

BEER, FAST CARS, AND ...:

Stereotypes Held by U.S. College-Level Students of German¹

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Foreign language educators generally agree that an important objective of foreign language instruction is the lessening of preconceived stereotypical images regarding the target culture, and a broadening of perspectives regarding humankind and its cultural diversity in general. One would hope that with increasing fluency in a language, and increased exposure to German speakers, authentic texts, and culture-specific contexts and information, students would also develop an increasingly sophisticated and critical perspective of a country and its people - a perspective which is based more on knowledge, observation, and critical of present-day phenomena than on preconceived, simplistic stereotypical notions. Stereotypes, however, are part of the human information processing system and as such are hard to avoid. In the following, we will outline various theoretical explications of stereotype formation, and then present the results of a study which investigates stereotypes held by U.S. students vis-à-vis Germany and Germans. We will conclude with a brief discussion of the pedagogical implications of stereotype formation based on insights from social psychology.

The term *stereotype*² was first introduced to the social sciences by the American journalist Walter Lippman in 1922. According to Lippman, stereotypes are employed to help impose order onto a complex world. They present a shortcut in the processing of data, which, in his words, "precedes the use of reason" (98). Lippman also observed a social function of stereotyping, namely, as a "projection upon the world of our own sense of our own value, our own position and our own rights" (96). In sum, the journalist defined stereotypes as necessary overgeneralizations and oversimplifications that are rigid, resistant to change, undependable in their actual content, and produced without logical reasoning. According to Brigham, subsequent researchers often selected only one of these characteristics as the "hallmark of an ethnic stereotype" (15). Earlier theoretical approaches to the study of stereotypes focus on the socio-cultural and psychological aspects of stereotype formation and application. Social learning theory claims that "education, communication, and direct observation" (Stroebe and Insko 17) are responsible for the processes involved. The acquisition of stereotypes is considered to be no different than the acquisition of any other kind of knowledge.

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While socio-cultural theories focus on the interpersonal aspects of stereotyping, psychological theories investigate intrapersonal processes which motivate the division of people into ingroup and outgroup. As mentioned by Fiske and Ruscher, Adorno's theory of the authoritarian personality, for example, considers stereotypes to be the result of an inner conflict, the manifestation of characteristics which people detest in themselves. Bettelheim and Janowitz's

account of the scapegoat theory claims that stereotypes are the result of repressed frustrations which cannot be voiced directly to the source of frustration. These frustrations are therefore often redirected to powerless minorities, who, in this process, are identified as possessing negative attributes (Stroebe and Insko 18). In other words, the minority groups are stereotyped.

In 1969, a landmark article by Tajfel initiated a re-evaluation of stereotype formation along cognitive lines. Tajfel maintained that then prevalent stereotype research wrongly focused on motivational issues as the basis for stereotype formation. He criticized the "blood-and-guts model" (80) which did not allow for reason as a factor in the process. Stereotypes now came to be seen as regular cognitive structures. Researchers such as Hamilton and Gifford demonstrated that stereotypes can be developed simply as a result of cognitive processes and irrespective of social influences. They did not deny the influence of learning and motivation on stereotype formation, but underscored the crucial role of cognition. According to them, stereotypes help simplify and categorize information obtained from a complex and at times over-stimulating environment. With the help of these cognitive structures, we manage to process, store, and retrieve input faster and more efficiently.

The revised focus on cognitive aspects changed the rather negative conception of stereotyping. While many earlier studies had alluded to their essentially pathological nature,³ stereotypes were now identified as an integral part of human information processing. However, their social functions were marginalized until the 1980s, when scholars in social psychology acknowledged that affective and motivational factors had been left out of consideration.

Tajfel, the founder of Social Identity Theory, emphasizes the importance of stereotypes for the definition of group identities. According to him, stereotypes help differentiate between in-group and out-group cohesion in a positive way.⁴ Taylor and Moghaddam maintain that

the important motivation for group categorization is social identity. It is postulated that the need for social identity leads to a striving for group distinctiveness along positively valued dimensions. Group distinctiveness refers to those characteristics of a group that make it different from other groups - in other words, a stereotype. According to social identity theory, then, the creation and maintenance of a positively valued stereotype [of one's own group] are postulated to be a fundamental human need (176).

