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By-Debyser, Francis

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A brief critical commentary on several current viewpoints on the teaching of French culture introduces the article which stresses the concept that linguistic behavior and culture are intimately related and emphasizes the necessity of applying this concept in the foreign language classroom. Basic French nouns, pronouns, and phrases are examined to illustrate the language-culture relationship which, it is argued, makes the most commonplace structures "idiomatic." Pedagogical conclusions stemming from this relationship are then enumerated, with emphasis given to the introduction and integration of cultural context into the language classroom according to a systematic progression. (AR)

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## FEATURE ARTICLES

### THE RELATION OF LANGUAGE TO CULTURE* AND THE TEACHING OF CULTURE TO BEGINNING LANGUAGE STUDENTS

By Francis Debyser
Deputy Director, B.E.L.C.**

Whenever the objectives of teaching a foreign language include not only immediate practical results (such as the correct handling of elementary structures in the language), but also a cultural broadening and personality growth for the student, the problem of teaching the culture in the language classroom arises. In other words, when we consider language-teaching a matter of education in its broadest sense, the problem of teaching the culture as well as the language appears. Contrary to widespread belief, this is not simply a question of introducing cultural studies at some intermediate or advanced level, but rather a question of the very concept of language-teaching itself implying a need, from the very beginning, of teaching the culture.

A special issue of *Le Français dans le Monde*,[1] which was devoted to a survey on the teaching of the French culture, presented a wide range of views, articles, and testimonies, containing a number of useful ideas. However, it was apparent from the teachers' answers to the journal's survey that they are more concerned with the problems contained in the concept of culture—what it is and what should be included in the study of it—than they are with the problems of integrating a study of it within the language classroom. The relationship between language and culture was discussed on only six pages (out of 54) and rarely from the viewpoint of teaching. It is interesting in this connection to refer to articles written by Bes, Thévenin, and Blanc which convincingly stress the close ties between language and culture, but fail to suggest any practical solution for combining the teaching of the two, inseparable though they consider them to be.

For instance, after having noted that "a culture is, above all, its language," Bes goes on to suggest that "language and culture may be considered two different aspects of the same reality," but unfortunately, the ways of applying this concept which he proposes are intended for students of an advanced level, for whom the language problem is already partly resolved. Likewise, Thévenin assumes at the outset that "any consideration of the teaching of French in foreign countries must rest on the fundamental principle that language and culture are inseparable"; but he does not concern himself with this relationship in teaching. Instead he regards it as "secondary" and considers it sufficient to give two separate courses—one to teach the French language and one to teach the French culture. The third article, by Blanc, has the advantage of placing the problem on the linguistic plane, notably by using as a point of departure quotations from Martinet, to which we will refer later. Unfortunately, Blanc suggests no way of teaching the culture which can be usefully applied to true beginners.[2]

In general, the debate on teaching the culture has never really been placed at the level of the language class. In spite of the theoretical premises made about the relationship of language to culture, the study of the culture is generally considered to be independent of language study and of a more lofty nature—a study which may lead to language study, which, in turn, may guide the student to the study of French culture and literature. Finally, the proposed solutions always apply to some long-term form of teaching — either a secondary course covering six or seven years or a college course given as a continuation of a secondary course in which linguistic foundations were laid.

Most of the research work up till now has been useful to teachers giving courses in the culture at a university or cultural center, but of only limited assistance to the large number teaching French as a foreign language who, according to their government regulations, must introduce the teaching of the culture into the language class from the very beginning of a course limited to three or four years.[3]

*Translator's note: The French word "civilisation" has been translated throughout this article as "culture" used in its broadest sense to include such things as the history, geography, customs, beliefs, morals, religion, arts, and typical behavior of a social group.
**Bureau pour l'Enseignement de la Langue et de la Civilisation françaises à l'Etranger.

[1]April-May 1963, No. 16

[2]The "method of teaching contemporary French culture" proposed by Blanc calls for conversation classes with students of quite advanced level.

