

International Summer Language Courses: Their Role in Learning to Appreciate Multiculturalism and Developing a Sense of "Europeanness"

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Abstract

International Summer Language Courses are offered at many universities throughout Europe. There is no doubt that they achieve a general improvement in foreign language skills. However, there has been very little research as to how effective they are in helping students to live in a multicultural environment and, thus, what role they play in furthering the process of European integration. A pilot study has been undertaken with the aim of establishing how open to other cultures the participants at two summer language courses at Nottingham Polytechnic are. Data were collected by means of questionnaires and participatory observation, then, through a Latent Class Analysis for ordered categories analysed in order to determine the courses' level of success. The results highlight the positive aspects of a multicultural learning environment and how its role in successful foreign language acquisition, the main objective of such courses, can be of use in the context of setting the objectives of language holidays, assembling foreign language teaching materials and the training and supplementary education of teachers who teach their "mother tongue as a foreign language".

1 Introduction

In view of the ethnic and national conflicts in Eastern Europe, the advancing pressure for international cooperation, the progression of European Integration and the increasing violence against foreigners in the states of the European Union, it is becoming more and more important that education attends to European themes.

After an analysis of different concepts of multicultural, intercultural, and international or anti-racist-education (Bos 1994a), it seems that an education

system which is oriented toward a homogeneous national culture can no longer succeed. Also outdated is an education system which fails to consider the different European national and regional traditions and characteristics, and the peculiarities of non-territorial minorities. An education system oriented to one dominating, even "monolingual supra-european culture", is doomed to failure.

The architects of the European 'house' provide us with very general goals for an education system (for example, the improvement and realization of human rights, the development of a European identity, and the development of a conscious global responsibility in Europe). In order to realize these goals, they provide programs and networks of cooperation and counsel (Bos 1994b). A large part of these programs clearly seems to serve the elite of the future, the university students of today. It is possible to compare the four large programs: PETRA with the youth as the target group, EUROFORM with the working population as the target group, and ERASMUS and COMETT II with university students as the target group. On average, one student receives 12 ECU, one worker receives 1 ECU to further his training, and one juvenile receives 0.3 ECU to further his job training (Manning 1994). Is this furthering of the elite the most effective way to realize an integrated Europe, or would a European consciousness be more effectively built through the experience of normal citizens, the foundation of society? This question cannot be decided at this point. However, the European education systems are now being confronted with these facts and is commissioned to organize and conduct such programs. But, there is often not enough funding available to finance the evaluations.

The "europeanisation" of higher education must be considered more carefully. In the context of the "student tourism program", ERASMUS, often very young students spend a few weeks or months at our universities. Is the prospective student offered an accompanying social program to help with cultural integration? Can the student find help in making contact with students of the host country? Can the student find support in adapting to the peculiarities of living in a different culture? Some of the preliminary results of an evaluation of the ERASMUS program (Teichler 1991; Maiworm, Steube & Teichler 1993) could indicate, that often such support programs are not available in every country in desirable quantities, as they often depend on the local initiator of the particular program and his/her dedication. Frequently the integration is limited by the subject matter and the foreign participants spending their free time with one another, rather than with natives of their host countries. New and deeper friendships are forged, albeit between co-nationals.

2 Research Question

Since the development of the "Kurzzeitpädagogik" (short-time education) by Hahn (1952), there has been a growing awareness that short term learning processes must be supervised and structured in order to be successful. Experience has shown that in international school exchanges (Thomas-Morus-Akademie 1993) as well as in experiences with multi-national summer camps, (Deutsche UNESCO-Kommission 1991) prejudices in youths do not decrease automatically through contact (Furnham & Bochner 1986) with other cultures. Intercultural learning must be enabled through communication and experience. The results of the research on cultural exchange show (Furnham & Bochner 1982; Thomas 1991) that foreign students do not learn only through cultural contact, but rather through the use of a mediator who has already been living in the host country for a longer period of time (Bochner 1981). The process of intercultural learning seems to be sped up by a more formalized method of support organized through professional, education direction (Deutsch 1970; Treuheit, Janssen & Otten 1990). Supposedly this is even more valid for students on a short-time exchange.

Few students have the time and money to study for a long time in a foreign country, and the short exchanges with ERASMUS are limited. However, at many universities, international summer courses are offered (DAAD 1992), often attended by students as a means to improve a foreign language. These programs increase the opportunities for intercultural learning. The directors of these programs have had many years of experience and are interested in maintaining quality programs in order to satisfy the paying students who finance the university. There are a few well-known studies in this field in which, for example, the problems involved with host families were discussed (EFL Service Ltd. 1992). But the multicultural learning situation was somewhat neglected in these studies, which makes it an even more interesting subject for a pilot study. The main interest in conducting this study was to get a first impression of whether intercultural learning in short-term exchange courses is possible in higher education. In addition, the format of the learning groups, the organization and conduct of learning, and the integration of classroom activities with extracurricular activities will be described. The basis for this pilot study will be the learning experience of the course participants.

