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# The Relationship of Field Dependent/Independent Cognitive Style to Spanish Language Achievement and Proficiency: A Preliminary Report

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THIS STUDY WAS CONCEIVED IN RESPONSE TO BOTH implicit and explicit assumptions found in the literature that a field independent (FI) cognitive style is more effective than a field dependent (FD) style for classroom study of another language (Birckbichler & Omaggio; Brown; Hansen & Stansfield), despite mixed and sometimes conflicting evidence concerning the possible role of field dependence/independence (FD/I) in second or foreign language learning.<sup>1</sup>

Research suggests that characteristics and behaviors associated with the two cognitive styles may have relevance for different aspects of language ability. The question was therefore raised whether FD/I might be differentially related to success on language tasks and in language learning programs of varying orientations: toward formal linguistic *achievement* or toward functional language *proficiency*. A corollary question concerns whether cognitive style and course orientation affect learners' perceptions of the process of learning a foreign language. Such perceptions may logically be assumed to influence choice of learning strategies, and thereby, perhaps, the learner's degree of success. These, then, were the major concerns of the study. Before continuing discussion of these questions, though, it is appropriate to discuss briefly the implications of FD/I for foreign language learning, as well as the interpretation of achievement and proficiency used in this study.

## FIELD DEPENDENCE/INDEPENDENCE

The FD/I dimension of cognitive style represents the extent to which an individual relies primarily on the self or is influenced by the world outside (i.e., the "field") in psychological functioning (Witkin, 46; Witkin & Goodenough, 48). These contrasting tendencies are believed to affect both cognitive and social behaviors and abilities: FI is associated with greater articulation and competence in cognitive analysis and restructuring, and FD with a more global approach and greater social and interpersonal competence. Either style may have advantages or disadvantages for a particular task; in the case of foreign language learning, two conflicting hypotheses are suggested by the research literature related to FD/I.

It appears that the cognitive restructuring abilities associated with FI extend into the verbal domain, at least with regard to the native language.<sup>2</sup> Evidence also exists that FI people are better able to select from a complex field those cues relevant to a particular problem; in contrast, FD learners may have difficulty focusing on the relevant cues, especially when cues useful in one context become irrelevant in another (Dickstein; Goodenough; Witkin, 49), as is common in foreign language learning. In addition, FD people tend toward a "spectator" approach to learning, while FI people are more apt to take a participatory approach, making use of hypothesis testing and processes such as analyzing and structuring (Davis & Haueisen; Goodenough; Witkin, 49). Effective learning may take place by either approach; nevertheless, that of FI learners corresponds with many of the strategies used by "good language learn-

*The Modern Language Journal*, 72, i (1988)  
0026-7902/88/0001/021 \$1.50/0  
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ers," as identified by Rubin and Stern: successful learners take an active approach, are willing guessers, experiment and practice, attend to form, and constantly analyze, categorize, and synthesize.

However, these same researchers also found that "good" language learners have a strong drive to communicate, try to use the language with others, monitor how well their speech is being received by others, and attend to social cues to meaning. The interpersonal orientation of FD people, then, may also be advantageous for language learning. Investigators of affective variables in foreign language learning have claimed that empathy, socialization, and other FD traits are the keys to language learning success (Brown; Gayle; Guiora). This view is supported by research which indicates that FD individuals are better than FI individuals at learning and remembering material with social connotations (Goodenough; Witkin, 49; Witkin & Goodenough).

Results of the few empirical studies which have treated the specific question of the relevance of FD/I to foreign language learning have been inconclusive and inconsistent.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, Brown and Bialystok/Fröhlich postulate that FI learners may have the advantage in classroom foreign language learning because of the formal, or structure-oriented, nature of classroom tasks, as opposed to a more "natural" or functional use of language for communication of meaning. Many classroom activities, and most testing procedures, focus on manipulating foreign language forms, while minimizing attention to social function and meaning. Such tasks may call forth the particular skills of FI people while ignoring or obscuring FD people's social/interpersonal abilities, which should logically also contribute to effective language use. The implication is that the supposed superiority of an FI cognitive style in classroom learning may be related to a distinction between the usual *formal linguistic achievement* orientation of classrooms and tests and what Omaggio has called "real competence," that is, *functional language proficiency*.