[3]For example, teaching the culture in the modern language class is mandatory in Italy in intermediate-level schools where it is obligatory for all young Italians from 11 to 14 years of age.

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In order to prevent the consideration of the culture from distracting us from the real language class, we will try to state the problem from a linguistic point of view. "A language," says Martinet, "is an instrument of communication in which human experience is analyzed differently within each linguistic community into units endowed with a semantic content and phonic expression."[4]

According to this definition, the child learning his mother tongue is learning to organize and communicate his experience by means of the code, or system, of the community to which he belongs; in a way, he adapts his individual experience to the collective experience and, in the process, integrates himself into his linguistic group.

What happens, then, when he is later taught some foreign language in school? Obviously he is then learning to communicate his experience, using a new code, a new system, an "instrument of communication," which is not his own, but which belongs to another linguistic community in which human experience is organized and analyzed differently.

Therefore, even a cursory examination of this phenomenon must take into account the relationship between the system—about which linguists and educators alike are beginning to have some clear ideas—and the characteristics of human experience that this same system constantly organizes and transmits.

This brings up the question of whether we can study a communication system without regard to its content, that is, at the level of linguistics, without regard to the collective human experience to which it almost always refers.

If we ask a linguist, he may well answer affirmatively, having been led since Saussure's time to often exclude from consideration the content of the message in order to better understand its organization. Distrust of content, as such, is characteristic of contemporary linguistics and, more generally,

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[4] A. Martinet, *Eléments de linguistique générale*, p. 25.

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of any semeiology, (that is, of any discipline concerned with the operation of a sign system). As we know, this methodological bias has brought some highly positive results in its applications to modern language teaching; we need only mention the progress achieved in teaching phonetics and grammatical structures.

However, a modern language teacher's answer to the question will be much more qualified:

1) First of all, he will point out that, even from the linguistic point of view, and taking into account the necessarily artificial conditions of second-language teaching to a student who does not leave his own country, the chances of interference are as likely at the level of human experience and message content as they are at the level of formal linguistic articulation. The student must not only learn how to use the new code, he must also understand that this code implies a different view of the world—that it is *not* simply a matter of a set of new signs or symbols capable of translating on a word-for-word basis the messages which he usually expresses in his mother tongue. If it were so, leading the student to become aware of the organization of the language, separate from the content of the experience, i.e., without reference to the socio-cultural context, might be useful.

2) If we rely blindly on a purely mechanical use of the language system, we run the full risk of using the language in a vacuum, communicating little more than nothing. Contemporary literature and motion pictures abound in examples of this type of language, which no longer communicates anything. For example, Ionesco's plays or Antonioni's motion picture dialogues show us how far the use "in vacuo" of a system "disconnected" from its content can lead. We know from experience that there can be a total lack of human understanding despite a perfect use of the code. Indeed, this is what we try to suggest when we say of an unhappily married couple or of sons and parents in disagreement that "they do not understand each other" or "they no longer speak the same language." In these cases, the language system is not affected and the language structures are intact, yet language is dead and communication no longer occurs. Although language teachers do not at all doubt the value of the new teaching methods (structural exercises aimed at creating spontaneous responses), they would all like the structures taught by linguistic conditioning to be only a first step towards a less dehumanized use of the foreign language. Once the language is returned to its cultural context, we will undoubtedly be able to avoid the impoverishment which tends to empty language of its content.

3) From a practical educational point of view, all studies on the role of motivation seem to indicate that introduction to culture, if done judiciously, can be an extremely powerful motivating factor, without which language teaching may well become mechanical and monotonous.

4) Finally, from a more general point of view, no language teacher will ever be content with teaching the code alone. If, indeed, he were, he would find himself disregarding the cultural and educational guidelines set forth in most school programs for language teaching which give an ever increasing importance to the culture.

