

1970 MLA SEMINAR IN AUDIO-VISUAL TEACHER PREPARATION*Introductory Remarks*

by *Diana E. Bartley, Chairman*

All too often audio aids and visual aids are taken for granted as being the primary solution to the problems of language learning, or worse yet, a substitute for the language teacher. This has been alluded to by many a pedagogue and language teacher over the past years.

The first paper presented at the 1970 Seminar in Audio-Visual Teacher Preparation presents a strong case for support of the above. In addition, the recommendations made by Prof. Andree Bergens in her article are meaningful not just in terms of foreign language learning but also in terms of English as a Second Dialect — an area which is now being investigated by more and more educators as a necessary area in which teaching and research must be carried on. As regards foreign language learning, she points out that the language laboratory is not an extension of the classroom but a separate entity within the educational setting and must not be construed as anything else in terms of teaching methodology. The case for the adaption of foreign language methodology to the teaching of English as a Second Dialect has been made more than once.¹ Consistent with this then, is the real possibility of utilizing Prof. Bergens' suggestions in Second Dialect teaching where they will be of value.

This same type of application is also possible with reference to the ideas presented by Prof. Uria-Santos. Why not teach the culture of Spanish speaking minority groups through the use of audio-visual aids? The author points out that one of the problems facing teachers today is the question of "relevance." What then could be more relevant than using her ideas not only with reference to Spanish Civilization but also in terms of the contemporary culture of Spanish speaking minority groups?

Perhaps the basic plea which I am making is that the valuable information and ideas presented in the following papers should be used not only 1) in terms of the content matter to which they are related in the papers, and 2) the context in which they are presented, but also 3) in terms of an emerging field, Second Dialect Learning.

¹See for example, Irwin Feigenbaum, "Using Foreign Language Methodology to Teach Standard English: Evaluation and Adaptation," Alfred Aarons, et al. (eds), *Linguistic Cultural Differences and American Education*, Florida FL Reporter (North Beach, Miami, Florida), 1969, pp. 116-122, 156.

The Language Laboratory Is No Miracle Worker

by Prof. Andre Bergens

Here are a few ideas which are not exactly new; I hope that by presenting them in a different light and context backed by years of experience, they may derive renewed values from such a presentation.

Undoubtedly, the L.L. is a most wonderful tool when used properly; it is a waste of time, energy and money when misused. Thus, many people rave about it, while others are very much against it; this is an understandable attitude in both cases.

Let's face the L.L. objectively, keeping in mind that this paper will be a limited presentation of some frequent problems.

I. In the L.L., we are dealing with machines, and machines can only give back what they are fed. The choice of the right material is the key to success, but prior to this choice, the teacher must decide upon the goals he wants to achieve. Theoretically, it seems easy; practically, it is quite difficult. What will these goals be, Pronunciation? Comprehension? Oral fluency? Patterns? Vocabulary? etc . . . The teacher must be very cautious and must realize that such goals *cannot be reached successfully at the same time* because the L.L. is no miracle worker.

II. Once the teacher has decided what he wants to achieve, he has to face a variety of problems; here are a few among others:

1. As Prof. Pleasant sees it, the L.L. should be considered as "supervised homework". This means that from the textbook the teacher uses in the classroom, he should make a selection of items in order to emphasize those which are linguistically different from the native language, while eliminating those which are similar since foreigners tend to transfer their linguistic habits into the language they are learning. Such a selection would prove quite helpful to the student by establishing some sort of a hierarchy of importance among which are given equal importance in the book as well as on the "commercial" tape that goes with it. Too often students devote time to useless drills, a dreadful situation for the L.L. is no miracle worker.

2. As important as the pedagogical value of the material is a psychological factor the teacher must always keep in mind: What kind of students will use it, and more specifically, what will their age group be?

It is obvious that high school pupils may like tapes which are organized and presented in an attractive and enjoyable way, whereas

college students whose goals and motivations are different may appreciate a more intellectual approach. It seems to me that the students who start a language at an elementary level should not be treated intellectually at the same level with scores of "witty" sentences and "humorous" drawings. Such pedestrian presentations may amuse them for a while, but they soon get irritated and start dropping the L.L., thus proving that it is no miracle worker.

3. Everybody knows that *practice* is the very word for language learning, and the L.L. is the ideal place where the student can acquire the automatic ability to deal with a second language the way he does with his native language.

Automatism is achieved through repetitions which condition the forming of habits. But habits are acquired slowly, and it means countless sessions of varied, elaborate and well-organized repetitions. This necessity gives rise to an unexpected contradiction between what has to be done and the reaction of numerous teachers who complain about the monotony of lab drills and the ensuing boredom. But why is there such an attitude when the L.L. is involved? These same people do not object to scales and endless boring exercises when they are applied to music, sports or other activities, but when it comes to the L.L., they object to any drill that lasts more than 10 minutes. They probably have not realized that the L.L. is no miracle worker; no entertainer, either.

