



**The State of German in the United States: A Statistical
Portrait and a Call for Teachers**

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This article reviews data about German spoken at home, and German taught in U.S. elementary, secondary, and postsecondary educational institutions. It discusses data about U.S. students studying in Germany, U.S. teachers of German, doctoral research related to German conducted at U.S. universities, and employment opportunities for German language professionals. It is argued that the teaching of German is still in demand, and that the training of school teachers is the most important challenge to the profession. In order to meet this challenge, German Studies programs in colleges and universities need to do more to make teacher training a priority.

1. Introduction

This appears to be a difficult time for the teaching of German in the U.S. Many of us are concerned about the closing of German programs in schools and colleges and about junior colleagues' desperate search for jobs in higher education. The profession is discussing how to protect programs of German, how to cope with new challenges, and how to implement curricular reform (Byrnes 2008; Davidheiser & Wolf 2009; Kramsch et al. 2007; Levine et al. 2008; Maxim 2009). But how serious is the situation of German in the United States really, how different is it compared to earlier 'times of crisis' (e.g., Byrnes 1996; Davidheiser 2000; Lovik 2003; Schulz 2002; Swaffar 2003), and if it is any different, what new recommendations can be made to strengthen the German-teaching profession in this country?

In order to provide a basis for discussion and potential answers to these questions, I have reviewed survey data about the teaching of foreign languages in general and the teaching of German in particular. Because I believe that programs of German at the various educational levels depend a great deal on each other, I have opted to include data on a wide range of issues related to the learning, teaching, and use of German in the U.S. that, taken together, should provide a relatively realistic picture about the state of German in this country. In particular, I review data about German spoken at home (U.S. Census Bureau 2005a; Robinson et al. 2006), German taught in elementary and secondary schools (ACTFL 2010; Rhodes & Pufahl 2010), and German enrollments in postsecondary educational institutions (Furman et al. 2010). I include data on U.S.

students studying in Germany (IIE 2010), U.S. teachers of German (Williams, personal communication), doctoral research related to German conducted at U.S. universities (Benseler 2007; Fliegenger 2009), and employment opportunities for teachers of German at the pre-collegiate and college levels (MLA Office of Research 2010; Zimmer-Loew, personal communication). Based on my interpretation of the data, I will argue that the teaching of German is still in demand, and that the training of new teachers and their hiring in primary and especially secondary schools is the most important challenge to the profession.

2. German at Home and at Large

German heritage and German spoken in American homes are of relevance for the present discussion. They have been reported to be motives for a significant number of students for taking beginning German courses. Andress et al. (2002: 3) reported that 59.3% of 4,711 surveyed high school students of German reported “family background” as being a very important or somewhat important motive for the decision to enroll in their first German course. “My parents/grandparents speak German” was an important motive for 29.3% of these students. Sinka & Zachau (2005: 101) found that 10% of the college students that they surveyed considered the reason, “my parents/grandparents speak German” a “very important motive” for studying German in the first place. German-speaking ancestry has clearly had an impact on enrollment numbers in German programs in the U.S.

In the census of 2000, almost 1.4 million U.S. citizens and residents reported using German as their home language (U.S. Census Bureau 2005a).¹ This made German the fifth most frequently used language in American homes at the time. A more recent survey from 2005, based on a much smaller sample than the census, suggests that German has fallen to seventh place and that it is used by an estimated 1.1 million people (U.S. Census Bureau 2005a).² The languages that were reportedly used more frequently

¹ The questions that were asked in the census are: A. Does this person speak a language other than English at home? (For those who speak another language) B. What is this language?

² The data are estimates based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. More information on sampling procedures can be found in U.S. Census Bureau 2005a.

than German were English, Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, French, and Vietnamese.³ Worth noting is that, in the 2005 survey, German was still the most frequently reported category of ancestry in the U.S.: an estimated 49 million U.S. Americans reported being of German ancestry (U.S. Census Bureau 2005b).⁴

In a study conducted in 2000, the General Social Survey (GSS) (reported in Robinson et al. 2006), participants were asked about “any languages they spoke” in addition to English. Of the 1,398 participants surveyed, 26% indicated that they spoke a second language. Of the second language users, 20% reported speaking Spanish, 15% French and 9% reported speaking German, the third most frequently reported second language. However, fewer than half of those familiar with German reported speaking the language well or very well.

Over the last forty years, German has been the third most frequently taught foreign language (FL) in the U.S. (e.g., Draper & Hicks 2002; Rhodes & Oxford 1988). Two recent surveys provide information about the current situation of German programs in comparison to other language programs in this country. In 2008, the Center for Applied Linguistics conducted a nationwide survey to investigate the amount and kind of FL programs that were offered in public and private elementary and secondary schools (Rhodes & Pufahl 2010) and how these had changed compared to prior survey findings reported by Rhodes & Branaman (1999) and Rhodes & Oxford (1988). Over 5,000 public and private institutions participated in the 2008 survey. At about the same time, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) conducted a study on FL enrollments in K-12 public schools in the school years of 2004-05 and 2007-08. Relevant findings of the detailed Rhodes & Pufahl study will be reported in the subsequent section before the more general data from ACTFL are presented.

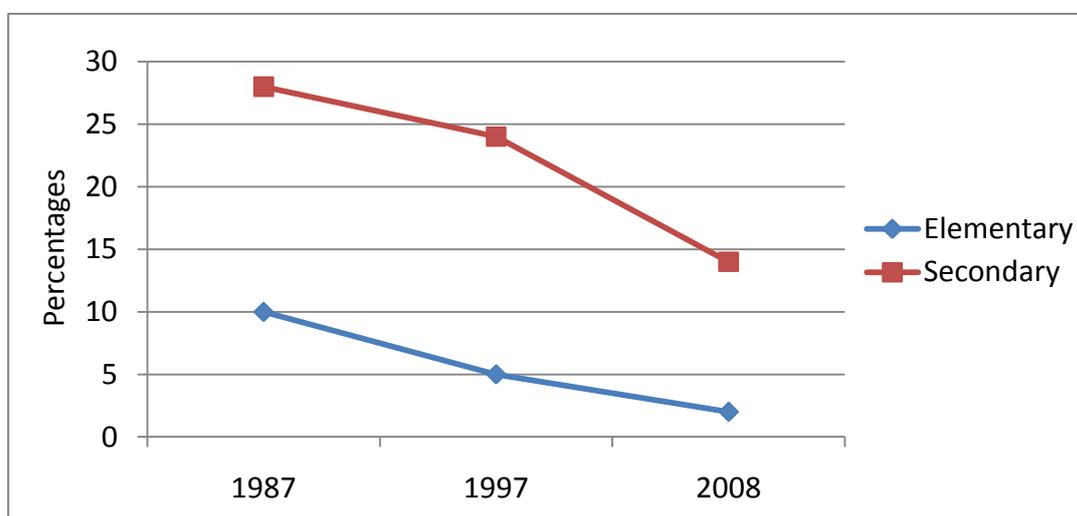
³ Unfortunately, the 2010 census did not solicit any information about home languages.

⁴ Note that before the United States’ entrance into World War I, German was the most frequently taught modern FL in the U.S.: According to Zeydel (1964: 356): “In that year (1915) over 40% of the public and private high schools throughout the country were offering French (11%), German (28%) and Spanish (2%).” Numbers of immigrants and FL enrollments apparently were related then as they are today when numbers of Spanish-speaking residents and Spanish enrollments are soaring.