Having agreed that the problem of teaching the culture arises in the very first years of French language teaching and that it is a part of teaching the language, we may well ask ourselves, before considering any new alternatives, what solutions have been tried up till now. These solutions vary according to the programs, the methods, and even the teachers; but they can be classified under three headings:

### 1) The culture is not being taught

Often the teaching of the culture is purposely ignored, for a variety of reasons:

—because time is lacking and schedules are too full;
—because, on the contrary, the curriculum provides for intensive instruction or for instruction extending over a number of years, and the linguistic foundations are to be firmly assimilated first, before considering the culture;
—because the teaching of French is conceived of as simply the teaching of a system of communication unrelated to the French socio-cultural context;
—because it is considered that with beginners, teaching the language is, in itself, teaching the culture.

Whatever the reasons may be, we can state that teaching French as a foreign language systematically without any introduction or reference to French culture and civilization is incomplete.[5]

Of the four reasons mentioned above, perhaps the least objectionable is the fourth: "to teach the language is to teach the culture." Yet the formula, "language=culture" may turn out to be but a reassuring sophism if, in practice, it fails to imply any specific pedagogical applications.

### 2) The culture serves as a background to the method

Here the method is superimposed upon a more or less stereotyped setting of French life. This is what is done in most manuals, methods, or series of films which are centered on some French family or a trip through France. Just as our grandparents used to smile for the photographer, obligingly leaning against some fence embellished with palm trees, so do we follow Jacques or Paul or M. Durand to the post-office, the Louvre, the Place de la Concorde, etc. Unless this is very well done, we should not overestimate the effectiveness of this process and believe that the problem is solved by use of this illusory background setting.

[5]Of course, the problem is different for countries in which French is not properly a foreign language but may, by statute, law, or in fact, be a national, or second, or parallel language; there is no doubt that in these countries the teaching of French at the beginning, at least, will be that of a means of communication independent of the French socio-cultural context; in other words, it will be possible to teach "French without France." It would be absurd to go against this constraint; we will say, rather, that it is desirable in this case to integrate the teaching of French not into the specific socio-cultural context of France, but into the context of the bilingual or French-speaking culture of which French is the expression.

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It is undoubtedly helpful to give some French coloring to the dialogues and texts presented to the students while taking into careful account the requirements of the lexical and grammatical progression. But in spite of all this, the problem of integrating the culture into the language class is far from being solved this way.

**3) The student is made aware of the culture independently**

Finally, the teacher may try to make his students aware of the culture independently from language instruction, and he can do this in a great variety of ways—some good and some very bad. A catastrophic procedure, unfortunately used frequently, consists of subjecting first- and second-year French students to condensed French history or geography courses, either in French or in the students' native tongue. On the other hand, anything that can arouse and sustain the student's curiosity about the country whose language he is studying is undoubtedly very useful: visual aids, pictures, photographs, illustrated magazines, films, postcard or stamp collections, decorations, etc. So, too, are extra-curricular activities such as correspondence and exchanges between young people, film or television commentaries about France or in a French environment, and, in general, anything that may reinforce the student's motivation for a better knowledge of France (and consequently reinforce his motivation to learn the language). But there is no need to insist upon this point: all dynamic language teachers do their best to enliven and illustrate their teaching in this way. However, these enterprises, praiseworthy as they are, are not an integral part of the method and progression.

From all this we can conclude that little progress has been made in solving the problems of teaching the culture in the first years of studying French. Indeed, at this level, the culture is either not being taught (language without cultural content), or it is being taught without being integrated into the language course proper (language and the culture taught separately) or else again it is taught improperly (with the teaching of the culture given precedence over the teaching of the language).

Let us turn now to an examination of the language-culture relationship in respect to its pedagogical applications at a lexical and grammatical level, such as that of the "français fondamental," adapted to beginners. This relationship would probably be less systematically ignored in beginning language classes if teachers were truly convinced that the elementary linguistic content of the beginning of the language program really bears a cultural stamp. Unfortunately, we almost always behave as if the nomenclature which makes up the "français fondamental" was universal to all languages —that is, simple concepts widely prevalent throughout the world and corresponding to a segmenting of reality, an organization of the data of experience, which is universally valid. Rivarol has had more influence in this respect than one might think.