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The most recent trend in stereotype research shows an attempt to integrate affective and cognitive approaches, and to present stereotypes as necessary processes.⁵ As Bausinger claims, "Stereotype sind kein defizienter Versuch, sondern ein gängiger Erfahrungsmodus" (163).⁶

American Stereotypes about Germans

The professional literature has devoted considerable attention to discussing how Americans

and Germans view each other.⁷ A 1933 study by Katz and Braly, which investigated stereotypes of ten ethnic groups held by Princeton University students, found the five most frequently listed adjectives for Germans to be "scientifically inclined," "industrious," "stolid," "intelligent," and "methodical." Quandt, however, claims that the generally positive image of the "diligent" Germans of the past, which was to a large part based on interactions with German immigrants to the U.S., has given way to images of Germans as "militaristic," "aggressive," and "cruel" which arose during the World Wars, and particularly during the Nazi era. Quandt states that "over the long run the Nazi-reference seems to have become the basic aspect of the American perception of the Germans" (204).

A replication of the Katz and Braly study by Gilbert in 1951 found the five most frequently mentioned characteristics to be "scientifically inclined," "industrious," "extremely nationalistic," "intelligent," and "aggressive," confirming Quandt's assessment that historical events between 1933 and 1945 did have an impact. However, Gallup polls conducted in 1961 and 1966, at the height of the Cold War when the Federal Republic and the U.S. had become close political allies, found no negative descriptors among the six most frequently marked characteristics. These were "industrious," "intelligent," "progressive," "practical," and "courageous," and "Berlin Wall."⁸

More recent studies, which have attempted empirical explorations into cultural images of Germans held by Americans generally point to the prevalence of unfavorable images of Germany and Germans. A 1986 study by Stapf, Stroebe and Jonas, entitled *Amerikaner über Deutschland und die Deutschen: Urteile und Vorurteile*, which surveyed 1,439 students from twelve post-secondary institutions across the U.S. found that Germans and Germany (in 1986 still divided into the Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic) received relatively low ratings on a number of indicators (e.g., *sympathisch*, *freundlich*, *aufgeschlossen*, *genießen das Leben*, and *attraktives Ferienland*) when compared with ratings of twelve other European countries/ nationalities. The Federal Republic ranked tenth out of fourteen in popularity (before Spain, Poland, the GDR and the U.S.S.R.). The West Germans ranked in twelfth place out of fourteen (before East Germans and Russians) on the characteristic *sympathisch*.

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A 1992 study at the University of Arizona does not confirm the negative image elicited by Stapf, Stroebe, and Jonas. It should be noted, however, that in the study summarized below, students were not asked to rate Germans relative to other nationalities as was the case in the 1986 study.

American Stereotypes about Germans held by U.S. College-Level Students of German: Results of a Study

Part I:

The findings reported here are the serendipitous by-product of a large-scale study investigating the relationship between metalinguistic awareness and grammatical accuracy of U.S. students of German on the post secondary level.⁹ The study was conducted at the

University of Arizona during the spring semester 1992 and involved 340 students of German, including students from second, third, and fourth semester German courses (German 102, 201, 202), and a third-year advanced conversation course (German 307).

As part of the study, students were asked to complete a number of sentence fragments aimed at eliciting specific syntactical structures. Two of the sentence fragments the students were asked to complete were:

Die Deutschen ...

In Arizona ...

Only during data analysis did we realize that the student protocols provided 340 unprompted, spontaneous views of Germans and Germany - in addition to information sought on students' syntactical development. The second sample, *In Arizona...*, permitted us to double-check the appropriateness of the task for eliciting stereotypical responses.

It needs to be emphasized that the study reported here was not conceived to be a systematic, scientific inquiry into U.S. students' stereotypes vis-à-vis Germany, but the data obtained nevertheless provide some interesting insights into currently held opinions about Germany and its people. It also provides some feedback on the relative success of our pedagogical efforts to overcome popular stereotypes and to create an up-to-date image of the German-speaking world. It should be mentioned that the study is unique in that it elicited intuitive, spontaneous reactions. Previous studies generally forced students to make choices from given characteristics.

