

LINES OF INVESTIGATION

It is evident that the proposed study must begin by ascertaining, on the widest scale practicable, the present facts regarding the study of the languages. It is equally certain, however, that such a determination of facts cannot constitute its sole or final purpose. Statistical information should be accompanied by a study or present methods of instruction, both in theory and practice, as well as by the exploration, through experiment, of the possibility of improved methods, and by a search for new points of view. Furthermore, the ultimate aims of our modern language studies should be sought for on a wide horizon. Here the views of modern language experts should be supplemented by those of experts in other fields and by the opinion, so far as it is intelligent and informed, of men of affairs generally. Such a study of ultimate aims and purposes may, in part at least, be carried on at the same time with the examination of present conditions and the evaluation of methods: both will lend aid to a measurement of the values of modern language study as fixed and conditioned by considerations of a general or specific nature.

A general clarification of purposes and a greater definiteness of objective is a result on which all lines of investigation should tend to converge.

It is impossible to do more than outline in the most general forms the directions which the study may take, and while the following analysis is intended to point out with some definiteness fields which might be covered, it is to be regarded as suggestive rather than final. At best we can only offer a sketch showing the task in its broadest aspect. Details are supplied only to a limited extent and perspective is almost altogether lacking, for it will at once be clear that while certain phases of the subject present obvious and mechanical means of solution, others will require a painstaking and expert study of method before they can be entered upon. In general, our object is to present the problem in broad outline with sufficient illustrative material to show how it can be successfully approached.

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General Historical Survey

Important for the study is a brief survey of the history of the study of the modern languages. Such a collection of facts, drawn from printed and other sources, will be of suggestive importance for future lines of progress, and, in the form of a brief sketch, would appropriately introduce the study when completed.