3 Study Design

The study was completed in the summer of 1992 in the language center of Nottingham Polytechnic (now the City University of Nottingham). It was an all inclusive survey of two three-week courses (from July 19th to August 8th and from August 10th to August 28th). Students were offered a "general English course" plus options and electives. The course was planned with 20 hours of language study in the mornings and 11 hours of language laboratory per week, with observation and guidance, but without correction on an individual basis. The language laboratory utilized video cassettes and special audio cassettes to help with speaking or conversational situations and to incorporate the participants' own personal interests and improve individual language deficits. The four hour morning classes were spent practising grammar, pronunciation, etc., with current workbooks featuring bicultural (ie. German/English) orientation. In the afternoons, discussion and group work took place in the areas of science and technology, literature and drama, law, business English, and social science. Optional courses (theatre, making videos, photography, etc.) were also offered. The general language instruction and the course offerings were taught by teachers of the Nottingham Language Center who were qualified to teach English as a foreign language. The optional courses were offered by other academic colleagues. In the optional and afternoon activities, the instructors lead discussions about the different social-cultural backgrounds of the students. These discussions were often difficult to conduct due to the conflicts between the respective cultures. For example, in a discussion about abortion, the irreconcilable and contrary attitudes of the participants of different traditions and cultures would clearly asserted themselves.

The instruction in the morning took place in groups of 5 to 10 people assigned on the basis of ability, while making an effort to maintain a multicultural balance within the groups. The ability of the students was determined by an entrance test which divided the group into four levels (lower intermediate, upper intermediate, advanced, and academic). The participants of the optional courses and specialized courses were placed together in groups of 3 to 10 people, which were also multicultural, but were of differing language ability. Special learning materials (standard English books of different fields) were used in the specialized courses. Excursions were planned in connection with these courses; visits were planned to the airport (technology), to the court building (law), to schools (social sciences), etc. Often during the week, videos were shown and discussed.

Another learning opportunity, in addition to the formal instruction program, were social activities offered outside of the classroom. These opportunities ranged from a tour through the pubs of Nottingham to visits to the castle and park of Lord Byron, a farm, and local Rock and Reggae festivals. Excursions to other famous sights in the area were also planned. Activities were offered almost every evening and weekend. A graduate student at Nottingham Polytechnic was assigned the responsibility of organizing the social program. The student was given a part-time job in order to establish the program. He also helped participants with individual and everyday problems. Because the student chosen for this position was preparing for his own study trip abroad, his interest and enthusiasm for the job were excellent. In addition, some of the full-time instructors attended the social activities.

When registering for the course, the students were able to decide whether they would rather live in a student flat or with a host family. Naturally, the chosen living arrangement offered further organized and informal activities. Data from the first course were collected by myself, and data from the second course were collected by colleagues from the Language Center.¹ In addition to the impressions and experiences of an unscheduled, participatory observation in the first course, data were primarily based on standardized questionnaires, which were completed by the participants in both courses. This questionnaire in its final form was developed collectively by students and instructors. The questionnaire consisted of six main areas with 32 variables subjectively evaluated by the participants. All items were on a four-point scale (for example, not much (1), a little (2), much (3), very much (4)). The six main areas to be evaluated were: the social program, the attractiveness of the course in general, the success in improvement of language skills, the causes of successful learning, the multicultural learning situation, and the contact and the communication situation. In addition, data were collected to determine age, gender, nationality, residential situation, occupation, and whether the participants desired further communication with the host country, fellow students, etc.

4 Results

Both courses consisted of approximately 30 participants. In the first course, 26 students completed the questionnaire, and in the second course, 27 students. Of these students, half were in the two higher levels of instruction and half were in the two lower levels. The course participants were between

18 and 51 years old ($\bar{x} = 28.4$ years), 54.9 percent were female, and 45.1 percent were male. The participants came from ten nations. In addition to the different countries in the EU, there were nine participants from Asia (Japan, Taiwan, and Nepal) and seven participants from Eastern Europe (Romania). The largest portion of participants was students (61.2 percent). In Nottingham, 60.4 percent of the course participants lived in student flats, 34 percent lived with host families, and 5.7 percent lived with friends or relatives.

For all of the participants, at least those in the first course, it was discovered through conversations during participatory observation, that the language course at Nottingham was the first one of its kind that these students had experienced. None of the students had previous experience in a multicultural learning situation. The English instruction they had had to this juncture was bicultural (ie. French/English), including a large proportion of British social studies, English literature, history, politics, etc. None of the participants were studying English. Many of the students chose an International Summer Language Course in order to have contact with students from other nations. In many conversations it became clear that English was considered as the "lingua franca". In the everyday life of these students, English was spoken more frequently with people of other nations than could be native British speakers.

Between the single variables, many significant phenomena are presented as bivariate statistics. A lot of the simple correlations are unimportant and, therefore, will not be explained. In order not to dismiss the most important information multivariate analyses normally concedered such as factor analysis or cluster analysis will be used. Since data on an interval scale level were unavailable and there is a lack of variance in the factor analysis which will indicate the essential background of the data on the level of the variables, this method should not be used. In addition to the problem of scales, the results of the cluster analysis, which will be used to structure member groups, are dependent on the differing algorithms which are used, although it is not the best method for obtaining a first heuristic access.