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The task which we asked students to perform elicited stereotypes in an exemplary fashion. The fateful sentence fragments were buried among nine contextually unrelated fragments and lent themselves to elicit glib and occasionally "cute", rather than pre-meditated responses. An examination of the results shows that the responses to both cues, *Die Deutschen...* and *In Arizona...* met all of the dictionary criteria of "stereotype," i.e., "a standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, affective attitude, or uncritical judgment" (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* 1986).

Responses to *Die Deutschen...* could basically be grouped into eight categories:

1. The Germans' love of beer (12.94% of responses)
2. personal characteristics (51,76%)
3. cars (7.06%)
4. references to country or language (5.59%)
5. references to culture or schooling (4.71%)
6. physical characteristics (3.82%)
7. references to history or historical events (3.24%), and
8. references to food and eating (2.65%).

Forty-five (13.24%) of the responses in German were not classified. These include such

responses as *Die Deutschen sprechen Deutsch* (7), ... *leben/wohnen in Deutschland* (5), and other responses which were given by fewer than 1% of the students.

The following is a summary of responses given by eight or more students. (For a summary listing of all German responses, see Appendix A.) Reference to the Germans' love of beer tied in number of responses (44 or 12.94%) with the student perception that the Germans were friendly. In third place, thirty students (8.82%) found Germans "interesting." In fourth place was reference to the quality and quantity of German cars (24 or 7.06%). The fifth, sixth, and seventh most popular responses were that the Germans were *nett* (23 or 6.76%), *intelligent* (13 or 3.82%), and *fleißig* (12 or 3.53%), respectively. Nine students (2.54%) mentioned that the Germans had a beautiful country, eight (2.35%) that they were *lustig* and full of fun, and seven students (2.06%) stated that the Germans had an interesting culture.

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The personal characteristics, listed by 176 students (51.76%) merit some further scrutiny. 92.05% of the adjectives listed were positive. The five most frequently cited characteristics were *freundlich* (44), *interessant* (30), *nett* (23), *intelligent* (13), and *fleißig* (12). Negative or neutral qualities were listed by only 29 students (16.48% of those that listed personal characteristics). *Nicht nett/nicht freundlich* was provided by five students, *langweilig* by four, and *sehr ernst/nehmen fast alles sehr ernst*, and *reserviert/introvertiert* were given by three students each. Adjectives such as "militaristic," "aggressive" or "nationalistic" were noticeably absent. Of the physical characteristics listed (*schön, groß, stark, blaue/schöne Augen, blondes Haar, schöne Nasen*), only one carried a negative connotation (*dick*).

Contrary to expectations, only a very small number of students (11 or 3.24%) referred to historical events. Of those, only two mentioned the Nazi-era, and four (1.18% of the total responses) mentioned re-unification of the two Germanies. Given the front-page status of political events in Germany during several years immediately preceding this part of the study, it is surprising that these events were so little reflected in the responses.¹⁰

While analyzing the results of the data collected in 1992, we were struck first by the overwhelmingly positive nature of responses. Fewer than 10% of all responses could in any way be interpreted as negatively loaded (including references to the difficulty of the language). Secondly, we were surprised, that so few of the students made reference to current political events (e.g., the fall of the Berlin Wall, and reunification, which during 1992 were featured frequently in newspaper and television reports), to historical events (e.g., the Nazi-era), or to concrete cultural/scientific achievements. Rather, spontaneous imagery cued by *Die Deutschen...* appeared to be limited predominantly to the simplistically stereotypical, trivial and popular.

Part II:

Inspired by a review of the theoretical literature on stereotype formation, which points in the direction that stereotypes are sensitive to various contextual factors and subject to change depending on cognitive, emotional, socio-cultural or motivational factors, we hypothesized that the limited range of images expressed by the students was possibly due to limitations in

language proficiency. That is, we hypothesized that students really wanted to express much more complex and differentiated images but were unable, linguistically, to do so. To test this hypothesis we conducted a follow-up study during the fall semester 1994 where we asked a total of 129 German students in second, third, and fourth semester German courses (German 102, 201, 202), as well as in a third-year advanced conversation course (German 307) to perform a similar task as did the students in the original study. Only this time the sentence cues were given in English (i.e., "The Germans..." and "In Arizona..."), and students were asked to complete the sentences in English. Again, these two sentence cues were hidden among five other contextually unrelated sentence fragments.