#### PROFICIENCY AND ACHIEVEMENT

For some years, proficiency was widely equated in the literature with linguistic competence, i.e., knowledge of a language as a

structured, rule-bound system, expressed as the ability to recognize and manipulate its vocabulary, structure, and sound system to produce grammatically well-formed utterances (Brooks; Fries; Politzer). More recently, however, the concept of proficiency has broadened to include competence in the use of language for communication, comprising strategic and sociolinguistic, as well as linguistic, competences.<sup>4</sup>

Unfortunately, though, even where classroom activities may reflect this contemporary, expanded view of proficiency, the assessment of learners' progress has generally continued to focus almost exclusively on control of vocabulary and grammatical structures, representing only linguistic competence. We have evidence that this dimension is related strongly to overall academic achievement, but only weakly to functional language proficiency as assessed by more direct means (Clark; Genesee; Oller). Thus, such tests might well be considered more nearly measures of linguistic *achievement* than of language *proficiency*.

Given the hypothesized relationship of FD/I to cognitive and interpersonal abilities, it appears possible that such measures, as well as many current teaching practices, may favor FI learners, while possessing an implicit bias against learners with a FD cognitive style. The present investigation focused on this issue by examining performance as related to achievement and proficiency orientation of both treatment and criterion variables.

#### STUDY DESIGN

The primary research question of this investigation was whether a relationship exists between FD/I and learners' performance on language tests of formal *linguistic achievement* and of functional *language proficiency*, in courses with these two different types of orientation. A secondary question was whether learners' perceptions of the foreign language learning process are related to the orientation of the course and to their own degree of FD/I.

Subjects were students in second-quarter Spanish classes at two public midwestern universities. The two schools were markedly different in both size and scope, one being a large research university with extensive post-graduate programs, and the other a moderate-sized institution devoted primarily to undergraduate

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How about learners who are good/low at both FD & FI? Can the traits be indicated? 23

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education. Nevertheless, the student clientele, class size, course objectives, and teaching methods of first-year Spanish courses at both appeared generally representative of such courses at many universities.

An important difference for purposes of this study, though, occurred in the degree of focus on formal grammar study or functional language use. One Spanish course had a relatively strong grammar/linguistic-achievement orientation, reflected in class activities and testing procedures. The second course, in contrast, had an explicit goal of developing functional proficiency in Spanish. While still organized around a grammatical syllabus, this course covered fewer grammatical concepts in order to include, on a regular basis, classroom activities designed to focus attention on the social functions and meanings of the grammatical structures under study and to provide practice in using them for communication.<sup>5</sup> These activities included listening for meaning to oral texts, guided paired or small-group interviews and conversation, instructor-student and student-instructor questions on personal activities and interests, and other situational or contextualized exercises, all focusing on understanding and expressing meaning in Spanish. In addition, such oral communication tasks formed an integral part of the testing program throughout the quarter.

Dependent variables for the primary question were Spanish linguistic achievement, measured by the regular written final exam for each course, and communicative Spanish language proficiency, measured by the ACTFL/ETS Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) (Liskin-Gasparro).<sup>6</sup> The OPI was administered to all students and rated by the investigator, who had been trained in the procedure at an ACTFL-approved workshop and was working toward certification as an Oral Proficiency Tester.<sup>7</sup> Students in each course took the appropriate final exam as scheduled at the end of the academic quarter.<sup>8</sup> Data for the second question were gathered through administration of an instructor-designed questionnaire on which students indicated, on a scale of one (not at all helpful) to seven (extremely helpful), the degree of usefulness to them personally of various foreign language learning strategies and resources.

The degree of FD/I of all students was assessed by the Group Embedded Figures Test

(GEFT) (Oltman). This measure requires subjects to perceive and outline a simple geometric shape embedded in a complex design, a task which theoretically elicits the analytical and restructuring abilities associated with a FI cognitive style. Based on scores on the GEFT, students at each institution were divided into three groups, designated field dependent (FD), field central (FC), and field independent (FI). For the data analysis, twelve subjects were selected at random from among those in each of the six student groups for whom all data were available, for a total sample of seventy-two students, thirty-six from each course.

ANALYSIS & RESULTS

The first research question asked: What differences exist in performance on a measure of Spanish linguistic achievement (course final exam) and on a measure of functional Spanish language proficiency (OPI) by FD, FC, and FI learners in a predominantly grammar-achievement-oriented (GA) Spanish course and in a Spanish course incorporating activities designed to promote communicative language proficiency (LP)?

This complex question can be clarified by splitting it into several subquestions:

A. Is there any interaction effect between course orientation and degree of FD/I on students' performance on an achievement-oriented final exam and on the OPI?

