Landeskunde: Its Role and Functions in the Irish German Language Classroom

An Empirical Study

ANNA MARIA LYSAGHT

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Supervisor: Dr. Arnd Witte

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Introduction

This thesis deals with the role and functions of Landeskunde in the Irish secondary educational system. The controversial nature of Landeskunde (see section 1) and the differing views surrounding its composition, role and functions in both teaching approaches in general and in the Irish secondary school system in particular were the issues which prompted the research that comprises the basis of this study.

Chapter one offers an analysis of the concept of Landeskunde – what it actually is. There is a brief outline of various theories put forward throughout the development of foreign language teaching regarding the composition of Landeskunde, it's aims and functions. The development of Landeskunde and its changing role within the Communicative Approach and the Intercultural Approach is also investigated.

Chapter two looks at the role of Landeskunde (referred to in the Curriculum Guidelines of the Department of Education as "Cultural Studies") in both the Junior and Leaving Certificate courses in Ireland. Also included is a look at the different approaches used in teaching culture at both levels and the ambiguities present for teachers when choosing material relating to and aspects of the target language country to use in class.

Chapter three presents an examination of results obtained from empirical research based on factual evidence gathered in response to the questionnaire distributed as part of this study (see Appendix One). It is a concrete illustration of the popularity and importance of Landeskunde in Irish secondary schools.

Included in chapter four are some important conclusions ascertained from responses to the questionnaires followed by some practical recommendations for teachers regarding the methodologies and materials used in teaching German as a second language in Irish secondary schools.

CHAPTER ONE

THE COMPOSITION, ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF LANDESKUNDE

1. What Exactly is Landeskunde?

"Who climbs the grammar tree distinctly knows
where a noun, a verb, a participle grows"
(John Dryden, 1693)

When investigating a particular subject, it is necessary first to understand the background and individual strands of development of that subject before one can begin to research a new facet of that subject. In other words, one must look to the past in order to make sense of the future. And so it is with Landeskunde. We must first understand the place occupied by Landeskunde in various teaching methods in general before we can understand its role in the specific context of Irish classrooms which themselves are modelled to a certain degree on these approaches.

"Landeskunde rückt in den Mittelpunkt des Fremdsprachenunterrichts" (Stuttgarter Thesen zur Rolle der Landeskunde 1982: 8). "Landeskunde hat keine apriorische, grundsätzliche Vorrangstellung gegenüber andere Inhalten" (Deutschmann 1982: 227). Such polarised opinions are testimony to the varying degrees of importance attributed to Landeskunde, or "Cultural Studies" as it may be referred to in the English language, throughout the course of its controversial existence.

Today, there is rarely an article dealing with Landeskunde which does not refer at the outset to the long established and on-going difficulty which exists in defining this subject (Koreik 1995: 1). Indeed, the controversy surrounding this subject has at times been so intense that even the actual term "Landeskunde" has been disputed because of the fact

that according to some, "Land" was considered too blatantly geographical and "Kunde" was seen as too general and not academic enough (Grawe 1987: 459-474).

What exactly is Landeskunde? It has been referred to as, amongst other things, an "Unfach" (Schmidt 1980: 289), a "unmögliches Fach aus Deutschland" (Gürttler/Steinfeld 1990: 255) and a "Polyhybrid" (Zapp 1983: 1). There are various factors at play in contributing to the confusion surrounding the actual term "Landeskunde", the most obvious being the lack of concrete academic theory regarding this subject and the almost endless possibilities for the selection, justification and mediation of materials which qualify as suitable to be taught under the term "Landeskunde". It is comparable to "ein Buch, dessen Inhalt oder besser: dessen Inhalte verwirrend sind wie ein Labyrinth" (Delmas/Vorderwülbecke 1982: 190).

Although there have been numerous attempts to define Landeskunde, many have also shied away from attempting to concretely define such a broad, controversial notion, putting forward instead *suggestions* as to what might be included under the heading "Landeskunde":

> "Niemand ist in der Lage zu beschreiben, was Kulturkunde, Landes-/Länderkunde, Civilisation alles umfassen. Beteiligt sind auf jeden Fall die Kulturanthropologie, Politik-, Sozial-, Rechts- und Wirtschaftswissenschaften, Geschichte, Kunstgeographie, Geographie" (Ehnert 1990: 226).

However, one point upon which all are agreed is that the teaching of Landeskunde involves the teaching of culture (culture being defined as a set of rules, beliefs, traditions and customs which are commonly observed by a particular group of people in a particular society), or, according to the more comprehensive "erweiterte Kulturbegriff" (Schilling 1989: 152), culture is:

"Kommunikations-, Sinn- oder auch Funktionszusammenhang und richtet sich auf die Gesamtheit der Verhaltens-, Denk-, Empfindungs-, Wahrnehmungs- und Lebensweisen in einem Kulturraum [...]; die Summe der Normen, Wertungen, Leitvorstellungen, Grundhaltungen, die diesen Kulturraum charakterisieren."

Landeskunde actually promotes the idea of an "erweiterter Kulturbegriff" (Ramin 1989: 229). As I have already said, there have been innumerable attempts to define Landeskunde, all of which share in one form or another the same elements which they claim compose Landeskunde. One of the more comprehensive yet concise definitions of Landeskunde comes from Lipold:

Modell der Abhängigkeiten von der allgemeinen Landeskunde

Thematische Ebenen	(gezeigt an einigen Beispielen)
Interdisziplinäre	ALLGEMEINE LANDESKUNDE
Disziplinäre	Linguistik Geschichte Politik Wirtschaft Geographie
Teildisziplinäre	Sprachgeschichte ... Gegenwartssprache ... Fachsprache ... Dialekte ... Sprachlandeskunde ... Soziolekte

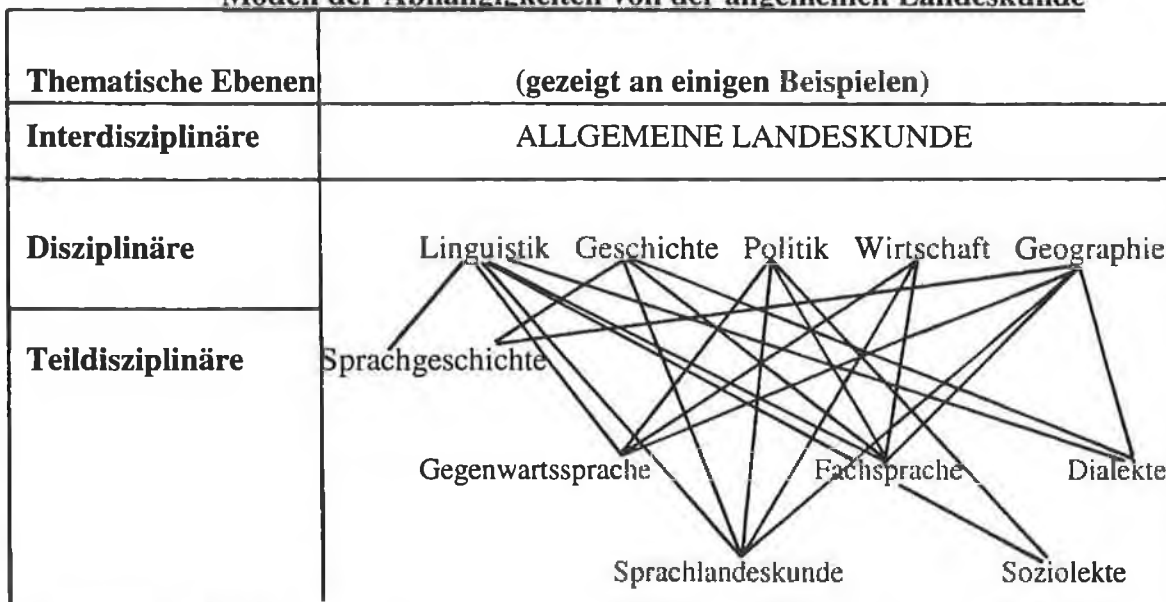**Diagram 1** (Lipold 1989: 37)

This is an important definition of Landeskunde as it encompasses and summarises very clearly in diagram form numerous attempts at definition and the various topics which have always been considered part of Landeskunde and it shows clearly how they are connected to one another. It is more or less a complete diagram of the definition put forward by Ehnert (1990) .

The most comprehensive yet concise written definition of Landeskunde to date has been put forward by Althaus & Mog (1992: 8):

> "Sie soll Fremde mit der Geschichte, den politischen Strukturen und Institutionen, den sozialen und kulturellen Verhältnissen, mit Philosophie, Literatur und Kunst eines Landes vertraut machen, sie soll selbstverständlich auch Einblicke in die Mentalität, die Lebensweise und den Alltag seiner Bewohner geben [...] (Die Lehrenden) sollen darüber hinaus zugleich Vorurteile abbauen, Stereotypen auflösen, Völkerverständigung fördern; sie sollen über das Fremdverstehen die Selbsterfahrung der ausländischen Lernenden schärfen, Haltungen und Wahrnehmungsweisen verändern."

While Lipold's hypothesis illustrates the various components of Landeskunde and how they are interconnected with one another, the above definition put forward by Althaus & Mog illustrates the actual *aims and functions* of Landeskunde. Taking the Althaus / Mog definition into account, Landeskunde itself can be said to be all of those subjects, those topics or spheres of study which contribute to achieving the aims mentioned above. These materials would include all of the individual aspects of Lipold's diagram, as well as music, art and literature in the target language and of the target language country.

1.1 Literature as Landeskunde

Literature in all of its forms has always been an important element of foreign language teaching. Although literature has always been present, the actual role played by it in foreign language class is many-facetted and has often been disputed. Literature appears in foreign language class in one of two forms, either as factual/documentary articles or as literary texts (novels, prose, poetry, short stories etc.) Factual texts, namely newspaper and magazine articles, instructions and notices are frequently used in foreign language teaching using the Communicative Approach. Because of their pragmatic structure and factual content, they are ideal for helping to develop the practical, communicative skills which a learner would need for successful communication with others in the target

language country, skills on which the Communicative Approach is based.

Through such media learners can practice their reading strategies, these being selective and global reading respectively. By means of selective reading a reader can gather solely that material which he needs to successfully complete a task or for successful communication. Global reading is practised when a reader wants a general overview of the text, in order to get a basic idea of what is going on. Through factual texts, learners also become familiar with the way in which language is used every day in the target culture and they will learn the vocabulary necessary for practical communication.

Literary texts are the second form of literature used in foreign language teaching and their worth and role has often been disputed. On the one hand it has been suggested that choosing literary texts from the target language country as a form of teaching material in the foreign language classroom is an absurd idea due to the complexity involved in the interpretation of the texts – interpretation of both the foreign language and themes / symbols (Stieg 1980: 459-468). According to this view, each geographical and cultural difference would demand the use of secondary support material to aid comprehension. Literary texts are then seen as more complex and difficult than a straightforward explanation of the political or social situation of the target language country.

In contrast to this hypothesis, literary texts are in many ways responsible for mediating details of social or political situations in a foreign culture or society and for helping to form many perspectives and opinions in the learner which purely factual or documentary texts fail to do (due to their lack of interpretative potential). Literary texts achieve the involvement of the reader in the story through the aesthetic and emotional dimensions present in the work. Where great attention to detail is shown by the author in regard to scenery or emotions in a story, the reader is more likely to discover a certain aspect which is in common with his or her own emotional or social situation and is therefore more inclined towards involvement in the events of the story and the fates of the characters.

Through deeper involvement in the story, more complex perspectives and opinions are formed about the topic in question. Factual texts, by way of their analytical, uninvolved approach towards the mediation of information simply do not offer the reader the scope for involvement in events and, as previously mentioned, lack sufficient interpretative material. For instance, many would be in agreement that a learner would learn more about the political and social situation and the public feeling in Germany during World War Two by reading the "Diary of Anne Frank" (Frank 1954) than by attending a course of history lessons on the subject of "Life in Germany during World War Two". This outcome would be due to the emotions awakened in the reader as a result of explicit emotional and authentic material used by Anne Frank.

Furthermore, the complexity of the interpretative process can encourage discussion, analysis, investigation and comparison with one's own situation. Literary texts then, can be seen to integrate the development of complex thought processes into foreign language class (Stieg 1980: 460). Discussing the meaning behind stories, poems or novels is an effective method of encouraging the learner to make use of various speech acts such as inference, association and evaluation in the foreign language (Schmidt 1980: 523).

Through this accumulation of experiences and understanding of social behaviour as a result of reading literary texts the ability of the learner to interact with and make oneself comprehensible to others is increased. The general trend of literary texts to develop and improve analytical abilities, to foster discussion and comparison between one's own culture and the culture of target language has even lead some to go so far as to suggest that Landeskunde is actually a part of *literature* studies (Schmidt, 1980: 289) and would explain why literary texts compose the greater part of materials used in teaching foreign language through the Intercultural Approach.

1.2 Why Landeskunde?

Having established what Landeskunde is and what its aims are, the next step should be to put forward some points which illustrate why Landeskunde is an integral part of foreign

language teaching and an aspect which (if it is not already) should be accorded an equal proportion of lesson time as other elements such as grammar and communication skills. Foreign languages have long been recognised as a discipline in which intellectual development is merely *one* of the aims (Byram 1991: 103). When learning a foreign language there are other personal dimensions and certain modern and social conditions which at least justify, if not necessitate the inclusion of cultural studies in foreign language class.

In our global society today there are many political and social developments taking place which necessitate intercultural communication, competence and understanding through foreign languages. With growing awareness of neighbouring cultures through technology the world is fast becoming less of a large planet and more of a global village and there is a growing sense of dependency amongst countries which transgresses geographical and cultural borders. In order to accommodate this dependency, an intercultural competence (which is one of the units developed in foreign language class) must be developed and fostered in people of all nationalities from a young age onwards (Buttjes 1991: 48).

These reasons reflect the positive need for Landeskunde or Cultural Studies on a global scale, but there are also of course many immediate personal benefits for the individual learner. Landeskunde contributes in many ways to the creation and fostering of cultural awareness in the learner towards one's own culture and towards foreign cultures and those who live in them. These positive attitudes should enhance the enjoyment felt by the learner in foreign travel and encounters with members of a foreign culture. It is not the responsibility of the foreign language class to acculturate the learner to the foreign culture. Rather, following successful learning the learner should develop a *critical understanding* of the foreign culture. This understanding, this comprehension should then proceed to sow the seeds of a willingness to accept the unfamiliar in all aspects of life (Byram et al. 1991: 103).

Landeskunde or "Cultural Studies" is an integral part of learning a foreign language because of the fact that language and culture cannot be separated. Language does not

merely reflect a cultural reality but is in fact a part of that reality. This interlacing of language and culture is explained by Vermeer: "Sprache ist [...] integraler und integrierter Teil einer Kultur. Fremdsprachenunterricht bedeutet Unterricht in hetero-kulturellem Verhalten" (Vermeer 1972: 2) and by Byram, who analyses language as being:

> "not simply a reflector of an objective cultural reality. It is an integral part of that reality through which other parts are shaped and interpreted. It is both a symbol of the whole and part of the whole which shapes and is in turn shaped by sociocultural actions, beliefs and values" (Byram 1991: 18).

He uses this observation to argue that to separate language from culture, i.e. to teach one without the other would be an incorrect and flawed methodology, insofar as it would treat each of them as a self-contained, autonomous phenomenon, completely independent of the other. Even although division of language from culture may theoretically be deemed detrimental in a teaching context, it is nevertheless quite common practice in the practical language classroom situation. Many modern textbooks that promote the Communicative Approach, which is the most widely used form of foreign language teaching in Ireland today, while not abandoning cultural studies completely within the textbook, often separate the language lesson from the cultural information, and devote most of the text to language, leaving a separate section either at the beginning or at the end of a chapter for cultural studies.

An example of such practice would be the "Themen" textbooks (Aufderstraße et al. 1994) which include a small amount of cultural information in one form or another (such as poem, comic dialogue or joke relating to the target culture) usually at the beginning of every chapter. It becomes clear, on examining the layout of the textbook, that cultural information and grammatical (language) aspects are treated as separate entities, as fully independent features of the language course. It falls upon the individual teachers, therefore to integrate the cultural aspects into the language class.

To teach language as a phenomenon independent of culture would be almost irreparably damaging to the learner's fundamental perceptions of the foreign culture. Where such a situation arises the learner will view the foreign language in the light of his or her own customs and culture. The foreign language will not be viewed as foreign as such, but rather as another aspect of the learner's own culture. The foreign language will not actually be understood as being the product of a different set of beliefs and social phenomena but as having the same origin and context as the learner's own language (Byram 1991: 18).

This inseparability of language and culture, although dealt with in different ways in different teaching methods, has been taken into account to varying degrees by the creator and practitioners of all of the foreign language teaching methods. However, the recognition and acceptance of this mutual dependency of language and culture has not always led to the creation of a consistently significant place for Landeskunde within each method.

Within particular teaching methods it is still granted only a secondary role (for example in the Communicative Approach, as will be shown later), while in other methods (for example the Intercultural Approach) Landeskunde occupies a place of great importance (this will be demonstrated in greater detail in Chapter Two). Generally speaking, the importance of Landeskunde is determined by the aims of the particular teaching method. In Chapter Two I will examine the role and aims of Landeskunde in the Communicative Approach, in the Intercultural Approach and in the current curricula for Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate Examinations of the Department of Education in the Republic of Ireland.

1.3 Landeskunde in the Communicative Approach

The Communicative Approach was developed in the second half of the nineteen seventies. Several socio-political, pedagogical and institutional factors merged to create a climate which demanded reforms in the methodology of foreign language teaching. In

Germany, some of the factors which contributed to the reform climate of the time included the presence of a new government (social-liberal as opposed to conservative), and the rapid development of media and transport. The reforms mentioned above facilitated increases in both the diversity and numbers of persons learning a foreign language. No longer were language learners composed solely of schoolchildren, but they also began to include business people and those taking part in evening classes to learn a foreign language for a particular reason, e.g. for holidays or business purposes (Neuner 1993: 83).

The "Communicative" Approach is self-explanatory. It aims to impart to the learner effective communication skills for everyday situations and is therefore preoccupied with a portrayal of everyday phenomena and speech relating to those contexts.

Landeskunde in the Communicative Approach is the cultural knowledge of the target language country gained through the use of authentic material from the L2[1] country, which is aimed at everyday, practical communication. Through the use of practical material such as newspaper or magazine articles, recipes, instructions, timetables, notices and the like, learners encounter the norms, traditions and general "way of life" of the target culture. It is the main function of the materials used in the Communicative Approach to act as contexts for exercising and developing the language and practical communication skills learned. Cultural information about the target language country is rarely mediated for its own sake.[2] An example would be that if, using the Communicative Approach music were being discussed, the background material used is more likely to be a programme from a concert or the like as opposed to an article relating to a particular type of music popular in the L2 country or native of the L2 country.