In order to discover the differentiations in the responses of the participants, the Latent Class Analysis (LCA) in the heuristic sense was utilized. This method was developed by Larzarsfeld (1950), and Lazarsfeld & Henry (1968). The LCA can be used to trace statistical correlations of observed qualitative (categoric) data to the existence of latent (that is, not directly obvious) subgroups of different variables and individuals in the population. As a part of this analysis, it can be assumed that there is a specific response pattern underlying each subgroup (class) (Formann 1984; Langeheine & Rost 1988; Tarnai 1989). The basis for an LCA is data on a nominal level which can be

transferred to a multi-dimensional table of contingency with higher order correlations, in which the dependencies are replicated in latent variables, in this case, classes of persons. The LCA determines the *probability* of one person belonging to a certain type of response, similar to that of the Rasch Model (Rasch 1980; Fischer 1983), which requires data on an interval scale level. The optimal number of classes was determined by AIC [Akaike's Information Criterion] or BIC [Best Information Criterion] (Bozdogan 1987). The LCA was modified for ordinal data by Rost (1988), and completed with the program LACORD (Rost 1990).

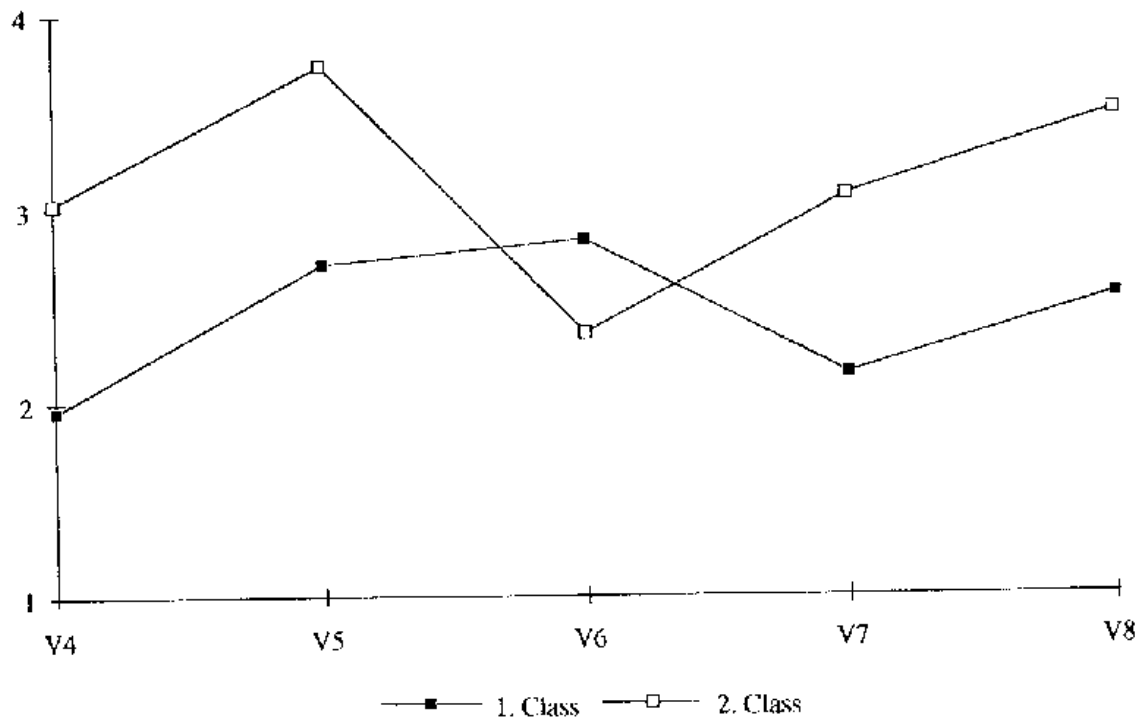
In the following diagrams (Fig. 1 to Fig. 6) the response values are on the vertical axis with a range of one to four. The analyzed variables are on the horizontal axis. The plotted points of the lines represent the expected value for an "ideal person" in each class for each respective variable.

Because the social program was incorporated as an integral part of the learning process, an evaluation of the social program was undertaken in addition to a general evaluation (V3, which is omitted in Fig. 1). The effectiveness of the social program could be further differentiated and evaluated in five areas: learning more about culture in the United Kingdom (V4), better possibilities for contact with students from other countries (V5), as well as with students from their own respective countries (V6) or to the instructors (V7), and the likelihood that the social program provided a good opportunity to improve English speaking skills (V8). In the general evaluation (V3), where the social program was interesting for the participants, 41.5 percent felt that the course was more appealing and 58.5 percent felt more satisfied with the program. In the analysis of the five items, there were two clearly different types of response (see Fig. 1).

Class I, which consisted of 50.9 percent of those surveyed, evaluated all of the individual areas more negatively than the 49.1 percent which made up Class II. The ordinality of the persons' ratings was clearly inconsistent in only one of the variables. In the evaluation of the social program with reference to better possibilities for contact with co-nationals (V6), these classes behaved contrarily. The students who evaluated all aspects of the program more positively assigned less value to this aspect than the other group. Interpreted in another way: Those who made more of an effort to establish contact with instructors and foreign students, felt that they learned more about the UK and improved their English through the social program, more than those students who oriented themselves through contact with co-nationals. Class I consisted more of the female (χ^2 , $\alpha < 10$ percent) and younger (t-Test, $\alpha < 5$ percent; \bar{x} of Class I = 25.5 years, \bar{x} of Class II = 30.9 years) participants. In reference to nationality, there was no difference in the evaluation of the social program,

with the exception of the Romanians, all of whom belonged to Class II (χ^2 , $\alpha < 5$ percent). Class II was also more (χ^2 , $\alpha < 5$ percent) interested in making further contact with people from the UK.

Figure 1: Evaluation of the Social Program.