III. Methods.

1. Since the L.L. is not a branch of the classroom, the same teaching methods should not be applied in both places. The classroom is where the new material is introduced to the students, and where they are *coached* on how to use it properly.

In the L.L. the purpose is to reinforce the material previously studied in the classroom. At no time should students face new material. In addition, they must know in advance what will be done during the next lab period in order to be well prepared, otherwise they will make mistakes and thus reinforce their mistakes

2. Role of the teacher in the L.L.

In high school, teachers should be in the lab in order to find out about the participation of their pupils, and also to exercise disciplinary conditions by their mere presence. In college, where conditions are somewhat different, instructors should not be in the lab for the following reasons:

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- a) Discipline is no problem
- b) An experienced instructor doesn't need to check students' participation for their performance in the classroom shows if they are doing a good job in the lab.
- c) Corrections in the L.L. are *useless*. Since a mistake is the result of a bad habit, a remark (and even a correction on the spot) is not likely to lead to any improvement. The only effective way to correct a mistake is to practice the right answer at length. On the contrary, it should be the student's responsibility to be his own judge, and by listening carefully to his playback, he should be able to make the necessary evaluations and proceed with remedial practice sessions. It is only when the student is aware of his weaknesses that he can successfully use the L.L. at its full value.

3. Dictations. These play an important part in language learning. The L.L. is their ideal location, for it enables the teacher to use the classroom for more appropriate subjects. They should consist of a passage based on material students are already familiar with, but in a new presentation.

4. Scripts. There are instances when students should have a script in front of them, especially when practicing in the lab:

- a) In phonetics practice for it enables them to associate spelling with sounds.
- b) In readings dealing with stress, intonation, rhythms, emphasis, etc. — again, the students associate the articulation of sentences with spelling and sounds.
- c) In some types of exercises dealing with patterns (substitutions for example). The use of a script prevents students from making a tiring and useless effort to retain the various clues that are given on the tape.

IV. The making of tapes, more specifically of good tapes, requires a long and arduous training, even though it looks so simple and easy. The process is time-consuming since it takes about 7 to 8 hours to organize a 42-minute tape, plus one hour and a half for recording. This is why one should retain the same textbook for at least 4 or 5 years, otherwise the investment of time is lost since the teacher has to make an average of 20 tapes per year. (Personally, I'm always puzzled when I hear colleagues suggesting that graduate students should help in the making of tapes.) Last but not least, to be a native of the target language does not qualify a person to make recordings. It

takes years of training to become a skillfull reader, and since the L.L. is no miracle worker a bad recording remains a bad recording. V. English as a second language. All the above mentioned problems are aggravated by the fact that, in addition, they differ according to the native language of the individual student. The ideal solution would be to use a different linguistic approach for each language background. However, as the students are grouped together, regardless of the country they come from, it is practically impossible to obtain satisfactory results. And this is when I wish the L.L. were a miracle worker.

The Relationship of Audio-Visuals: Application from Spanish Civilization

by Maria Rosa Uria-Santos

The teaching of civilization courses is extremely important in the preparation of the foreign language teacher. These courses open the door to a genuine knowledge and understanding of the culture and problems and people of the target civilization. They can provide valuable background, which supplements the standard courses in language and literature. This is particularly true in the field of Spanish and Portuguese where the inter-relationship between the writer and history of politics is so evident.

Says Robert G. Mead, Jr.: "In the Hispanic world language, literature and culture are inseparable components of a single diversified whole and it is this whole toward which we Spanish teachers should constantly orient the minds of our students."¹ In achieving this goal the teacher of civilization plays an important part when he fully understands the extent of his mission. Too often, however, the civilization courses do little more than catalog a number of facts of history, art and literature. For some, such courses are mere travelogues illustrated by slides with the result that the purpose of the course is defeated and frustration appears. Only when the teacher is aware of his essential mission as an interpreter of the two cultures, the Hispanic and his own, would the student of foreign languages, in learning about a foreign culture, be able to learn about his own culture and therefore about himself.

Another problem facing the teacher today, as we all know, is the question of "relevance". If we wish to make the civilization courses relevant, we will have to relate the study of the past to the present, and the past life of the Hispanic peoples should stimulate the students'

¹Robert G. Mead, Jr. "Progress in Hispanic Studies in the United States since World War II," *Hispania*, Vol. 53, Num. 3 (September, 1970), p. 395.

intelligence and sensibility. The teacher of civilization courses must learn to be in active control of the past and not blindly subservient to it.