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To investigate the hypothesis that language proficiency may act as confounding variable in the expression of stereotypes, we compared sentence content as well as sentence length of these 129 English responses with the 340 German responses collected earlier. As can be seen in Table 1, the average number of words per sentence differed considerably in the German and English versions of the responses. In the sentence cued by *Die Deutschen...*, we observed a consistent increase in sentence length from course to course, ranging from 5.01 words per sentence in German 102 to 6.77 words in German 307. This finding points to an increase in German language proficiency which, incidentally, corroborates findings of the study mentioned earlier.

The English responses to the same cue were almost twice as long, ranging from 10.07 words per sentence (for students enrolled in German 202) to 13.35 words per sentence (for students enrolled in 315), without, however a consistent increase from course to course. The number of words per sentence in the German cue for *In Arizona...* did not increase as consistently as in *Die Deutschen...*, but here too the English responses were consistently longer than the German responses. This difference in sentence length between German and English responses to an identical cue raised immediate suspicion that sentence length might be an indicator not just of increased language proficiency, but of different content, i.e., of different stereotypical imagery. A close analysis of student responses showed, however, that the categories of stereotypes expressed in both German and English remained the same for *Die Deutschen...* and "The Germans...."¹¹

While the categories of stereotypes expressed remained similar, there was, however, a noticeable redistribution of responses, ranging from between 1.71% to 16.14%, as can be seen in Table 2. Especially noteworthy are the differences in percentages in the two categories referring to history/historical events and to culture/schooling. A total of 25 students (19.38%) made reference to historical events in the English responses vs. only 3.24% in the German responses. Nine students (36%) made direct reference to the Nazi-era vs. only two (18.18%) in the German response. However, only 2 students (8%) referred to re-unification vs. four (36.36%) in the German responses. This may well be due, of course, to the recency of the re-unification when the German-language data were collected.

Further, the English responses also show an increase in reference to culture/schooling. 14.73% of the English responses fall into this category vs. only 4.71% of the German responses. Another difference was a noticeable increase in neutral/negative characteristics mentioned in

the English responses. While only 16.48% of the German responses fall into this category, 42.86% of the English responses do. Finally, the English responses were, generally speaking, more differentiated than the German responses in the unclassified items, accounting for 20.16% of the English responses vs. 13.24% of the German responses. For a summary listing of all English responses, see Appendix B.

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We concluded from this comparison that language proficiency does indeed have an effect on the stereotypical imagery conveyed by students. Since the cognitive demands of the foreign language task limit processing capacity, students tend to resort more easily to stereotypical responses if they have limited language proficiency. Hamilton, Sherman and Ruvolo come to a similar conclusion when they suggest that the impact of stereotypic information is greater for complex tasks. So much mental capacity is taken up by the demands of the task (e.g., attention to multiplicity of grammatical features) that not enough capacity is left to screen input for information.

Confronting Stereotypes in the Classroom

When foreign language students are confronted with new cultural patterns and new linguistic structures, they are likely to employ their natural tendency to stereotype in order to accommodate an overabundance of input and to reinforce their own sociocultural identity. How should foreign language teachers handle this situation? Husemann suggests:

Wenn wir alle der Erbsünde der Stereotypisierung verfallen und der Absolution der Sozialwissenschaftler und Sozialpsychologen sicher sind, die uns versichern, daß Stereotype unser Erbe aus Adams Zeiten sind, dann sollten wir uns damit abfinden und das Beste daraus machen. (Husemann, 389)¹²

Thus, rather than condemning the natural tendency to stereotype, teachers may want to seize the pedagogical opportunities it offers. The process of stereotype formation could be selected as a topic for class discussions. Through dialectic exchanges with each other and the instructor, students could be sensitized to the human tendency of seeing ingroups as inherently more positive than outgroups.