Because communication skills are seen as the ultimate aim of the Communicative Approach, Landeskunde tends to be viewed as an aspect of foreign language learning which is not completely imperative and is not particularly considered to be an actual goal

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[1] "L2" refers to the target language and L1 refers to the learner's mother tongue.
[2] "For its own sake" refers to the idea of teaching culture independently of a communicative context.

per se of language learning.

"Hauptziel eines pragmatisch-orientierten Fremdsprachenunterrichts ist also nicht die Vermittlung von sprachlichen bzw. landeskundlichen Kenntnissen, sondern die Entwicklung von fremdsprachlichem Können" (Neuner 1993: 85).

If communication is the ultimate aim of the Communicative Approach, then Landeskunde obviously occupies a role secondary to this aim because attitudes towards the L2 country and discussions about what topics are taught and the extent to which those topics should be taught are for the most part accorded a lesser importance than the achievement of fluency in the language. This becomes evident in both teaching materials associated with the Communicative Approach and (therefore) in the actual practice of the Communicative Approach.

The widespread practice of the Communicative Approach often involves giving learners a consumer or tourist type knowledge of the language (Byram 1991: 19), enabling them to survive in a foreign country. The Communicative Approach does emphasise the use of authentic teaching materials, for example factual texts from the L2 country (such as newspaper or magazine articles and instructions of various types) and such innovative teaching methods as partner work and group work, in order to preserve the language in an authentic, relevant context, but specifically *cultural* elements are rather restricted and limited.

Landeskunde occupies a somewhat secondary role in the learning of a language and its inclusion in a foreign language lesson is generally restricted to that material which would somehow encourage the appropriation of communication skills. The function of Landeskunde in the Communicative Approach is to contextualise what the pupils learn and to provide a realistic, comprehensible backdrop for the appropriation of fluency and communication skills: "Landeskunde wurde nur akzeptiert, soweit sie den Spracherwerb förderte oder sich aus dem sprachlichen Curriculum ergab" (Buttjes 1989: 114).

The role of Landeskunde in the Communicative Approach resembles a serving role. It appears to act as a medium through which the main aim of the Communicative Approach (practical communication skills) can be achieved and is not considered an independent aspect of foreign language learning with merits of its own. It is therefore more of a means to an end than an end in itself.

1.3.1 Texts and Themes in the Communicative Approach

As already said, the aims of a particular method will influence its didactics. Literature in *all of its guises* has always been an important part of foreign language learning and is used in all methods of language teaching. Reading comprehension tasks are a very important element of the Communicative Approach and the texts used in this method are chosen for their relevance to everyday phenomena and the opportunities they offer the learner to exercise his or her actual reading strategies. This criterion for the most part excludes the use of literary texts (which tend to place more of an emphasis on in-depth analytical abilities). The predominant text sort in the Communicative Approach is the "*Sachtext*", a factual text taken for example from a newspaper or a magazine. Such texts are chosen for the following reasons:

(a) To demonstrate to the learner how the language is used in everyday life through the use of authentic materials, and

(b) To exercise and improve the learner's ability to read an article and to extract from it the information which is necessary and useful to him (Neuner 1993: 102).

In a textbook using the Communicative Approach advertisements, newspaper articles and instructions are by far the predominant method of measuring comprehension skills (for example "Zur Sache 1" [Hayes & Hayes 1992], the workbook for Junior Certificate students in Ireland).

An example of a Communicative-Approach based textbook is "Deutsch Heute" (Capoore & Sidwell 1990) which is aimed at Junior Certificate students. Each chapter deals with a potential scenario where the pupil would have to communicate with native speakers, for example, "Einkaufen", "Etwas zu essen, Etwas zu trinken", "Die Bahn" and so on. The greater part of each chapter is devoted to the portrayal of authentic material such as travel tickets, menus, billboards with price tags and opening times etcetera. The students are required to extract important information from these materials by answering questions about them, thereby exercising their reading strategies. For example, students must come to terms with a train timetable in order to respond to questions regarding departure or arrival times, ticket prices and facilities on certain trains. Likewise in other chapters such as those about banks or restaurants, pupils must discover opening times and other such information by answering questions which refer to signs or notices printed in the book which show this information.

As a very brief summary, let it be said that in short, Landeskunde (cultural information about the target language country in the form of authentic materials from the everyday society of that country) does play a part in the Communicative Method because financial services, public transport, newspaper and magazine articles and the like with which the Communicative Approach deals are a part of almost every L2 culture. But within the Communicative Approach it serves the purpose of providing a context for building and exercising communicative skills rather than actually being taught for its own sake.

1.4 Landeskunde in the Intercultural Approach

Naturally the Communicative Approach, the ultimate aim of which is to prepare learners for a stay in the L2 country, is not suitable for all educational systems world-wide. In situations where there is a great geographical and cultural distance between the learner's home country and the country of the L2, (for example if they were situated in two different continents), a stay in the L2 country or an opportunity to practice those skills is not always possible for a number of reasons, more often than not financial.

For this reason, certain aspects of the Communicative Approach such as the emphasis on oral competency (when there is no immediate opportunity nor necessity to practise the language) and the predominance of factual articles (which deal with events which are of no relevance to the learner and to which the learner has no further access) over literary texts are not very useful to a learner in such a situation (Neuner 1993: 106). It was therefore deemed necessary at the beginning of the nineteen eighties to design a teaching method which would offer the learner living across a great geographical and cultural divide from the target language country an equally valuable learning experience, but without the emphasis on communication skills.

The principle aim of the Intercultural Approach is to increase the learner's knowledge and awareness of the target culture and through this to offer the learner an opportunity to view his or her own culture in the light of the target culture, thereby encouraging previously unattempted discussion, comparison and differentiation (Ramin 1989: 230). In the Intercultural Approach, it is not enough to merely present the German speaking countries superficially to the learner because by the very nature of the Intercultural Approach it is the *form* of presentation of material which should help to develop the analytical skills of the learner.

Because the Intercultural Approach concentrates on not only the institutional and impersonal aspects of the L2 country, but also on the development of the individual *within* these structures, the Intercultural Approach aims to develop in the learner an understanding of not only the structures, institutions and processes of the target language country, but also the emotional and social development of the individual within these structures. This aim should be reflected in the materials chosen for the mediation of cultural information in the intercultural Approach:

> "Bei der Auswahl der Texte ist darauf zu achten, daß die Landeskunde nicht zur Institution verkümmert, die die Menschen der jeweiligen Kultur bzw. der jeweiligen Kulturen vergißt. Nicht das Schulsystem ist z.B. ausschweifend darzustellen, sondern beispielsweise die Stellung oder Entwicklung eines Schülers

in diesem System" (Ehnert & Wazel 1994: 275).

As a result, effective teaching in the Intercultural Approach should result in the following developments in the learner:

- The ability to judge how natives behave in relation to their culture and how they react against it.

- The ability to assume various roles in the target society.

- The ability to view the target society as done by the natives of this society.
(Göhring, 1980: 72f)

The Intercultural Approach in foreign language teaching is about much more than teaching a language – even more important is the broadening of the learner's perspectives and opinions and the development of their analytical and comparative skills. The learner is encouraged to progress from what might have been considered rather simple, uncomplicated opinions and to assume a more critical stance regarding various aspects of his or her own culture and the culture of the L2 country.

> "Ein [...] mit einer kritischen Urteilsfähigkeit vorgenommerner Vergleich der eigenen Lebensmuster mit denen der Fremdkultur kann gewiß das Bewußtsein von der Relativität von Verhaltensnormen entwickeln helfen; er stellt damit eine wichtige Voraussetzung für eine wirksame Erziehung der Schüler zur Toleranz dar und vermindert die Wahrscheinlichkeit fur das Auftreten des nicht selten zu beobachtenden Beurteilens im Stile von 'Das ist besser, das ist schlechter'" (Ehnert / Wazel 1994: 275).

If one aspect of language learning (either language / grammar or Landeskunde) must for some reason be curtailed (in the case of the Intercultural Method that aspect is language, for reasons already discussed) then the other must compensate. In a case where there is a great cultural and

geographical distance between the learner's country and the L2 country communicative competence in the foreign language is important but not *the* most important issue, so cultural studies must be used as the main method by which the learner will come into contact with the foreign world. According to Neuner:

> "Das Erlernen einer Fremdsprache, die nicht als Lingua Franca (internationale Verkehrssprache) gebraucht wird [...] muß dazu beitragen, daß der Schüler die fremde Welt, die ihm im Unterricht begegnet, besser verstehen lernt und daß aus der Auseinandersetzung mit der fremden Welt die eigene Welt deutlichere Konturen annimmt" (Neuner 1993: 108).

So it has been established that the Communicative Approach alone with its emphasis on everyday phenomena cannot completely fulfil the needs of a learner for whom the opportunity to experience the target language culture and its people may never arise. Such a learner could not possibly comprehend correctly or easily everyday phenomena without first understanding the reasons why the culture within which these phenomena take place is fundamentally different to his own. This understanding is not intuitive and must be developed in the learner by the teacher, the teaching materials and the approaches used.

The Intercultural Method had to be designed therefore with new goals, new content, new teaching methodology and new criteria by which the learner's progress could be measured (Lernkontrollen), all of which would successfully convey the differences between the target language country and the L1 country. Therefore the content of the language course had to be re-evaluated and a transition had to be made from the predominantly factual information of the Communicative Approach to a content which would allow the development of perceptive and analytical abilities. A literature-orientated form of Landeskunde therefore came to the fore in language teaching methodology as the means by which these abilities could be cultivated and developed.

"Landeskunde bekam einmal die Funktion von Kontextwissen für Kommunikative Situationen unterschiedlichster Art (z.B. bei S.J Schmidt), zum anderen entwickelte sich für den fortgeschrittenen Sprachunterricht ein neuer, sozialwissenschaftlich inspirierter Umgang mit literarischen wie expositorischen Texten, der zum Ziel hatte, gesellschaftliche Systeme zu erkunden und zu vergleichen (z.B bei R. Picht und den Arbeiten des Deutsch-französischen Instituts Ludwigsburg" (Penning 1995: 627).

The change in the position of Landeskunde from a somewhat secondary role in the Communicative Approach to a more central role in the Intercultural Approach has also been observed by Weimann & Hosch (1993: 516): "Damit erfuhr die Landeskunde eine Aufwertung: neben die kommunikative fremdsprachlichen Kompetenz tritt Kultur bzw. Fremdverstehen als gleichberechtigtes Lernziel."

1.4.1 Texts and Themes in the Intercultural Method

The genre of texts used in the Intercultural Method differs greatly from those used in the Communicative Approach. Where in the Communicative Approach factual texts are the dominant genre of text used in the lesson, in the Intercultural Method they are replaced by literary texts. Authentic prose, poetry, short stories, novel extracts and other such forms of literature from the L2 country are valuable in the lesson as a means of evoking the cultural norms and behaviour of a society (Neuner 1993: 120).

"Literarische Texte im DaF-Unterricht verfremden das allzu Vertraute und deuten auf das Charakteristische. Sie führen u.U. schneller zum Wesen der Erscheinung als ein Text aus einem anderen funktionalistischen Bereich" (Ehnert / Wazel 1994: 276).

Literary texts are more advantageous than factual texts to the learner in the Intercultural Approach. Indeed one of the main goals of literary works is to evoke, either implicitly or explicitly, a portrait of a society or a culture. Fictional texts chronicling experiences,

feelings or events concerning characters within the L2 also serve to provide the learner with social structures and behaviour that he can observe, examine and compare with his own, and in this respect they are didactically far more valuable than factual texts.

> "Anders als Sachtexte, die in der Regel nur einen kleinen und meist schnell unaktuell werdenden Ausschnitt aus der gesellschaftlichen Wirklichkeit thematisieren, vermitteln gute literarische Texte in der Regel Komplexität." (Ehnert / Wazel 1994: 276).

Literature then, is the basis on which Cultural Studies (Landeskunde) are taught because the themes which are used are chosen not primarily for grammatical or syntactical content, but rather for their worth as indicators of the foreign culture and for their potential to develop the investigative and analytical skills of the learner.

This leads one to discuss the choice of themes used in the Intercultural Method. The themes chosen by the teacher for discussion should present an opportunity for the learner to identify with and comprehend the situation in question. On introduction to the theme the learner should be capable of identifying a similar situation or phenomenon in his own culture or in his own life experience. The choice of themes in the Intercultural Method is extremely important. They must not be too familiar to nor should they be too alien to the learner. If the themes are too familiar, the danger exists that the learner will not be capable of differentiating between particular aspects of the two cultures because they will appear too alike. Similarly, if the themes are too alien to the learner there is a real possibility that he or she will simply be unable to identify[3] in any way with the foreign culture. This is a very dangerous situation as identification is at the very least *to some degree* an essential factor in the comprehension process in the Intercultural Approach.

The essential ingredient in choosing themes for this method is the "Spannung des partiellen Nichtverstehens" (Neuner 1993: 111). According to this notion, the learner

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[3] "Identify" here does not refer to acculturation, rather it simply refers to finding "Anknüpfungspunkte" within the L2 culture.

should be offered themes with which (s)he can identify or which he can recognise, yet those themes should also offer enough new, unexplored territory that the learner's curiosity will be awakened and (s)he will want to discover more.

There have been various suggestions made in relation to how a teacher should choose such themes. One could ask the students themselves which themes they would like to discuss but this can be time-consuming and sometimes unproductive as their individual choices will vary a lot according to age and life experience. Other difficulties arise if one chooses themes which youths in the L2 country find interesting as these may be considered uninteresting or even incomprehensible by the learner. Those themes offering the "Spannung des partiellen Nichtverstehens" are "universal" situations which are experienced in one or other form by (young) people all over the world, regardless of their cultural background. Such themes include family, work, leisure time, relationships, school, health and so on. This choice of themes is also suggested by Aloys Beuers (1989: 127):

> "Für den ausländischen Rezipienten sind folgende Aspekte von Interesse: das Leben in den Familien, die Kinder- und Jugenderziehung, Schule, Arbeitsplätze, Arbeitsproblematik, Autorität und Freiheit, Ehe, Beruf, [...] Technik, Energie und Umweltschutz."

These themes are dealt with abundantly in literary texts and are in many ways ideal for the Intercultural Method in that they offer the learner an alliance with the foreign culture yet their functions and origins are significantly different to their functions and origins in the learner's own country, thus facilitating comparison between the L1 and the L2 countries. It should be the potential of the themes to motivate the learner to analyse and discuss and to help the learner to formulate a positive, well-balanced view of the target language society which is important as this in itself will promote successful language learning (Göhring, 1989: 79).

Take the theme of school for example. In a literary text portraying an educational system or experience, the learner should be able to stand back and recognise the fact that (s)he goes to school and the youths in the target language country go to school (identification). (S)he will then realise that the methods of schooling in the two cultures are different (differentiation) and he will then compare the advantages and disadvantages of the two systems (comparison). Finally, through the comparison of one's own school with a foreign school, the learner should begin to view not only the school in the target language country in the light of his or her own, but also his or her own school system in a new light, against a backdrop of the foreign school. So, from the above it can clearly be seen that a literature-orientated form of Landeskunde occupies a central role in the Intercultural Approach. It is no longer merely a secondary component through which other goals are achieved but is, in its own right, through a careful choice of texts and themes, the main method of developing in the learner a comprehension of and identification with the foreign culture.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ROLE OF LANDESKUNDE IN THE IRISH SECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

2. Landeskunde in the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate Curricula in Ireland

According to the Department of Education Curriculum Guidelines for Teachers, the general aim of education is:

> "to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual, including aesthetic, creative, critical, cultural, emotional, expressive, intellectual [...] for personal and home life, for working life, for living in the community and for leisure." (Department of Education Draft Guidelines n.d.a[4]: 2)

2.1 Landeskunde at Junior Certificate Level

The role of Landeskunde varies widely at Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate level in Ireland. At Junior Certificate level the main method of teaching foreign language bears strong resemblance in the materials used and teaching methods practised to the Communicative Approach and the textbooks and workbooks for Junior Certificate level contain the previously described content and format of this approach. The teachers and materials concentrate on teaching basic communicative skills for living, or at least surviving in the foreign culture.

The German syllabus for Junior Certificate is said to be a communicative syllabus, centred around "the needs, expectations and interests which pupils bring to the foreign language classroom" (Department of Education Junior Certificate Programme 1989: 47).

These needs centre around "using and understanding the target language as a means of communication and instruction in the classroom" (Department of Education Junior Certificate Programme 1989: 47).

The general communicative aims of the Junior Certificate include, among others, to enable students to cope with normal classroom use of a language and to "equip pupils with a competence in the target language which would equip them to provide themselves with basic necessities to avoid misdemeanours and or serious embarrassment" (Department of Education Junior Certificate Programme 1989: 48).

Another main communicative aim of the Junior Certificate course is to "furnish pupils with linguistic skills which will make it possible for them to pursue at least some aspects of their general interests through the medium of the target language" (Department of Education Junior Certificate Programme 1989: 48). The general objectives of the Junior Certificate syllabus are to enable students to perform communicative tasks in the target language. It is therefore clear that the Department of Education places a distinct emphasis on the importance of the communicative element of foreign language learning at Junior Certificate level.

There is a wide variety of textbooks being used in the Junior Certificate, not all of which can be mentioned here. For this study, it was decided to examine a Junior Certificate textbook named "Deutsch Heute" (Capoore & Sidwell 1990) because it is one of the most widely used textbooks throughout secondary schools in Ireland.

"Deutsch Heute" (Capoore & Sidwell 1990) is a three stage German course, each stage of which corresponds with a secondary school year approaching and including Third Year (Junior Certificate year). All three of the books concentrate on preparing the learners for potential situations where they would have to communicate with natives. The topics covered in each stage of the course vary, although in some cases there is an overlap. Where this is the case, there is an increase in the detail and complexity with which they

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[4] N.d.a refers to "no date available" for publishing details.

are dealt. For instance, in "Teil 3" of the course (for Third Year students), the range of topics which are dealt with is narrowed down but the topics are dealt with more in-depth. There is a certain pattern present in the layout of the book in that many of the chapters are introduced by native German speakers who are discussing the particular topic to be dealt with in the chapter. Much of the time, learners practise reading the given dialogues aloud. The dialogue is also printed, presumably so that the learner can become familiar with the written version of the spoken word. These dialogues are often followed by exercises and charts or diagrams with keywords and phrases from which the learner must formulate a dialogue or some form of practical communication modelled on the introductory conversations they have read.