3. German in Elementary Education

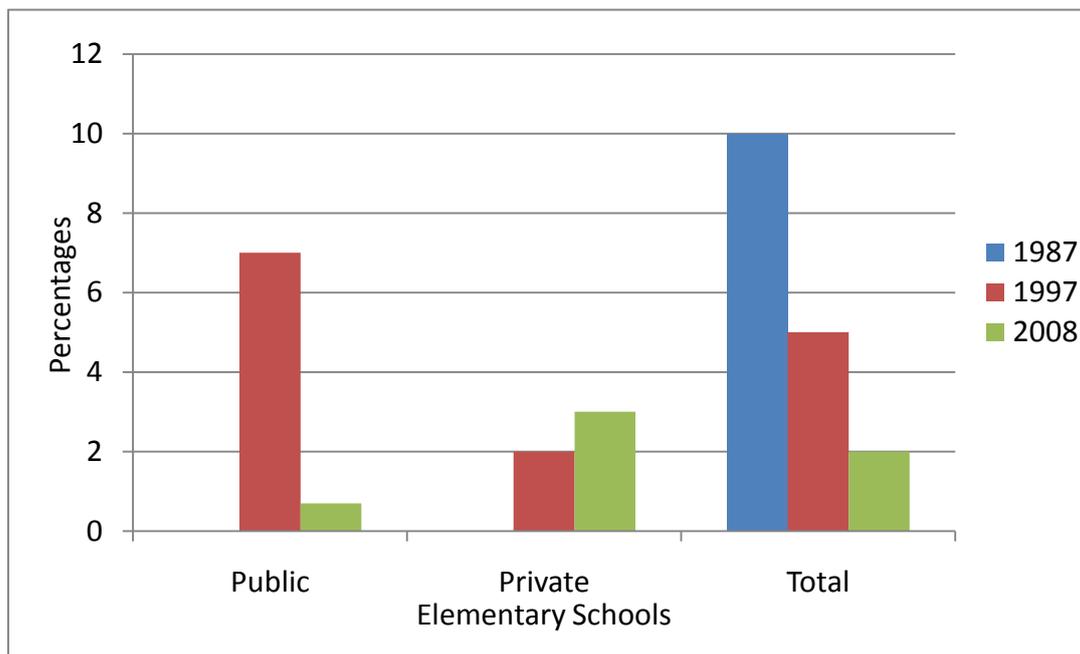
According to Rhodes & Pufahl (2010), the percentage of U.S. elementary schools that offer FL instruction decreased from 31% in 1997 to 25% in 2008. The decrease was much more prominent in public schools (from 24% to 14%) compared to private schools (from 53% to 51%). Private elementary schools offer FLs two to three times more often than public schools. The percentage of elementary schools with language programs that offer German fell from 5% in 1997 to 2% in 2008 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. German Offered by Elementary Schools and Secondary Schools with Foreign Language Programs (based on data from Rhodes & Pufahl 2010).



While German offerings in public elementary schools fell from 7% to 0.7%, private schools slightly increased their offerings of German programs from 2% to 3% (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. German Offered by Elementary Schools with Foreign Language Programs According to School Type (based on data from Rhodes & Pufahl 2010).



German has fallen to the sixth place of the most frequently offered FL programs at the elementary level, and it appears to be on par with the teaching of American Sign Language (ASL) and Italian, which each share about 2% of FL programs offered in elementary schools. While schools' offerings of other traditionally taught languages, such as French, decreased as well, programs of Arabic, Chinese, and Latin increased. In 2008, both Chinese and surprisingly Latin surpassed the teaching of German at this level. Chinese was offered in 3% and Latin in 6% of elementary schools with language programs (compared to 0.3% and 3% of such schools in 1997). Spanish has strengthened its dominating position in FL instruction in elementary schools. 88% of schools with language programs offered Spanish courses in 2008 compared to 79% in 1997. Note, however, that a decrease in the percentage of schools that offer German programs does not necessarily have to mean a decrease in student enrollment numbers in programs of German. It is possible that well established programs in traditionally taught languages, such as German, have more students enrolled than recently introduced programs.

Rhodes & Pufahl's survey also reveals trends in German language teaching in the U.S. according to region. The overall decrease of German language programs at the

elementary level was mostly due to a decline of German programs in the Central and Pacific Northwestern regions which, in 1997, had the highest shares of German in FL teaching at the elementary level (10% and 5% respectively). However, these percentages fell over the last decade to 2% and 1% respectively. The percentages of German in schools with FL offerings in the Northeast, South, and Southwest remained at similar levels (2%, 2% and 3% respectively).

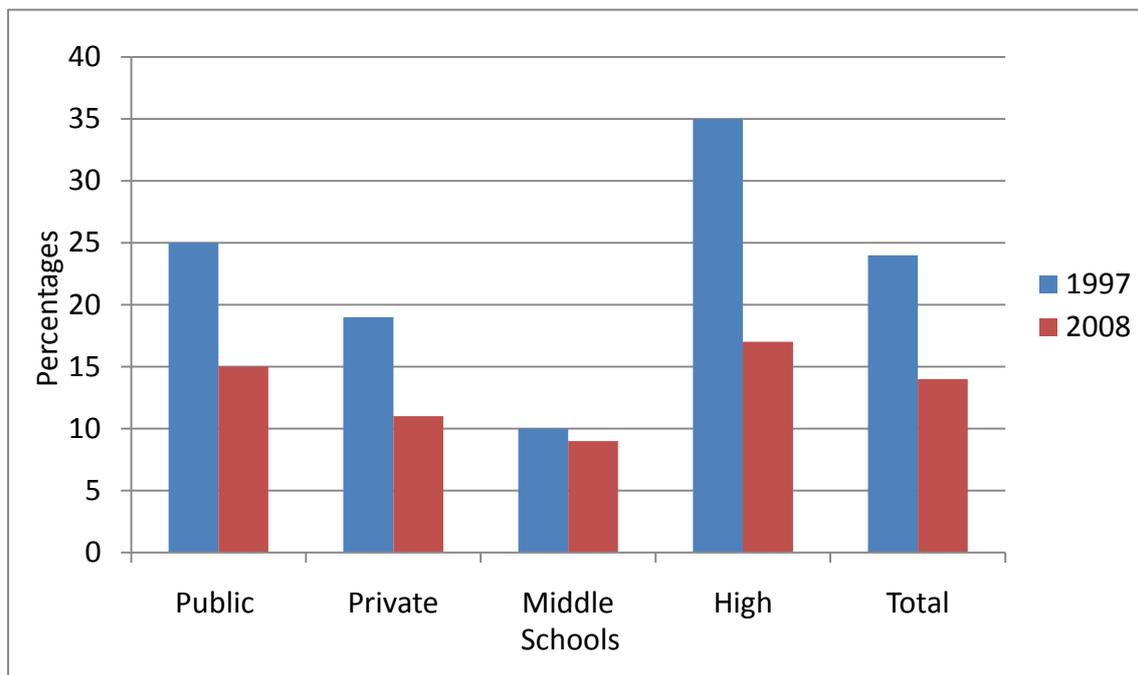
4. German in Secondary Education

The percentages of schools that offer FLs also decreased at the secondary level. Whereas 86% of secondary schools offered FL programs in 1997, only 79% offered such programs in 2008 (Rhodes & Pufahl 2010). This decrease was mostly due to the loss of FL programs in middle schools. At this level, only 58% of schools taught FLs in 2008 compared to 75% of schools in 1997. The percentage of high schools that offer FLs has remained stable. 91% of all high schools reported having FL programs in 2008 compared to 90% in 1997 and 95% in 1987.

German has steadily lost its share of FL programs at the secondary level. In 1987, 28% of secondary schools with FL programs were offering German. In 1997, this percentage decreased to 24%, and in 2008 it shrank to 14% (cf. Figure 1). As can be seen in Figure 3, both public and private schools lost German programs at similar rates; and high school programs of German suffered more losses than middle school programs.

In all U.S. regions, the percentages of secondary schools that offer German decreased between the years 1997 and 2008, but at different rates: The biggest declines can be found in the South (from 14% to 6%), the Southwest (from 29% to 12%), and the Northeast (from 27% to 13%). The percentages of schools with German programs fell from 30% to 22% in the Central Region and from 15% to 13% in the Pacific Northwest (Rhodes & Pufahl 2010).