The question regarding the general success of the language course was evaluated on three criteria: English improvement (V9), spending a nice holiday (V10), and social contact (V11). The two ordinarily rated classes (Class I with 43.4 percent, Class II with 56.6 percent) evaluated all three of these areas highly (see Fig. 2), although the evaluations given by Class I were higher than those given by Class II. In both groups, the aspect of social contact was rated more highly than English improvement and spending a nice holiday.

After a general self-evaluation of the success of learning English (V9, see Fig. 2), 23.1 percent of those surveyed perceived their improvement to be smaller than the majority of participants. The success of learning had to be differentiated into separate aspects in order to be evaluated: grammar (V12), listening (V13), writing (V14), speaking (V15), pronunciation (V16), and discussion (V17).

Figure 2: General Success of the Language Course.

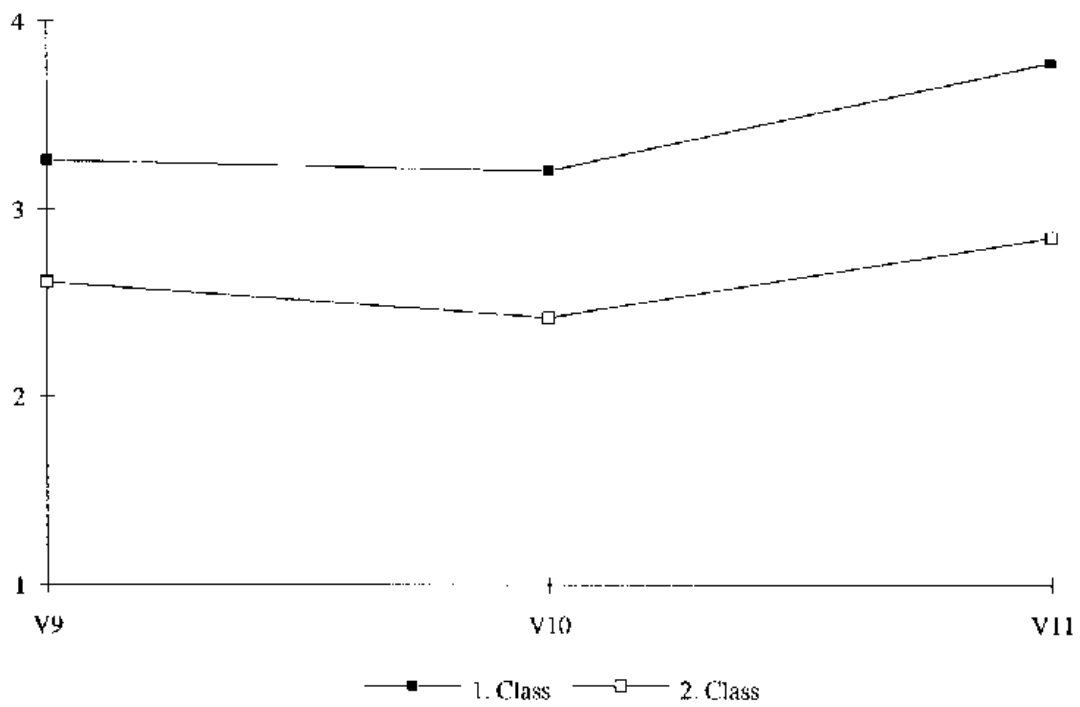
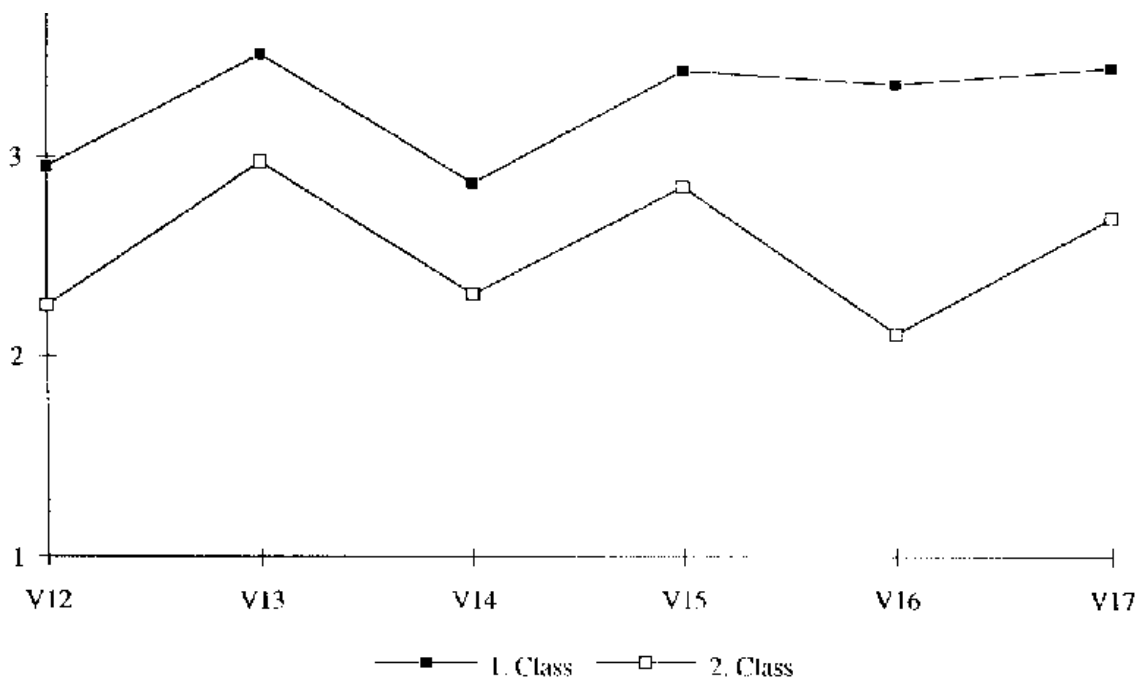


Figure 3: Evaluation of English Improvement.