Other exercises include reading comprehension tasks using factual texts from everyday life in the target language country. These exercises use authentic material such as newspaper articles, bus and train timetables, tickets and notices relating to the theme about which the learner must answer questions.

"Deutsch Heute" (Capoore & Sidwell 1990) pointedly makes use of role play and group work and other innovative learning and teaching techniques but the "undiluted" cultural aspects of the book so to speak, for example articles dealing with various aspects of the German way of life without a language context, are kept to a minimum. For instance in the chapter dealing with finance, students are merely shown phrases needed to complete basic transactions in a bank. Likewise, in the chapter "Etwas zu essen, Etwas zu trinken" (Capoore & Sidwell 1990) students are equipped with the basic vocabulary and structures for ordering a meal in a German eatery and paying for it. There is no significant attention given to, say, customary or especially popular dishes, just as in the chapter on money, there is no background information given on the history of German currency or other "cultural" aspects of the economy such as the German stock exchange or the post-war inflation, to name some examples.

The workbook for Junior Certificate pupils, "Zur Sache 1" (Hayes & Hayes 1992) reflects the type of material commonly used for a Junior Certificate language course

based on the Communicative Approach. It contains many exercises for practising written communication but for the most part it is composed of newspaper and magazine articles, recipes and extracts from various instruction manuals as well as advertisements.

The pupil's task always involves improving his or her communicative vocabulary and reading skills through reading the article and extracting from it the answers required by the set questions. Then, at the end of the course these comprehension abilities and communicative skills are again tested in the Junior Certificate examination in exercises modelled on those practised by the learner over the course of the year. In the first paper of the Junior Certificate examination the pupils are first of all given a list of between three and five keywords (usually the names of shops or other buildings) and are asked to identify a certain one (see Appendix Two). They are also presented with advertisements and required to identify certain ones (see Appendix Two). The reading comprehension task in the Junior Certificate examination is based on a factual text.

2.2 Landeskunde at Leaving Certificate Level

All Leaving Certificate programmes emphasise the importance of self-directed and independent learning and the importance of a spirit of enquiry, critical thinking, problem solving, self-reliance, initiative and enterprise (Department of Education Draft Guidelines for Teachers n.d.a: 2). In foreign language class at Leaving Certificate level, particular importance is placed on the "critical thinking" and "problem solving" and once the learner reaches Leaving Certificate level the themes handled in foreign language class and the manner in which they are dealt with undergo changes from Junior Certificate in order to expressly accommodate critical thinking and problem solving.

The Senior Cycle of education in Ireland (Fifth Year and Sixth Year) has three main aims: General Aims, Behavioural Objectives and Assessment. The Behavioural Objectives are further divided into three categories. These are: "Basic Communication and Proficiency", "Language Awareness" and "Cultural Awareness". The communicative element of foreign language learning of the Junior Certificate syllabus is retained in the

Leaving Certificate Syllabus: "The communicative skills acquired in the Junior Certificate will be maintained and continually reactivated during the Senior Cycle" (Department of Education Leaving Certificate Syllabus 1995: 2). However, a purely communicative approach at Leaving Certificate level was considered to be too functional and unfocused and Cultural Awareness assumed a role of greater importance than it previously occupied at Junior Certificate level (Sherwin 1997: 61).

The new emphasis in the Leaving Certificate was on the development of learner autonomy (illustrating a resemblance to the Intercultural Approach). For example, learners must employ strategies to deduce meaning from texts and contexts and would therefore need to use not only linguistic knowledge, but also cultural knowledge and awareness of the social context implicit in the language used (Sherwin 1997: 61).

While Cultural Awareness *is* mentioned in relation to the Junior Certificate syllabus, it is explicitly stated by the Department of Education that the Leaving Certificate syllabus aims to develop *further* this awareness:

> "The aim of the Junior Certificate syllabus make explicit reference to the development of the learner's Language Awareness and Cultural Awareness. These aspects of the Junior Certificate syllabus are *further*[5] developed in the syllabus for the Leaving Certificate" (Department of Education Leaving Certificate German Syllabus 1995: 2)

This is the view of the Department of Education on "Cultural Awareness" at Leaving Certificate level:

> "Cultural awareness is an essential aspect of successful language learning. [...] Culture in the context of the syllabus concerns in particular the way of life of the target language society but also the diversity of its cultural heritage (literature, visual arts, music etc.). [...] Implicit in the cultural aims of the syllabus is the

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[5] My own emphasis.

promotion of the intellectual and social development of learners whose perceptions and insights into the other culture should not remain unchanged and superficial. [...] The use of authentic materials including literary texts can promote awareness of the way of life of the country in a direct way and enable learners to deepen their insight into both the other country and their own." (Department of Education Draft Guidelines n.d.a: 22, 28)

From this quotation, one can see that the reasons given for the inclusion of "Cultural Awareness" in the Leaving Certificate syllabus and their anticipated effects on the learner's perceptions and opinions can be compared to the aims of the Intercultural Approach, whose main aim is to encourage independent thought in the learner through the use of culture-related material.

The "cultural" themes at Leaving Certificate level for students of German are chosen for their relevance to the learner's life experience and social environment. Speaking broadly of the Intercultural Approach, these themes should illustrate universal events and situations occurring to which the learner can relate. In the Irish secondary school context they should illustrate events and situations common to both Ireland and Germany, but with differing origins and contexts. Such themes would include among others crime, travel, relationships, male and female roles, health and leisure time.

The textbook for Leaving Certificate level chosen for analysis for this dissertation is "Einsicht" (Stocker & Saunders 1995) because, like "Deutsch Heute" (Capoore & Sidwell 1990) it is one of the most widely used textbooks in secondary schools in Ireland. Each chapter of the book is divided up into three sections, referred to as "Topics", "Grammar" and "Communication" respectively, although within the actual chapters themselves these subheadings are intermingled and are not strictly separated. The themes are portrayed by the use of poetry and texts - a small proportion of which are factual, but for the most part they are literary.

Choosing themes for the Leaving Certificate syllabus which relate either to the L2 culture but which are also applicable to the L1 culture, or themes which relate to the western world in general, to which both cultures belong, is another reflection of the influence of the Intercultural Approach. "Teaching and learning strategies should not only focus on the target language and its community, but also on its relationship to Ireland and the Irish way of life" (Sherwin 1997: 61). Choosing themes which are characteristic of both cultures places an emphasis not only on the actual themes themselves, but on their potential to motivate the learner to active discussion and analysis through the learner's identification with, or equally curiosity about habits of the target language culture (Spannung des partiellen Nichtverstehens). Such universal experiences occur in every culture but for different reasons and these differences should give rise to sensible, reasonable and well-informed discussion among learners.

There are two Reading Comprehension Tasks on the Leaving Certificate written paper (see Appendix 2), one of which is always a literary text which deals with feelings and emotions as well as events and scenarios to which the pupils can relate. Pupils must answer two sections of questions for both texts. For text 1 students must answer questions in sections entitled "Leseverständnis" and "Schriftliche Produktion". For the second text, pupils must answer sections entitled "Angewandte Grammatik" and "Äußerung zum Thema". The pupils are asked some factual questions relating to the events in the text itself but there is also an emphasis on questions about personal opinion, and such abstract ideas as symbolism, techniques used by writers, imagery etcetera.

One of the factors responsible for this emphasis on abstract as well as on factual topics is the oral examination, the function of which, apart from examining the pupil's fluency, is to examine the pupil's ability to discuss and compare various aspects of society clearly and accurately. Pupils are expected to possess a clear, comprehensible view of events in their own society and the society of the L2. "What is now asked of students is an ability to respond and think in the language of the L2 at a high level" (Sherwin 1997: 63).

For the Leaving Certificate Examination, most pupils are able to express an opinion on the culture of the L2 or compare it with their own, but this opinion is all too often chosen by the pupil from a narrow selection of possibilities supplied by the teacher and learnt off in advance of the examination.

The opinions and perspectives are therefore well-structured and organised in advance of the examination (due to the fact that the students are in possession of the materials used in the oral examination: role plays and picture stories) for reasons other than a genuine interest in the topic (they simply wish to pass an examination). This is clear evidence of instrumental motivation, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Many teachers claim that they do not have enough time in the year to discuss in-depth and individually all 32 topics listed in "Sprich doch!" (Department of Education 1994), the handbook for the Leaving Certificate German oral examination.

2.3 Differences in the Mediation of Landeskunde at Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate Levels

There is a slight problem for teachers and learners of German in secondary schools in Ireland today which lies in the fact there are differing structures and emphases within the teaching methods in operation for Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate courses respectively.

At Junior Certificate level, the teaching method used follows the pattern of the Communicative Approach whereas at Leaving Certificate level, although the communicative element is preserved, there is a new emphasis on Cultural Studies independent of a communicative context. This method would therefore appear to have been influenced to a degree by the Intercultural Approach.

Much of the time at Junior Certificate level, pupils are provided with guidelines which they can then use to practise the communicative skills that they learn. Although the use of given structures to practise language skills may resemble the "Pattern Drills" of the

Audiovisual Method, it is nevertheless done in a communicative context. (In any case, it would be wrong to believe that any language teaching method could be developed without in some way being influenced by another method). There is always a role-play or a dialogue that the pupils can use for their own learning, which acts as a form of direction in the Communicative Approach.

At Leaving Certificate level the teaching and learning methods would appear to be freer, less "structured" so to speak than at Junior Certificate level because it is more discussion and comparison-orientated and the context of the language is not purely communicative. Obviously, the move from the Junior Cycle to the Senior Cycle is a progression from a state of dependence to a more autonomous learning process, which is in line with the intellectual development of the pupils. This difference in the learning processes involved in Junior and Senior Cycles respectively is attested to by the Department of Education in it's description of the Transition Year (the fourth year of secondary education in Ireland, between the Junior and Senior cycles): "Students […] move from a state of dependency to a more autonomous and participative role" (Department of Education Transition Year Programmes: Guidelines for Schools 1986: 6).

Because this transition from one method to another must be made, students in Ireland must learn to implement two different learning processes in the course of their foreign language education in secondary school. Yet this is a very high expectation of a pupil at Leaving Certificate level given the current lack of time available to Junior Certificate students for entrance into a new Senior Cycle. It appears that the vast majority of pupils tend to find this progression towards autonomous, independent learning relatively difficult to cope with as they are so used to learning within a framework provided for them by the teacher.

The following is an example of a teacher of German who noticed in her fifth year German class this inability to cope with a decrease in structure. At the start of the school year she had organised a discussion on the reunification of Germany, discussing all the political, social and cultural ramifications, as well as the advantages and possible

problems.

Later in the year she asked the class to organise a debate on the political situation here in Ireland, having already provided much of the necessary material (keywords and phrases) for the previous debate. The pupils however could not cope with this new situation and could not construct coherent arguments either for or against the motion independently, without her help. They were in possession of practically all of the material they needed but because the material was out of context (Irish unification instead of German reunification) they did not know where to begin, they needed a structure provided for them by the teacher, they were completely unable to work autonomously. So in summary, those are the two main problems in existence for the teaching of Landeskunde in Ireland:

(a)   Landeskunde's changing role from a secondary to a primary concern, which occurs in the change from a supporting role at Junior Certificate (influence of the Communicative Approach) level to a predominant role at Leaving Certificate level (influence of the Intercultural Approach)

(b)   The context of Landeskunde changing from structured (constantly a communicative context) to less structured (the context of Landeskunde changes constantly, depending on the topic being discussed). Again, this difference is a result of the different teaching methods employed at Junior and Leaving Certificate level. The method used for the teaching of German within the Junior Cycle appears to resemble the Communicative Approach and the method used for Senior Cycle is more inclined towards the Intercultural Approach.

2.4 The Transition Year as a Possibility for Minimising Inconsistencies between the Portrayal and Mediation of Landeskunde at Junior and Leaving Certificate Levels

Although the Transition Year is compulsory in almost all secondary schools in the Republic of Ireland at present, it is still an only an optional year in some schools and is

undertaken at the discretion of the individual student. The Transition Year was introduced in 1974 for potential early school leavers who, having completed an approved Junior Cycle, felt that they were ready to leave school but perhaps required additional training before they were ready to enter the world of work. It was also an option for pupils who wished to continue with their education to Senior Cycle level but who felt that they were not prepared to progress immediately to the Leaving Certificate course. (Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland Transition Year Options: A Teacher's Handbook n.d.a: 3).

One of the main objectives of the Transition Year was to assist students in beginning to take responsibility for their own learning (Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland Transition Year Options: A Teacher's Handbook n.d.a: 4). Because the Transition year is seen primarily as a preparatory year for the student before (s)he progresses in life, it has been suggested by the national teachers' organisation in Ireland (Association of Secondary School Teachers of Ireland) that this Transition Year could be used as a "window" in the pupils' school career in which the teacher could ease the pupil into a new teaching system:

> "Transition Year Programmes are directed towards the intellectual, social and emotional maturation of the student and are regarded as a bridge between Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle (Association of Secondary School Teachers of Ireland Transition Year Options: A Teacher's Handbook n.d.a: 3).

The Transition Year could prove to be an opportunity to gradually introduce a teaching method that encourages open discussion on and comparison of abstract topics (resembling the Intercultural Approach) to the already established practice which was based on the Communicative Approach which would have provided more structure for the pupils.

If this were the case the pupils would have the opportunity to make a gradual transition from a learning context within a framework, where many structures are provided for them

to a freer class plan which is more discussion and thought-orientated, where they would be encouraged carefully to consider their points of view and opinions and the factors behind them. The transition should be very gradual and thus enhance and develop the learner's abilities rather than estranging him or her to such an extent that (s)he cannot make use of his or her optimum abilities.

It is necessary that this "transition" is a slow process so that during it the students will have gained so much experience in reading and writing about comparisons between Germany and Ireland that by the time they reach their fifth and sixth year in secondary school, i.e. their Senior Cycle, it will have become much less problematic for them and they will not feel as intimidated or confused by discussing mutual cultural phenomena or comparing their own country to that of the L2 country as they appear to today. The Transition Year could prove to be an ideal opportunity for a gradual changeover from one learning (and teaching) method to another, something which in the current educational system in Ireland would appear to be recommendable:

"The traditional Leaving Certificate programme does not cater adequately for the varieties of needs and abilities of students now completing Senior Cycle" (Department of Education Charting Our Education Future, White Paper on Education, 1995: 50).

If such a scheme were to begin, then much attention would have to be paid to those topics which could be used in the learners' progression from the third year to the sixth year. The current rules and regulations as set out by the Department of Education prohibit the use of Leaving Certificate material in the Transition Year:

> "The Transition Year has been introduced to provide students with enriched opportunities for personal development. Schools are not permitted to offer a three-year Leaving Certificate programme as this would undermine the Transition Year objectives" (Department of Education Charting Our Education Future White Paper on Education 1995: 50).

This rule in itself is fair, as it is not the intention of the Transition Year to be academically challenging; rather, it should contribute to the aspirations and the character development of the learners. However, excluding Leaving Certificate themes from the Transition Year curriculum will render it all the more difficult for a teacher to choose themes for the learners, given that almost all of the suitable themes are "reserved" for the Leaving Certificate. In any case, it should be recommended that a solution should not be long forthcoming given the urgency of the situation and the genuinely interested and concerned discussion currently taking place.

2.4.1 Ambiguities in the Choice of Landeskunde Content for the Junior and Leaving Certificate Course

But there is one final problem with the teaching of Landeskunde which underlies the problem of making the transition from the Junior Cycle to the Senior Cycle and which has existed in the Irish educational system since foreign languages were officially introduced as a compulsory component of the new Irish education syllabus in 1924 (Coolahan 1981: 75). That is that there are no official regulations from the Department of Education regarding which cultural topics must be taught and to what extent.

At Junior Certificate level with the prevalence of the Communicative Approach "culture" in its own right, i.e. not being exclusively used as a context for communication skills, is allotted very little lesson time and it is often the case that it is simply granted a few minutes at the end of class, as a gap filler before the bell goes. Naturally with some exceptions, this is proving to be the situation of Landeskunde (Cultural Studies) in Ireland at Junior Certificate level but it is also attested to by Byram (1991: 17) as occurring in Great Britain. Those aspects of the culture which are discussed and the amount of time allotted to them are entirely at the discretion of the teacher. This current practice leads to inadequacies and inconsistencies across the board in the amount and content of the knowledge that each Third Year student acquires.

Likewise, at Leaving Certificate level the attitude towards the amount and type of Landeskunde which should be dealt with is ambiguous. On the question of topics to be covered in the syllabus, the only topics which are clearly defined in the Leaving Certificate are those mentioned in the list of topics which must be prepared for the oral examination, each of which must be discussed in the following three ways:

"Explain" - pupils must explain the events of a role - play or picture sequence.

"Future Projection" - what are the possible repercussions?

"Opinion on Issue" - What are the pupil's own views on the situation or can he or she relate the situation to his or her own experience? (Kavanagh 1998: 1).

Because of these three approaches which must be taken by the student towards the topic, there is an obligation to discuss topics on a level deeper than merely superficial. Landeskunde is admittedly more high profile at Leaving Certificate level, nevertheless the same problem exists as for the Junior Certificate in that there are no concrete rules or regulations as to *what exactly* should be taught. The topics for the oral examination are accorded priority as the individual teacher sees fit. Certain teachers may have a preference for specific topics and may ignore others. It would not be unfair to suggest that what teachers need at both levels in order to introduce some kind of order to the teaching of Landeskunde are:

(a) a list of topics chosen by the Department of Education for their didactic value which must be taught, and

(b) adequate guidelines for the teaching of the topics, i.e. methodological aids or suggestions for teachers.

Such suggestions, if put forward by the Department of Education in printed form could well prove to significantly reduce the present inadequacies and inconsistencies which

exist amongst different teachers and different schools.

In summary then, it can be seen that Landekunde in many forms has long been a fundamental part of foreign language teaching in Ireland although its importance is determined by the particular aims of the teaching method in question and in the personal approach of the individual teacher towards it.

In the Communicative Approach, on which the Junior Certificate course is modelled, Landeskunde occupies a place secondary to the appropriation of everyday communication skills and students may encounter some undiluted "culture" i.e. cultural information imparted for its own sake and not as a context for exercising communicative skills if there is time at the end of the lesson.

In the Intercultural Approach, whose pattern the Leaving Certificate curriculum closely follows, Landeskunde finds a new value and new form (literature-orientated) and becomes more concerned with the development of cultural awareness and the breaking down of ethnocentric views through a reasonable comprehension and critical awareness of and identification with the new culture. Landeskunde therefore, in the form of literature within the Intercultural Approach could be said to be one of the most, if not the most predominant device used in the teaching of a foreign language.