B. Does course orientation toward grammar or proficiency affect students' performance on the two types of measures?

C. Do FD, FC, and FI students perform differently on the two types of measures?

For purposes of statistical analysis, raw scores on the two course final exams were transformed into z-scores and the two sets of scores then combined into a single "achievement" variable. It was also necessary to adjust OPI ratings, which are stated in verbal terms, to a numerical system. I thought it highly unlikely that speakers at either absolute zero or at or above the Advanced level (ACTFL) would be found in a first-year university language course. The Advanced Plus and Superior levels were therefore eliminated as possibilities, and numerical values from zero to seven assigned to the remaining ACTFL levels, as follows: 0 = absolute zero; 1 = NL; 2 = NM; 3 = NH; 4 =



TABLE I  
MANOVA on Performance Measures by FD/I and Course Orientation

Source of Variation	df (Hypothesis)	df (Error)	Multivariate F	p =
FD/I	4.00	130.00	5.776	.000**
FD/I X Orientation	4.00	130.00	.488	.744
Orientation	2.00	65.00	.006	.994

\*\*p < .01.

IL; 5 = IM; 6 = IH; 7 = Adv.<sup>9</sup> The relationship between FD/I and performance by students in the two types of courses was then examined through a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) on final exam z-scores and OPI ratings by degree of FD/I and course orientation (Table I), with appropriate follow-up one-way analyses.

No interaction was found between cognitive style and course orientation. That is, course orientation did not affect FD, FC, and FI learners in different ways, nor did FD/I have different effects on performance in the two courses. Neither did the analysis by course orientation alone discover any significant effect on final exam scores or OPI ratings.

In the analysis by cognitive style alone, however, a significant difference in performance was revealed: FI and FC subjects at both schools scored higher than FD subjects ( $p = .001$ ) on achievement-oriented final exams (Table II), and FI subjects performed better than FC and FD subjects ( $p = .007$ ) on the OPI (Table III). Only six of the forty-eight FD and FC subjects (12.5%) rated above the Novice level on the OPI; FD and FC group means of 2.58 and 2.33, respectively, placed these subjects generally between NM and NH on the ACTFL scale. The average OPI rating for the FI group, however, represented by their mean score of 3.42, fell a full level higher, just at the NH-IL border, with twelve of the twenty-four subjects in this group (50%) receiving a rating in the Intermediate range. Thus, FI was found to be advantageous on both achievement and proficiency measures, independently of course orientation.

The second question of interest was: What differences exist in perceptions of the foreign language learning process held by learners with varying degrees of FD/I in a grammar-oriented Spanish course and in a Spanish course incor-

TABLE II  
ANOVA on Final Exam Z-scores by FD/I

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F	p =
Between	2	12.092	6.046	7.205	.001**
Within	69	57.907	.839		
Total	71	70.000			

\*\*p < .01.

TABLE III  
ANOVA on OPI Ratings by FD/I

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F	p =
Between	2	14.583	7.292	5.280	.007**
Within	69	95.292	1.381		
Total	71	109.875			

\*\*p < .01.

porating activities designed to promote communicative proficiency?

A preliminary factor analysis grouped the fifty-one items of the questionnaire on perceptions of the learning process into ten identifiable factors: 1) practice with *focus on meaning*; 2) practice with *study aids* (lab tapes and flash cards); 3) *active oral practice*, either instructor-directed or small-group; 4) attention to *accuracy and rules*; 5) *instructor* as resource/director of learning; 6) *other people* (not including instructor) as resource; 7) *textbook* as resource; 8) *computer exercises* as study aids; 9) *tolerance of ambiguity*; 10) *receptive practice* of familiar material in context.

To compare and contrast the views of each subject group concerning the relative importance of these learning factors, a MANOVA was performed on them by course orientation and cognitive style, treated both simultaneously and separately (Table IV). No interaction effect

TABLE IV  
MANOVA on Identified Learning Factors by FD/I and Identified Learning Factors

Source of Variation	df (Hypothesis)	df (Error)	F	p =
FD/I X Orientation	20.00	110.00	1.199	.269
Orientation	10.00	55.00	2.693	.009**
FD/I	20.00	110.00	1.424	.126

\*\* $p < .01$ .

was found; the overall pattern of perceptions of the learning process was similar for all groups.