Figure 3. German Offered by Secondary Schools with Foreign Language Programs According to School Type (based on data from Rhodes & Pufahl 2010).



Other languages that were offered less frequently in secondary schools with FL programs in 2008 compared to 1997 are French (down from 64% to 46%), Japanese (from 7% to 3%), Latin (from 20% to 13%), and Russian (from 3% to 0.3%). Spanish remained stable after a continuous rise in the 1970s, 80s and 90s and was offered by the large majority of secondary schools with language programs (93% in both 2008 and 1997). Spanish programs for native speakers were offered slightly less often in 2008 (8%) compared to 1997 (9%). Languages that increased their share of FL program offerings by at least one percent are ASL (from 2% to 4%), Chinese (from 1% to 4%), and Italian (from 3% to 4%).

5. ACTFL Data on K-12 Enrollments in Foreign Languages

Whereas the Rhodes & Pufahl study surveyed both private and public schools directly and provided percentages of schools and school types that offered FL programs at the different educational levels, the ACTFL study collected available FL enrollment data in K-12 public schools for 2004-05 and 2007-08 through the states' foreign language

supervisors, and used statistical models to estimate enrollment numbers for the states that did not provide any data.⁵

According to ACTFL, 8.9 million K-12 public school students (i.e. only 18.5% of all students from kindergarten to high school) were enrolled in FL courses in 2007-08. This is somewhat more than the 8.6 million students (or 18% of students) enrolled in FLs in 2004-05. In secondary schools, an estimated 32% of students were enrolled in FL courses in 2007-08 compared to 30% of students in 2004-05. Note that Draper & Hicks (2002) reported that in 2000 33.8% of students in grades 7-12 were still studying a FL.⁶ ACTFL's percentages of FL enrollments for K-12 public schools are illustrated in Figure 4.⁷

Most of the results of the ACTFL survey are in agreement with Rhodes & Pufahl's findings: with over 72% of enrollments, Spanish continues to dominate FL instruction in K-12 public schools. French follows in second place with 14% to 15% of enrollments, and German is a distant third place with over 4% of enrollments. Other results that are consistent with Rhodes & Pufahl's report are increases in Chinese enrollments and enrollments in 'other' languages like Italian and ASL. Unlike Rhodes & Pufahl's study, which shows a decrease in the percentages of German programs offered in schools at all levels, ACTFL reports a slight increase in the percentage and total number of German enrollments. It is possible that this reflects an upward trend that began in the last decade which is not captured in Rhodes & Pufahl's study that compares data from 2008 with data from 1997. It is also possible that while the percentages of German programs have declined due to the appearance of newly created programs in other languages, the overall enrollments have remained stable and increased due to the success of the existing German language programs. According to

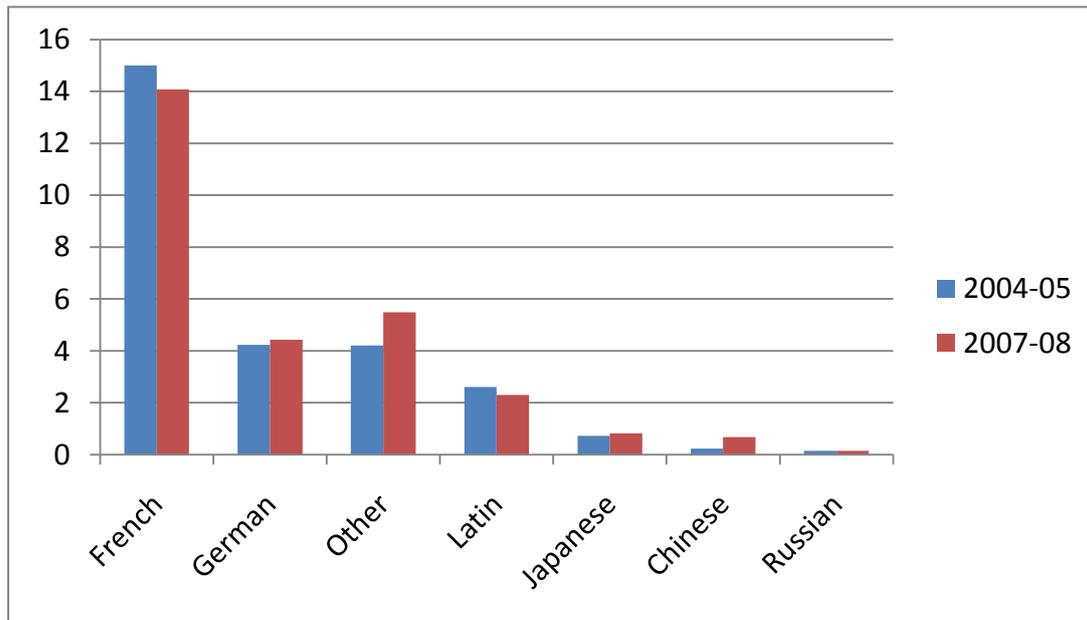
⁵ In the ACTFL study, enrollments were reported by only 27 of the 50 states for 2004-05 and by 34 states for 2007-08. For the states that did not provide enrollment data, statistical modeling was used to obtain estimates of FL enrollments based on other data, such as numbers of FL teachers, members in FL associations, and student participants in language testing programs. These estimates became part of the computed total FL enrollment numbers and percentages. For a description of the study methodology, see ACTFL 2010: 25-29.

⁶ Of these almost seven million students, 68.7% studied Spanish, 18.3% French, and 4.8% German. In high schools, 43.8% of students were enrolled in a FL course. 2.1% of these students were learning German in 2000 (Draper & Hicks 2002).

⁷ For the purpose of clarity, the dominant share of Spanish enrollments was not included in the graph.

ACTFL, the estimated total enrollment numbers for German grew from 365,040 in 2004-05 to 395,019 in 2007-08, an increase of about 30,000 over the three-year period.

Figure 4. Percentages of K-12 Public School Foreign Language Enrollments by Language (without Spanish) 2004-05 and 2007-08 (based on data from ACTFL 2010).



Note. Enrollments in Spanish (not included in the graph) represented 72.87% of FL enrollments in 2004-05 and 72.06% of FL enrollments in 2007-08.

6. German in Postsecondary Education

Data on the teaching of FLs in U.S. institutions of higher education are available from the periodically conducted surveys commissioned by the Modern Language Association (MLA). According to the last survey’s report, published by Furman et al. (2010), 96,349 students were enrolled in courses of German at the college level in the fall of 2009. Although German enrollment numbers have increased slightly over the last decade (see Figure 5), the percentages of German enrollments have decreased steadily over the last forty years. Figure 6 illustrates how the percentages of enrollments in German and selected other languages have changed over the last fifty years.