The use of these widely differing teaching approaches in such close temporal proximity to one another has lead to inconsistencies and inadequacies in the use and portrayal of Landeskunde (referring to cultural information in general) in secondary education in Ireland and these shortcomings need to be recognised and addressed as a matter of urgency.

CHAPTER THREE

REALISING AND UNDERSTANDING PUPIL PERCEPTIONS OF LANDESKUNDE: RESULTS OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

3. Reasons for the Empirical Research

At the time of writing, there had been some research done in Great Britain and Scotland on the subject of the role of Cultural Studies in secondary school foreign language classrooms (Byram et al. 1990; Keller 1979). However, until now no such research has been carried out regarding the state of Landeskunde specifically in Irish foreign language classrooms. Landeskunde, without doubt, is an omnipresent component of German class and will therefore have a lasting effect on the learning of the language. Taking this into account, it was decided that it would be very interesting to discover the opinions of school goers concerning Cultural Studies in their language class and to discover how, if at all, it affected the learning processes of the pupils and their opinions towards the language itself.

Purely theoretical research for such a topic would not suffice, as by its very nature it would not produce concrete data and information which would be immediately relevant to a practical classroom situation. It was decided therefore, to carry out empirical research in the form of a questionnaire in order to immerse the study in the "real world" and to emerge with real, practical information. The answers provided by the students will compose the core of the study. The title of the dissertation, "The Role of Landeskunde in the Irish Foreign Language Classroom" is a complex and multi-layered topic in itself and a number of elements must be examined in order to arrive at a comprehensive, well-balanced conclusion that would concretely define the function and role of Landeskunde in secondary school classrooms in Ireland.

A questionnaire (see Appendix One) was chosen as the primary investigative method for a number of reasons, most notably because "sie am unkompliziertesten die Sammlung einer großen Informationsmenge und -variation von vielen Befragten in strukturell gleicher Weise zuläßt" (Witte 1996: 177). Also, a questionnaire is a means of imposing order on the logistical chaos which resulted from the distribution of a large amount of questionnaires, each containing an equally large amount of information. No other method of research could have been as efficient in accurately assembling such a large amount of data. Ninety-five questionnaires were distributed and returned, showing a return rate of 100%. Each questionnaire containined twenty-six questions, which created 2470 responses for analysis. Furthermore, the anonymous nature of the questionnaire, which was emphasised to each group of students on their receiving the questionnaire, encouraged the students to provide honest and uninhibited answers: "Children provide wonderfully frank and honest feedback especially when they sense that their opinions are valued and respected" (Hopkins 1993: 153). The following are the areas that the study sought to investigate:

3.1 Aims of the Questionnaire

a) To establish the role played by Landeskunde in the foreign language class as estimated by the students in that class. Does it play a large role, a small role or is it non-existent?

b) To assess the importance of cultural studies in learning a foreign language. This differs from the above in that a pupil may feel that Cultural Studies is a very important part of learning a foreign language but it may play a very small role in German class.

c) To establish the popularity of cultural studies amongst students of German.

d) To establish the effects of Landeskunde on the learning process in the foreign language class. Does it encourage or discourage learning? Does it have a positive or a negative effect on the learning process.

e) To establish the current perceptions, prejudices and knowledge of young Irish students of the German language, the German people and Germany.

f) To establish whether there is a connection between the perceptions and prejudices of students and the amount and type of Landeskunde to which they are being exposed.

3.1.1 Structure of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was composed of twenty-five actual questions and a blank map of Germany into which students had to mark a number of cities and the border between the former East Germany and West Germany. Although there are no sub-headings in the questionnaire itself, it will be divided in this chapter into different sections according to the topics to which the questions relate as there are several "clusters" of questions which relate to a single issue.

Questions one to three aimed to establish the background of the individual respondent and whether or not he or she had had any previous contact with a German person.

Questions four and five were multiple choice questions regarding personality and appearance traits in relation to German people. These questions were included in order to establish the level of stereotyping (if any) present among students.

Questions six to fourteen were general knowledge questions about the geography, politics, history and economy of Germany.

Questions fifteen to nineteen concentrated of the pupils' opinions on the German language, the composition of their language class and Cultural Studies.

Questions twenty to twenty-five concentrated solely on Landeskunde, or Cultural Studies (see definitions, section 1), the role played by Landeskunde, the materials used in teaching this part of German class and the various aspects of the topic upon which pupils felt their teacher concentrated. Questions twenty-four and twenty-five included spaces where the pupils could elaborate on the answers that they provided.

The design of the questionnaire was carefully considered. Both "closed" and "open" questions were included. For the most part closed questions were used except in those areas where an open question would yield more information. Closed questions were used to elicit concise, limited answers which required no elaboration. Answers to closed questions were either right or wrong, yes or no. Closed questions were used for questions one to fourteen.

Questions fifteen to twenty-five on the other hand are open questions. They become more opinion-orientated and thus require the students to consider their reasons for providing the answers they do. Open questions are often very valuable because through posing only one question, a large and varied amount of information can be gathered due to the diversity of the answers provided by students. " 'Offene Fragen', die einen Kommentar erfordern, wurden zwecks Erhebung studentischer Urteile, Meinungen und Kritik gestellt" (Witte 1996: 178). Also, in some instances pupils can provide more than one answer (for example in question fifteen, question nineteen and question twenty-two).

The general knowledge questions, most of which were closed questions were placed at the beginning of the questionnaire in order to familiarise the students with the format of the questionnaire and answering questions. As was anticipated, there was a certain amount of excitement in all classes of students on being given a break from normal lessons in order to complete the questionnaire and this excitement extended to the actual completion of the surveys. Placing the closed questions at the beginning of the survey meant that any joking would have been carried out while reading those questions and would have abated by the time the student reached at the very latest, the middle of the questionnaire and the subsequent questions would be completed in earnest. Naturally all

of the questions in the survey are important, but those from question fifteen onwards will provide the real core of the study. This design seemed to have worked as the admittedly very small amount of joking which did occur on the questionnaires appeared at the very early stages of answering. All further answers were in earnest.

Some individual views of students shall be cited throughout the dissertation either because they are representative of general responses, they are important to the study as a whole, or simply because they are significant or interesting in themselves (Bühler / Niederberger (1985: 475) cited in Witte 1996: 178).

All quotations from the pupils shall be preserved in their original form. In the course of the analysis of answers, the term "Cultural Studies" shall be used on occasion to refer to Landeskunde. The term "Cultural Studies" was employed in the questionnaire itself due to the fact that the students were completely familiar with this term, as opposed to "Landeskunde" which is not usually used in Ireland at secondary school level. Also, it may be of interest to note that for certain questions of the questionnaire, the statistics procured do not compose 100% in total of the students and may even exceed this figure. This is because of the fact that there may have been an overlap in the answers provided by students, or some students may have chosen more than one option from a selection of potential answers provided.

The questionnaires were numbered from one to ninety-five. Numbers one to forty are first year questionnaires, numbers forty-one to sixty-nine are third year questionnaires and numbers seventy to ninety-five are sixth year questionnaires. When a citation from a questionnaire appears, it will be accompanied by a number which will indicate from which group the response is obtained and by either F or M, which will indicate the gender of the respondent. This will not be done however, for individual words, included as examples of misspellings etcetera.

3.1.2 Profile of the Respondents

The questionnaires were distributed in April 1998 to two co-educational secondary schools in County Kildare in the Republic of Ireland. The respondents were the first year, third year and sixth year groups of students of German in each school. In all, ninety-five questionnaires were returned out of ninety-five.

40% of the respondents were first year students, 62% of whom were female and 38% of whom were male.

30% of the respondents were third year students, 74% of whom were female and 26% of whom were male.

30% of the respondents were sixth year students, 44% of whom were female and 56% of whom were male.

There was careful consideration given to the selection of respondents. First year students are new to the subject, therefore their newly formed opinions on the subject would be particularly relevant and interesting. Third year students would have formed more definite opinions on the language and most of them would have decided whether or not they would continue with German after the Junior Certificate Examination. Their answers therefore to question sixteen would be particularly relevant. Sixth year students are another important group as they would have decided whether or not they would continue to study German in Third Level Education. Therefore, these are the three most important groups of students in Second Level Education in Ireland.

3.1.3 Analysis of Responses Provided by Pupils in Response to Questionnaire

Question two sought to establish which of the students had or had not had any contact with German people. The results of this question were to be analysed in the light of questions four and five. Had the fact of having met German people any bearing on the opinions and preconceptions held by some students about German people? Was it those students who had not met any German people to date who held the most preconceptions about German people and who practised the most stereotyping? As it happened, the vast majority of the students who responded to the questionnaire had in fact met German people at one time or another. 100% of sixth year students replied that they had met Germans along with 82% of third year students and 94% of first year students. These figures are consistent with the educational status of the students and will be discussed further in the light of answers to other questions in the next chapter.

Question three was to an extent an extension of question two and aimed to establish the most prevalent context for meeting German people. This question, like question two, could also have a bearing on the preconceptions held by Irish pupils about German people. For instance, meeting a German visitor to Ireland for a few hours is likely to create a different impression of Germany and the German people than the impressions created as a result of a three-week school exchange in Germany. In the former case, the opinions and impressions of the German people and of Germany which are instilled in the student will be influenced by the opinions of that person or few persons.

On the other hand, on a school exchange to Germany the student has the opportunity to encounter many different personalities and experiences, which will serve to create a broader perspective of the country and the people. "it is a widespread belief that student exchange is the best way to achieve international understanding because the pupils experience the complexities of the foreign culture at first hand" (Buttjes 1991: 120). It was intended through this question to establish whether and to what extent different meeting contexts created different impressions.

Out of all of the categories, German visitors to Ireland were the most widely encountered, with 41% of sixth year students, 65% of third year students and 62% of first year students having met them. School exchange programmes were the second most common means by which students encountered German people. 30% of Sixth Years, 10% of Third Years and 21% of First Years met them this way. German relatives were not much in evidence, with 4% of Sixth Years, 3% of Third Years and 5% of First Years claiming them.

3.2 Stereotypes

Question four, along with question five was included in the questionnaire in order to establish: (a) the general attitudes of the students towards German people and (b) the level of preconceptions and stereotyping (if any) present regarding the physical appearance and personality of German people.

Let us turn our attention first to (b). The term "stereotype" was first introduced by Walter Lippmann in 1922. He claimed that human beings used stereotypes to impose order on a complex world. According to Lippmann, stereotypes were necessary over-generalisations and oversimplifications that were rigid, resistant to change, undependable in their actual content and produced without logical reasoning (Lippmann 1922).

"Stereotypes" can be concisely defined as "shared beliefs about person attributes, usually personality traits but also behaviours of a group of people" (Schadron, Yzerbyt, Leyens 1994: 3) and *stereotyping* is the process of applying a judgement to a group of people, thereby rendering them interchangeable. By using a stereotype, one considers that all members of a category, such as an ethnic group (or a nationality) share the attributes embedded in the stereotype (Schadron et al. 1994: 11). Schadron, Leyens and Yzerbyt identify certain components that they deem essential for the specificity of stereotypes, among them description, homogeneity, distinctiveness and consensus of the judges.

In analysing the answers provided by the groups in response to questions four and five the above four components were identified, thus indicating that specific, identifiable

stereotypes were volunteered by the students in response to the questions. Questions four and five listed a number of appearance and personality traits respectively. Some of these traits were typical of the already existing German stereotype (such as blonde hair, blue eyes, hardworking and unfriendly amongst others) and others were arbitrary characteristics. The task of the students was to identify those traits (if any) that he or she thought were typically "German". Out of the completion of this task would emerge those students who viewed Germans in the already existing stereotypical light and those who possessed an impartial view of the German people.

The results for question four were very surprising in regard to those students amongst whom the level of stereotyping was highest and lowest respectively. On the basis of gender, the level of stereotyping amongst males and females was identical. 61% of the total number of males who responded to the questionnaire stereotyped German people in terms of appearance, as did 61% of the females. Of the total number of students who had not met any German people, 75% stereotyped them in terms of appearance (blonde-haired, blue-eyed, tall and thin), compared to 79% of the total number of students who had met German people. These findings would appear to indicate that gender is not a significant factor in the practice of stereotyping and that the fact of having met a German person is not automatically indicative of a lower level of ethnocentricity.

56% of Sixth Years in comparison with 51% of Third Years and 50% of First Years considered the average German to be tall, thin and athletic (which is an already existing stereotype). This is a very surprising result, considering that all of the sixth year students had met German people, presumably not all of whom had blonde hair and blue eyes, in comparison to only 94% of First Years who had met German people. In addition, 63% of sixth year students in comparison with 34% of third year students and 23% of first year students replied that on average, German people are blonde-haired and blue-eyed.

In a survey carried out by Haerle & Schulz (1992) which aimed to ascertain which (if any) stereotypes about German people were most prevalent amongst university students in Arizona in the United States, the researchers asked the students to list those characteristics which they felt were most typical of German people. The questions

elicited voluntary information; that is, students were not given a choice of characteristics from which they had to choose those that they felt were most suitable, as is the case in this study. The physical characteristics most frequently listed in the Haerle / Schulz study were: schön, *groß*, stark, *blaue Augen, Blondes Haar*. Immediately, a correlation is evident between the physical attributes typical of German people mentioned by the students in the Haerle / Schulz (1992) study and those mentioned by the students n this study, even though the information in both studies was accumulated using different methodologies. These results point without doubt towards the widespread existence of a recogniseable German stereotype. In the next chapter the possible causes of the stereotyping witnessed here shall be examined in detail.

The finding relating to questions four and five illustrate that the highest level of stereotyping is present amongst sixth year students and first year student students demonstrate the lowest level. The number of first year students who chose "Neither" when choosing physical attributes by way of reluctance to categorise further confirms this observation. 43% of first year students chose "Neither" in comparison with 24% of Third Years and 23% of Sixth Years. Furthermore, certain students wished to ensure that the reasons for their choice of "Neither" did not go unnoticed or misunderstood by the researcher and offered explanations in the margins of the questionnaires. These explanations were offered only by first year students and the following is a sample of their comments: "Their eyes and hair can be any colour at all" (6F), "You can't generalise" (26M), "You can't describe an average person" (18F), "They are all unlike" (32M).

No such statements were received from sixth year or third year students. So on the basis of the above results it would appear that the highest level of stereotyping on the basis of physical attributes occurs in the sixth year group and the lowest level occurs in the first year group. The comments made by members of the first year group would also indicate the fact that they would appear to be the least ethnocentric group of the three. The findings gained from the answers to question four would seem to demonstrate that the student begins secondary school with a low or non-existent level of preconceptions which

seems to increase for some reason as the schooling progresses and to reach a peak at sixth year level.

Is it possible then, that certain factors in the course of the pupil's German language education must in some way contribute to the birth and growth of stereotypes and preconceptions within the student? These factors and their possible influence will be discussed in more detail later on in the chapter. What is important for this study is not just that stereotypes exist, but that the materials used in class seem to contribute to the practice of stereotyping. Stereotypes themselves are not dangerous, they are merely products of exposure to generalisations and they can actually help a human being to simplify and categorise information obtained from a complex and over-stimulating environment (Hamilton & Gifford 1976: 392-407).

Indeed stereotypes themselves, since Tajafel's theory of a cognition process in the formation of stereotypes (Tajafel 1969), have been considered more and more to be an integral part of human information processing because with such structures one can store, process and retrieve input much faster than without. (Before this theory, the process of stereotype formation had almost exclusively been attributed to social influences [Bettelheim & Janowitz 1950]). Although stereotypes themselves are unavoidable, they are not dangerous. It is the *practice* of stereotyping that can be destructive as it renders the individuals within a particular group interchangeable (Schadron et al. 1994). Haerle & Schulz (1996: 9) echo these sentiments:

> "Although we accept the existence of stereotypes, we would nevertheless be remiss in our role as educators if we would not attempt to develop in our students [...] an awareness that stereotypes *impede cross cultural understanding*[6]."

Stereotyping then, can have a detrimental effect on the students' perception of the L2 culture and the members of that culture. As has been previously explained in the second chapter, background knowledge of the L2 country and the inhabitants of that country is

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[6] My emphasis

also very important as a positive view of the country can aid language learning. If the student is indifferent to the culture and inhabitants of the target language country a concrete, positive view of the language itself will simply not be possible. Ethnocentricity is born out of a lack of well-balanced, unbiased portrayal of or exposure to a foreign culture. It is a valid question then, on the basis of the figures obtained for questions four and five in relation to the student's educational status, to ask whether the portrayal of the German people becomes more biased as the secondary schooling of Irish pupils progresses.

The answers provided for question five also reveal a certain amount of stereotyping amongst the three groups in regard to German personalities. The following table will illustrate which qualities were attributed to Germans in which proportions and it will become obvious that the boring, unfriendly but healthy German is alive and well.

Positive Traits	Negative Traits
Healthy 82%	Boring 48 %
Hygienic 74 %	Unfriendly 41 %
Hardworking 58 %	Power-hungry 38 %
Friendly 56 %	Racist 18 %
Patriotic 54 %	Lazy 11%
Easygoing 43 %	Untidy 12 %

Table 1: Positive and negative traits assigned to the German personality by Irish secondary school students.

As one can see the average number of positive traits attributed to German people far exceeds the number of negative traits given them. This was also the case in the Haerle / Schulz (1992) study, which concluded that the attribution of stereotypical traits was directly related to proficiency in the L2. This will be discussed further in the following chapter. However, the results obtained from question five (see above table) reveal quite a

difference between the sixth year views on the average German personality and the first year views. On average, first year students attributed significantly more positive traits to Germans than did sixth year students. However, it was the third year students who attributed the most negative and least positive characteristics to the German people. The following table, through the amount of positive and negative traits attributed to the German people by each group, illustrates the differences in opinion in relation to German people between first year, third year and sixth year students.

	Positive Traits	Negative Traits
First Years	69 %	31 %
Third Years	49 %	51 %
Sixth Years	52 %	48 %

Table 2: Pupils' perceptions of German people

One female respondent in first year, eager to show her appreciation of German people added in the margin: "I'm sure Germans have a negative side but I'm not aware of it. Whatever I've heard about or known about Germans is that they are an industrious and proud race" (6F).

3.3 General Knowledge

Questions six, seven and eight were general knowledge questions, included in the questionnaire in order to examine the students' basic geographical knowledge of Germany. All three questions produced an extremely poor standard of answering. The information gleaned in response to these questions would suggest that the students in question generally possessed a very limited geographical knowledge of Germany. Even one of the most fundamental pieces of information that one should know about a target language country (the name of that country's capital city) was to a large extent unknown.