Let us begin with a consideration of the vocabulary. Almost all over the world, there are farmers *(cultivateurs*[6]*)*, traders *(commerçants)*, students *(étudiants)*, employees *(employés)*, workers *(travailleurs)*, and policemen *(agents de police)*. Everywhere the human body *(corps)* includes a head *(tête)*, legs *(jambes)*, arms *(bras)*, etc. Everywhere man's life generally consists in working *(travailler)*, eating *(manger)*, drinking *(boire)*, resting *(se reposer)*, sleeping *(dormir)*. And as to justice *(justice)*, liberty *(liberté)*, and love *(amour)*, everyone soon will have his share of these, thanks to progress *(progrès)*.

Let us, however, try to use the lexical material in *Le Français Fondamental* to write short texts or dialogues to be used in the language classroom and, with this purpose in mind, let us revert to the setting of the traditional centers of interest: the house, the family, the school, the meal, etc. We will soon realize that whatever we write with this set of simple, general, and seemingly universal words turns out to have a very French look. Thus, the *maison* (house), seemingly commonplace, will have a *toit* (roof), a *cheminée* (chimney), *murs* (walls) of *briques* (bricks) or *pierre* (stone), a *cave* (cellar), a *grenier* (attic), *plafonds* (ceilings), and a *plancher* (floor). Yet, is this a universal house? We would more likely recognize it as a home in a Parisian suburb. As we could have foreseen, as soon as we try to use the limited vocabulary at our disposal, our "fundamental" house at once assumes a typically French look, with even a slightly provincial and old fashioned air. And so, it has become a "foreign" house for any student whose house may perhaps have neither chimney, nor roof, nor floors, nor cellars, nor attic, but may instead have a terrace, balconies, a patio, or a porch.

Let us now consider the family *(famille)*. The *français fondamental* family extends over three generations, from the grandparents *(grands-parents)* to the grandchildren *(petits-enfants)*, and centers around the father and the mother *(père et mère)* —husband and wife *(mari et femme)* —and their children *(enfants)*. Around this immediate family core gravitate various relatives: uncles *(oncles)*, aunts *(tantes)*, nephews, *(neveux)*, nieces *(nièces)*, and cousins *(cousins)*. And finally, *Le français fondamental* also gives us such terms as *maman* and *papa*, indispensable in a family dialogue. Here, then, is a well-structured family, seemingly less marked by the French culture than the house in which it is living. Yet, in order for the young foreigner to make proper use of this vocabulary without risk of interference, it will be necessary for him to have, in his mother tongue, two different words to say nephew and grandson, and a single word equivalent to the French word *parents*, capable of denoting his father and his mother as well as his distant cousins. He will also have to understand the idea that the word *femme* is paired sometimes with the word *homme*

[6]Words in parentheses are listed in *Le français fondamental*, 1er degré.

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(man) and sometimes with the word *mari* (husband), or that the word *fille* is paired sometimes with the word *fils* (son), sometimes with the word *garçon* (boy). He will even have to be made aware of more subtle nuances: for example that *maman* is a name which he calls his mother when he talks to her, but which he will rarely use when speaking about her to others. Because they have not been introduced to the elementary structures of the "fundamental" French family, many students from neighboring countries may find that family as puzzling as a Bororo family.

It would be easy to find other examples by looking at all the centers of interest which may be "clothed" in *Le français fondamental:* in every instance—be it a farm with its collection of animals which seems to emerge from one of La Fontaine's fables[7], or the countryside *(campagne)* with its trees *(arbres)*, meadows *(prairies)*, brooks *(rivières)*, and woods *(bois)*—the world which comes alive turns into a typically French picture, landscape, or still life.