Findings in the area of social psychology also point out ways to avoid the activation of stereotypic beliefs. Fiske and Taylor, for example, found that "when perceivers are *accountable* to a third party for their impressions, and they believe that the third party wants an accurate impression, perceivers may [...] utilize relatively individuating processes" (99). This suggests that when native speakers come to the classroom, teachers should ask students to interact with them and to find out certain characteristics about them. Teachers should stress that the information to be gathered be as accurate and as detailed as possible. The information could also be rated by the guest native speaker on its degree of accuracy.

Fiske and Neuberg claim that the more motivated perceivers are to consider individuating attributes, the less likely they are to stereotype. High personal involvement may motivate subjects to process information more critically. The more interested students are in a subject area or topic, the more motivated they will be to obtain detailed information rather than

relying on generic, stereotypic beliefs.

Wilder's findings suggest that stereotypes are likely to be employed when there is no other information available to interpret the actions of others. Stereotypes are then used as a "default" (88). It seems important, therefore, for teachers to create rich contexts in classroom exercises. The characters mentioned in role plays, exercises, or reading texts should be examined closely. The more individuating information is provided, the less likely students will be to stereotype.

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Conclusion

The tendency to stereotype is a natural part of the human information processing system. As such, it is difficult to avoid and is not necessarily negative. Stereotypic categorization helps the human psyche to deal with uncertainties, to generalize from limited data, and to define the self and others. Stereotypes can be positive, neutral, or negative. They can be true, partly true, or patently false. Although we accept the existence of stereotypes, we would, nevertheless, be remiss in our role as educators, if we would not attempt to develop in our students a critical stance and an awareness that stereotypes impede cross-cultural understanding.

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NOTES

1. This paper is a revised version of a paper presented at the 1994 Annual Convention of the AATG in Atlanta, GA.

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2. The word "stereotype" is rooted in the Greek words *stereos* meaning "solid", and *typos* which denotes the "mark of a blow, an impression, or a model" (Miller 4). According to Stroebe and Insko, the word was first used in 1798 to "describe a printing process involving the use of fixed casts of the pages of types" (4). This procedure implies the rigid reproduction of images from the same mold. [Back to document](#)

3. See, for instance, McCauley, Stitt, and Segal, 1995. [Back to document](#)

4. Tajfel 1981, 164. [Back to document](#)

5. See, for instance, Hamilton and Mackie; Hamilton, Stroessner and Mackie. [Back to document](#)

6. Translation: Stereotypes are not a deficient attempt, but rather a common mode of experiencing the world. [Back to document](#)

7. See, for instance, Beitter; Jacobmeyer; Jaraus; Karlins, Coffman, and Walters; Keller;

Mog, and Althaus; Quandt; SINUS München; Stapf, Stroebe, and Jonas. [Back to document](#)

8. Cited in Stapf, Stroebe, and Jonas, 44. [Back to document](#)

9. The results of this study will appear in Schulz, "Metalinguistic Awareness in the Acquisition of German as a Second Language: Report of a Study." We gratefully acknowledge a grant awarded through the Mini-Grant Program of the Faculty of Humanities, University of Arizona which made this study possible. [Back to document](#)

10. It might be interesting to note that the cue *In Arizona...* elicited still less differentiated responses than *Die Deutschen...*. A total of 59.5% of the responses referred to the hot climate, even though residents of Flagstaff or Kingman would clearly dispute such claims. A sizeable number of the responses (14.6%) mentioned the desert landscape, flora or fauna, again making generalizations with which inhabitants of the northern part of the state would not identify. Other responses (4.9%) mentioned stereotypical characterizations (e.g., Cowboys, conservatives). The remaining responses referred to personal activities of the respondents (e.g., ...*lebe ich gern*) or could not be classified. [Back to document](#)

11. For the English version of *In Arizona...*, a category called "Reference to Germans/Germany" had to be added, because a number of students referred to a German presence in Arizona (e.g., ... "there are a lot of German tourists"; or "...you don't find many German-speaking people") which was not the case in the German response. [Back to document](#)

12. Translation: If we are all guilty of the original sin of stereotyping and are certain that the social scientists and social psychologists, who assure us that we inherited stereotyping from Adam, will absolve us, then we should just accept this and make the best out of it. [Back to document](#)

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APPENDIX A: Summary Listing of Students' German Responses*