The first of the general knowledge questions in the questionnaire asked the students to name two German rivers. The results were very disappointing, illustrating a lack of appropriate geographical knowledge amongst all of the three groups. Out of the sixth year group, a mere 52% managed to name two German rivers while 33% managed to name one and a sizeable 15% could not name a single German river. The results from the third year group were even less impressive. Only 27% named two rivers, 51% named one and 22% left the answer spaces blank. Of the first year group, 39% named two correct rivers, 34% named one and 27% did not attempt an answer. Although the results of answers from the first year group may be considered poor, with less than half of the group supplying correct answers, they are nevertheless more impressive than the number of correct answers given from the third year group who are two years the senior of the first year students.

Despite the fact the sixth year group is the group with the most correct answers, which is to be expected given that they are educationally the most advanced group, the results are still unimpressive given that barely over half (only 13% more Sixth Years than First Years, despite a five year difference in educational status) managed to supply fully correct answers. At first year level the number of correct answers is discouraging, but at sixth year level the number of fully correct answers should be considered unacceptable.

Of the answers given, the most frequently quoted rivers were the Rhine, the Ruhr and the Danube. Of the total number of students who quoted the Rhine, only 47% spelt it correctly. The other 53% postulated numerous variations in the spelling including "rine", "ryne", "ryn" and "rein". A small number of students included the Seine river in their answers. Not only that, but they even managed to spell it incorrectly (Sine, Sien).

The second geographical question on the questionnaire involved naming five German cities. All three groups of students fared considerably better on this question than on question six, even though *more* information was sought, as well as *different* information. 78% of sixth year students named five German cities correctly and the remaining 28% succeeded in naming three or more, 68% of third year students named five cities

correctly, 17% named three or more and 15% did not supply an answer. 85% of first year students named five cities correctly and the remaining 15% named three or more.

As was the case for question six, the third year students put in the poorest performance of all three groups, granting significantly fewer correct answers than the first year students who were two years behind them in their education. In response to this question, the following were the five most frequently quoted cities: Munich (82%), Berlin (79%), Frankfurt (63%), Bonn (60%), Düsseldorf (53%). There were numerous misspellings of Munich which included "Münichen", "Münch", "Munic" and "Muinch". Frankfurt was also misspelled in a small number of cases. The answers given included "Frankfort", "Frankford", "Frinkfurt" and "Frankfurd". The remaining cities given included Stuttgart, Heidelberg, Essen, Dortmund and Hamburg, as well as the non-German cities of Vienna, Prague and Strasbourg. 7% of students listed Brandenburg (with spelling variations of Brandenbury and Brandenvertenberg [an attempt at Baden-Würtemburg perhaps?]), Sachsen, Bayern, "Nordrhein Pfalz" or "Nedersachsen" as German cities. There was obviously much confusion present regarding the differences between cities and regions and also the combinations within the names of provinces. One first year male (32M) submitted "Bayern Munich" as a German city.

The responses to question eight, regarding the name of the German capital city clearly illustrated the real extent to which the students were uninformed about their target language country. It was astonishing to note that the vast majority of students in all groups stated Berlin as the capital of Germany (74% of Sixth Years, 79% of Third Years and 91% of First Years). Knowing the capital city of the target language country must surely be one of the most fundamental pieces of knowledge that one acquires when learning a foreign language. The remaining 26% of sixth year students stated Bonn as the capital, as did the remaining 21% of third year students. However, Munich was the second choice as the German capital for the remaining 9% of first year students.

Questions nine, ten and eleven were related to the present and past politics and history of Germany. In the Haerle / Schulz (1992) study, the researchers were surprised at the little amount of attention given by students to political and historical events in Germany.

Upon being asked what they associated with Germany (the students could provide voluntary information, there was no specification as to the type of information required), only 1.8% of students mentioned the German Reunification, even though at the time of the study (1992) it was receiving wide coverage in the world's media. The answers provided in response to this questionnaire mirror those of Haerle and Schulz (1992) and would appear to compound the view that young people generally care little for politics in any shape or form. Although the number of correct answers received were relatively small (just over a quarter of sixth year students (26%) knew who the German Chancellor (at the time of the study) was along with 33% of Third Years and 60% of First Years), the first year students were those who performed best.

However in all three groups, knowing who the Chancellor was and spelling his name correctly would appear to be two separate tests. All of sixth year students who named the Chancellor (26%), 7% of third year students and 8% of first year students spelled the name correctly while the remainder of students (from all three groups) provided a number of amusing variations which included the following: Helmet, Helman, Heinrich, Hermann, Helmot, Helmer, Helmitt and as a surname: Kole, Köln, Cole, Köhle, Col, Coole, Chole, Cohl. These results could be a reflection on the exposure to (a) politics in class and (b) current affairs in the media in general. It is to be expected that sixth years will have an advantage over both other groups in terms of exposure to these factors.

Once again, the third year students posited the least number of correct answers, indicating a lower level of knowledge of Germany and the German people than either of the two other groups. The second part of this question, "Which party does he represent?" met with only one correct answer from the entire body of students that answered the questionnaire. Surprisingly, this correct answer was given by a first year student. The performance standard for this question, where first year students exhibit sufficient

knowledge of various aspects of the L2 and are closely followed by sixth year students (see questions 7, 8, 9 (a), 10, 11) or vice versa (see questions 6 & 9 (a)), would appear to indicate a trend in foreign language learning.

This trend seems to be that students are supplied not only with lessons in language, but also with geographical, historical and other information about the target language country in the first year of study. However, this seems to wane with time and a lack of sufficient reinforcement (at third year level). However, by the sixth year there would appear to be a resurgence in the level of knowledge of the target language country, perhaps accumulated through other classes, through contact with Germans or Germany or through increased pressure to succeed in the Leaving Certificate examination as well as through the language class itself.

For question ten, an exceptionally small 18.5% of sixth year students provided the correct answer of 1989 for the date of German Reunification in comparison with 34% of third year students and 49% of first year students. In relation to sixth year students, it is particularly unsatisfactory that such a tiny proportion of students at such an advanced stage of their secondary school career failed to be aware of such an important event in the recent history of the country whose language they are learning. There was a very wide variety of answers given to this question from all of the groups and the variations are probably best shown in table form for clarity.

	Sixth Years	Third Years	First Years
1989	18.5 %	34 %	49 %
Early 1990's	26 %	27 %	31 %
1950's	0 %	10 %	0 %
1945	0 %	3 %	0 %
Did not know	55.5 %	26 %	20 %

Table 3: Possible dates for German Reunification as proposed by students.

Of the three groups, the first year students supplied the most correct answers and the sixth year students supplied the least. The first year students were also the group, of whom most, when choosing an alternative answer, opted for an era nearest the correct date.

In stating the titles of the two former Germanys, the vast majority of students opted for the simplest titles of "East Germany" and "West Germany". This answer was given by 81% of Sixth Years, 72% of Third Years and 83% of First Years. 15% of students in sixth year answered with Federal Republic of Germany and German Democratic Republic, as did 3% of third years and 3% of first years. The remaining students (4% of Sixth Years, 25% of Third Years and 14% of First Years) gave no answer. Once again, the third year students appear to lag behind their peers in the numbers of correct answers given.

Question twelve, which asked "Is Industry in Germany seen as more important/less important/ just as important as in other countries?" did not aim to elicit a factual answer, but like questions four and five was included in order to establish any stereotyping that might be present. There is a popular perception in existence today that Germany one of the foremost industrial countries in the world. The common view is that Germans are an industrious people, who work hard to develop their industry and maintain a world wide domination. Did this particular stereotype exist in the classroom as well as in the world at large?

Only the sixth year students showed a tendency towards recognising this stereotype, with 55% claiming that industry plays a more important role in Germany than anywhere else. 75% of third years and 55% of first years felt that it was of the same importance in Germany as it would be anywhere else, thereby rejecting the stereotype that Germany is full of factories, offices and powerful business institutions. The remaining students (24% of Third Years and 45% of First Years) considered it more important than in other countries.

3.4 Names of well-known German People and Companies

Asking the students to name five German companies and eight famous Germans was a means of establishing the level of "everyday" German names that students were exposed to. Given that there are well more than five famous German companies and eight famous German people which receive much daily exposure in the television and newspaper media in Ireland, correct answers were surprisingly low in number. 30% of sixth year students correctly named five German companies but only 3% of third year students managed the same task. In comparison to this very low number of third years, a very impressive 29% of first year students managed to note a full and correct quota of five German companies.

The bridge between the success rates of the sixth year students and the first year students for this question, as for numerous other questions (see questions 6, 7, 8, 10, 11) is very narrow, perhaps too narrow in relation to their differing educational positions. Question thirteen indicates a difference of merely 1% in the abilities of the students from sixth year and those from first year to name five famous German companies, despite a difference of five years in their educational positions. 22% of Sixth Years, 34% of Third Years and 36% of First Years managed to name between three and five companies. 37% of sixth year students, 37% of third year students and 21% of first year students named up to three companies and the remaining 11% of Sixth Years, 26% of Third Years and 14% of First Years gave no answers at all.

The five most quoted companies were, in order of prevalence, Volkswagen (63%), BMW (51%) Mercedes (40%), Siemens (7%) and Lufthansa (5%). Other companies mentioned in very small numbers included Bayer, Krupps, Kinder, Milka, Becks, Adidas, Schwarzkopf. Although Volkswagen was the most quoted company and, like all of the other companies mentioned it receives ample publicity in the media here in Ireland, there were many aberrations in the spelling of the company's name which included "Wolfswagen", "Volswagon", "Wolkswagen" and "Wolkeswaken". The variations in the

spelling of this particular word could be due to confusion surrounding the phonetics of the letters "W" and "V" and "G" and "K" in German.

Less than half of the students in each group managed to come up with the names of eight famous Germans. 20% of sixth year students managed it (One fifth of the total number of sixth year students), 17% of third year students did and 21% of first year students did. These results show immediately that once again, the third year group lags behind both of the other groups. This is to an extent understandable where the sixth year group is concerned but not where the First Years are concerned. Third year students are two years ahead of first year students in their schooling and should demonstrate knowledge to that effect, as should the Sixth Years, whose success rate is also exceeded by that of the First Years.

33% of Sixth Years could name between four and eight famous Germans as did 49% of Third Years and 36% of First Years. 30% of sixth year students named either four or less famous Germans with 24% of Third Years and 36% of First Years. All of the sixth year students named at the least between one and three famous Germans but 10% of third year students and 8% of first years did not or could not attempt an answer.

The most famous Germans students amongst the first year students were, in this order,
1. Steffi Graf (59%)
2. Michael Schumacher (53%)
3. Jürgen Klinsmann (50%)
4. Adolf Hitler (39%)
5. Helmut Kohl (31%)
6. Ralf Schumacher / Claudia Schiffer (28%)
7. Andreas Möller (22%)
8. Oliver Bierhof (11%)

There was a marked difference exhibited in the famous Germans chosen by males and females respectively. All of the historically famous Germans mentioned in by the first

year group were chosen exclusively by females (except for Adolf Hitler, who was mentioned by both males and females). These figures included Anne Frank, Luther, Bach, Beethoven, Goethe, Mozart, Einstein, Wagner. Not one of the above figures was mentioned by male students. Males, on the other hand, opted for the more contemporary sporting figures of Germany.

The famous Germans mentioned exclusively by first year males were Sammer, Gutenberg, Riedle, Berger, Beckenbauer, Langer, Möller, Bierhoff, Köpke, Ziege and Vogts. The Germans mentioned by both male and female sixth year students were those exceptionally famous contemporary Germans whose names are internationally recognised. These were Schindler, Kohl, Graf, Klinsman, M. Schumacher and R. Schumacher. There was also variation amongst all students in the use of first names when naming well-known German people. Of all of the above figures, Anne Frank, Claudia Schiffer, Oskar Schindler, Ralf and Michael Schumacher were the only ones mentioned with both first and surname. All others (for the most part historical figures) were mentioned only by surnames.

The respective answers to this question from males and females would lead one to believe that the majority of females were more aware of the cultural history of the country than the males. This fact would appear indicate that they were paying more attention to educational cultural material in class which would contain for the most part information relating to German people famous throughout history, as opposed to the males who chose their famous Germans from contemporary Germany.

Naturally, contemporary famous Germans are also likely to be mentioned in a section of modern German textbooks relating to their field but they will also benefit from extensive publicity in the television and newspaper media on an almost daily basis. The student is far more likely to remember a contemporary famous person from a television programme or a large newspaper article than from a small snippet in a textbook. The choice of German people chosen by males and females respectively in response to this question would seem therefore to point to the fact that the male students of this group appear to be

more influenced by modern media such as television and newspaper (and especially the sporting world) than would females.

It is also possible that these results illustrate the influence of traditional male / female interests on the choice of Germans. Males are *traditionally* more interested in sport than are females and this would go towards explaining the increased number of sporting personalities chosen by males as opposed to females. Females are *traditionally* more inclined towards the Arts than are males and this could also provide an explanation for the increased number of historical figures chosen by females as opposed to males.

In the third year group the most famous Germans were:
1. Adolf Hitler (75%)
2. Jürgen Klinsman (68%)
3. Martin Luther (30%)
4. Michael Schumacher (23%)
5. Karl-Heinz Riedle / Thomas Hässler (20%)
6. Ralf Schumacher / Steffi Graf (17%)
7. Albert Einstein / Andreas Köpke (14%)
8. Franz Beckenbauer / Andreas Möller (10%)

Within this group the situation which occurred in the first year group where females chose more historical figures than males and males chose more contemporary figures than females is almost reversed. Here the males were the students who opted very much for historical as well as contemporary figures in their choice of famous Germans, thereby indicating a greater exposure to or interest in history than the females, who chose more contemporary Germans than historical Germans (with the exception of Beethoven, Hitler, Luther, Einstein and Grimm, who were also chosen by females). These were also mentioned only by surnames.

The figures mentioned by males but not by females were Mozart, Beethoven, Bismarck, Schindler, Goering, Matthäis, Ziege, Möller, Völler, Bierhoff, Köpke, Hässler and Hess.

However, with the exception of only Grimm and Goethe, the females did not choose any Germans that were not chosen by the males. The Germans commonly chosen by both males and females were Hitler, Luther, Einstein, Kohl, Graf, Klinsman, M. Schumacher and R. Schumacher. Adolf Hitler and Martin Luther were the only two mentioned only by their surnames. Overall, the males demonstrated a significantly wider range of influences in their broad choice of famous Germans than did the females, who were quite limited to contemporary figures in their choices.

In the sixth year group, the most famous Germans were:
1. Adolf Hitler (74%)
2. Jürgen Klinsman (51%)
3. Steffi Graf (44%)
4. Michael Schumacher (29%)
5. Bismarck (22%)
6. Mozart / Bach (19%)
7. Franz Beckenbauer (15%)
8. Albert Einstein / Ralf Schumacher (11%)

The Germans chosen by the males and females in this group resembled those chosen by the males and females respectively of the first year group. There was a marked difference in the *types* of people chosen by the males and females respectively. Like the first year group, the female sixth year students were more inclined towards celebrated figures of music, literature and other fields of *Hochkultur* than the male students.

The Germans chosen exclusively by female students were Anne Frank, Beethoven, Goethe, Mozart, Grimm, Strauss, Freud, Kaiser Wilhelm, Schiffer and Langer. Anne Frank was the only figure mentioned with first and surname. The figures chosen exclusively by the male students were contemporary sporting heroes Beckenbauer, Möller and Bierhoff as well as infamous major figures of German war history Goering, Goebbels and Hess. Again, the traditional male and female interests of sports / war and arts / fashion respectively could account for this dichotomy in the male and female

choices of Germans. In all of the groups most Germans named were presented only by their surnames. Both Mozart and Hitler, both of Austrian nationality were considered by the students to be German. Hitler is one of the most prominent names listed by all three groups (in fourth place for first year students and in first place for Third Years and Sixth Years).

3.5 Motivation

Question fifteen aimed to ascertain the types of motivation employed by the students for learning German. Motivation in foreign language learning is, as in every other sphere of human activity, the crucial factor which determines whether a person is inclined towards a task at all and if so, it will determine *why* a person is so inclined. Over the years, considerable research has been carried out into motivation for learning foreign languages, most notably R.C Gardner.

According to Gardner, motivation involves four key factors: (a) a goal, (b) effortful (purposeful) behaviour, (c) a desire to attain the goal, (d) favourable attitudes towards the activity in question (Gardner 1985: 50). Broadly speaking, Gardner defines motivation as: "The combination of effort, plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language, plus favourable attitudes towards learning the language" (Gardner 1985: 10 cited in Ellis 1994: 509). He then postulates that there are different *types* of motivation. Motivation can be causative (have an effect on learning) or it can be resultative (be influenced by learning). It can be intrinsic (derive from personal interests and inner needs of the learner) or it can be extrinsic (derive from external sources such as material rewards) (Ellis 1994: 36). In order to establish the *type* of motivation for foreign language learning, reasons for learning the foreign language must be established. Once established, these reasons can be classified into what are known as "Orientations" – types of reasons.

In regard to causative and resultative motivations, Gardner (1985, cited in Ellis 1994: 514) claims that motivation is *primarily* causative, although it is also to a small extent resultative. This view concedes that motivation is affected by achievement. A high level

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of motivation stimulates learning, which in turn will result in an increase in motivation. A low level of motivation on the other hand, will signal low achievement which will in turn result in lower motivation. This hypothesis is further supported by studies by Savignon (1972); Strong (1983; 1984) and Hermann (1980) (all cited in Ellis 1994: 518), each of whom discovered that learner motivation is strongly affected by achievement.

In particular, Gardner and Lambert focus on two types of orientations: integrative and instrumental (Gardner & Lambert 1959). An integrative motivation is employed when the learner desires to integrate himself into the L2 culture and to identify with members of that culture. Integrative motivation involves learning the language because of "a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other language group" (Lambert 1974: 98). Integrative motivation is strongly related to L2 achievement (Ellis 1994: 513), possibly because of an "emotional" desire to learn the language. Instrumental motivation on the other hand is when the learner learns a language of the target culture in order to use this language as an instrument which (s)he can use to achieve other goals. The motivation for learning the L2 is influenced by external factors.

Gardner & Mac Intyre (1991 cited in Ellis 1994: 517) report a study in which forty-six psychology students were offered $10.00 if they succeeded in a paired associate (English – French) vocabulary test. The same number of students within a different group were simply told to do their best. Those offered the reward achieved better results in the test and spent more time viewing the words (except in the sixth and last trial where the possibility of a reward no longer existed). This lead Gardner & Mac Intyre to claim that once the chance of a reward was eliminated, the learners ceased to apply an extra effort.