From this, one might conclude that the cultural component appears when the lexical elements are grouped into texts, dialogues, or sentences. Actually, it already forms an integral part of the word, as we can easily show.

Let us, for example, take a very common word in French, the word *bois* (wood). The statistical survey of the spoken language[8] showed that this word had a frequency (117) only a little less than that of the word *homme* (man) (131). This very high frequency can logically be taken as a socio-cultural sign. Of course, *bois* is so frequent in French because, in the conceptual division with which we view the world, we use the same word to denote a place planted with trees, a substance, a fuel, and a construction material. This use of a single word where most other languages use four different terms is not only a fact of language, but also a fact of the culture. But the frequency of *bois* can, half-seriously, also be explained by the fact that there are many trees and forests in France, and one never needs to go very far to find the woods which haunt the children's or poets' imagination: even if he may not be acquainted with the forest of Fontainebleau, the child who lives in the poor industrial districts of Paris knows the woods of Vincennes. Wood *(bois)* considered as a raw material also forms a part of the everyday life of a country rich in trees, where for a long time the floors, furniture, barrels, and even street pavements were made solely of wood.

Thus, the language-culture relationship is obvious, even when we remain within the contextual realization of one isolated word. The role played by the culture will appear even greater if we examine the wider horizons of semantic and associative fields. The whole cultural context explains why a Frenchman says that he is "not made of wood" (when confronted with a seductive woman), or that he will see "what wood a man is heating himself with" (what stuff he is made of) or more prosaically that he has a "wooden head" (a "hangover"), or again why this same Frenchman "touches wood" to avoid bad luck, whereas a young Italian would touch iron.

Finally, the conceptual structure of the language is not only determined by a distribution of more or less synonymous or associated uses, but also by semantic opposites of which, ultimately, it is difficult to decide whether they constitute facts of language or facts of the culture. Thus, the very popular French adjective *doux* (soft or sweet) is opposed to *dur, violent, brutal* (hard, harsh) much more often than to *amer, salé, sec* (bitter, salty, dry) and, therefore, will have but a very limited similarity of use with its approximate equivalents in languages where the most frequent opposite of *doux* is *amer* (sweet, bitter—*dolce, amaro*). In the end, it is almost solely the cultural context rather than linguistic factors which will or will not permit certain word associations. Thus, no contradiction appears when we speak of a man as "small and athletic" in a country where, as in Japan, Mexico, or Southern Italy, tall men are few and where athletes are small, muscular men, springy, supple, full of reflexes. On the other hand, in Scandinavia, the United States, or even in France, where an athlete is often a long and tall fellow, such an association of adjectives would be absurd.

Just as the most common and seemingly least typical word actually reveals a cultural influence and would be used incorrectly when removed from its socio-cultural context, so does the sentence, simple as it may be, with its ordered sequence, its grammatical devices and words, its rhythm and its prosody. We will not go into considerations here of the genius of the language or the merit of the direct word order, even though some serious thinking about comparative morphology, avoiding any linguistic narcissism, may open the eyes of the teacher of French to certain new perspectives on the language-culture relation! Thus, rather than seeking to uncover in the organization of the French sentence the pre-eminent development of human thought accomplished in the best possible of languages (which will draw a smile from the Arabs or Chinese), we will show the student from the outset that the French rhythmic scansion almost always corresponds to the grammatical organization of the sentence. To teach a student how to recognize and reproduce this rhythmic scansion which, in the spoken sentence, underscores the distribution of the syntactical elements: does this not from the beginning and most convincingly make him aware of the grammatical articulation of French thinking?

Even at the level of the contemporary French grammatical system used in the most elementary phraseology, linguistic behavior is related to habitual ways of representing the world—at least, habitual ways of expressing the relation between man and the

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[7] *Le chien* (dog), *le cheval* (horse), *le boeuf* (ox), *le veau* (calf), *l'âne* (donkey), *le mouton* (sheep), *le cochon* (pig), *la chèvre* (goat), *les poules* (chicken).