Figure 5. Total Numbers of Students Enrolled in German Courses in U.S. Institutions of Higher Education (based on data from Furman et al. 2010)

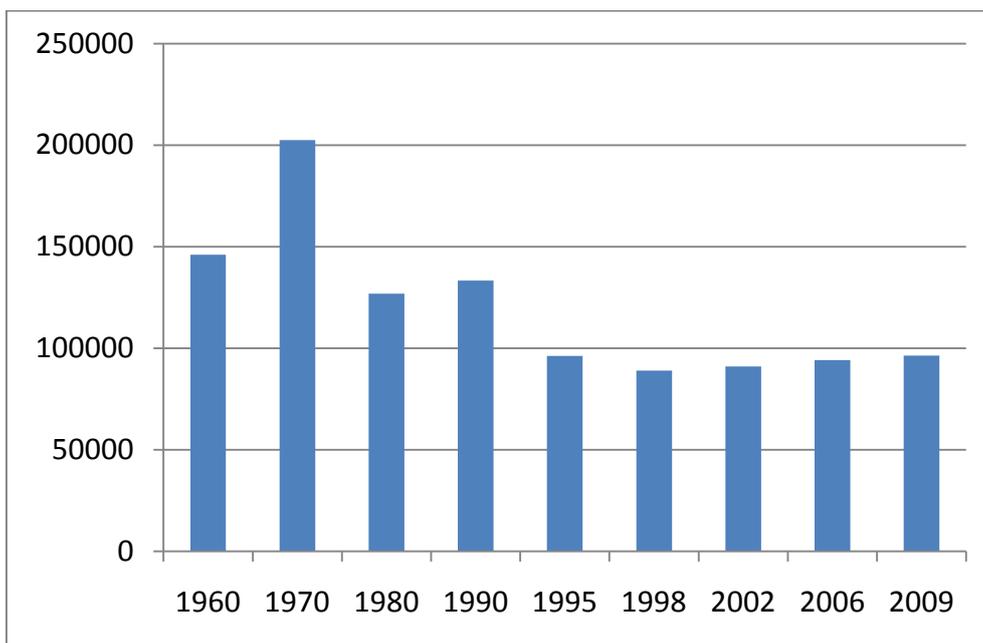
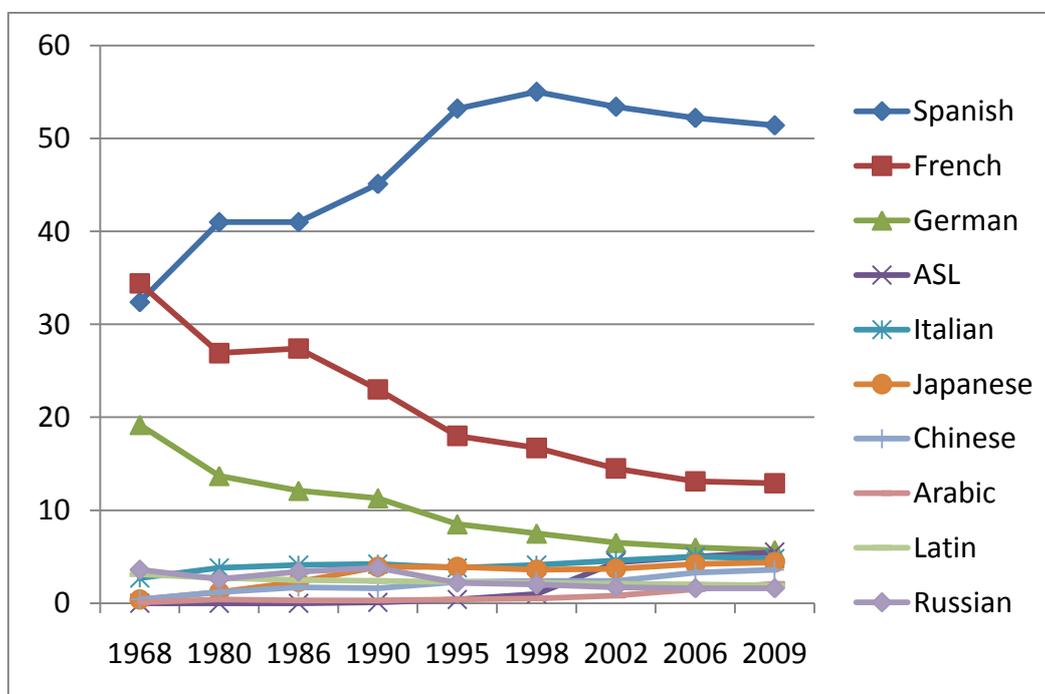


Figure 6. Percentages of Foreign Language Enrollments in U.S. Institutions of Higher Education (based on data from Furman et al. 2010)



In the fall of 2009, German was still the third most popular FL at the college level with 5.7% of FL enrollments, followed closely by ASL with about 5.5% of enrollments.

While German and French lost shares of FL enrollments, other languages, such as ASL, Italian, but especially Arabic and Chinese showed enrollment increases over the last decade. This trend is likely to continue, in part, due to sustained government funding through the National Security Language Initiative (Redden 2010).

The data of Furman et al. also show that the majority of FL students in college are in beginning courses (the first two years of language instruction). Students of German are no exception: Over 79% of them were enrolled in beginning courses primarily because of institutional or departmental language requirements;⁸ and fewer than 21% were enrolled in more advanced courses at the third-year level or above.

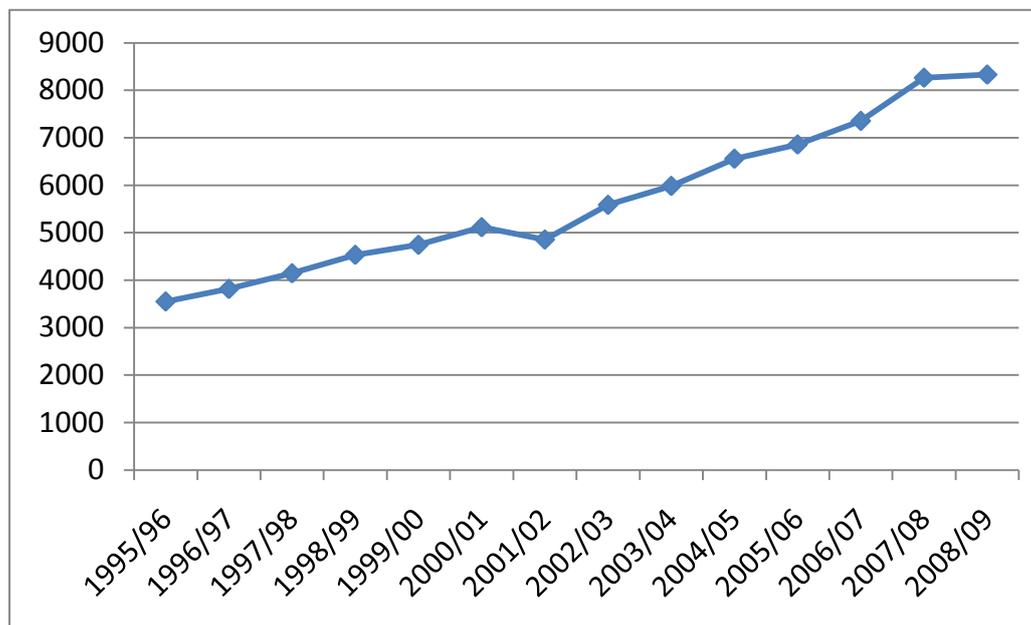
7. Study Abroad in German-Speaking Countries

How popular are German-speaking countries for U.S. college students with an interest in study abroad? Numbers of students choosing German-speaking countries for a study abroad destination may be an additional indicator for students' interest in German. Data on college students' enrollments in study abroad programs are available through the annual Open Doors Reports provided by the Institute of International Education (IIE 2010).⁹ The number of U.S. students studying in Germany has been increasing consistently over the last 15 years (see Figure 7). Whereas in 1995/1996 only 3,552 students studied in Germany for credit from a U.S. college, 8,330 did so in 2008/2009. This made Germany the seventh most popular destination of the 260,327 college students who studied abroad in 2008/2009. In addition, 2,836 U.S. students studied in Austria, and 1,942 (in 2007/08) studied in Switzerland. If counted together, the numbers of study abroad students in the three main German-speaking countries would jump to sixth place. The study abroad destinations that were more popular than Germany in 2008/2009 were the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, France, China, and Australia (IIE 2010).

⁸ Additional potential reasons for the small percentages of students in advanced courses are the discontinuous and not always optimal preparation of students in secondary schools as well as imperfect placement practices at the college level which may result in relatively high rates of false beginners or students placed in courses below their actual proficiency level.

⁹ To my knowledge, there is no comparable report available for study abroad enrollments at the pre-college level.

Figure 7. Total Number of U.S. Study Abroad Students in Germany from 1995 to 2008
(based on data from IIE 2010).