This yields two ordinally rated classes (see Fig. 3). The 32.1 percent of participants who belonged to Class I rated the success of the course on the basis of their improvement in English, rather than considering all of the areas in their evaluation, as did the members of Class II. Class II differed especially in their rating of pronunciation. Perhaps this is an indication of improvement or better guidance of work in the language laboratory. Both classes rated highly in all areas. These results are a subjective indication of the success of the course. Evidently, none of the areas were badly designed. Class II (67.9 percent) consisted more (t-Test, $\alpha < 5$ percent) of the younger students (\bar{x} of Class I = 32.9 years, \bar{x} of Class II = 26.5 years). This is not surprising since it is well known that age is negatively correlated with the ease of learning correct pronunciation. It is therefore presumable, that the success in improvement of pronunciation is more strongly perceived by the older students.

After the participants had evaluated their improvement in the individual language areas, they were asked to indicate which activities were most helpful. The categories of teaching material (V18), classroom activities (V19), language lab (V20), optional courses (V21), social programs (V22), private contact with foreign students (V23), private contact with co-nationals (V24), and private contact with native British people (V25) could be evaluated. This analysis provided two significantly different types of responses (see Fig. 4).

Class I, 41.5 percent of the participants, rated the contribution of learning materials, instruction, and language lab as less important in relation to language improvement. More important for this class' improvement were the optional courses, the social program, and private contact with other students. In Class II, these elements were reversed in their significance to improvement. The more academic-oriented students (Class II) differed from the more communication-oriented students (Class I) through the value they attached to private contact with native British people in improving their language skills. In Class I, more of the members belonged to the two lower course levels (χ^2 , $\alpha < 5$ percent), were younger (t-Test, $\alpha < 5$ percent; \bar{x} of Class I = 25.4 years, \bar{x} of Class II = 30.4 years), and more often live in student flats than with host families during the course (χ^2 , $\alpha < 5$ percent). This class also expressed less interest in continuing contact with Great Britain as well as with native British people.

Because the multicultural learning situation was the norm throughout the course and differed greatly from the previous experiences of the participants, it must be included in the evaluation of the course. The areas of grammar (V26), listening (V27), writing (V28), speaking (V29), pronunciation (V30), and discussion (V31) should be evaluated in consideration of the multicultural

Figure 4: Activities Designed to Improve English Skills.