[8] *L'élaboration du Français Fondamental, 1er degré.* (Paris: Didier, 1964.)

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world—which are not necessarily the same as those of the foreign student. Indeed, certain fundamental oppositions, such as the distinction between singular and plural, masculine and feminine, animate and inanimate, between what may be counted and what may be considered as matter or mass, between what is considered active or passive, may vary considerably from one language to another, even in the case of neighboring languages having a common historical origin. The same applies to the distinction between the traditional grammatical categories: adjective-substantive, adjective-adverb, preposition-adverb, and, even more so, to all the structures involving aspectual values—ideas of time, duration, space, or motion and the like—relating to the subject of the statement. In fact, these opposite distinctions may exist in one language and not in another; or else, as is more frequent, their distribution may be different: some languages may not use the gender for the adjective, but may utilize it for certain types of pronouns which in French are not differentiated by gender. Can we then say these are pure grammatical facts, or are not these grammatical facts also linguistic behaviors tied to a cultural context?

Of course, it would be untenable to pretend that a given language furnishes an entirely subjective representation of the world without any real equivalent in any other language. In fact, it would be easy to show that, if necessary, anything could be stated in more or less complicated circumlocutions in another language. We simply wish to convince the teachers of French as a foreign language of the fact that the most commonplace structures such as:

*je bois du vin*
*je n'aime pas le lait*
*je prends mon petit déjeuner*
*j'ai mal à la tête*
*je me lave les mains*
*je vais être en retard*
*je viens d'arriver*
*je suis en train de travailler*

are, in fact, "idiomatic" expressions which may be difficult for some students, simply because the Frenchman assumes a viewpoint to communicate simple experiences of the kind referred to by our examples which may appear strange or unusual to the young foreigner. Therefore, it will not suffice to explain to him that the near-future in *je vais partir* corresponds in his language to this or that circumlocution, meaning "I am on the verge of leaving" or "I will leave in a moment," since then when he uses the near-future in French he will be thinking of only those rather rare cases when the situational context would oblige him in his own language to use the equivalent circumlocution. We must, on the other hand and above all, accustom him to use the near-future in all cases where it is mandatory in French, even though a simple future or a present tense would suffice in the student's native tongue. In calling fundamental structures "idiomatic," we would be uttering no more than an obvious tautology if the term "idiomatic expression" were not still too often used in the limited sense of "ready-made expression" or "frozen form," which tend to imply that, in a given language, the specific organization of the communication of human experience proceeds along some universal process, except for a limited number of isolated structures which constitute some sort of folkloric peculiarities of language. The modern-language teacher will do well to remember that whatever is commonplace, current, and fundamental is also, and by definition, "idiomatic."

We have mentioned situational context, so let us now consider the pedagogical concept of *situation* which is often referred to in the elaboration of modern-language manuals. We all know the importance which today is given to ensuring that all the linguistic elements taught to the students be "language in a situation," so that the foreign language actually be a living language. As a result of this, the part devoted to dialogues in the recent manuals has, as was desirable, considerably increased in relation to the narrative or descriptive texts which were preponderant in the older methods. The interest of "language in situation" is, so to say, to let the student take part in the game and thus to impart to him linguistic *behaviors* which he would not acquire if he were to keep a spectator's attitude with respect to the foreign tongue.

And yet, the situation must not be manufactured solely as a function of the life and naturalness requirements of the dialogues and the exigencies of the grammatical and lexical progression; we must also take into account the linguistic consequence of the situational context: the latter implies a series of choices between forms both simple and typical, the situational use of which depends on the socio-cultural support of the tongue. Thus, most of the dialogues require the use of a conventional phraseology, forms of greeting, of leave-taking, of thanks, a choice between *tu* and *vous*, etc., all of which are difficult to handle, and the appropriate use of which is much more delicate for the foreign student than is usually thought. Indeed, the student is endangered at every instant by linguistic interferences and will tend to transpose into French the behaviors which an identical situation would imply in his homeland.

