Language Drills:
The Language Laboratory and Modern Language
Teaching

Review Article: Teodoro Llamzon

FRANCISCANS IN THE PHILIPPINES

TOMAS DE HÁBITO Y PROFESIONES DE LA PROVINCIA DE
    SAN GREGORIO DE FILIPINAS (1583-1736).   By Mariano
    Rubio, O.F.M. Madrid, 1961, 122p.

The book under review originally appeared in *Missionalia His-
pánica* XVIII (1961), 211-50 and 273-350.   In it Father Rubio
continues the work of the Franciscan Fathers of Pastrana in making
known the many valuable historical documents to be found in the
archives of the Franciscan Philippine Province of San Gregorio Magno.
The manuscript here reproduced is the book, apparently begun by
San Pedro Bautista in 1588, in which were recorded with appropriate
data the Franciscans who took the religious habit or made their
religious profession in the Philippines up to the year 1736.   Complete
for the latter group, it does not appear, according to Father Rubio,
to be as complete in its recording of those who took the habit.

Since the manuscript is now in danger of destruction from the
ravages of time and of the *anay*, Father Rubio has made a careful
transcription of it, noting the parts which he has had to reconstruct
laboriously, due to the state of the manuscript.   This transcription
is preceded by a useful historical introduction on the origin of the
Philippine Franciscan Province, the various novitiates established in
the Province, and the training of the novices.   The transcribed docu-
ment is carefully annotated and an appendix provides references to
the *Catálogo* of Gómez Platero and the *Necrología* of Huerta, for all
the persons whose names are recorded here.   The work will be of
value to those interested in the ecclesiastical history of the Philippines,
particularly of the Franciscans.

<div style="text-align: right">JOHN N. SCHUMACHER</div>

LANGUAGE DRILLS

THE LANGUAGE LABORATORY AND MODERN LANGUAGE
    TEACHING.   By Edward M. Stack.   New York: Oxford Univer-
    sity Press, 1960. viii, 149p.

This is a handbook on the proper use of modern language labora-
tories.   In the words of the author, "this book is designed to assist
language teachers and students in training to become language
teachers.   It provides specific descriptions of techniques and pro-
cedures for the classroom, language laboratory, and collateral activi-
ties.   Particular attention is given to the beginning and intermediate

stages of instruction. The oral-aural approach, combined with the best features of the 'traditional' approach, is the guiding philosophy of the presentation. Practical guidance rather than philosophical argumentation is the aim of this text."

Besides teaching techniques, the book offers administrative and mechanical aids relating to the operation of a language laboratory.

Recently, a committee was appointed by the Modern Language Association to investigate the best way of presenting a language course to a beginner. It was known as the Textbook Committee of the Modern Language Association. After much study and research, the Committee came up with the following conclusions: 1) the optimum sequence for the presentation of a foreign language is HEARING—SPEAKING—READING—WRITING on the high-school and university level; 2) this is reduced to HEAR—SAY—SEE in the elementary school. This last principle was actually carried out by the language program known as FLES (Foreign Language In The Elementary School) and the results were most encouraging.

Stack follows this sequence scrupulously in the book. The high-school or university student first hears a word, phrase or sentence (perhaps accompanied by visual aid for showing the meaning), then imitates what he has heard. When he has become proficient in recognizing and reproducing the sounds, he learns to read and write. For elementary programs, writing skill is omitted until about the second or third year of study.

Perhaps, more should be said here about FLES, for certainly this movement is in the right direction and should be encouraged and imitated. It was first organized by the Modern Language Association, whose aim was to start children early in the hearing of foreign languages. Many cities and communities here welcomed and co-operated with the program and in such cities as New York, Hartford, Los Angeles and San Diego, the program is employed extensively, with happy results.