Note: Study abroad figures reflect credit given by U.S. campuses during the survey year to their students who studied abroad in the academic year just completed, including the summer term.

8. Teachers of German

The numbers and profiles of the members of the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG) may serve as another indicator for the health of the German-teaching profession in this country. In general, membership data mirror enrollment trends at the different educational levels and in the different regions, although the organization, of course, does not include all teachers of German in the U.S. In 2009, the organization counted a still impressive 4,998 active members (Williams, personal communication). This is only about one percent down from the previous year, but 18% down compared to the academic year of 2000/2001 and 32% down compared to 1993/1994. Figure 8 presents the total numbers of AATG members from selected years between 1993 and 2009.

Figure 8. Total Numbers of AATG Members in Selected Years from 1993 to 2009 (based on data from Williams, personal communication)

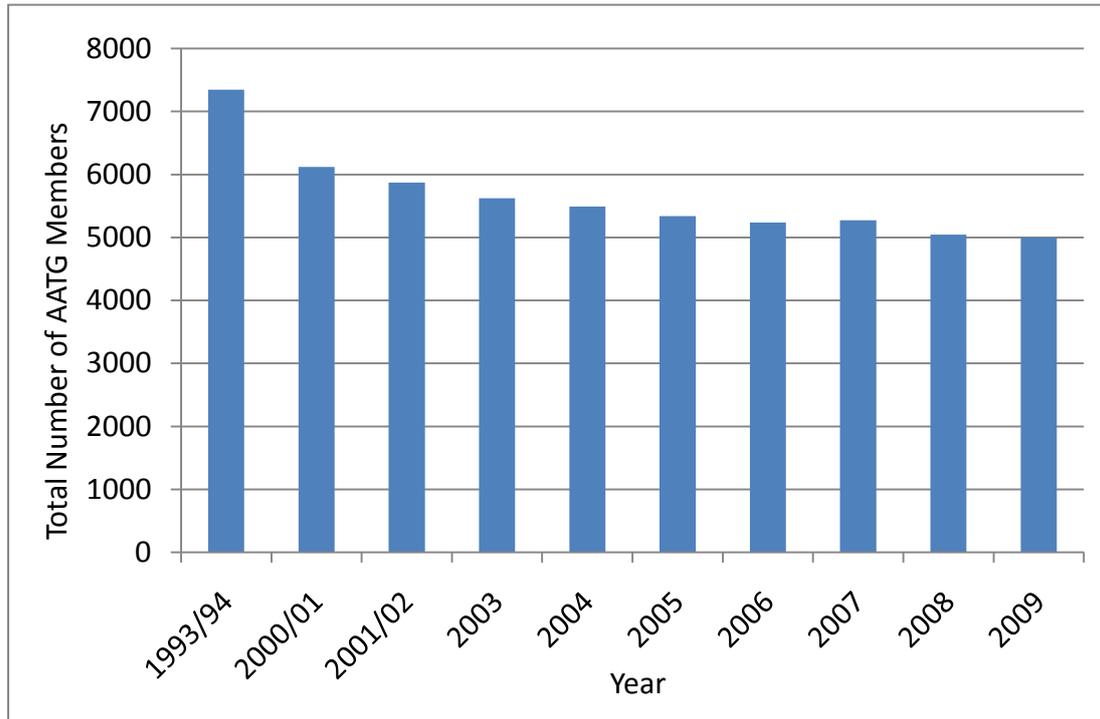
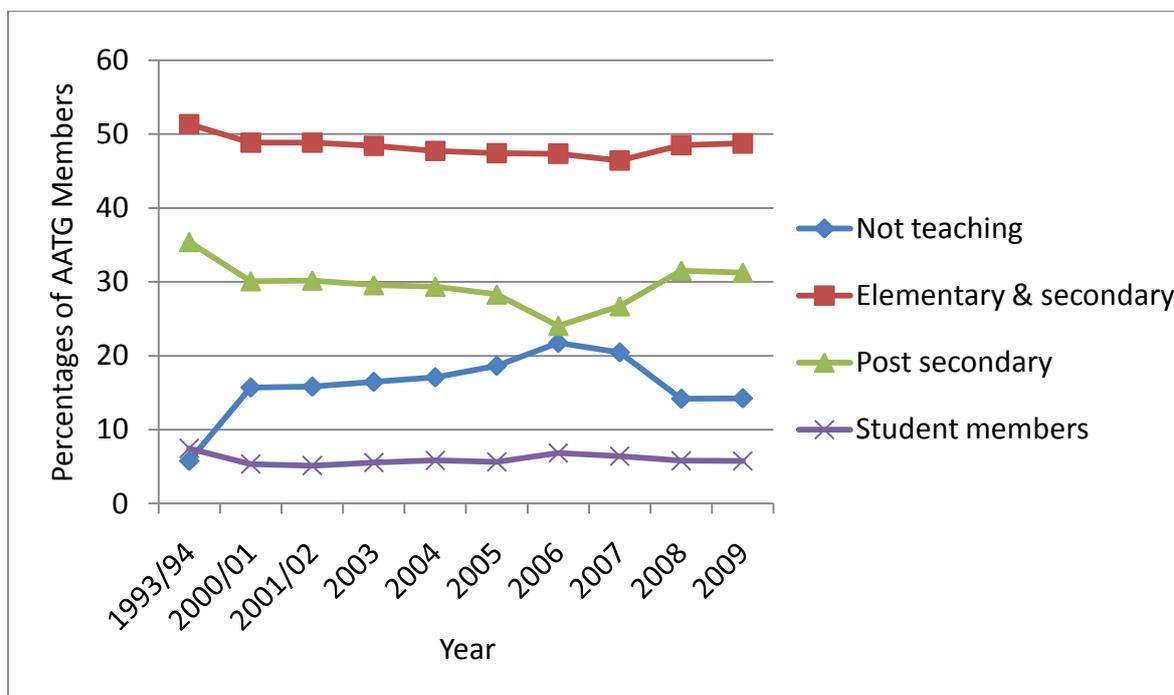


Figure 9 illustrates changes in membership profile (i.e., employment status and affiliation according to school type) for the same period. In 2009, about 49% of AATG members were teaching in secondary and elementary education. Of these colleagues most worked in high schools, fewer in middle schools, and the fewest in elementary schools. Fewer than one third (31%) of AATG members taught in postsecondary institutions, almost 6% were students, and 14% were not teaching at the time. The number of non-teaching AATG members¹⁰ increased substantially in the 1990s and during the first six years of the last decade, probably because of high numbers of retirements. Exact figures about age of AATG members are not available because not all members report their age. However, according to data from the AATG web page, the largest age group of the association’s membership is between 51 and 60 years old, the second largest group is between 41 and 50 years old, and the third largest group is between 61 and 70 years old. In a recent survey conducted with randomly chosen AATG members, about half of the 777 respondents were 50 years or older. Mean and

¹⁰ Students are not included in this category.

median age was a relatively high 49 years (Schulz & Ganz 2010). The association certainly needs more young teachers as members.

Figure 9. Percentages of AATG Members According to School Affiliation/Employment (based on data from Williams, personal communication)



9. Doctoral Recipients and Research in German

Data on doctoral recipients and their research specialization could be informative with respect to the pool and profile of the next generation of college professors of German. According to Tatlock's (2010) analysis of MLA data, 64 U.S. doctoral programs granted a total of 1,003 PhDs in German between 1995 and 2006. This is an average of 84 PhDs produced per year during the 12-year period. In 2007, 92 of the 608 doctorates granted in foreign languages and literatures were doctorates in German (Fliegner 2009). These represent 15% of all doctorates awarded in FLs and literatures in that year. At about the same time, however, only 6% of students enrolled in FLs were students of German (Furman et al. 2010). There is a clear mismatch of doctorates awarded in German and college students to be taught in German language, literature and culture.