This in turn lead to the conclusion that instrumental motivation can be successful, but for successful learning the possibility of a reward in some form must exist (Ellis 1994: 514). Naturally the efficacy of both of the motivations has been questioned in the past (Gardner & Lambert 1972) but that is not the purpose of this dissertation. Rather, this thesis aims to ascertain to which extent both of these motivations are present amongst the students who responded to the questionnaire. There was quite a variation in reasons amongst the

three individual groups as to why they were learning the German language. However, as a collective group the reasons for learning German are broken down in the following way:

35% of students chose German because they feel it is important for jobs. (Instrumental motivation).

26% of students chose it because they like the German language. (Integrative motivation – they like the experience of learning the language, therefore they wish become proficient in the language, presumably so that they can travel to the L2).

22% of students study German because it is a compulsory school subject (this was the case in one of the secondary schools only). (Instrumental motivation – they must learn the language in order to sit for their examinations).

12% chose it because it allows them to learn about another culture. (Instrumental motivation – they wish to know about another culture in order to understand that culture). The remaining 5% chose it under the heading of "Other" for a variety of reasons that included: "My parents made me" (45M), "Everyone said it was easy" (36M) and "My brother / sister does it and told me it was good" (15F) and "To go to Germany in sixth year" (62M).

Results point to the presence of both instrumental and integrative motivation amongst the students, but there is a sizeable majority of 20% of students (two thirds in total) who practice instrumental motivation as opposed to the one third of students who practice integrative motivation.

3.6 Attitudes

One of the most important variables in the learning of a second language is learner attitudes. The attitude of a language learner towards the L2 has an impact on the level of

L2 proficiency achieved by that learner and (like motivation) is influenced by the learner's success (Ellis 1994: 198). It would appear that in general, positive attitudes towards the L2 are reinforced by success and negative attitudes are reinforced by failure.

Questions sixteen to nineteen inclusive of the questionnaire used for this study dealt with the attitudes of the students towards the various aspects of German class. In both of the schools questioned, the German language option was optional as of Third Year onwards. In all of the groups the number of students planning to continue German at a higher educational level exceeded those who planned to discontinue it. This result appears to indicate a positive attitude towards German and a perception of German as a valuable subject in all of the three groups. 52% of sixth year students planned to continue German after the Leaving Certificate and 61% of Third Years and 83% of First Years planned to continue after the Junior Certificate.

In question seventeen, the students were asked to indicate their opinions of the German language, the grammar and the "cultural side" of learning German respectively. Overall, first year students had the most positive (perhaps the most optimistic) attitudes towards all three aspects of learning German. This could be due to the fact that they were fresh into first year and because everything was still so new and different to national school, they were very optimistic towards their studies. This optimism is also apparent in the answers given by first year students in response to question sixteen, where of all of the three groups, the First Years were those of whom the largest proportion planned to continue German after a major examination. The first year students liked the three aspects more and disliked everything less than both of the other groups. On average, Cultural Studies were the most enjoyed part of learning a language (43%), followed by the language itself (37%). These figures are proportional of the complete sample of ninety-five students. Grammar was the most disliked part of German class (60%). This question provided the first indicator of attitudes specifically towards Landeskunde; attitudes which were distinctly positive in tone.

Question nineteen, by asking the students to choose an adjective to describe Landeskunde, strove to focus exclusively on the attitudes of students towards Landeskunde. It aimed to establish more *definite* attitudes and to accumulate more *specific* information regarding perception of Cultural Studies amongst students. The answers to this question demonstrated further positive attitudes towards Landeskunde amongst the members of all three groups.

Culture was seen as "interesting" by 57% of the complete sample of students (55% of sixth year, 51% of third year, 65% of first year) and was seen as "relevant to class" by 48% of students, 55% of sixth year, 44% of third year, 46% of first year). However, only 4% found it "important". While 31% found it boring, only 1% considered it to be irrelevant to class. As with question seventeen, the results obtained point towards generally positive attitudes towards Landeskunde.

When asked in question twenty whether they preferred learning about Germany to learning the German language, 40% of Sixth Years, 51% of Third Years, 60% of First Years felt that they preferred learning about Germany to learning German. 18.5% of Sixth Years, 10% of Third Year, 21% of First Years preferred learning German and the remaining students enjoyed both equally. This statistic would go towards cementing even further the positive status of Landeskunde in the foreign language classroom. The reasons for particular enjoyment of Cultural Studies or language were established through the responses given for questions twenty-four and twenty-five, in which the students were asked whether they wanted more or less Cultural Studies in class or whether Cultural Studies is important or not and the reasons therefore.

In the past, the role of attitudes in foreign language learning has been extensively researched (Gardner & Lambert 1972); (Gardner 1985). In these studies, it has been claimed that socially-based motivation, when a learner is very willing to become a valued member of the L2 community (Gardner & Lambert 1959: 271, cited in Ellis 1996: 209) results in a high success rate in L2 appropriation. This willingness is indicative of a

positive attitude towards the L2 and the L2 community. The learner attitudes established in this study shall be discussed in-depth in the following chapter.

3.7 The Role of Landeskunde

Questions twenty-one to twenty-three aimed to establish the role of Landeskunde in the classroom. This differs from the students' opinions on Landeskunde or the importance (according to the students) of Landeskunde in that students may feel that Landeskunde is very important but it might only constitute a very small proportion of class time (i.e. play a very small role). Even though the majority of students in all three groups felt that Cultural Studies are interesting and they enjoy learning about the culture of Germany, the actual role played by Cultural Studies does not correspond with it's popularity rating. Overall, 11% of Sixth Years, 3% of Third Years and 39% of First Years who responded to the questionnaire felt that culture played a significant (big) role in their classroom.

These figures seem to compound the hypothesis that students in first year receive significant information about all aspects of the target language country, which wanes in the middle of their educational careers and increases again towards the end, when the pressure on students to succeed in examinations. 89% of Sixth Years, 79% of Third Years and 55% of First Years felt that it played a small role. 14% of Third Years and 6% of First Years felt that culture, as a part of their language class played no role at all. The remainder of the students failed to answer.

It is important to note that the group of students who felt that culture played no role whatsoever in language class was exclusively composed of third and first year students. These findings then, would further support the observation made earlier in Chapter Two that the Junior Certificate syllabus is modelled primarily on the Communicative Approach, a teaching method which tends to place communicative language skills rather than cultural knowledge in the forefront of the language class. At Leaving Certificate level, certain students felt that Landeskunde played only a small role in class. However, it was at all times present. No Leaving Certificate student felt that Cultural Studies were

completely absent from the syllabus.

Asking the students which aspects of Germany they learn most about was a means of establishing whether (if at all) the composition of Cultural Studies varies during the three stages of secondary education in question. The extent to which certain topics were covered in class varied from group to group, although "Education" was the one area that all groups felt they learned most about. The priority given to each topic within each group is shown below.

Sixth Years	Third Years	First Years
Education 85 %	Education 85 %	Education 39 %
Youth 52 %	Youth 65 %	Youth 31 %
Industry 11 %	Politics/History 3 %	History/Geography 23 %
History 7 %		Industry 8 %
Politics 3.7 %		

Table 4: Priority given to topics other than language in German class.

The prevalence of history and geography in first year classes would go a long way towards explaining the excellent performance of first year students in questions seven, eight, ten and eleven which concentrated on the history and geography of Germany. As one can see, Education is the topic most widely taught to all three groups. One sixth year female attested to this when she answered to question twenty-four that she would like more cultural studies in class: "We are only told about the educational system in Germany [...] I would like to learn more about the politics and industry of the state. I only know the history from history class." (81F)

The means by which the students learned most about German culture varied greatly from group to group. The majority of sixth year students learned most from their own personal experience, while Third Years learned most from their textbooks and First Years learned most from talking to their teachers. All of these results correspond with the educational

level of each group. Sixth Years are likely to have had more experience with Germans than either Third Years or First Years, if only because of the advantage in age (see section 3.14).

Likewise, because first year students are young and are used to learning directly from a teacher, a secondary school teacher is likely to explain more elements of German life to first years orally than to third or sixth year students, who are capable of learning more independently. Third year students are more or less in the middle. They can learn a measured amount of information independently from a textbook, but are not likely to be as autonomous in their learning processes as sixth year students. School video was the least quoted means of learning about German culture in all of the three groups. Various teaching materials which can be used in foreign language class will be discussed further in the following chapter.

The final two questions of the survey allowed the students to voice their opinions on the role and importance of Landeskunde and aimed to establish whether they felt any changes ought to be made to the German syllabus regarding Cultural Studies and if so, which changes. By establishing the opinions of the students on Landeskunde, one could in turn establish the potential for development of Landeskunde within the syllabus. From the data collected, it would appear that there is most definitely a need to develop the existing cultural curriculum as the demand is certainly there. The overwhelming majority of students within all three groups felt that for various reasons they would like more Cultural Studies in their school curriculum.

Overall, 89% of Sixth Years, 85% of Third Years and 62% of First Years wanted more Cultural Studies. 11% of Sixth Years, 15% of Third Years and 29% of First Years wanted less and the remaining 9% of First Years were impartial. This is indicative of yet more evidence of the positive view of Cultural Studies held by the majority of students who returned the questionnaire. There were a wide variety of reasons given by the members of all three groups for why there should be more or less Landeskunde in class. The

following is a list of the reasons given by members of all three groups in order of importance[7]:

(a) It is interesting: 94% "It makes German class more interesting instead of reading a grammar book all the time" (76F).

(b) One needs to know about the L2 if one is going there: 21% "If you want to go there you need to know the people's habits and their way of life" (45F).

(c) It is better / an alternative to grammar and language: 16% "I'm not interested in learning the language but I find Germany's culture great. It's enjoyable and interesting" (61M).

(d) It helps one to discover the differences between Ireland and Germany: 11% "It is important because it gives us a better insight into who they are and it highlights the differences between our culture and theirs" (72F).

Other reasons given by first year students include the fact that they want to know about the country (3%): "I would like to learn more about cultural Studies because it is interesting and I have never done it before" (34M), and the fact that they feel they are doing too little at the moment (3%): "Because we learn very little at the moment" (25F). Alternative reasons given by Third Years are that they "don't do enough" (10%): "Because I haven't learned a lot about the German culture and it is important as it helps you to understand the Germans better and do German as a language" (45F). Another reason given was that it helps one's confidence in the language (3%): "Because even though it is not that interesting you do have to know maybe a good bit about German culture in order to feel confident in the language itself" (43F). And finally, it contributes to their understanding of the language (3%): "We need to understand the country of the language and the people who speak it naturally before we can understand it" (40M).

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[7] Students could choose any number of reasons, each of equal weighting. Therefore, the total number of percentages do not add up to 100%.

Sixth Years supplied the following reasons for more Landeskunde in class: So that one won't cause offence when visiting the country (11%): "Because it is important not to offend someone while in Germany. With this information you can fit in more easily" (83M). It is an escape from exam pressure (7%): "Because constantly learning grammar and hearing about exams is a bit much" (90F). One needs it for the exams (7%): "Some of the questions on the Leaving Certificate are asked about Germany and because German culture is not really covered in class, it is hard to talk / write about it" (77F). Finally, many felt that the language alone is artificial (4%): "There's not much sense in learning the language of a country you know absolutely nothing about" (78F).

The reasons given for promoting *less* Landeskunde in class were boredom (20% of all students who responded felt Cultural Studies were boring) "Boring" (41M) and irrelevance (11% of students felt that Cultural Studies were irrelevant to German class) "It is not important because it's not as if you are ever going to go to Germany in your life anyway so you don't need to know about the country" (14M). This respondent is unknowingly demonstrating a distinct lack of motivation to learn the L2. This lack of motivation is due to the absence of a "reward" or goal (going to the L2 country to practise the language, which the learner in question feels is not possible). The response in question is direct evidence of the hypothesis that the possibility of a reward is crucial to the practice of instrumental motivation (see section 3.5).

3.8 The Importance of Landeskunde

Question twenty-five, the final question of the questionnaire, aimed to establish the actual *importance*, according to the students themselves, of Landeskunde. 53% felt that it was reasonably important, followed by 37% who felt it was very important and the remaining 10% felt that it was not important. These statistics break down into individual groups in the following way: 59% of Sixth Years, 51% of Third Years and 55% of First Years considered Cultural Studies to be reasonably important. 37% of Sixth Years, 34% of Third Years and 44% of First Years considered Cultural Studies to be very important and the remainder of each group – 4%, 15% and 1% of Sixth, Third and First Years

respectively found it unimportant. The reasons given for importance / lack of importance were very similar to those given for why there should be more or less cultural studies in class, though their importance varied.

The number one reason among first years as to why Landeskunde is important is that it is important if one wants to go there (16%). This shows that first year students realise the importance of a background knowledge of the L2. Third year students' most important reason for learning about culture was also that it is important if one wants to live or to travel there (17%). This is another indicator of integrative motivation. The majority of sixth year students (25%) feel that a language without a cultural context is useless: "It would be pointless to learn the language of a country you know nothing about" (78F). The following illustrates the reasons given in order of importance by students of all three groups for the importance of Landeskunde. Again, not all reults will add up to 100% as students could choose several reasons.

(a) One without the other is useless 49%: "Being able to speak the German language is useless without knowing about Germany as a nation and it's culture" (14M).

(b) One needs to know it if one is going there 45%: "If you want to visit Germany or work there you'll need to know about the country" (12M).

(c) One *should* know about one's target language country (obligation): 44% "You don't have to know everything but you should know a bit" (27M).

(d) It provides a context for the language: 38% "It helps you to understand the language" (68M).

Other reasons given from members of individual groups are:

First Years: You might as well (8%) "Because if you're learning about a language you might as well learn about the country" (26M); It expands your knowledge of the country

(5%); It makes it easier to get a job (5%) "I would find a job more easily and I wouldn't feel unknowledgeable" (17F).

Third Years: So that one won't cause offence if you go there (3%) "You *have* to know something in case you are going there (49M); One needs it for exams (3%) "Need to know it for the exam" (58M); It is interesting (3%) "It is interesting" (55M).

Sixth Years: It helps to prevent stereotyping (4%) "Prevents bias and stereotyping" (79F); It increases one's desire to visit the target language country (4%) "It makes me want to visit the country and experience it first-hand" (74F); It highlights differences between the L1 and L2 countries (4%): "it highlights the differences between our country and theirs" 72F; It helps survival in the L2 (7%) "Going to a country and being able to speak the language is one thing, but you should also have a healthy interest and knowledge of fellow Europeans" (73F).

The reason given as to why Landeskunde is unimportant is that it is simply not as important as learning the language itself. The view of the students who feel that Cultural Studies are irrelevant to class as presumed by the researcher from this answer is that in order to successfully live and ultimately survive in the L2, the majority of pupils consider the spoken language is more important than a knowledge of the L2 culture. This opinion may be shortsighted and naïve, but it is not the fault of the pupil that (s)he feels this way. Rather, it is a direct reflection on the amount of importance placed on Landeskunde by the teacher, who is the dominant influence on the student's opinion on and perception of a subject.

If the teacher explicitly and successfully demonstrated to the students that Cultural Studies are an important component of foreign language learning, this view would no doubt be adopted by the students themselves. Of course, there is great importance placed on the language itself in an examination context, especially with the inclusion of the Oral Examination and this would also have an effect on the importance placed by students on the spoken language.

3.9 Mapwork

At the end of the questionnaire was a blank map of Germany into which the students had to mark several cities and the former border between East and West Germany (see Appendix Three). From the entire group of ninety-five students questioned, not one map was returned which was fully and correctly completed. The answers to this question correspond with the answers to questions six, seven and eight in that the results obtained from both third year and sixth year students were extremely disappointing, reflecting a very inadequate geographical knowledge in relation to their position in the educational system. The first year students, on the other hand performed very well (again, a reflection on the amount of history and geography studied in German class at this level as opposed to sixth year and third year level) (see section 3.7).

The 3% of maps returned which contained five correctly positioned cities were from first year students alone. The majority of students in all groups achieved between one and three correct cities - 63% of Sixth Years, 72% of Third Years and 62% of First Years. The remainder of each group (37% of Sixth Years, 28% of Third Years and 38% of First Years) achieved between three and five correct cities. The first year students were also the group who submitted the highest number of maps containing correctly marked borders. 60% of First Years managed this in comparison with 48% of Third Years and only 37% of Sixth Years. 34% of First Years marked the borders incorrectly, as did 20% of Third Years and 11% of Sixth Years.

This further illustrates the lack of inhibition of the First Years in comparison with the two other groups when it comes to guessing or trying an answer that they may not be sure is correct. Only 5% of First Years did not attempt an answer in comparison to 30% of Third Years and 52% of Sixth Years. Clearly, the first years are more likely to attempt an answer than the Third or Sixth Years. In actual fact, these results would appear to indicate that the more one progresses in learning German at least where these students are concerned, the more inhibited and less adventurous one becomes in volunteering information.

There have been several studies done into the relationship between motivation, persistence and achievement (Ellis 1994: 512) and many have indicated that those who are highly motivated naturally persist in answering and achieve higher success rates.

It has also been suggested that self-confidence is one of the best predictors of proficiency in the L2. This would appear to be the case with the first year students involved in this study. Throughout the questionnaire they proved to be the least inhibited, most self-confident group of the three, attempting the most answers and in many cases achieving the highest success rates (see section 3.3 – they were the only group to have named five cities correctly and they achieved the highest proportion of correctly marked borders).

The most glaring problem for students in completing the maps was the positioning of the former border. Most students had an idea that the border was not simply a line through the centre of the map and they accordingly drew a diagonal line across the map. However, there were several who clearly were completely ignorant as to where the border should have been positioned, and who *did* simply drew a line in the centre of the map (see Appendix Three, map one). Another major problem was the fact that many students did not actually know which *side* of Germany was East and which was West (see Appendix Three, map one). This, again is some of the most basic information one should possess about the target language country.

Most of the students had a notion as to where the cities should have (approximately) been marked, but this notion was very vague. For instance, Berlin tended to be marked (very) roughly in the right hand side of the map. Likewise, Bonn was generally in the middle of the map, slightly to the left. For some reason, many students marked Munich in the north of the map and Frankfurt in the south (see Appendix Three, map two). All in all, there were many unintentionally amusing attempts at filling the maps in correctly, but it should not be overlooked that the poor performance of students in this question, as in questions six, seven and eight reflects an exceptionally poor geographical knowledge of Germany among students, with the first year students achieving the highest success rates.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4. Conclusions

Several important facts have emerged from this study:

(a) Landeskunde, in the opinions of students from all three groups is an important, enjoyable and interesting part of German class (see sections 3.7 and 3.8).

(b) In direct contrast to this, the actual role played by Landeskunde in class is at best small and at worst non-existent (see section 3.7).

(c) There is a strong incidence of both stereotyping and instrumental motivation amongst students of all three groups (see sections 3.2 and 3.5).

