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The Teaching of English in Cultural Context

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signed to perform the laboratory experiments in General Biology in the school grandstand! With a lack of laboratory space, equipment, books, and with a lack of a scientific atmosphere in general, it is a wonder that high-school teachers can do as well as they do in science. In spite of all these handicaps these teachers are willing and eager to learn more about science, and to carry on the best they can under the circumstances.

It is only by a spirit of sympathy, understanding, and cooperation between college and high-school science teachers that science education in the Philippines will improve. This spirit must not only be the keynote of summer institutes but also must motivate colleges and high schools in a given area, and college and high-school departments in the same school. Only by this cooperation can we make the essential basic reforms in science education.

JAMES A. McKEOUGH

The Teaching of English in Cultural Context

A new kind of English course was offered during the 1962 summer session of the Ateneo de Manila Graduate School. Listed as "Teaching English as a Second Language," it was directed by Father John W. McCarron, S.J., and Dr. Emy Pascasio, both of the Ateneo's Department of Language and Linguistics. The daily schedule included three hours of intensive language-in-context study and an additional hour devoted to a comparison of the American and Philippine cultures.

The basic premise of the course is that learning a new language involves more than learning a new grammar. Besides new sounds, new words with their own proper meanings, and new syntax, a whole new set of social relationships and value attitudes must be learned if the student is to use the language as it is used by its native speakers.

For a language is more than a way of making one's basic needs understood. It is the expression of an art, a literature, a set of values; in sum, it reflects the culture of a people. Each society has its own way of viewing its natural and social environment, and of coming to terms with it. Thus the spatial and social distance to be maintained between two people in conversation will vary greatly from country to country. In some cultures talking with an individual of lower or higher status demands a special manner of speech. Timing is important, too. One comes to the point more quickly in English than in Tagalog, and the speaker of American English need not say "May I ask a question?" before he asks it, even of a stranger.

With this conception of language in mind, Father McCarron designed the Ateneo English Course to include training in the American use of space and time, and an understanding of American values, themes, and institutions. American English was presented to students in what has been called the "context of situation." This means that as each new lesson is presented in dialogue form, sounds, intonation, and grammar are explained along with the cultural use of time and space, the values being expressed, and the meaning of the entire situation to a native speaker.

The three-hour daily session was divided into phonology drill, presentation and explanation of the model dialogue, and finally a testing or dramatization and discussion of the dialogue by the students themselves.

The phonology drill was based on recent studies made by linguist Henry Lee Smith, and published in 1957. The meaning and rhythm of an English sentence depend on a proper placing of the main stress in the sentence. Native speakers of English will recognize this fact immediately if they reflect how meaning can be changed by stressing different words in a sentence, or by longer and shorter pauses between words, and by the drop of the voice at the end of the sentence.

Intensive drill in the proper use of the main stress filled the first hour of each day's session. Since the rhythm of written English prose also depends upon a flowing use of this main stress, various literary selections, speeches, poetry, and prose pieces were chosen and presented as illustrations of the point.

During the second hour of each class, an actual dialogue, originally taped in the United States, then re-taped here with drills made from each sentence heard on the tape, was presented to the students. The dialogue was typed out with "lexical notes"; that is, with explanations of grammatical obscurities, the use of time and space, the value attitudes, and the ultimate themes expressed in the text.

During the third hour, the students were called upon to present the dialogue, the literary pieces, or the poetry in which drill had been given during previous classes. The purpose here was to have the student experience in some way what the dialogues and the literary selections really meant. For our concepts are formed through experience, and often we might "read into" the text something that is not there, simply because in our own experience or our own understanding of what is being said, the real meaning has escaped us. During this third hour of class each morning, discussion was encouraged on the real meanings, and the differences between the two cultures. It is interesting to note that many of the American students of the after-

noon Tagalog class came each morning to help out as informants for the English class, and, conversely, some teaching in the Tagalog class was done by members of the morning English class. Thus when these Filipino and non-Filipino informants came together for the evening comparative culture course, a groundwork for understanding had already been laid by participation in the English or Tagalog courses.

The evening session on values in Philippine and American culture was an integral part of the language study. This course, a production of the staff and associates of the Institute of Philippine Culture under the direction of Father Frank Lynch, S.J., brings together the findings of anthropology, sociology, psychology, history, economics, and linguistics regarding the basic themes in the two cultures. By viewing as a whole the value systems of the two societies, the students were better able to understand the languages as expressions of their respective cultures.

It is difficult to assess "Teaching English as a School Language" by comparing it with similar courses in English since to my knowledge there are no comparable courses given elsewhere. Furthermore, despite the intensive nature of the course, six weeks is too short a time to master the technical aspects of second-language learning as well as the deeper meanings attached to the language.

But if success can be measured by the absorption of new ideas for presenting, drilling, and teaching a second language, by the amount of awakening interest in, and understanding of, one's own way of speaking and living, or by the grasp of the mentality and culture that is behind another's, then this course with its interdisciplinary approach can certainly be termed a success.

MICHAEL R. SASO

Changing Assumptions in the Theory of the Firm

With business increasingly employing the services of economists, a closer scrutiny has been and will continue to be made of the validity and sufficiency (especially for operational purposes) of assumptions employed in economic theory which up to recent times has been almost exclusively concerned with price-output problems. For example, there has been a growing dissatisfaction¹ with the use

¹ See for example: W. J. Baumol, *Business Behavior, Value and Growth*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1969. A. Kaplan, J. Dirlam and E. Lanzelotti, *Pricing in Big Business*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1968. Neil Chamberlain, *The Firm: Micro-Economic Planning and Action*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1962.