In the analysis by course orientation alone, a significant difference ( $p = .009$ ) was found on one factor: use of computer. Students in the proficiency-oriented (LP) course consistently rated computer-assisted practice much more helpful than did those in the achievement-oriented (GA) course. Since CAI was newly available as a study aid in the LP course, however, the favorable view of computer use by these subjects was attributed in part to a "halo effect," while the low ratings given to this factor by GA subjects may have resulted from their lack of experience with CAI in foreign language learning.

The multivariate analysis by cognitive style alone again showed similar overall patterns of views among FD, FC, and FI subjects, considered across the two types of course. Nevertheless, follow-up univariate F-tests revealed a difference between the two extreme groups, significant at the  $p = .039$  level, on factor one, *focus on meaning*, with FI subjects attributing more importance than FD subjects to this factor.

Correlations between the OPI, the two course final exams, and the ten identified learning factors were also examined. Factor one, *focus on meaning*, correlated positively with performance on the OPI (.425,  $p = .005$ ) and the course final exam (.426,  $p = .005$ ) by subjects in the grammar-oriented course (Table V).

TABLE V  
Correlation of Final Exam Scores and OPI Ratings with Views of Importance of Focus on Meaning

GA Final	GA OPI	LP Final	LP OPI
.426	.425	.106	.132
$p = .005^{**}$	$p = .005^{**}$	$p = .269$	$p = .221$

\*\* $p < .01$ .

That is, this single factor accounted for slightly over 18% of the variance in these students' scores on both achievement and proficiency measures. No such correlations were observed, however, for students in the proficiency-oriented course.

#### SUMMARY

Major findings of this study may be summarized as follows.

First, field independence was found advantageous for performance on both formal linguistic achievement and functional language proficiency tasks, while course orientation toward achievement or proficiency appeared to have no significant effect on performance on either kind of task.

Second, the general pattern of perceptions regarding the importance of various factors in the language learning process was similar for all cognitive style groups at the two schools. However, FI students at both schools considered focus on meaning to be significantly more important in learning than did FD students.

Third, views of the importance of focus on meaning correlated with performance on both the OPI and the course final exam for subjects in the grammar-oriented course, but did not correlate with performance on either measure for subjects in the proficiency-oriented course.

#### DISCUSSION

In this investigation, field independence was found conducive to success on both formal achievement and functional proficiency tasks, independently of the relatively formal or functional orientation of the course. These results, together with Hansen's similar findings, are in conflict with the hypothesis offered by Brown and by Bialystok/Fröhlich that FD/I might be

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differentially related to the formal versus functional nature of various language tasks.

One can, of course, argue that a structured interview such as the OPI is somewhat more formal than much "natural" language use. Moreover, the administration of this measure in conjunction with a classroom learning situation may have enhanced subjects' views of the formality of its demands. Bialystok and Fröhlich note that the evaluative nature of classroom-related tasks may in itself make them more formal. Nevertheless, the OPI is clearly oriented to the functional use of language for communication, in contrast with the focus on grammatical form of most classroom achievement measures, including the final exams used here. Nor should the interview have been viewed by subjects in this study as particularly formal in the evaluative sense: although it was a course requirement, only participation was required, so that students' performance could not negatively affect their grade.

Additionally, because the OPI is a face-to-face conversation, it could theoretically aid FD students by providing social cues for interpreting the interviewer's language and as feedback on their own communicative success, so that they could use other strategies as necessary to clarify meaning or compensate for gaps in linguistic knowledge. Such cues and strategies are supposedly more often and more effectively used by FD people. In the present study, though, it appeared that either: 1) FD subjects did not use interpersonal cues and strategies more effectively than FI subjects; 2) the OPI is not sensitive to the use of such strategies; or 3) the part played by these strategies in communication is insufficient to compensate for gaps in linguistic knowledge at this beginning level.

Naiman and others concluded that FI is more important as a predictor of success in the higher stages of language learning than in the early stages. Their hypothesis corresponds to the ascending importance accorded to grammatical accuracy in Higgs and Clifford's model of the relative contribution of various factors to language proficiency. However, both here and in the Hansen study, FD/I was found to have a significant effect also at early stages. Most FD subjects in this study received an ACTFL rating of Novice Mid or Novice High, indicating that they were still largely dependent

everyone

Elaine Fuller Carter

on memorized words and phrases for whatever communication they found possible. The FI group average, though, fell just at the Novice High-Intermediate Low border, with fully half attaining a rating in the Intermediate range.