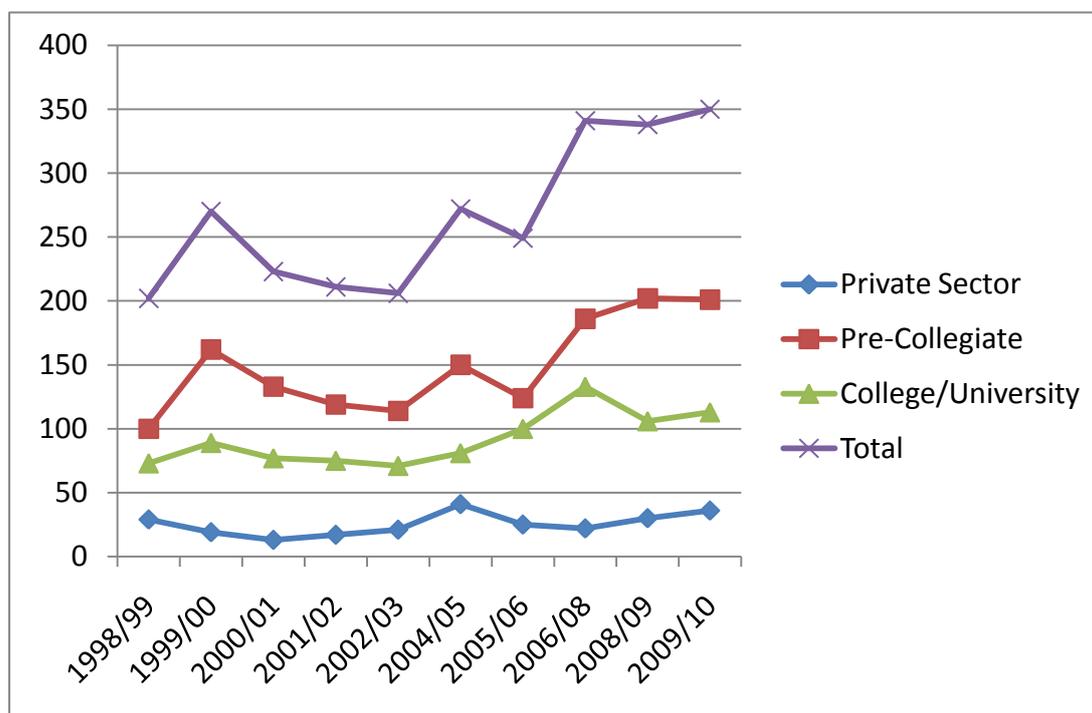
This mismatch is likely to increase the pressures for new PhDs to compete on the job market, at least, for traditional academic positions.

The area of expertise or specialization of recent PhDs in German is also of interest for the current review. If one believes that more teachers and teacher trainers are needed to sustain German programs at all levels, one may want to ask to what extent doctoral programs prepare such specialists. Benseler's (2007; 2006; 2005) listings of "U.S. doctoral degrees related to the teaching of German" reveal interesting information in that respect. In the three reports, Benseler listed 312 dissertations. Ecke (2010) reanalyzed these dissertations with respect to the broad research areas that they fell into and found the following: 145 of these dissertations could be categorized as literary analyses, 60 as cultural studies (on film, history, philosophy etc.) and 107 as studies in theoretical and applied linguistics. However, of the latter 107 dissertations, only 30 specifically addressed aspects of the German language. Seventy-seven dissertations dealt with languages other than German (e.g., ESL). Of the 30 dissertations about German, 11 studies were linguistic analyses and only 19 (or 6% of the dissertations cited by Benseler as relevant to the teaching of German) explicitly attended to the teaching of German as a FL. Research into the learning and teaching of German apparently represents only a minor portion of university research in German.

10. Employment Issues and Trends

Data on employment opportunities and hiring trends are of special interest to junior colleagues and students with career plans in the teaching of German language and culture. Some students may have been discouraged recently from pursuing a career in teaching because of the dark picture that has arisen from news about budget cuts in education and FL program closures. Data compiled by the AATG office about teaching positions announced through the AATG GER-JOBS-Listserv show that there is a continuous strong interest in and need for teachers of German, especially at the pre-collegiate level. The data presented in Figure 10 are based on an analysis of the listserv's job postings conducted by Helene Zimmer-Loew (personal communication), who kindly gave me permission to include these data here.

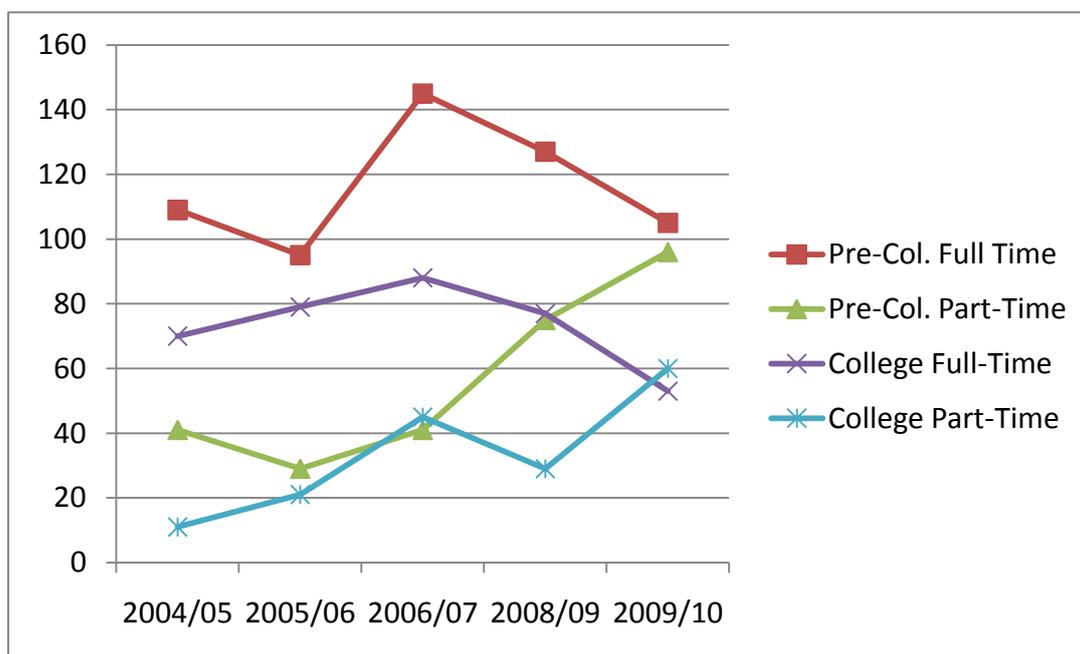
Figure 10. Teaching Positions in German Posted through the AATG's GER-JOBS-Listserv in Selected Years 1998/1999-2009/2010 (based on data from Zimmer-Loew)



For many readers these data may come as a positive surprise. The total number of positions advertised on the listserv has increased substantially over the last decade.¹¹ The total number of positions posted in 2009/2010 is the highest ever since the list's creation in 1998. The good news is that there are still numerous employment opportunities for teachers of German at all educational levels. The not-so-good news is that the profile of the announced positions has changed in part over the last few years, probably due to the economic crisis and school's lack of funding for full-time positions. Both at the pre-collegiate level and at the college level, the numbers of part-time positions have increased while the numbers of full-time positions have decreased. Figure 11 juxtaposes the numbers of full-time positions and part-time positions that have been posted on the GER-JOBS-Listserv over the last few years.

¹¹ One should take into consideration, though, that the relatively low numbers of job postings in 1998/1999 were probably due to the fact that the listserv was new and relatively unknown.