Thus, nothing is less clear to a foreigner than to know exactly when and how he should say: *Bonjour, Bonsoir, Au revoir, A bientôt, A plus tard, A tout à l'heure*, or again when he should simply say: *Bonjour, Bonjour Pierre, Bonjour Monsieur*, or *Bonjour Monsieur X*.

The same applies to *S'il vous plaît, Excusez-moi, Pardon, Pardon Monsieur, Merci, Non merci, Merci beaucoup, Merci Monsieur, Il n'y a pas de quoi, Je vous en prie*, etc. The give-and-take of elementary politeness are not codified by any international rules. We believe that a "situational blunder" such as an inopportune *de rien* translating an Italian *prego* or a German *bitte* is as shocking in a dialogue as a grammatical mistake; similarly, it is intolerable that young foreigners are trained to address their teacher by beginning their sentences with a *Monsieur le professeur*, which is nothing

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more than a transposition of a *Signor professore* or a *Herr Professor.*[9]

In regard to the delicate problem of the so-called courtesy form, it is necessary to alert beginners to an appropriate use of *tu* and of *vous*. It is insufficient and risky simply to teach that *vous* is *the* courtesy form, because the student will believe that the situational use of *tu* and of *vous* corresponds to that which may exist in his mother tongue between the second person singular and the more usual courtesy form (*lei, Sie, usted*, etc.). It would be absurd, in the course of an *explication de texte*, to comment on the subtle alternations between *vous* and *tu* in the impassioned language of Racine's tragedies before adult foreign students who do not know, for instance, that in contemporary French *tu* is used to address a primary-school student and *vous* is used with a secondary-school student, or that *tu* is the pronoun used among intimate friends and that *vous* does not, in French, always imply any particular formality in human relations.

Along the same line of thought, the use of the noun, of the pronoun followed by a noun, of diminutives, or of affectivity words (in addition to the above-mentioned case of the pertinent use of such terms as *maman* and *papa*), also implies linguistic choices for which only proper information on use in the cultural context can train and prepare the student.

Considerations of the language-culture relationship as it pertains to vocabulary, grammar, and linguistic behavior leads to a first series of pedagogical conclusions:

(1) The teaching of the culture to beginners will consist mostly in avoiding linguistic interferences arising from cultural differences. Language teaching must therefore include the teaching of cultural connotations.

(2) Even minimum material can be made fruitful if teachers take the necessary care to make it so. With this purpose in mind, they would review the *linguistic content* of the manuals, texts, and dialogues which they are using.

(3) As for phonetics and grammar, introduction to the culture at the level of language must be based on a *comparison* with the student's culture. The teaching of the culture will, therefore, be comparative and contrastive at the beginning.

(4) Unlike phonetics and grammar, where linguistic comparison serves only to help the teacher to establish his progression, the cultural differences which are likely to cause interferences will have to be *explained to the students.*

(5) This work requires that the teacher proceed with *skill* and *caution;* indeed, if he is progressively to unveil cultural differences, it is in order that they be understood and accepted. He must beware of exoticism and remember, as P. Rivenc has said, that his role "is not to oppose two types of men to each other, but to interest them in one another as being both similar and different."

(6) Such teaching will never be synthetic or perfunctory but it will nonetheless be *systematic*, since the teacher will never let anything go by in the language without giving the necessary explanations from the cultural point of view. It follows that the culture must be introduced in accordance with a *progression.*

(7) In accordance with the requirements of any progression, this teaching will imply different degrees of urgency. With beginners, it will bear only on truly *significant* features[10] of the culture, leaving aside the nuances, the complex regional "variant," and the picturesque aspects—which may already be out-dated. There is no reason to consider the word *cordonnier* (a *français fondamental* word) as representative of the French culture, since this profession (bootmaker) is about to disappear, as are those of *bourrelier* (harness-maker) and of *maréchal ferrant* (farrier).[11]

(8) Of course, this occasional but systematic introduction to the culture is to be *synchronic* and must avoid plunging into history. However, in the case of a culture rich in traditions, the echoes of the past into the present are many, and they enable the teacher to escape from the closed and monotonous world of gadgets and five-and-dime stores. The historical or traditional elements which are present in contemporary realities can, and even must, be the topic of simple explanations.