In this paper we shall try to illustrate the manner in which traditional materials can be presented in order to emphasize their relationship to contemporary situations and, therefore, achieve a greater depth of understanding of the foreign culture. The task has been greatly eased, thanks to the pedagogical advances in teaching, particularly the use of audio-visuals of all types. The use of films, tapes, records, television can bring the world into the classroom in a vital way, enhancing meaning, clarifying concepts and attitudes, and as a result, making teaching more effective.

I will limit myself to discussing how we use certain audio-visuals in the Spanish 361 civilization class at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, what we are teaching with them and how these students, future Spanish teachers, are being exposed to the use of audio-visuals in teaching of civilization.

The visual aids most commonly used by us are: the *opaque projector*—the advantage of opaque projection is that there is no need for processing of material projected—a picture in a book or flat pictures of any kind can be projected as they are; *silent slides* — since accompanying tapes or records eliminate the explanation by the teacher and prevent student discussion during the presentation of the pictures; *maps* are also indispensable in teaching a civilization course. In addition to the visual aids just mentioned, auditory materials such as *phonographs* and *tape recorders* are of primary importance.

Let us, then, consider how, by showing a set of pictures of color slides on a certain subject — for example *La corrida de toros* or a bullfight, we can link the present to the past and find in this singular spectacle traits of the Spanish character, history, social patterns, linguistic information, and ultimately, the meaning of a deadly ritual in which man plays the animal.

We can start by pointing out that the history of bullfighting goes back to ancient times — some authorities see the killing of the bull linked to the Roman circus with its combats between animals and men. Whatever its origin may be, the bullfight has been and is today the great national *fiesta* of Spain.

In order that the students can visualize the changes that have taken place in the history of bullfighting, the teacher can use Jose Maria de Cossio's *Los Toros* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1947) in which pictures of the different periods can be found and projected. Meanwhile one may explain that up to the 15th century the *matatores* or bullfighter came from the lower classes and received a certain amount of money for doing the job. But this situation changed considerably

in the 16th and 17th centuries. By then, the men who fought were of nobility. These gentlemen fought the bull with lances on horseback—horsemanship being a principal part of the spectacle, and, in fighting the bull, the *hidalgos* proved their manhood to their ladies, to their peers, and to their inferiors. Americo Castro² points out that the gentlemen who fought the bull did so in order to prove man's dominance over the greatest strength and bravery of the beast. This display of courage was the proof of his *limpieza de sangre*, of his condition of old Christian difference from that of the new converts or *cristianos nuevos*. According to an old and popular Spanish tradition, the members of the Jewish caste were cowards, therefore, by showing personal bravery and courage, the *hidalgo* asserted before the others his true nobility and purity of blood. The above explanation will remind the student of civilization of the complexities of the caste system prevailing in the Spanish society since the beginning of the 14th century. We may also indicate how in the 18th century, when the scorn against the new Christian was diffused, professional *toreros* replaced the *hidalgos* and the whole feeling of the *fiesta* and manner of fighting changed. Since then the paid fighters go through the whole ritual on foot displaying their cape, grace and bravery in a way very similar to the present day *corrida*. At this point the showing of slides of a modern bullfight is in order.

Music also plays an important part in the *corrida* and the students should hear some tapes or records of the traditional *pasodobles* that accompany the series of delicate and artistic passes the fighter performs before the bull.

The enthusiasm of the Spaniard for this spectacle has had an influence in the Spanish language originating new terms, idioms, and causing multiple metaphoric applications. Let us remember some of those terms and metaphors: "hacer novillos" (to bullfight with calves), the common idiom for "to pay hooky" from school; "haberle visto las orejas al toro" (to have seen the bull's ears) or to know from experience the danger of something; "echarle a uno el toro" (let the bull loose on someone) or to confront someone with something unexpected and shocking; "ponerse hecho un toro" (to become a bull) or to be furious over something; "mas cornadas de el hambre que los toros" which means that hunger gives more goings than do the bulls, and so forth.

Bullfighting has been the inspiration of numberless Spanish artists from Goya and Eugenio Lucas to Picasso and Zuloaga. Here too, we may project to the class some pictures of these artists and

²Americo Castro, "Por que mataban toros los grandes senores en el siglo XVII," *Insula*, Num. 284-5 (julio-agosto, 1970), p. 5.

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explain what symbolism there is in Picasso's bulls and horses. Finally the reading of Garcia Lorca's "Lament for Ignacio Sanchez Mejias," will show the students the unique quality of this drama between man and animal because although it is true that the bull invariably dies, the fighter too, occasionally, loses his life in the bullring. Lorca's poem captures the tragic quality of this ending.

The previous illustration demonstrates how one can gain a deep understanding of the country and the culture of Spain by analyzing the meaning and history of a spectacle that many consider a simple sport or an expression of the folkloric gipsy Spain.

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