality of Irish/ German business relationships than by consulting those at the forefront of such trade. A research study of this kind would not only provide a basis for curriculum design but would also raise the general awareness of the value of intercultural competence.

Finally, in teaching German for business, we need not strive for the unattainable ideal of the native speaker, we need not seek to replicate the socialisation of the native speaker. We must however, be active in the pursuit of language for business curricula which go some way to enabling graduates to be international, rather than foreign businesspersons. We cannot do away with intercultural differences, nor would such cultural homogeneity be desirable. Hence, their importance is one factor on which future curricular development must rest. For it is only with the requisite intercultural competence that graduates will be able to move with confidence in the German business environment, to negotiate the common cultural ground, without needing to change identity or abandon their own viewpoint, without resorting either to being a 'mimic' or a 'cultural monster'.

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Appendix A

German Language Requirements for Industry

1. How many people does your company employ?

2. In what area of activity is your company engaged?

- Food
- Drink, Tobacco
- Leisure Products
- Clothing, Footwear
- Furniture and Home Products
- Engineering
- Construction
- Electronics
- Chemicals and Plastics
- Others (please specify) _____

Services

- Financial
- Tourism
- Construction
- Other (please specify) _____

3. How important for your company is trade with Germany?

Extremely Important Very Important Important Not Very Important Of no Importance

4. The language predominately used when conducting trade with Germany is

German English

5. What weight is given to German language proficiency in assessing applicants for vacancies among the following areas?

(a) Marketing

Extremely Important Very Important Important Not Very Important Of no Importance

(b) Sales

Extremely Important Very Important Important Not Very Important Of no Importance

German Letters and/or Faxes

Extremely Often Very Often Often Not Very Often Never

Translation of Technical Documents

Extremely Often Very Often Often Not Very Often Never

Dealing with Phone Enquiries

Extremely Often Very Often Often Not Very Often Never

Attending Trade Fairs

Extremely Often Very Often Often Not Very Often Never

Negotiating with German Supplier

Extremely Often Very Often Often Not Very Often Never

Checking of own Company Literature

Extremely Often Very Often Often Not Very Often Never

Preparation of Price Quotations for German Customers

Extremely Often Very Often Often Not Very Often Never

Technical Specifications

Extremely Often Very Often Often Not Very Often Never

(c) Purchasing

Extremely Important Very Important Important Not Very Important Of no Importance

(d) Secretarial

Extremely Important Very Important Important Not Very Important Of no Importance

(e) Technical

Extremely Important Very Important Important Not Very Important Of no Importance

6. Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with the following statement

"A knowledge of German on the part of our marketing staff makes it easier to penetrate the German market"

Absolutely True Very True True Not Very True Absolutely Not True

The following two questions should be answered by an employee who uses German in his/her work.

7. German language skills are need for the following tasks:

Preparation of Product Description

Extremely Often Very Often Often Not Very Often Never

Translation of Foreign Correspondence

Extremely Often Very Often Often Not Very Often Never

Other (please specify): _____

Extremely
Often

Very
Often

Often

Not
Very Often

Never

8. In what department are you employed?
(please tick where appropriate)

Marketing

Sales

Purchasing

Technical

Secretarial/General Administration