Brought down to a size which only seems small, and firmly integrated into the language course, an initiation to the culture such as this is not a trifling task and probably implies more work and pedagogical rigor on the teacher's part than if he were content to lecture on the *châteaux* of the Loire Valley or on the most recent French technical achievements. It remains to be seen in what phase of the language class, or in what type of language class, the teaching of the language will lead to that of the culture. It is, indeed, to be desired that the above indications do not upset the balance of language teaching, to which recent research has striven to give an extremely rigorous organization. Of the four phases of the language class,[12] there are two which seem to be excluded from cultural considerations, the *contrôle* phase and the *fixation* phase.* Obviously, even from the viewpoint of this article, no culture will be discussed in the form of structural exercises. In contrast with this, the two

[9] In addition to interferences which may cause different distributions between *instituteur/professeur, maestro/professore, Lehrer/Studienrat/Professor.*

[10] See R. Lado, "How to compare two cultures," *Linguistics across cultures* (Ann Arbor, 1960).

[11] Refer to L. Wylie's remarkable study, *"Transformation et permanence de la structure sociale en France."* in *A la recherche de la France*, (Paris, 1963).

[12] See Denis Girard: "Les Moments de la classe de langue" (the phases of the language class) in *Le Français dans le monde*, Nos. 28 and 29, October and December, 1964.

*Translator's note: The four phases to which M. Debyser here refers should *not* be confused by American readers with the Four Phases of the Guberina-Rivenc (audio-visual) method which they resemble in certain superficial ways.

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other fundamental phases, known as the *présentation* phase and the *réemploi* phase, lend themselves to this on several counts: the *présentation*, which includes explanations in "multiple contexts," allows the use of audio-visual means to avoid cultural interferences, (for which the teacher must be prepared in advance); and the *réemploi* phase, which is the most flexible of all the phases, uses animation and situational techniques to put the elements that were assimilated during the *présentation* to work in different contexts and is well suited to familiarizing the student with words or linguistic structures peculiar to the cultural factor. Finally, when the student level permits, for example, in the second or third year, brief conversation periods will certainly allow the development of the comparative aspect which we have mentioned in our conclusions and may even lead, at the end of the conversation period, to appropriate *contrôle* or *fixation* exercises on the cultural acquisitions.[13]

As a matter of principle, we have predicated at the beginning of this article that the problem of teaching the culture cannot be avoided when a modern language is being considered as material for personal growth and enrichment. This is because, beyond the utilitarian reasons, educators strive above all to broaden the student's human horizon. To use foreign-language teaching to lead the student to *understand* cultural differences is to prepare him to accept them. The teaching of a culture, *inseparable* and *unseparated from linguistic teaching*, (as we conceive it to be) from the very beginning years onward, strives to fulfill this need, which is felt by educators the world over, by giving even greater importance to the teaching of modern languages. The aim would not be reached if we were to limit ourselves to the process of communication, for one may very well speak the same language without understanding one's neighbor. For an educator, didactic research on language or the languages must, ultimately, revert to their specific human dimension, namely, rapport with one's fellow-man or, even better, with ALL of one's fellow-men.

[13]See above-quoted article by M. Blanc.

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*Launching Big Adoption of three Audio-Visual Language Courses in League City Schools, Texas, home of the Astronauts—From left to right, Mr. Charles A. S. Heinle, Director of the Chilton Center for Curriculum Development; Mr. Alan Weber, Director of Secondary Education, Offices of Instructions, League City, Texas; Margaret McWhirter, Assistant to Mr. Weber; and Madame Colette Renard, Director of Pedagogy, Chilton Center for Curriculum Development.*