The objective aimed at by the Modern Language Association is the training of the student to understand, speak, read and write the foreign language with native speed, intonation, pronunciation, and fluency. Experiments have shown that these objectives are best realized under the following conditions: 1) when language study is begun at an early age; 2) when instruction has continuity over a period of years; 3) when the student is brought as completely as possible into contact with the language; 4) when structural linguistic methods are used to systematize language patterns, thus shortening the learning process by reducing the haphazard mode of learning the characteristic ways of expressing ideas in the foreign language.

To help the student learn the first two steps—hearing and speaking—pattern drills are used. Stack here provides a multitude of excellent examples and methods of constructing these drills; perhaps this is the greatest service this book has to offer to the language teacher. The author distinguishes two phases in the oral drill: a) the *teaching phase,* and b) the *testing phase.* The teaching phase is the main presentation of the material and here the segments of consistent patterns should be big enough so that the student will be able to respond to each new stimulus by analogy to the preceding example. The testing phase follows the first phase right away and is simply a sampling in random order of the patterned segments of the teaching phase.

From the classroom, these drills are carried on further in the laboratory, where the machine relieves the teacher of several hours of endless repetitions, questions and responses. In this connection, the author distinquishes between the library type of laboratory and the broadcast-system type. He thinks that the library type is suitable only for university students capable of independent study, but that the broadcast system should be used at both the elementary and high-school level, where the members of the class work under the teacher's direction and supervision. A detailed and extremely helpful description of the two types of laboratories is given in the book.

Because the language laboratory has become an integral part of the learning and teaching of foreign languages, the function of the classroom may now be viewed as constituting two phases: a) *pre-laboratory*—where the students are prepared to use the drills correctly; b) *post-laboratory*—where the students' learning in the laboratory is tested and checked. The student is confronted with the necessity of using the newly learned patterns and principles.

Perhaps the weakest section of the book is the treatment of pronunciation problems. Here is how he introduces the student to a new sound, such as that found in the French word *rue* 'street':

TEACHER—Listen to the French word for 'street': *la rue, la rue, la rue*: [ry]. To see if you can recognize this [y]-sound in the word [ry], let's play "same or different". I'll say a pair of words. If they are the same, say "same." If they are different, say "different." Listen: [la ry]—[la ry]—[la ru].

STUDENTS—Different!

TEACHER—They were different. Next pair: [la ru]—[la ru].

STUDENTS—Same!...

When the students have thus been started on their training as critical listeners, the teacher asks them to identify the correct word for *street*:

TEACHER—(showing picture for street)—Now I'll say two words, one of which is correct for "street" in French. If the first word is correct, say "first"; if the second is correct, say "second". Listen [la ru—la ry].

STUDENTS—Second!

TEACHER—Second is right. Again: [la ru], [la ru].

STUDENTS—Neither...

There are two difficulties with this procedure: 1) the students are allowed to hear the wrong pronunciation of a word—the pronunciation makes an impression on their memory and interferes with the right pronunciation; 2) the student is not taught how to phonetically reproduce the sound, i.e., he is not taught how to pucker his lips, and bring his tongue-tip up high forward, etc. The student may approximate, but will find it difficult to reproduce, the sound exactly.

The phonology drills, however, are effective. There is the so-called *noun-unit,* a list of about 30 nouns containing all the sounds of the language. These are repeated one by one and the students imitate the teacher. Then there is the *sentence-unit,* a list of sentences containing all the sounds and basic sentences of the language. The teacher reads the sentence and the class repeats in chorus. Or, the teacher puts up a picture of a cat, and asks, "What is this?" The class responds, "That is a——". Here there is a most efficient method for helping the student memorize the forms and learn the sounds of the language at the same time.

TEODORO LLAMZON

GARDENER'S GUIDE

PHILIPPINE ORNAMENTAL PLANTS. By Dr. Mona Lisa Steiner. Manila: Carmelo and Bauerman, Inc., 1960. 233 pp. illus., 2nd edition.

This fascinating book is filled with exciting information on ornamental plants in a fashion which cannot fail to be helpful. Prepared as a source of information for all lovers of plant life, this book presents a concise, clear and easily understandable description of the