(d) Students possess a very limited (it almost appears to be deficient) knowledge of various aspects of the target language country such as history, geography and politics (see section 3.3).

4.1 The Role of Landeskunde as Proposed by the Respondents

The questions posed to elicit student opinions of Landeskunde were questions seventeen, nineteen, twenty, twenty-one, twenty-four and twenty-five. According to the vast majority of students from all groups, of all of the components of a language class (language, grammar and cultural studies), Landeskunde (cultural studies) proved to be the most popular (see section 3.7). Pupils could pick any number of adjectives to describe how they viewed Landeskunde. Of all of the adjectives offered to the pupils to describe how they viewed Landeskunde, "interesting" was the most popular, chosen by 55% of Sixth Years, 51% of Third Years and 65% of First Years. The next most popular description was "relevant to class" (55% of Sixth Years, 44% of Third Years and 47% of First Years).

In response to question twenty, most students claimed that they preferred learning about Germany to learning the German language (see section 3.7). Most of the students from each of the three groups felt that cultural studies, as a part of a language class were "reasonably important", as opposed to "very important"(see section 3.8). The students obviously feel that cultural studies are a necessary constituent of a language class but not the most important element.

In the minds of the students, the *most* important constituent of a language class is the language itself. This view, that cultural studies should be *to a certain extent* a part of language class appears to be reinforced by the answers given to question nineteen. When asked whether cultural studies were important, only 12% of students thought so. In other words, the view that cultural studies are "important" does not appear to be as widely held as the view that it is interesting (and therefore enjoyable) or relevant to class. However, the overall perception of Landeskunde is a very positive one. The vast majority of pupils enjoy Landeskunde and consider it to be interesting, relevant to their language class and a reasonably important aspect of learning a language.

Despite the positive views of the pupils about Landeskunde, the realities of its position in a practical, factual classroom situation are quite negative. When asked if they would prefer more or less Cultural Studies in language class, most students answered in the affirmative (see section 3.7), thereby implying that they were dissatisfied with the amount of cultural material dealt with in (language) class time. This result consolidates the findings obtained for question twenty-one, to which the majority of students responded that Cultural Studies plays a small role in their language classroom. Several students also stated that Cultural Studies were completely absent from their classes (see section 3.7). From the above then, it cannot be misinterpreted that in general, the majority of pupils are dissatisfied with the amount of Cultural Studies in class and would welcome an increase in the amount of cultural material currently present in language class.

Taking the responses of the students regarding their own opinions of Cultural Studies (very positive) and their responses regarding the *actual* role played by Landeskunde in

the language class, it becomes apparent that there is a grave discrepancy in existence between the pupils expectations and wishes regarding Landeskunde and its position in the reality of their classrooms.

4.1.1 Limited General Knowledge of the Target Language Country

A very important finding of the study was the fact that pupils of all levels possessed a very limited general knowledge of the target language country (Germany). Very few students seemed able to correctly name a full quota of German cities or rivers, or were able to correctly mark in the former German border in the map provided. An equally small number were able to name a full quota of famous German people or companies. The *types* of famous German people named and the possible influences involved in these choices has already been discussed in section 3.4. However, it might be of interest to point out that of all the groups of people mentioned by the students (musicians, sporting personalities, scientists, literary figures etcetera), one of the groups that is least are German literary figures.

Goethe, Grimm and Anne Frank are the only three literary figures mentioned by the students. All three are mentioned to a very limited degree only. What is very surprising is that not one male student referred to a single one of these figures, they were mentioned exclusively by female students. 3% of First Years named Goethe along with 3% of Third Years and 7% of Sixth Years (13% of the total sample of students). Grimm was named only by Third Years (3%) and Sixth Years (4%). Anne Frank was mentioned by 7% of Sixth Years and 8% of Third Years. Goethe is mentioned by all three groups, presumably because teachers feel that the introduction to German literature must be preceded by an introduction to arguably the most acclaimed German writer of all, Goethe.

The number of students who named Goethe increases as the educational level increases, doubtless due to increased familiarity with the subject. First Year students opt for Anne Frank as the next most well-known author, presumably because she is the only other German author whose literary legacy is familiar to them. She is an exceptionally famous

figure, recognised even by twelve and thirteen year old schoolchildren, due to the nature and circumstances of her fate. Grimm is mentioned again with according frequency only by Third Years and Sixth Years. The first year students do not appear to be familiar with this figure.

These results provide clear evidence of a lack of German literature encountered by students in German class. The vast majority of students are unable to name a German author and the small proportion who do are restricted to a very limited selection of very well-known literary figures. This is all in spite of the numerous opportunities to use literature as a means of mediating cultural information and the advantages of doing so (see sections 1.2 and 4.2.3).

4.1.2 Stereotyping and Instrumental Motivation

Another noteworthy conclusion elicited from the survey is the high incidence of stereotyping and instrumental motivation among pupils of all groups. As discovered in the previous chapter, stereotyping and instrumental motivation are not only present among all three groups, but the level of both seems to actually increase as the students progress through secondary school. For instance, 63% of Sixth Years, 34% of Third Years and 23% of First Years considered the average German to be blonde-haired and blue-eyed. 56% of Sixth Years, 51% of Third Years and 50% of First Years felt that an average German person is tall, thin and athletic. Both of these results appear to show that there is a steady increase in the dominance of a stereotypical image among students as their schooling progresses. The First Years stereotype least, the Third Years a little more and the largest proportion of Sixth Years practise stereotyping.

From this study, it seems that the students begin secondary school with a very open mind (some of the first year students took extra care to add comments to make sure that their reluctance to generalise did not go unnoticed - see section 3.2), which seems to dissipate as the schooling progresses, to be replaced with an unimaginative, unchallenged view of the target language country at sixth year level. The only possible conclusion, in the light

of this finding is that in the course of their secondary school studies, the students are being exposed to a stereotypical image of German people either through the amount of cultural studies they experience in class (for example very little would not be enough to dispel an already established stereotypical view of German people), or through the content of the cultural studies aspect of the language class.

Several sources have admitted to the existence of stereotypes and to the impossibility of dispelling them (Haerle / Schulz 1996; Schadron et al. 1994).

> "Wenn wir alle der Erbsünde der Stereotypisierung verfallen und der Absolution der Sozialwissenschaftler und Soziopsychologen sicher sind, die uns versichern, daß Stereotypen unser Erbe aus Adams Zeiten sind, dann sollen wir uns damit abfinden und das Beste daraus machen" (Husemann 1993: 389).

It might be of interest to mention briefly that stereotyping has also been linked with the learner's proficiency in the foreign language (Haerle / Schulz 1996); (Hamilton / Sherwin / Ruvolo 1990). According to these studies, those learners who are not yet in any great measure proficient in the foreign language are more likely to opt for stereotypical images when describing people than those who possess a greater proficiency.

The basis for this assumption lies in the fact that researchers felt that so much mental capacity is taken up by the demands of the task of describing a person or a thing (for example attention to grammar and spelling) that not enough is left for screening the descriptive information in detail and the students tend to opt immediately for the stereotypical image that automatically enters his or her head (Hamilton, Sherwin, Ruvolo 1990 cited in Haerle / Schulz 1996).

Such a hypothesis cannot be tested amongst the respondents in this survey as all of the responses were in English. In any case it would appear that the results of this study would not support this hypothesis. As has been shown in chapter 3.2, those students most proficient in the L2 language are in actual fact the students who are prone to practising

the most stereotyping (sixth year students) and those least proficient in the second language are also those who practise least stereotyping.

4.1.3 Inconsistencies in the Importance Attributed to Particular Topics for Discussion at Junior and Senior Stages of Secondary Education

Among all three groups "Education" is the topic dealt with most in class (see section 3.7), followed by "Youth" (see section 3.7). However, the first year group is the only group, amongst whom the history and geography of Germany play a dominant role (see section 3.7). In the case of the Sixth Years, "Industry" is attributed more class time than history (see section 3.7). For the third year group, politics and history are dealt with in equally small measure. Geography was not mentioned at all among Sixth Years or Third Years as a component of German class (see section 3.7). These figures are important in that they highlight those aspects of the German cultural curriculum which are attributed most class time, and those which are attributed insufficient attention at all three levels.

Devoting much class time to a particular aspect or particular aspects of German class and neglecting others can have dire consequences for the amount and kind of knowledge that the students accumulate about the target language country, some of which can be seen in the responses from all three groups to the general knowledge questions within the questionnaire (see section 3.3). The first year students outperformed both the sixth year and third year groups on several occasions. The third year group performed dismally for questions six, seven, nine, ten, eleven, thirteen and fourteen, achieving the lowest number of correct answers in all cases, despite the fact that they are two years ahead of the first year group (see section 3.3). First Years do not appear to learn anything about politics and Sixth Years and Third Years learn little about the history and nothing about the geography of Germany.

4.2 Recommendations – Integration of Stereotyping into the Learning Experience

Teachers must learn to accept stereotypes and stereotyping as a fact of life. Then, stereotypes can actually be integrated into the classroom and transformed into useful pedagogical aids (Haerle / Schulz 1996: 9). This can be done in the form of discussions on the origins and formation of stereotypes both in general and those relating to German people in particular (e.g blonde hair and blue eyes). Such discussions should act as a major contribution towards students' consideration of the phenomena of stereotypes and the reasons for their existence and should therefore reduce the spontaneous, automatic use of stereotypes on the part of the student.

Like stereotyping, instrumental motivation is also rife among the students of all years who responded to the questionnaire. The vast majority of students are studying German because they want to travel to Germany generally to work there because they feel that Geman is a valuable asset for the job market and that having a competence in the German language will help them to advance their career prospects (see section 3.5). The presence of instrumental motivation is evidence of a lack of a deeper insight into and interest in the target language culture, because instrumental motivation is only employed if the reason for learning the L2 is superficial (i.e. there must be a reward present, or at least an ulterior motive).

The dominance of both stereotyping and instrumental motivation in all groups and markedly increasing as the groups progress in the education system (see section 3.2) illustrates a conflict between the *aims* of the Leaving Certificate Curriculum Guidelines and the *extent of the achievement of these aims* within schools. According to the Guidelines, learners' "perceptions and insights into the other culture should not remain unchanged and superficial" (Draft Guidelines for Teachers n.d.a: 22).

If the learners' image of Germany and the German in actual fact becomes more formulaic as they progress through school, and they are learning the language primarily for

superficial reasons, without any real interest or desire to learn more about or at least become familiar with the target language culture (as seems to be the case from the research produced from this study), then the teaching methods and / or the materials being used in the classroom are clearly ineffective in fulfilling the aims of the Curriculum Guidelines.

4.2.1 Re-evaluation of Importance Attributed to Particular Topics at Junior and Senior stages of Pupils' Secondary School Career

If the above is the case, then a re-evaluation of both the teaching methodology and didactics in the foreign language classroom is in order. As has been shown in sections 3.3 and 3.7, there is quite a discrepancy in the value placed on particular topics at different stages of the secondary school career of the pupil. For the most junior students (First Years) history and geography are obviously the most important, while industry and politics take over at more senior level.

Obviously, for all of the groups, both the topics and the way in which they are dealt dealt with should be more integrated. In a language class, the portrayal of history and geography of the target language tends to be rather simplistic. This is because of the fact that the language itself is considered (understandably) to be the most important subject to be learned. History and geography are school subjects in their own right and therefore, when they are included in a language class, teachers tend to concentrate on a few landmark historical or important geographical facts about the target language country, generally learned by rote. It would appear that the inclusion of history and geography in language class is merely the inclusion of 'token' knowledge about that country.

Because of the simplistic facts learned about the target language country (simplistic when viewed in the light of the complexity of history and geography as subjects in their own right) and the simplistic methods of learning this token information (generally by rote), it is often the case that history and geography come to be seen as "uncomplicated" topics in the language class and the likes of politics and information about the industry of the L2

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country are considered more high-brow or more complex.

The fact that Sixth Years and Third Years are more advanced than First Years does not automatically mean that they have "outgrown" history and geography in favour of more "complicated" topics such as politics and industry, although this seems to be the dominant perception, given the level of attention attributed to both of these topics at sixth year level (see section 3.7). In any case it is evident from the results of questions nine (a) and nine (b) that the importance placed by the teacher upon political information has not made a lasting impression on either the third year or the sixth year group (see section 3.3).

In the same vein, the fact that first year students are between twelve and thirteen years of age does not mean that politics of the L2 country should be excluded from the course for fear of it being too complicated in favour of "easier", "less complicated" topics such as (simple) history and geography (an idea which is apparent from the evidence regarding the importance attributed to certain aspects of language class – see section 3.7). The correct spelling of the name of the political leader of the target language country along with a brief explanation of the principles of the leading political party should not tend to be viewed by some teachers as too complicated or possibly incomprehensible material for a first year group.

In actual fact, this would appear to be the case from the answers received from first year students in response to question nine (a). 60% of First Years knew the name of Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor at the time of this study, but a mere 8% managed to spell his name correctly and all pupils bar one did not know which party he represented. This appears to indicate that teachers consider knowing the name of the political leader important for first year students but the correct spelling of his name or any information about the policies of his political party are for some reason considered to be either not *as* relevant to or too complicated for first year students. In the same way, an occasional brief history or geography lesson should not be seen as too facile for a third or sixth year group. As is apparent from the standard of answers received for questions six, seven,

eight, ten and eleven, the history and geography of Germany do not appear to be such elementary topics that teachers can afford not to continuously revise and teach them (see section 3.7).

Naturally, the individual aspects of history, geography or politics chosen by the teacher for the class will vary according to the level of the class (whether it is strong or weak), because the deciding factor in choosing material is the relevance of the content both to the learners themselves and to the world they live in. By varying the content of Landeskunde, the teacher is offering the learner a wider scope for his or her knowledge of the target language country and culture. A wider scope of knowledge creates a greater potential for the learner to develop an interest in a particular aspect of the target language country. The learner should not find himself / herself in a position (as would appear to be the position of the learners in this study) where (s)he is familiar with every possible element and variation of one aspect of the L2 country but possesses not even the most elementary knowledge of another aspect of the L2 country.

4.2.2 Development of Pupil *Interest* in the Target Language Culture

Just as important in the teaching of culture as the mediation of cultural *knowledge* is the mediation of *interest* in the culture of target language country. Once an interest is established, a desire to learn even more about the country of the L2 is awakened and it is the interest in the target language country which leads to the development and promotion of an integrative motivation for learning the language.

> "Ebenso wichtig wie die Vermittlung von Kenntnissen und die Entwicklung von landeskundlichen Könnens dürfte es sein, das Verstehenwollen zu initiieren bzw. Interesse für das Zielsprachenland" (Ehnert / Wazel 1994: 274).

If there is growth and development in the learner's interest in and desire to learn more about the target language country, growth and development of learner autonomy should also ensue. The learner will no longer be prepared to wait for the teacher to provide all

the information he needs or wants about the target language country, nor will the teacher have to constantly encourage and motivate the learner to begin and persist at learning. Rather, if the desire for knowledge is strong enough, (s)he will be eager to initiate and develop the learning process.

4.2.3 Variation in the Teaching Materials Used in Teaching Culture

However, it is not merely the content of the Landeskunde which must be re-evaluated across all three groups, but also the methodology employed in the mediation of this material. For each of the groups there appears to be very little variation in the methodology of teaching Landeskunde (see section 3.7). The following is a list which proposes some of the aims of Landeskunde.

(a) Integrationshilfe

(b) Vertieftes Sprach-/Literaturverständnis

(c) Persönlichkeitsentwicklung / Identitätsfindung

(d) Förderung interkultureller Kommunikationsfähigkeit

(e) Wissenserweiterung über das Zielsprachenland

(f) Bestimmung des gesellschaftlichen Standorts

(g) Vermittlung von Wertvorstellungen

(h) Verbesserung der internationalen Beziehungen

(i) Faktenvermittlung über das andere Land (Delmas / Vorderwülbecke 1989: 181).

This list does not claim to encompass flawlessly every aspect and aim of Landeskunde (Henrici / Riemer 1994: 274) rather, it offers a broad view of several valid aims of Landeskunde, both implicit (a, c, d f, g, h) and explicit (b, e, i). In order to accomplish successfully even *some* of these aims, the methodology used in the teaching of culture should be as varied as possible in order to offer the learner as varied a portrayal and perspective of the target language country as possible.

As mentioned earlier (see section 1.2), literary texts from various epochs in the L2 country's history are a well-established means of portraying the culture of the target language country, but there are also various other types of texts which can be used in German class. Comics, poems and songs are also useful in mediating the culture of the L2. Texts which are written by non-German authors about Germany are also valuable because as well as illustrating the L2 culture, they also may encourage the learner to try writing in German (Schmidt 1994: 411).

Games are another alternative methodology that appear to be under estimated in this study, and which can be put to greater use in class. They provide a superb opportunity to make the learning process fun. Often, learning is actually disguised when games are played because the learners are happy to be removed from the constraints of a traditional classroom setting and they are not fully conscious of the fact that through playing a game they are actually learning valuable information. What the teacher must do is base the games around cultural knowledge or cultural aspects of the target language country. The competitive nature of games will mean that the learners will try to acquire as much knowledge as they possibly can in order to win the game. Some suggestions for games could be "Hangman", a Table Quiz or "Twenty Questions" (see Appendix Three).

One medium which in this study at least seems to be particularly under-used is video, which is in actual fact considered by many (Heidecker 1994; Herron et al. 1992) to be particularly valuable and effective in the portrayal of various elements of the L2 culture. Video brings the target language culture alive, adding colour, movement and emotion to an otherwise static subject.

> "Video permits the second language learner to witness the dynamics of interaction as they observe native speakers in authentic settings, speaking and using different accents, registers and paralinguistic cues e.g. postures and gestures" (Herron et al. 1992: 420).

In relation to video, the question of accessibility to both video machines and video tapes often arises. Both of the schools in question in this survey possessed a number of video machines. Both schools were also in close proximity to the Goethe Institut library in Dublin which offers a very wide selection of video tapes which teachers can borrow for up to six weeks at a time (this lengthy borrowing time also offers teachers who may not have easy access to the Goethe Institut ample time to make the best use of the video they have borrowed). Many teachers also choose to video language learning programmes shown on television and bring them into school to show to the class. There are innumerable types of video which can be used in foreign language class such as discussions, advertisements, cartoons, language teaching films and productions made by the learners themselves (Heidecker 1994: 437), providing these portray, make explicit reference to or are in some way connected to a particular cultural theme.

Once they do, all of these genres of videos are excellent mediators of cultural knowledge and can act as a "Quelle des Zuwachses an Wissen über kulturelle, politische, technische, wissenschaftliche, industrielle, soziale, religiöse usw. Daten aus dem Land der Zielsprache" (Faber 1983/84 cited in Henrici & Riemer 1994: 439).