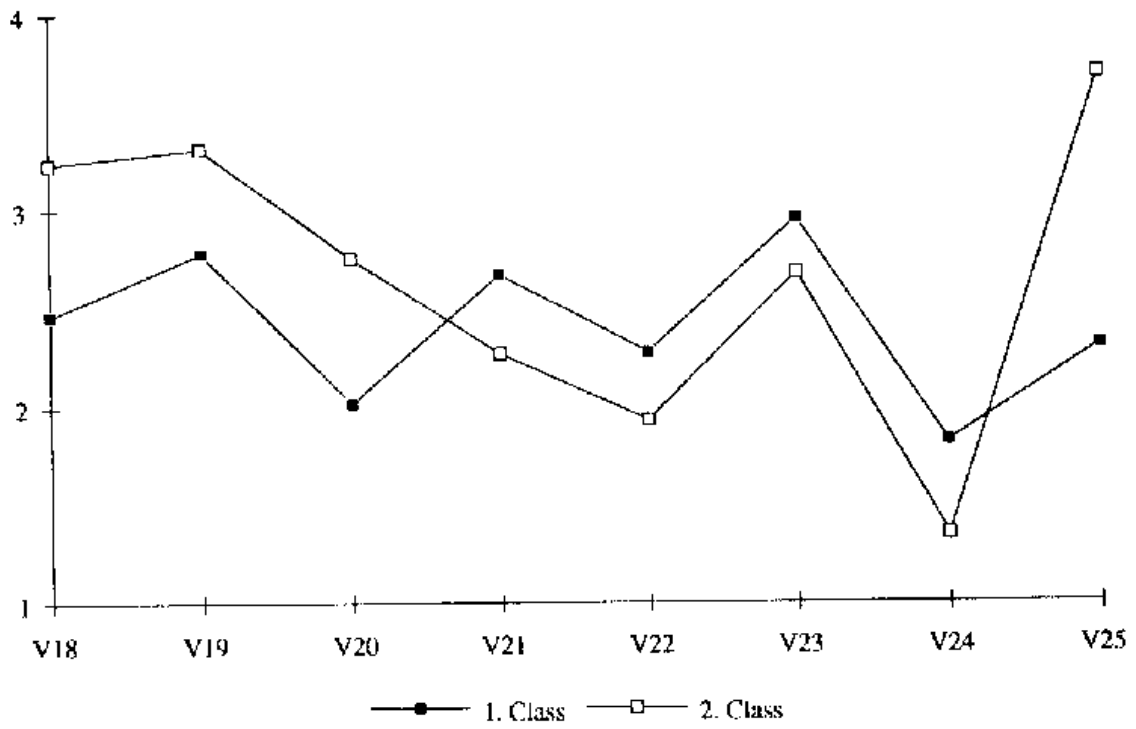
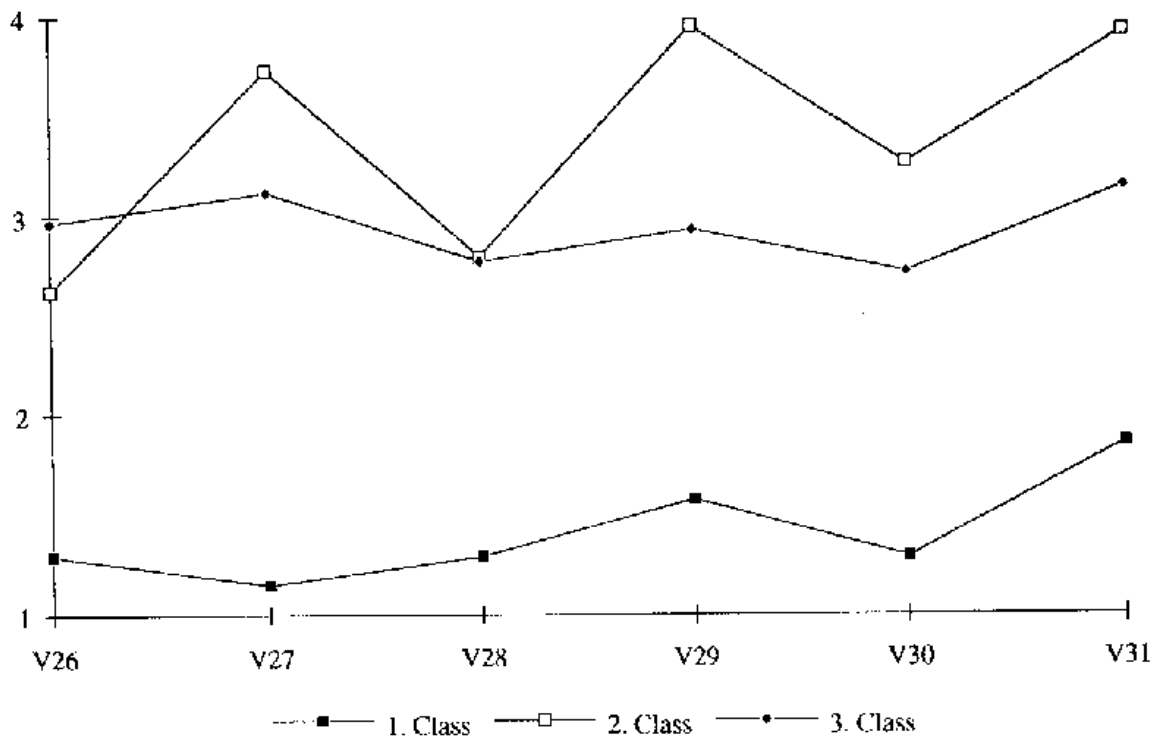


Figure 5: Evaluation of the Multicultural Learning Situation.



composition of the groups. Three classes of response types are provided (see Fig. 5). Class II (73.6 percent of the participants) and Class III (11.3 percent of the participants) differ mainly from each other only in their different evaluations of grammatical improvement. The majority differs from the minority (Class I, 15.1 percent) in the value they placed on the multicultural conditions within the class. The majority attributed an important part of their success in learning to the three weeks spent in a multicultural environment.

In order to determine whether the students felt a lack in their contact with other cultures, they were asked if they had experienced enough contact with other foreign students (V32), if they had learned more about life in the countries of the other students in the course (V33), if they had experienced enough contact with British people (V34), and if they knew more about Great Britain and the life of the British people (V35).

In the largest group of persons (see Fig. 6), represented in Class III (52.8 percent), all four areas were rated well above average. Class I (17 percent) and Class II (30.2 percent) had the same pattern of response on a different ordinal level. Both groups felt that their contact with other students was more likely than contact with British people. These students felt that their knowledge of Great Britain and its people was greater due to secondary sources rather than actual contact with British people. This indicates that the problem lies not within the classroom, but rather within the social program, specialized and optional courses and living arrangements, signifying a need for improvement in these areas. The evaluation of the communication situation depended on the living arrangements in highly significant ways (χ^2 , $\alpha < 1$ percent). Most of the students in Class III lived in host families, and most of the students in Classes I and II lived in student flats. The members of Class III were highly (χ^2 , $\alpha < 5$ percent) interested in continuing their contact with Great Britain. They were, for the most part, the older students (F-Test, $\alpha < 1$ percent; \bar{x} of Class I = 23.0 years, \bar{x} of Class II = 24.5 years, \bar{x} of Class III = 32.5 years).

Between simple variables and single classes of the LCAs, many significant phenomena are present on the bivariate level. The individual types are not so important, and therefore will not be explained. In order not to dismiss the most important information and to document the further possible uses of the LCA, a Second-Order LCA (Tarnai & Bos 1990) - similar to a Second-Order Factor Analysis - was undertaken. The different classes of the "First-Order" LCAs patterns (represented by Fig. 1 to Fig. 6), were taken as values for the "new variables" as the basis for the Second-Order LCA (SOLCA). The response pattern of each individual person consists of his/her affiliation to one of the classes of each of the six analysed areas.