The basic criterion for an Intermediate rating is demonstrated ability to go beyond memorized material and "create with the language" at a sentence level. Such ability implies some rudimentary understanding of the grammatical structure of the language and how it differs from the native language. FI-linked restructuring abilities might therefore be advantageous in progressing from a Novice to an Intermediate proficiency level (in accordance with the results of this investigation). However, once this major border has been crossed, FD traits and strategies may come into play in the process of broadening learners' ability to apply their grammatical competence to a greater variety of situational contexts. The apparent relationship found here between FD/I and proficiency, then, may or may not hold within the Intermediate and the Advanced levels.

It may be that the superior performance of FI learners here was partly due to their high cognitive restructuring skills. However, the analysis of perceptions regarding the learning process revealed an interesting difference between FD and FI subjects, which may also have relevance for foreign language achievement and proficiency. One might theorize that FI learners would tend to analyze and note the structural aspects of language, whereas the interpersonal orientation of FD learners would lead them to emphasize its social and communicative aspects, and hence attend preferentially to meaning rather than form. In this study, though, FD subjects attributed significantly *less* importance to practice focusing on meaning than did FI subjects.

Individuals' tendency to focus primarily on structural form or on meaning in foreign language study should logically correspond to their views of the relative importance of the two; moreover, these views might be influenced by the orientation of the academic course. In this investigation, however, perceptions of the importance of focus on meaning did not vary significantly across courses. Nevertheless, the relationship between subjects' perceptions and their level of performance did vary. In the course oriented toward formal linguistic achievement,

good



students who considered factor one, *focus on meaning*, important to learning did well on both achievement and proficiency measures. Apparently, their views led them to give more attention to the meaning of what they were practicing, and this focus may have enhanced their learning.

The value of functional, communicative practice with focus on meaning has been supported by the several "good language learner" studies (Naiman; Rubin; Stern), as well as by Bialystok's investigation of the effectiveness of various foreign language learning strategies. Of the strategies Bialystok examined, she found functional practice the most crucial for success on both formal (focusing on the language code) and functional (involving the use of the language for communication of meaning) language tasks. The same study revealed the apparent existence of a ceiling on the usefulness of practice focusing predominantly on form: beyond a certain point, additional formal practice no longer improved performance on either formal or functional tasks. However, Bialystok observed no such ceiling effect for functional practice focusing on meaning, implying an important role for such practice in language learning.

The results of the studies cited above support the notion that focus on meaning may have been a contributing factor in the differing performance of FD and FI learners in the grammar-oriented course. However, the intercorrelations observed between these subjects' views of the importance of attention to meaning and their performance were not replicated in the proficiency-oriented course. Where classroom activities and testing procedures generally encouraged or demanded focus on meaning by all students, the amount of attention given to meaning may have been less dependent on the individual's own view of its importance. That this increased focus on meaning did not appear to improve FD subjects' performance in comparison to FI subjects in the same course suggests that functional practice is beneficial to all learners, regardless of their cognitive style orientation.

The finding that course orientation had no statistically significant effect on either subjects' performance or their perceptions of the learning process is perhaps not surprising, in view of the non-discrete character of formal gram-

matical or linguistic achievement and functional, communicative language proficiency. Because linguistic achievement is subsumed as one component in the broader construct of language proficiency, a strict dichotomy is both theoretically and practically impossible. Thus, despite the differing course emphases on formal achievement or functional proficiency, the contrast in actual learning strategies of students in the two courses may have been insufficient to affect their performance differentially. Not only were some classroom activities necessarily common to the two courses, but as Bialystok points out, the degree of formality or functionality of a given activity for individual students varies according to the amount of attention they personally give to form or to transmitting meaning.

Further, a single academic quarter may well have been insufficient time for varying treatments to have much effect, particularly in view of participants' previous experience: since these were second-quarter courses, all subjects began with a background of Spanish study which, while accepted for placement purposes as the equivalent of one university quarter, actually varied in length, content, and approach to learning. In addition, the questionnaire on perceptions of the learning process was administered several weeks prior to the end of the quarter, decreasing still more the possible influence of course orientation on subjects' views. A longer period of time could produce a noticeable effect of course orientation on performance, perceptions of the learning process, or both, especially given its apparent effect on student behavior with regard to the use of functional practice even within the short time here available.

*Major weakness*

#### IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Among the implications of my study for foreign language research and education are:

First, this investigation's inconclusive findings regarding the effect of course orientation on performance and on student perceptions of the language learning process, together with the limited time of the study, suggest that a similar but longer study, encompassing perhaps a full first-year course, could have some merit. The investigation of possible *changes* in perceptions through the course should be a focal point of such a study.