1.1. Summary of Positive Personal Characteristics

Die Deutschen sind...

freundlich (44)
 interessant (nicht langweilig) (30)
 (sehr)nett (sympatisch) (23)
 intelligent (klug) (13)
 fleißig (nicht faul); gute Arbeiter; arbeiten hart/schwer/viel/oft (12)
 lustig (haben viel Spaß/lieben eine Party) (8)
 pünktlich (6)
 gut (nicht schlecht) (6)
 glücklich (4)
 sauber (putzen viel) (3)
 organisiert (2)
 froh (2)

Positive qualities mentioned once only: (9)

stolz; wunderbar; toll; witzig; geduldig; höflich; mit viel Gefühl; wie die Amerikaner;
 gute Politiker.

Total number of positive responses: 162 (N = 176) = 92.05%**

* Number of responses is in parentheses.

** Total does not add up to 100% since some students gave more than one response.

1.2. Summary of Negative or Neutral Personal Characteristics

Die Deutschen sind...

nicht (immer) nett/freundlich; mögen Amerikaner nicht gern (5)
 langweilig (4)
 sehr ernst (nehmen fast alles sehr ernst) (3)
 introvertiert/reserviert (3)

Negative/neutral qualities mentioned once only: (14)

kompliziert; unglücklich; sehr kalt; dumm; alt; ungeduldig; neugierig; sehr traditionell; laut; schmutzig; komisch; sehr seltsam; haben viele Vorurteile; denken, daß sie besser sind als die Amerikaner.

Total number of negative/neutral responses: 29 (N = 176) = 16.48%

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2. References to Beer / Wine

Die Deutschen...

trinken/mögen/lieben Bier (31)
haben/machen gutes/das beste Bier (8)

Mentioned once only: (5)

trinken mehr Bier als die Amerikaner; denken, daß amerikanisches Bier schlecht schmeckt; amüsieren sich viel mit Getränken; trinken nicht zu viel Bier; machen auch guten Wein.

Total number of responses: 44 (N=340) = 12.94%

3. Reference to Cars

Die Deutschen...

machen viele/sehr große/ausgezeichnete/die besten/prima Autos (7)
haben/machen schnelle (und nette) Autos (3)
haben viele Autos (2)
fahren kleine Autos (2)

Mentioned once only: (10)

haben große Autos; haben teure Autos; fahren schöne Autos; fahren sehr schnell Auto; fahren viel Auto; lieben ihre Autos; lieben sportliche Autos; würden sehr schnell fahren, wenn sie alle einen Porsche hätten; sind sehr aggressive Autofahrer; haben die beste Kraftfahrzeug-Technologie.

Total number of responses: 24 (N=340) = 7.06%

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4. References to Country or Language

Die Deutschen...

haben ein schönes/leben in einem schönen Land (9)

haben schöne Städte (und Dörfer) (3)

haben eine sehr schwere Sprache/sprechen eine schwierige Sprache (3)

Mentioned once only: (4)

haben schöne Schlösser; müssen in einem kleinen Land leben; haben einen lustigen Dialekt; haben eine schöne Sprache.

Total number of responses: 19 (N = 340) = 5.59%

5. References to Culture/Schooling

Die Deutschen...

haben (mögen) (viel) (eine interessante/reiche) Kultur (7)

sind (normalerweise) sehr gebildet (2)

Mentioned once only: (7)

haben... Musik; lieben Goethe; haben tolle Wissenschaftler und Komponisten; sind ein altes und traditionelles Volk; sind ein Volk, über das man viele interessante Dinge lernen kann; haben gute Schulen; sind gute Studenten.

Total number of responses: 16 (N=340) = 4.71%

6. Reference to Physical Characteristics

Die Deutschen...

sind schön (4)

sind groß (4)

Mentioned once only: (4)

sind dick und stark; haben blaue Augen und blondes Haar; haben schöne Augen; haben schöne Nasen.