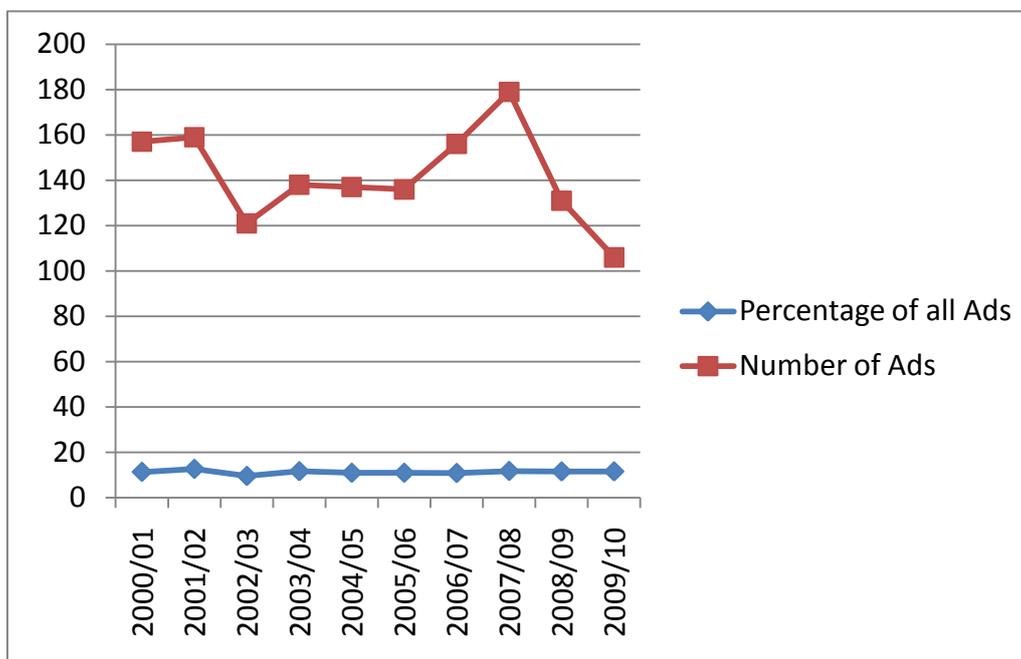
Figure 11. Full-Time and Part-Time Positions in German Posted at the AATG GER-JOBS-Listserv in Selected Years (based on data from Zimmer-Loew)



Notice that although the numbers of full-time positions at the pre-collegiate level have decreased over the last four years, the numbers are still at about the same level as in 2004-2006, which I take as positive. I would have expected even fewer postings of full-time positions given the economic crisis that we are in.

For the college/university level, the GER-JOBS-Listserv posted over a hundred open positions in 2009/2010 (Figure 10). In that year, full-time positions were at a low, whereas part time jobs were at a historic high (see Figure 11). Other academic job lists suggest a relatively difficult time for job-seeking professionals in German at the postsecondary level. Figure 12 illustrates the numbers and percentages of jobs in German and Scandinavian advertised in the MLA Job Information List’s four annual issues between 2000/01 and 2009/10. The data reveal a clear reduction in academic job postings for PhDs in German over the last three years although the percentages of German ads have remained at about the same level over the last decade.

Figure 12. Numbers and Percentages of Positions in German and Scandinavian Advertised in the Foreign Language Job Information List 2001/01 to 2009/10 (based on data from the MLA Office of Research 2010).



Whereas in 2007/08 a record high of 179 positions in German/Scandinavian were advertised, numbers of ads in 2008/09 and 2009/10 dropped to 131 and 106 respectively. Note that in the last two years, open positions were more often posted later in a term because of delayed funding decisions. It is also possible that institutions increasingly post (late) job openings in German on the AATG's GER-JOBS-Listserv because it is free and faster than submissions to the MLA Job Information List.

In U.S. institutions of higher education, one also has to distinguish between permanent and temporary full-time hires. The percentage share of (permanent) tenure/tenure-track appointments compared to temporary/visiting hires has been declining since the mid-1990s (Laurence 2009), but especially so in recent years. A popular wiki for employers and job seekers in German (http://www.wikihost.org/w/academe/german_2009-2010/) reports that tenure-track appointments in 2009/10 were down 30% compared to the previous year and 68% down compared to 2006/07. Only 21 tenure-track hires were reported for the 2009/10 year.¹² 2009/10 was also the first year in which more visiting

¹² It is likely that additional hires were made that were not reported. Figures should be interpreted with caution.

appointments (a total of 40) were made compared to tenure-track hires, which is consistent with the data from the AATG’s GER-JOBS-Listserv presented in Figure 11. The number of visiting hires increased 25% compared to the previous year.

For positions advertised for generalists, linguists or program directors, doctorate recipients in German will probably also have to compete with some PhD recipients who specialize in German in the fields of linguistics and FL education, not to mention more experienced colleagues who reenter the job market and applicants from German-speaking countries.

11. Summary of Statistical Data

Given the diverse nature of the statistical data presented above, I am summarizing in Table 1 the main data and trends with respect to the learning, teaching, and use of German in the United States between the late 1990s and 2009/10:

Table 1. Summary of Main Data and Trends for the Learning, Teaching, and Use of German in the United States.

Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • German is spoken less frequently as a first language in American homes. • The percentage of schools with FL programs that offer German in elementary and secondary schools has declined between 1998 and 2009. • The percentage of German enrollments among FL enrollments at the college level has decreased from 1998 to 2009. • The number of members of the American Association of Teachers of German has decreased by 18% from 2000/01 to 2009. • More part-time teaching positions in German have been announced for the pre- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘German’ continues to be the most frequently reported ancestry by U.S. citizens and residents. • The total number of students who study German as a FL has increased slightly in K-12 public schools from 2004/05 to 2007/08. • The total number of college students, enrolled in courses of German, has increased slightly from 1998 to 2009. • The number of U.S. college students who participate in study abroad programs in Germany has doubled from 1997/98 to 2008/2009.

<p>collegiate level and the college level, whereas full-time positions have declined since 2006/07.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a mismatch between the relatively high rate of PhDs produced in German and the relatively low rate of students taking courses in German. • Research into the learning and teaching of German still represents only a minor portion of university research in German (as reflected by doctoral dissertation topics). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall number of teaching positions in German posted through the AATG GER JOBS listserv has increased from 1998/99 to 2009/10, especially for the pre-collegiate level.
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12. Reflections and Recommendations

It was my intention to gather and review statistical data from a number of surveys with relevance to the learning, teaching, and use of German in the U.S. By doing so, I sought to sketch out a relatively objective picture of the state of German in this country. School teachers, college instructors, and most importantly our students of German deserve to know about both the opportunities and challenges in the profession. It was certainly not among my intentions to dissuade students from pursuing a career in German. On the contrary, this paper should be understood as a call for more teachers, particularly at the secondary level.

12.1 The need for diversity in language teaching

German as well as French and Spanish have been privileged in the language teaching profession in the United States for decades. One may question whether an emphasis on the teaching of three languages (and more recently only one with the overwhelming dominance of Spanish) is desirable or justifiable. Without doubt, the U.S. is in need of professionals familiar with many languages and cultures. As language educators, most of us will welcome any effort to stimulate language and culture learning. Young people's exposure to any new language and culture will be to the benefit of the individual and the society at large. In that sense, recent attempts to diversify language programs (for whatever reason) should be seen as something positive, even if newly created programs compete with other already established programs. Time will tell

whether the introduction of programs in languages such as Arabic and Chinese, which are typologically very different from English and which are relatively difficult to learn for English-speaking students, will be successful in elementary and secondary schools.

12.2 A future for German

German will continue to have its place among FLs taught in the United States, and it will most likely continue to have a privileged position. The German teaching profession should be encouraged by students' sustained strong interest in German language and culture, even though the proportion of German programs in schools with FL programs has been declining. Among the positive indicators from the surveys reviewed here are the increasing numbers of college students studying in German-speaking countries and the solid and even increasing total enrollment numbers of students in German in K-12 schools and at the college level. The AATG remains a strong professional organization with its 5,000 members including almost 300 student members. The fact that 'German' continues to be the most frequently reported ancestry by U.S. citizens and residents should be seen as an asset. Young people's curiosity about their ancestors will remain an important motive for the study of German, much like the generally positive image of present-day Germany through its cultural, economic, political, and technological influence and innovations (Ott 2010: 3). Last but not least, data from the AATG's GER-JOBS-Listserv show that there is still much, if not growing, demand for teachers of German in schools and in the private sector. However, there are issues that the profession should be aware of and challenges it needs to face.