Figure 6: Evaluation of the Communication Opportunities.

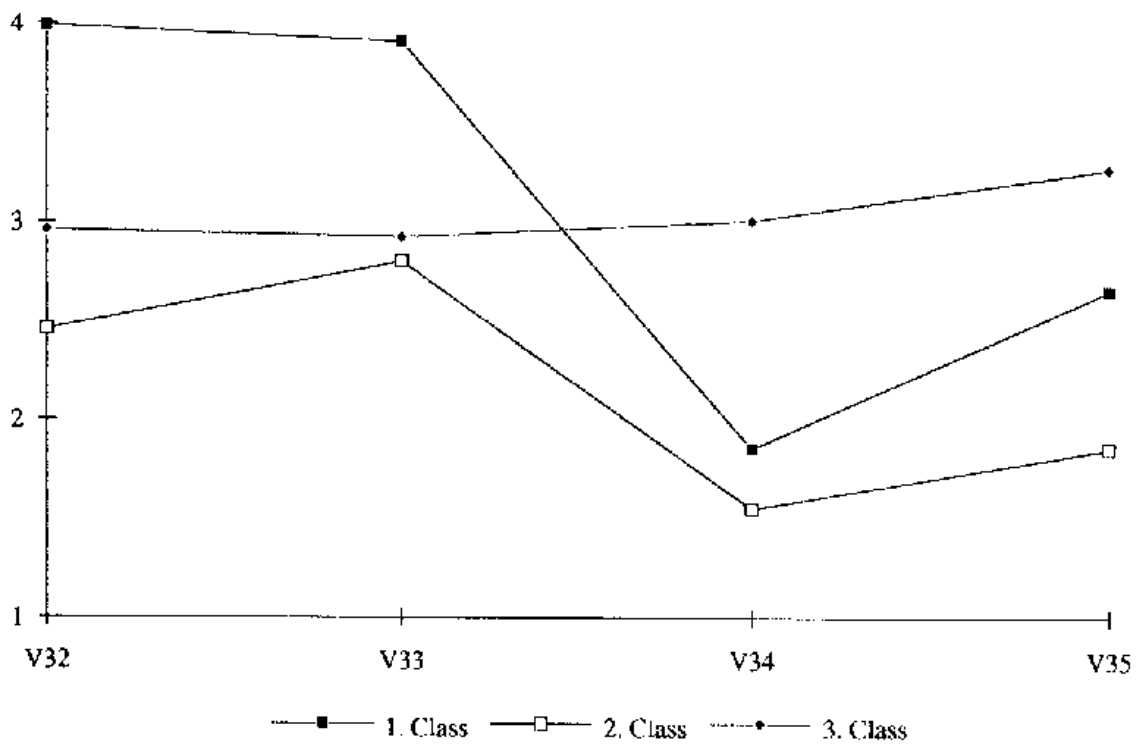


Table 1: Classes of the Second-Order LCA and Classes of the Evaluation of the Social Programm (see Fig. 1).

		SOLCA			
Count	I				
Exp Val	I				
Row Pct	I				Row
Col Pct	I	Class 1	Class 2	Total	
-----+-----+-----+					
Class 1	I	11	16	27	
	I	17.3	9.7	50.9%	
	I	40.7%	59.3%		
	I	32.4%	84.2%		
-----+-----+					
Class 2	I	23	3	26	
	I	16.7	9.3	49.1%	
	I	88.5%	11.5%		
	I	67.6%	15.8%		
-----+-----+					
Column		34	19	53	
Total		64.2%	35.8%	100.0%	

Figure 1

$$\chi^2 = 13.11583; DF = 1; p = .0029$$

The completion of the Second-Order LCA resulted in two classes, Class I with 64.2 percent and Class II with 35.8 percent of the participants. In order to utilize a SOLCA, the classes of the SOLCA can be cross-tabulated with the classes of the "First-Order" LCA. It occurred, for example, in the cross-tabulation of the classes of SOLCA with the classes of LCA in the "Evaluation of the Social Program" (see Tab. 1), that the Class I of the "Evaluation of the Social Program" is over proportionally represented by the SOLCA Class II. This is the class which evaluated the social program less positively.

Due to lack of space, the further cross-tabulations between the "First-Order" and Second-Order LCAs will not be depicted in detail, but only briefly described. Class II of the SOLCA is clearly underrepresented (χ^2 , $\alpha < 1$ percent) in Class I's self-evaluation of the "General Success of the Language Course" (see Fig. 2). This is the class which assessed all corresponding variables more positively. Class II of the SOLCA is not at all represented in the Class I evaluation of "Evaluation of English Improvement" (see Fig. 3). This is also the class which assessed the corresponding variables with a higher value. In the distribution of the SOLCA classes of both classes of "Activities Designed to Improve English Skills" (see Fig. 4), it is clear that Class II of the SOLCA in Class I of the "First-Order" LCA is overrepresented (χ^2 , $\alpha < 1$ percent). This is the class that was represented by the more communication-orientated and less academic-orientated participants. Between the two SOLCA classes and the three classes of "Evaluation of the Multicultural Learning Situation" (see Fig. 5) there is no significant relation other than in the "Evaluation of the Communication Opportunities" (see Fig. 6). The Class II of the SOLCA is clearly overrepresented in Class II of the "First-Order" LCA and underrepresented in Class III (χ^2 , $\alpha < 1$ percent). In this case, those participants of Class II of the SOLCA did not evaluate opportunities for communication so positively.