Total references to physical characteristics: 12 (N = 340) = 3.53%

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7. References to History/Historical or Current Events

Die Deutschen...

haben eine interesssante Geschichte (2)

Mentioned once only: (9)

haben eine schlechte Geschichte; lieben Krieg; haben keinen Krieg gemacht; haben keine Angst vor den Franzosen; haben eine lange Geschichte; sind jetzt wieder vereint; haben viel Arbeit mit der ehemaligen DDR; haben viele Probleme mit der Regierung, weil sie beide Teile Deutschlands zusammenbringen müssen; wohnen jetzt zusammen, aber haben viele Probleme.

Total number of responses: 11 (N=340) =3.24%

Direct reference to Nazi-era: 2 = 18.18%

Direct reference to re-unification: 4 = 36.36%

8. References to Food and Eating

Die Deutschen...

mögen Schnitzel (2)

essen Sauerkraut (2)

essen Wurst (2)

Mentioned once only: (3)

haben viele Kuchen; machen ausgezeichnete Schokolade; amüsieren sich viel mit Essen.

Total number of responses: 9 (N = 340) = 2.65%

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**APPENDIX B:
Summary Listing of Students' English Responses***

1.1. Summary of Positive Personal Characteristics

The Germans are...

interesting/live an interesting life style (9)

friendly (6)

kind/warm/nice/lovely (5)

a work-ethic/hard working people (4)

fascinating/wonderful (3)

very casual/leisure people (2)

polite (2)

generous/good (2)

Positive qualities mentioned once only: (8)

...prideful of their rich heritage; crazy people of which I wish I was one; a unique people; sophisticated; family-oriented; happy; very honest; an absolute riot.

Total number of positive responses: 41 (N=56)=73.21%**

* Number of responses is in parentheses.

** Total does not add up to 100% since some students gave more than one response.

1.2. Summary of Negative or Neutral Personal Characteristics

The Germans are/have...

(very) serious (4)

strong beliefs and morals/strict/bent on order & perfection/known for their hard-living ways (4)

not very friendly/less friendly than Americans (2)

people like any other (2)

Americans/not much different from Americans (2)

Negative/neutral qualities mentioned only once: (10)

Europeans are known for their ignorance of hygiene; ...you don't want to piss them off; being historically surrounded by enemies, they can be reactionary at times; ...some of the men are sexist; in many ways have changed a lot; a group of people I have a hard time understanding; their gene pool is seriously skewed; keep to themselves; no sense of humor, Kant exemplifies this best, as well as a popular joke whose punch line is: the shortest book written in the history of man...two hundred years of German humor; a very strong people. This goes back to the Germanic tribes conquering Rome, to their modern day survival after Hitler.

Total number of negative/neutral responses: 24 (N=56)=42.86%

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2. References to Beer/Wine

The Germans...

love/drink lots of/like to drink beer (5)

make/are known for their good beer/brew some world-famous beer (3)

drink (a lot) (2)

Mentioned once only: (2)

were disappointed with the quality of the beer we offered them; are known for their fine wines.

Total number of responses: 12 (N=129) = 9.30%

3. Reference to Cars

The Germans...

make some pretty nifty automobiles and a couple of motorcycles, too

Total number of responses: 1 (N=129) = 0.78%

4. Reference to Country/Language

The Germans...

have a beautiful language (2)

Mentioned once only: (3)

have a very difficult language to learn; speak a gentle feminine language; have a beautiful country

Total number of responses: 5 (N = 129) = 3.88%

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5. References to Culture/Schooling

The Germans...

have an (extremely) interesting/lovely/fascinating culture (9)

have a rich heritage/culture (3)

Mentioned once only: (7)

... full of strong values; are a cultured and traditional volk; were responsible for some of the most wonderful art movements like expressionism; have a very good school system; are lucky in that they begin learning other languages when they are young; begin to learn English at an earlier age than we learn German or any other foreign language; realize the importance of a sound education for everyone.

Total number of responses: 19 (N=129) = 14.73%

6. References to Physical Characteristics

The Germans...