In short, video is a superb mediator of situations and role-play in the foreign culture in that they demonstrate explicitly, in an authentic setting the behaviour, habits and norms of the inhabitants of the target language community.

4.2.4 An Integrated and Comparative Approach for the Portrayal of the Target Language Country

The most effective mediation of knowledge about and interest in not only the country of the L2 but also one's own country can be achieved through the use of any of the above materials in a comparative approach; that is, the above materials can be used to compare the history, geography and many other aspects of both German and Irish culture.

Through comparison with one's own country, pupils achieve a clearer understanding of not only the similarities of their country and the L2 country, but also the differences. Without distinct comparison with one's own country, many pupils are likely to feel that there may be vague differences between the L1 and L2 countries, of which they are not particularly aware, but that the one major (and therefore the most important) difference is the language.

Naturally, not *all* aspects of the cultures can be compared. There are many elements of a culture which are implicit in that culture only and extremely difficult, if not impossible to decipher by a non-member of that culture (anthropology describes a "cultural code", an implicit, almost subconscious code of behaviour and beliefs within cultures). However, as many concrete, tangible, comprehensible aspects as possible of the L2 culture should be made prominent in the language class and compared in-depth with the same aspects of the L1 culture. Through comparison of their own country with the L2 country, the pupils will not only begin to see the target language culture in the light of their own, but also their culture in the light of the L2 culture, a concept upon which the Intercultural Approach is based (see section 1.5).

It is not only a comparative approach which is desirable in the classroom, but also an *integrated* approach. The use of all of the above methodologies in an integrated fashion (i.e. not over-using one to the neglect of another) should benefit the foreign language learner by offering him / her a range of portrayals, settings and themes relating to the country of the L2 and not restricting him / her to an unchanging method of portrayal which, due to repetitiveness, is likely to become mediocre and consequently uninteresting.

A variation by the teacher in both the content and mediation of cultural studies should also help to reduce the amount of stereotyping and instrumental motivation in the foreign language class. Frequent exposure to many vaired elements of the L2 culture should both awaken the pupils to the differences among people (not all of the Germans they encounter

will be blonde-haired and blue-eyed) and develop an interest in at least one aspect of German culture (there is more to learning German than job prospects).

Of course, it is not only aspects within culture, within Landeskunde which should be integrated. The two overall aspects of language learning, *language* and *culture* should be united, or integrated if a truly balanced approach is to be achieved. Just as language should not be taught without culture (see section 1), nor should culture be taught to the detriment of language learning – this would completely defeat the point of the language class. Language class should comprise equal parts language and culture in order to impart to the learner a balanced, all-encompassing experience of learning a language.

If the pupils feel that Landeskunde is enjoyable, interesting and important, then the role played by Landeskunde in class should reflect this and not directly contradict it (As it appears to do in the schools in this study). Through using a wide variety of teaching materials in an integrated fashion and as a means of comparing the cultures of the L1 and the L2, teachers of German might be able to begin to respond to the needs and preferences of the pupils and succeed in placing Landeskunde where the pupils want it – in a dominant position in class. If pupils are interested in a subject they will want to learn (more) about it. This is the case with Landeskunde.

Landeskunde should not undermine the communicative element of the syllabus, but likewise under no circumstances should it be undermined. It has proved, in the course of this study, to be a valuable teaching constituent which teachers can use as a means to develop and encourage enthusiastic learning among students.

Appendix One

Questionnaire

1)   Age

       Sex

       Year

2)   Have you ever met any Germans?   Y   N

3)   Were they   a)   German relatives

                      b)   Germans living here

                      c)   German penpals

                      d)   German visitors to Ireland

                      e)   Other (please state)

4)   What do you think the average German looks like? Please tick one answer per section.

a)Tall	a)Fat	a)Athletic	a)Brown eyes	a)Brown hair
b)Small	b)Thin	b)Unathletic	b)Green eyes	b)Black hair
c)Neither	c)Neither	c)Neither	c)Blue eyes	c)Red hair
			d)Neither	d)Neither

5)   Which of the following characteristics fit the average German personality?

Positive			**Negative**		
Healthy	Y	N	Unhealthy	Y	N
Humorous	Y	N	Boring	Y	N
Hygienic	Y	N	Untidy	Y	N
Friendly	Y	N	Unfriendly	Y	N
Hardworking	Y	N	Lazy	Y	N
Patriotic	Y	N	Racist	Y	N
Easy-going	Y	N	Power-hungry	Y	N

6)   Name two German rivers   a)

7)   Name five German cities

                                               b)

a)

b)

c)

d)

e)

f)

8)   What is the German capital?

9 (a)   Who is the German Chancellor?

9 (b)   Which party does he represent?

10)   When was Germany re-unified?

11)   What were the two former Germanys called?   a)

                                                                           b)

12)   Is industry in Germany   a)   More important than in other countries

                                           b)   Just as important as in other countries

                                         c)   Not as important as in other countries

13)   Name five German companies   a)

                                                b)

                                            c)

                                            d)

                                              e)

14)   Name eight famous Germans, living or dead   a)

                                                                                  b)

                                                                                  c)

                                                                                  d)

                                                                                  e)

f)

g)

h)

15) Why are you learning German?   a) Wanted to learn about another culture

b) Good at the language

c) Compulsory subject

d) Important for jobs

e) Like the language

f) Other (please state)

16) Will you continue learning German after the Junior Certificate / Leaving Certificate? Underline which applies to you.   Y   N

17) Please tick where appropriate.

	Like a lot	It's OK	Dislike
Language:	O	O	O
Grammar:	O	O	O
Cultural Studies:	O	O	O

18) Do you find grammar   a)   Too difficult

b)   Manageable

c)   Easy

d)

19) Do you find the cultural side   a)   Interesting

b)   Boring

c)   Important

d)   Relevant to learning German

e)   Irrelevant to learning German

f)   Other (please state)

20) Do you prefer learning   a)   German

                                          b)   About Germany

                                          c)   Both

21) In your classroom, does learning about Germany play   a)   a big role

                                                           b)   a small role

                                                           c)   no role at all

22) Which aspects do you learn most about?   a)   Industry

                                                  b)   Education

                                                  c)   Young people

                                                  d)   Politics

                                                  e)   History

                                                     f)   Other (please state)

23) How would you learn most about German culture?   a)   Textbook

                                                     b)   TV

                                                      c)   School Video

                                                     d)   Personal experience with Germans

                                                     e)   Other (please state)

24) Cultural studies in German class: would you like   a)   More

                                                      b)   Less

Why?_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

25) In your opinion, learning about the country whose language you are learning is:

    a)   Very important

    b)   Reasonably important

    c)   Not at all important

Why?_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix Two

Three samples of completed maps offered by students

Please insert on the map shown below the following German cities:

1. Berlin

2. Bonn

3. Munich

4. Frankfurt

5. Dusseldorf

Also please draw the border between the former East Germany and West Germany indicating East and West

Please insert on the map shown below the following German cities:

1. Berlin

2. Bonn

3. Munich

4. Frankfurt

5. Dusseldorf

Also please draw the border between the former East Germany and West Germany indicating East and West

Please insert on the map shown below the following German cities:

1. Berlin

2. Bonn

3. Munich

4. Frankfurt

5. Dusseldorf

Also please draw the border between the former East Germany and West Germany indicating East and West

Appendix Three

Sample Papers for

a)   Junior Certificate Examination

b)   Leaving Certificate Examination

SECTION II - READING COMPREHENSION
(100 marks)

Read the information carefully and then answer as instructed in each case.

A

1. You are in a department store.. Which of the following signs indicates a special offer? Rewrite the chosen word.

| SONDERZUG | SONDERANGEBOT | SONDERFALL | SONDERSCHULE |

2. You are in a supermarket, looking for something for a pain in your stomach. Which of the following words would you look for on packaged medication? Rewrite the chosen word.

| HALSWEH | ZAHNSCHMERZEN | MAGENSCHMERZEN | KOPFWEH |

3. You are reading a brochure to plan a family holiday. Which of the following words would tell you that children are welcome? Rewrite the chosen word.

| KINDERFREUNDLICH | KEINE KINDER | KINDISCH | KINDERLOS |

B

Write the number of the **ADVERTISEMENT** beside the item or service it is advertising. Beware of **extra items!**

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

(7)

2	Wines
	Riding holidays
	Health food shop
	Guitar lessons
	Sports gym
	Children's shoe shop
	Children's party food
	Second level school
	TV magazine
	Windows and doors

TEXT 1: LESEVERSTÄNDNIS   (60)

Martin besucht öfters seine Großeltern und findet es interessant, wie gern sein Großvater die Nachbarn aus dem Fenster beobacthet.

1.

Martins Großvater sitzt den ganzen Tag am Fenster. Er wohnt im Eichenweg und schaut sich gern alles an, was auf dieser Straße unter den schönen Eichenbäumen so passiert. Zum Beispiel, am Tag der Hochzeit bei Schmidts. Er hat alles gesehen, kann das Brautkleid beschreiben, den viel zu kurzen Anzug von Vater Schmidt, die Autos, die vor der Tür parkten, und auch den riesengroßen, gelben Strohhut von Frau Schmidt – das alles kann er jetzt in allen Details beschreiben.

2.

Und so geht es weiter. Sobald im Frühjahr die Eichen die ersten grünen Blätter zeigen, ruft Martins Großvater Martins Eltern an und sagt es ihnen. Wenn der Müllwagen über eine Stunde zu spät kommt, notiert er sich die genaue Zeit und schreibt noch am selben Abend einen Beschwerdebrief, daß die Mülltonnen wieder mal spät geleert wurden. Wenn Herr Meier, der Briefträger, beim Metzger länger als fünf Minuten bleibt, weiß er Bescheid: Natürlich trinken die beiden jetzt ihre vier, fünf Bierchen, und der Meier steckt nachher mal wieder die Briefe in die falschen Briefkästen.

3.

Einmal hat Martins Großvater der Polizei sogar einen Einbruch melden können. Darauf war er noch tagelang stolz, obwohl der Einbruch eigentlich gar kein richtiger Einbruch war. Frau Flocks Tochter hatte die Schlüssel vergessen und war durchs offene Fenster gestiegen. Doch natürlich hätte es ein echter Einbruch sein können; die Polizei hatte Martins Großvater damals sehr für seine Aufmerksamkeit gelobt.

4.

Martins Großvater ist sehr stolz darauf, daß er genau weiß, was in der Straße geschieht, wer mit wem im Streit liegt, wer welche Sorgen und Nöte hat und was die Leute in ihrem Leben so treiben. „Man muß sich um seine Nachbarn kümmern“, sagt er oft. „Ich mag es nicht, wenn man nur so nebeneinander lebt, ohne mit den Nachbarn zu reden und einander zu helfen.“ Aus diesem Grund haßt Martins Großvater den Fernseher. Der Fernseher schafft eine Distanz zwischen der Realität und dem „richtigen“ Leben, sagt er. Wenn er das sagt, denkt er vor allem an seine Frau, Klärchen, Martins Großmutter, die nie aus dem Fenster sieht, sondern immer nur fernsieht. Die Großmutter behauptet genau das Gegenteil, sie sagt, daß der kleine Fernseher ihr viel mehr vom Leben zeigt als der langweilige Blick aus dem Fenster.

Ob in Mexico bei einem Erdbeben viele Menschen ums Leben kommen, in Indien ein alter Tempel bei einer Explosion zerstört wird oder in Norwegen ein Schiff untergeht – der Fernseher informiert sie sofort darüber. Will sie lachen, muß sie nur eine lustige Sendung wählen. Außerdem bringt der Fernseher immer wieder alte Filme, die sie an ihre Jugend erinnern.

5.

Martin war eines Tages bei den Großeltern zu Besuch. Martin glaubte erst, der Großvater wäre gar nicht da, weil er nicht aus dem Fenster blickte. Aber dann war er doch zu Hause – und hockte vor dem Fernseher! „Nur wegen der Nachrichten“, sagte er verlegen. „Man muß ja wissen, was in der Politik so alles passiert.“

Martin setzte sich still dazu und sah den Großvater auf einmal lächeln!

Frei nach: **KLAUS KORDON,** *Nachbarn und andere Leute*

1.   Richtig oder falsch? Kreuzen Sie an!

		richtig	falsch
1.	Martins Großvater konnte die Hochzeit der Nachbarstochter genau beschreiben		
2.	Der Briefträger machte manchmal Fehler, weil er zuviel getrunken hatte.		
3.	Martins Großvater hat einmal einen Dieb erwischt.		
4.	Martins Großvater sieht viel fern.		
5.	Martins Großmutter interessiert sich sehr für alles, was in der Nachbarschaft geschieht.		
6.	Als Martin eines Tages zu Besuch kam, fand er den Großvater im Garten.		

2. · Add headings to the (numbered) paragraphs to suit the content. Explain briefly in English your reason for the choice of heading for each paragraph.

Example: 1. "Hochzeit bei Schmidts" – Martin's grandfather watched the neighbour's wedding from the window.

Einbruch	2. _____
Überraschung	3. _____
Hochzeit bei Schmidts	
Beschwerden	4. _____
Omas Einstellung	5. _____

3 Read over the entire passage again. Locate and write down *three* bits of evidence to indicate the grandfather took great interest in all that went on around him.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4 What was the difference in attitude towards television between the grandfather and the grand-mother?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

TEXT II: LESEVERSTÄNDNIS (60)

SMOG: So schützen Sie sich und Ihre Kinder

Jetzt ist es wieder soweit: Der Wetterbericht warnt vor Glatteis, schlechter Sicht und – Smog. Aber Smog ist nicht nur eine Wetterlage. Er greift die Gesundheit an: Nase, Bronchien, Hals, Lunge, Herz und Augen. In Europa – das ergab eine Studie der Weltgesundheitsorganisation (WHO) – sterben jedes Jahr über 2000 Menschen an den Folgen der Luftverschmutzung. Und noch mehr erkranken durch Smog. Deshalb warnen Umweltbehörden über Rundfunk, wenn die Konzentration an Schadstoffen zu groß wird.

Was ist eigentlich Smog? Der Ausdruck „Smog" stammt aus dem Englischen. Er setzt sich zusammen aus „smoke" (Rauch) und „fog" (Nebel). Smog entsteht durch Schadstoffe aus Industrieanlagen, Autos und privaten Haushalten.

Der Artzt Dr. Helmut Brammer empfiehlt: „Trinken Sie viel Zitronen- oder Orangensaft. Smog und die damit verbundenen Schadstoffe sind Vitamin-C-Killer.".

Kranke, ältere Menschen und junge Kinder sollten möglichst in der Wohnung bleiben, Kinder sollten draußen nicht herumspielen. Die Wohnung nur kurz lüften. Fenster nicht länger als fünf Minuten auflassen. Benutzen Sie keine Löse- und Reinigungsmittel, keine Klebstoffe oder Sprays. Und vor allem: nicht rauchen. Sonst sorgen Sie für Smog in der Wohnung.

Wenn Sie sich draußen aufhalten müssen, sollten Sie (und Ihre Kinder) möglichst nur durch die Nase atmen. Nicht durch den Mund. Die Nase filtert viele Schadstoffe aus der Luft. Dr Brammer: „Halten Sie sich ein Tuch vor das Gesicht oder einen Schal. Das

Read the article on smog, then fill in the information in the box below.

Season:	
Parts of the body affected	
Annual deaths in Europe due to smog	
How are smog warnings given?	
What causes smog?	

2.   **What belongs together?**

Indicate your answer in all cases by inserting the letters which correspond to the numbers in the box below.

1.	Smog	a.	ist ein englisches Wort
2.	Die Luftverschmutzung	b.	wenn Smogkonzentrationen hoch sind
3.	Smog	c.	daß Smog in die Wohnung gerät
4.	Man braucht mehr Vitamin-C	d.	gefährdet die Gesundheit
5.	Man muß vermeiden	e.	gegen Smog schützen
6.	Man soll sich draußen	f.	verursacht den Tod

1	D	2		3		4		5		. 6	

3.   Read the following sentences. Indicate your answer in all cases by inserting the correct letter, (a) or (b) or (c) or (d), in the box.

1. Smog entsteht
   (a)   weil die Luft sehr kalt ist.
   (b)   weil es Glatteis gibt.
   (c)   weil es schlechte Sicht gibt.
   (d)   weil warme Luft nicht abziehen kann.

2. 2000 Menschen sterben jedes Jahr an den Folgen der Luftverschmutzung
   (a)   in Europa
   (b)   in der ganzen Welt
   (c)   in Deutschland
   (d)   in England

3. Man soll viel Orangensaft trinken
   (a)   um den Smog zu verhindern.
   (b)   um gesund zu bleiben.
   (c)   weil Smog das Vitamin-C zerstört.
   (d)   um die Schadstoffe abzubauen.

4. Man soll
   (a)   die Wohnung gut lüften.
   (b)   nur kurz lüften
   (c)   nie die Wohnung lüften.
   (d)   ein paarmal am Tag lüften.

5. Wenn man sich draußen aufhält sollte man
   (a)   durch die Nase atmen.
   (b)   durch den Mund atmen.
   (c)   abwechselnd durch den Mund und dann durch die Nase atmen.
   (d)   wenig einatmen.

6. Ein Tuch oder ein Schal
   (a)   bietet keinen Schutz gegen Smog.
   (b)   bietet nur Schutz, wenn man das Gesicht damit deckt.
   (c)   bietet nur Schutz für die Nase.
   (d)   bietet nur Schutz für den Mund.

Appendix Four

Foreign Language Games

Hangman

"Hangman" is a game which can be played either in pairs, groups or among an entire class. Student A must choose a word and must draw a series of blank spaces, each representing a letter of that word (e.g dog = ---). The other student or students must try to guess what the word is by offering a selection of different letters. Each time a correct letter has been found it is written into the corresponding space. Each time an incorrect letter is offered, Student A must draw a section of a hangman's platform and a man hanging from the platform. The object of the game is to guess the correct word before the drawing of the platform and man is completed by Student A.

Twenty Questions

"Twenty Questions" can also be played in pairs, small groups or among a whole class. Student A chooses a topic or object of the target language country. The other student(s) must try to ascertain what this subject is by asking Student A a series of questions to which (s)he may only reply "yes" or "no". The maximum number of questions which can be asked is twenty. By analysing the "yes" and "no" answers the students must try to identify the topic or object that Student A has in mind. Any cheating such as the student changing his or her topic or object can be quashed by asking him or her to write it down on paper before the game begins.

In the case of both games, teachers can initiate a discussion about the various topics which have been mentioned in the course of the games and can supply further information and design homework relating to the topics.

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