12.3 Less German at home and in immersion-type programs

Fewer Americans report using German as a family or home language compared to earlier years. Given migration patterns, this trend will continue in the future. It could, in addition to other factors, contribute to less interest in and demand for German at the preschool and elementary levels, at least for immersion-type programs. Lenker & Rhodes' data (2007: 4) may be consistent with such an assumption. In their study, German was found in 6th place among schools that offer immersion programs, behind Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiian, French, and Spanish. Elementary and immersion schools will probably be most successful in regions with significant percentages of German native or heritage speakers, e.g. in parts of the Midwest (North and South Dakota, Indiana etc.), but also metropolitan areas with large numbers (not

percentages) of German speakers, e.g. in Southern California, Florida, and the Northwest (see MLA Language Map).

12.4 Why fewer schools offer German

The decrease in the percentage share of German programs in schools with FL programs at the elementary and secondary levels is a result of a number of factors: funding issues, retiring teachers, lack of qualified and certified teachers, as well as competition from dominant Spanish programs and recently established language programs that are more likely to attract government funding (cf. Robinson et al. 2006). According to Rhodes & Pufahl (2010: 68), 30% of the surveyed schools with FL programs in 2008 reported “being affected by a shortage of qualified language teachers”. At the same time, however, college students of German may be turned away from prospective teaching careers by their or their parents’ perception of cuts in educational spending and language program closures. If the high retirement rate and the shortage of qualified teachers of German continue, even fewer schools will be offering German, and it will become increasingly difficult to provide much needed continuity in the study of German from one level to the next. Articulation and collaboration between colleagues across educational levels and institutions (see Byrnes 1996; McCarthy 2010; and Schulz 1998) will be more important than ever. Articulation efforts at the local level should have teacher recruitment and placement as one of their main objectives.

12.5 How German at the college level will be affected

It is necessary that universities prepare and graduate sufficient certified teachers who are able and willing to fill vacant positions and continue established successful programs before they are closed down and replaced by other programs in the schools. This is very much in the interest of German programs at the college level, as both Tatlock (2010) and McCarthy (2010) point out. If the infrastructure of German programs at the secondary school level continues to deteriorate, it will negatively affect enrollment numbers in basic German language programs, ultimate student achievement, and numbers of majors and minors in German at the college level as previous research has suggested: Watzke (2000), for example, reported that students who have taken a longer sequence of FL courses in high school enroll at proportionally higher rates in FL courses at the college level; Andress et al. (2002) found that high school German plays an important role in students’ desire to continue the study of German in college, while

Di Donato (1998) presented evidence that it also has an impact on students' selection of German as a major or minor.

12.6 German programs at universities called to action

The future of the German-teaching profession will depend a great deal on how German departments at institutions of higher education manage to address current challenges beyond what has been debated recently (MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Educational Reform 2007). At the postsecondary level, the profession will have to confront two main issues: the first is the mismatch between, on the one hand, a relatively high percentage of faculty in the humanities working in German, as well as a relatively high proportion of PhDs produced in German and, on the other hand, a relatively low and decreasing percentage of students taking courses in German, compared to other FLs with healthier faculty-student ratios. This will put limits on expansion possibilities for German programs and may lead to further cuts and mergers of programs, unless student enrollments can be increased. The mismatch will also lead to more competition on the academic job market and worsen the prospects of junior colleagues to obtain tenure-track positions and promotion.

It would be unrealistic to expect that German Studies departments at U.S. universities would willingly reduce the number of their PhD students, based on the recognition of this mismatch. However, professors should make their students and PhD candidates aware of the challenges they will face, discuss with them career opportunities not limited to the academic track, and optimally prepare them for an increasingly difficult job market. Keeping record of alumni and their employers in and especially out of academia could help gather data about such opportunities and would be of value as a recruitment tool for students who are curious about program graduates' employment prospects. Graduate students should also be informed that training in second language acquisition theory, teaching methodology, language assessment, learning technology, and program administration will give them a competitive edge on the job market (Wurst 2008), and that a specialization in German literature/culture (and a bit of undergraduate language teaching practice) might not be enough to secure a teaching position.

12.7 The need for more teacher training

The second issue concerns what I think is the principal need of the German teaching profession in the U.S.: qualified, certified and devoted young teachers of German. In

order to sustain German programs at all educational levels, we need more teachers, but teacher training has never been a priority of most German (Studies) departments. Instead of producing too many PhDs, departments should make teacher training a priority and nurture students at the undergraduate and MA levels with an interest in teaching, so that these young professionals can fill positions in secondary and elementary schools that become vacant due to continuing high rates of retirement of older colleagues.

Becoming serious about teacher training would require more than a course on teaching methods and teaching practice in first and second-year college German. It would require more course offerings in applied linguistics, education, psychology, and teaching methodology in addition to cultural area studies and literature (Geisler 2008) and inevitably also at the cost of some literature courses. In some institutions, preparing future teachers of, for example, German and French could be most efficient in interdisciplinary alliances or programs of FL education or applied linguistics, programs that share resources from various departments or units, offer cross-listed or common courses in second language acquisition and teaching methodology and specialized courses in language and cultural studies.

In other institutions, language departments could develop their own degree programs for teachers of FLs, including German. These programs should integrate the state's requirements for teacher certification¹³ to shorten the long and laborious path to 'teacherhood'. Some universities are in the process of creating such programs or have already implemented them successfully. Other possibilities are the close collaboration between language departments and education programs to develop fast tracks to teaching certification for BA and MA students or intensive (one-year or multiple summer) MA programs in education with teaching certification.

German departments which cannot include a teacher training track to their programs should at least attempt to support and advise students with an interest in teaching at primary or secondary schools. In order to do that, undergraduate advisors would have to be familiar with the state's teacher certification requirements and programs offered by education departments or local community colleges so that they can provide informed

¹³ Requirements for secondary teacher certification usually include courses in learning theory, educational psychology, special (needs in) education, teaching methods, structured English foundations, structured English immersion methods, testing and evaluation, internship (student teaching), and constitution.

recommendations on how German majors may work towards teacher certification during or after their regular program of study.¹⁴

Students interested in a teaching career would be best advised to obtain a degree in two or more areas, e.g. German and English, ESL, or Spanish. While this will often extend the time needed for degree completion, it would certainly increase students' flexibility and competitiveness on the job market which, as we saw above, increasingly includes half-time positions for teachers of German. Students seem to know this already. In many institutions, the numbers of students of German with double and triple majors have increased over the last few years.¹⁵

13. Conclusion

In this paper, I have reviewed survey data with relevance to the learning, teaching, and use of German in the United States. The data reflect both opportunities and challenges for the German teaching profession and for students of German interested in a teaching career. Training students of German and preparing them for a successful career will increasingly become an ethical issue (cf. Dykstra-Pruim). Interests of individual scholars, programs, and departments will more often be in opposition to the optimal preparation of our students for a competitive job market and a profession in need of teachers. The future of the profession will depend on whether those of us who work in U.S. institutions of higher education will realize what is at stake, and whether we will keep putting our own interests first, or whether we will have the strength to put our students first.

¹⁴ Local community colleges frequently offer courses for teacher certification online or during summer semesters. These courses are often very affordable and could be taken by students in parallel to their regular course of study in their major field.

¹⁵ The most frequent double majors in combination with German in our institution are English, psychology, linguistics, other languages, political science, business/economics, but also sciences, such as microbiology.

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