In Summary, Class II of the Second-Order LCA can be described with the following: Those persons who did not profit greatly from the social program and had more contact with the peer group of co-nationals, did not rate the success of the course so highly, and did not rate their improvement in the different areas of English so highly. These students were members of Class II of the Second-Order LCA (35.8 percent of the participants). This group was more communication-oriented and felt a lack of communication opportunities.

Table 2: Accommodation and the Classes of the Second-Order LCA.

		SOLCA						
		Count	I					
		Exp	Val	I				
Row	Pct	I		Row				
Col	Pct	I	Class 1	I	Class 2	I	Total	
-----+-----+-----+								
student flat		I	16	I	16	I	32	
		I	21.1	I	10.9	I	64.0%	
		I	50.0%	I	50.0%	I		
		I	48.5%	I	94.1%	I		
+-----+-----+								
host family		I	17	I	1	I	18	
		I	11.9	I	6.1	I	36.0%	
		I	94.4%	I	5.6%	I		
		I	51.5%	I	5.9%	I		
+-----+-----+								
Column			33		17		50	
Total			66.0%		34.0%		100.0%	

$$\chi^2 = 10.14062; DF = 1; p = .00145$$

In a further interpretation of the Second-Order LCA, namely the cross-tabulation of the two classes of SOLCA with the variables of the various living arrangements during the course, it was clear that the less positive appraisal of communication opportunities is related to a lack of contact with British people. More of the members of Class I of the Second-Order LCA lived in host families (see Tab. 2) and the more of the members of Class II lived in the multicultural student flats. In a further cross-tabulation (due to lack of space, not represented here) was discovered that in Class I there were more students interested in continuing contact with the British people than the members of Class II (χ^2 , $\alpha < 5$ percent).

5 Conclusion

The cause of these results can not be determined in an objective sense: the amount of multicultural orientation that a student of an international summer language course experienced was directly related to his/her other success in learning the language. However, it can be determined that those students, who at the end of the course were evaluated as having a high level of multicultural

orientation, placed more value on their success in the language. How strongly the course influenced multicultural orientation can not be determined. Because the course was the first multicultural learning situation for the participants, we can determine that the evaluation of the multicultural learning situation as an important part of the success of learning language was caused by the multicultural experiences of the students during the course.

Generally, the multicultural learning situation was welcomed, desired, and frequently formed the foundation of the learning process. In addition to the improvement in language, the students learned more about the cultures of their classmates. For a section of the participants contact with native-speakers remained unobtainable. In the more academic-oriented group this deficit was partially compensated for with the traditional, biculturally-oriented teaching material. A balance could also be achieved through the use of extracurricular activities. Only by directing the communication process and additional activities was it possible to minimize the co-national orientation. This is especially important for the younger students with a lower level of language competence. Professional guidance and support, perhaps through a tutorial program, could prove to be particularly worthwhile for these students.

Overall, the teaching and learning situation in this summer language course was characterized by the multitude of offered activities, which collectively led to the positive evaluation of the course. Not only the concentration on classroom activities, but also the integrated organization of learning activities during free time, school, and living arrangements served as the basis for the success of the program.

It is already clear from the results of this pilot study that intercultural learning can be initiated by short-term exchange programs. That it requires a lot of work and care in order to obtain good results is also evident. This may indicate that other exchange programs (i.e. ERASMUS) are in need of improvement. It also indicates, especially for German universities, that much more care must be taken in dealing with students (Bos 1994c), especially foreign students.

In addition to an improvement in the organization of such courses, the results may also indicate that the current way of teaching foreign languages, especially English, needs to be reconsidered. Recently in Germany there has been a debate over whether multicultural elements should be used in teaching German as a foreign language as well as in the instruction of native German speakers (Gogolin 1992). Does it make sense to prepare for a multicultural speaking situation in a multicultural learning group with equipped bicultural learning materials alone? Shouldn't the content of the learning materials be modified (Pingel 1994)? Perhaps some more international themes such as

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"social security in Europe" or "the relations between men and women in different cultures" need to be integrated into the course, and fewer themes like "Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot" or "the quarrel between King and Parliament"? Similarly, the training of teachers who teach English as a foreign language must be validated, and discussion opened as to whether teaching English as a foreign language should be more internationally orientated and less oriented to traditional British culture.

It cannot be determined from the results, how long the initial learning process will take. It is still a possibility that Nottingham was only a single case of luck. In order to answer this question and in order to validate these results, larger and more encompassing studies with improved instruments and larger samples must be undertaken. Surely this is an inexpensive task in comparison with the large amount of money provided by the taxpayers in the European Community for exchange programs like ERASMUS and from the viewpoint of the student who must pay for summer courses.

Last but not least, with this small pilot study it can be shown what possibilities exist for data analysis for ordinal variables through the Latent Class Analysis. With the LCA a tool of analysis is available in which the advantages of the multivariate analysis procedures, like the factor analysis or cluster analysis, are combined without the necessity of accepting their disadvantages.

Notes:

1. I thank my colleagues from Nottingham Polytechnic, especially Donna Humphrey.

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