Mentioned once only: (2)

are beautiful people

are a very strange race of blond-haired, blue-eyed people

Total reference to physical characteristics: 2 (N= 129) = 1.55%

7. References to History/Historical or Current Events

The Germans...

have a (very) interesting/eventful/very complex and rich history (8)

have a long history/are people with an extensive history (2)

Mentioned once only: (15)

are still feeling guilt from the rest of the world for mistakes and horrors of the past; were in many ways responsible for the eruption of the global and international conflicts in 1914 and 1939; have a rough history; have a terrible past; cause a lot of unnecessary concern worldwide; cause wars; are blamed today still about what Hitler did even though they had nothing to do with it; despite their recent history are a historically interesting people; don't know how to win a war; invaded and we were all killed; have played a major role in our world's modern history; have a fascinating history, especially in film; over the past ten years, created a remarkable history of themselves due to reunification; have just had their 5 year anniversary for unification; have re-elected Helmut Kohl.

Total number of responses: 25 (N=129) = 19.38%

Direct reference to Nazi-era: 9 = 36%

Direct reference to re-unification: 2 = 8%

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8. References to Food/Eating

The Germans...

make great foods/are good cooks/are known for their good food (3)

have good chocolate/know what good chocolate is (2)

like to eat wurst/sausage (2)

Mentioned once only: (2)

eat so much, how come they are not all 300 pounds; ...know how to enjoy cake and

coffee.

Total number of responses: 9 (N= 129) = 6.98%

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TABLE 1:
Average Number of Words per Sentence for German and English Responses

Class	In Arizona ... (English)	In Arizona ... (German)	The Germans ...	Die Deutschen ...
102	9.72	7.02	10.34	5.01
201	12.06	6.96	10.37	5.83
202	10.57	8.24	10.07	6.68
307	10.38	7.56	13.35	6.77
Total	10.68	7.45	11.03	6.07

TABLE 2:
Comparison of German and English Response Rates: *Die Deutschen...* / *The Germans...*

Category of Response*	102 ¹ N %	201 ² N %	202 ³ N %	307 ⁴ N %	Total ⁵ N %	Response Rank	Difference in Response Rate: %
Personal Charact.: German Responses	66 50.00	38 55.07	53 58.24	19 39.58	176 51.8	1.	8.35
English Responses	15 46.88	15 42.86	11 39.29	15 44.12	56 43.41	1.	
Beer / Wine: German Responses	21 15.91	4 5.80	12 13.19	7 14.58	44 12.94	2.	3.64
English Responses	5 15.62	1 2.86	2 7.14	4 11.76	12 9.30	4.	
Cars: German Responses	7 5.30	6 8.70	8 8.79	3 6.25	24 7.06	3.	6.28
English Responses	0 0.00	0 0.00	0 0.00	1 2.17	1 0.78	8.	
Country/Language: German Responses	6 4.55	7 10.14	3 3.30	3 6.25	19 5.59	4.	1.71
English Responses	0 0.00	1 2.86	1 3.57	3 8.82	5 3.88	6.	
Culture/School: German Responses	6 4.55	3 4.35	6 6.54	1 2.08	16 4.71	5.	10.02
English Responses	6 18.75	1 2.86	3 10.71	9 26.47	19 14.73	3.	

Physical Charact.: German Responses	8 6.06	2 2.90	0 0.00	2 4.17	13 3.82	6.	2.27
English Responses	1 3.13	0 0.00	0 0.00	1 2.96	2 1.55	7.	
History: German Responses	2 1.51	2 2.90	1 1.10	6 12.5	11 3.24	7.	16.14
English Response	6 18.75	5 14.29	5 17.86	9 26.47	²⁵ 19.38	2.	
Food/Eating: German Responses	3 2.27	1 1.45	4 4.40	1 2.08	9 2.65	8.	5.10
English Responses	2 6.25	4 11.43	1 3.57	2 5.88	10 7.75	5.	

* Respondents were not limited to one answer.

Notes:

¹N (Ger) = 132; N (Eng) = 32

²N (Ger) = 69; N (Eng) = 35

³N (Ger) = 91; N (Eng) = 28

⁴N (Ger) = 48; N (Eng) = 34

⁵N (Ger) = 340; N (Eng) = 129

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Schulz, Renate A. and Birgit M. Haerle. (1996). BEER, FAST CARS, AND ...: Stereotypes Held by U.S. College-Level Students of German. *Zeitschrift für Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht* [Online], 1(2), 23 pp. Available: http://www.spz.tu-darmstadt.de/projekt_ejournal/jg_01_2/beitrag/schulz1.htm

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