Second, FI cognitive skills were found advantageous, here and in Hansen, for both formal linguistic achievement and functional communicative proficiency. These findings cause us to question the hypothesis that FD and FI may be differentially related to formal-linguistic and functional-communicative foreign language tasks or situations.

Third, we must ask whether the apparent advantage of a FI cognitive style for attainment of Intermediate-level foreign language proficiency in a classroom situation holds at or within higher proficiency levels, or whether FD and FI styles may be related in differing ways to the various levels.

Fourth, if the behaviors associated with a FI style do indeed enhance both achievement and proficiency in classroom foreign language learning, we need more research into possible

ways of helping all learners to acquire and use these apparently effective strategies, as well as instructional techniques to make use of the social and interpersonal abilities attributed to FD learners. Some relevant techniques might be found in Gunderson's description of a project which applied Johnson and Johnson's "cooperative learning" to a French classroom.

Finally, practice involving meaningful, communicative use of language elements studied is apparently quite important among foreign language learning strategies. Therefore, in order to promote use of this strategy by all students, the design of most classroom activities, out-of-class assignments, and testing procedures should encourage or require learners to attend to meaning, rather than to form alone.

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## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup>A preliminary version of this paper was presented at the annual meeting of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, August 1986.

<sup>2</sup>See Bibliography, 12, 30, 40, 52.

<sup>3</sup>See Bibliography, 3, 21, 33, 42, 48, 49.

<sup>4</sup>See Bibliography, 8, 9, 24, 25, 26, 43, 44, 46.

<sup>5</sup>These two first-year courses varied in choice of materials used as well as amount of linguistic content. The first two quarters of the grammar-oriented course covered approximately two-thirds (through lesson 13) of its textbook (Jarvis). The proficiency-oriented course, however, made no attempt to "cover the book" in an academic year; content for the first two quarters included less than half (through lesson 10) of its textbook (Stillman & Gordon), with a few selected grammatical points omitted or presented for recognition only.

<sup>6</sup>Evaluation of performance on the OPI is global, expressed by one of nine ratings, from Novice Low to Superior. The complete rating scale, with description of each level, may be found in the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* (see Bibliography, 1).

<sup>7</sup>Although GEFT scoring had been done prior to inter-

views, information regarding individual students' placement in cognitive style groups was held unavailable to the investigator during the interviews and their rating. As a check on reliability of the investigator's interview technique and ratings, ten interview samples, selected as particularly problematic to rate, were also rated by one of two other trained raters. The separate ratings were in agreement in eight cases; on the remaining two, the investigator's rating was one level below that assigned by the other rater (e.g., NM-NH or IL-IM).

<sup>8</sup>Although the specific content of the two exams varied somewhat, according to course content, the major part of each tested knowledge of vocabulary and structure, especially verb and pronoun forms, through multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank items; both also included a short written composition. The proficiency-oriented course final also contained a listening section; however, it was omitted for purposes of this study, so that the two achievement measures were both entirely in the written mode.

<sup>9</sup>According to current OPI doctrine, these ratings represent, not equidistant points on a linear scale, but rather the lower border of ranges of ability which increase in size as one ascends the scale; therefore, the difference in ability between IL and IM speakers, for example, is assumed to be greater than the difference between NM and NH speakers.

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## Proceedings: Indiana Symposium on Foreign Language Proficiency

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AN INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON THE EVALUATION of Foreign Language Proficiency was held at Indiana University in March of 1987. Participants included about thirty US and nine foreign specialists on language testing and communicative approaches to language teaching. The Bloomington symposium included both

proponents and critics of the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines*. The *Proceedings* book, 312 pages long, is available for purchase (\$15.25 plus postage). Write: Symposium Proceedings, CREDLI, Indiana University, 602 Ballantine Hall, Bloomington, IN 47405, USA.

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## French Education Teacher Training and Research Project

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LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY HAS ANNOUNCED the establishment of a research and training project in French education. The project will provide graduate study and research, serve as a resource center, and work in both pre- and in-service training. An integral part of the LSU Center for French and Francophone Studies, the project is supported by the departments of Curriculum and Instruction and French and

Italian. Additional support is provided by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Association for the Promotion of Education and Training Abroad (Belgium), and the Quebec Ministry of International Relations. For additional information contact the French Education Project, 202 Peabody Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge 70803. Telephone: (504) 388-6662.