

# International Language for UN

By Francisco Morelos

**M**ANY petty jealousies can be avoided in the world's organization like the United Nations, if a common universal language can be adopted. English, French, Russian, and Spanish are the prevailing languages that are spoken in the deliberations of the assembly of the United Nations. The smaller nations feel slighted in the present set-up. The Chinese, the Japanese, and even the Hindus believe that their languages are just as good as the European languages, if not much older. In point of population, the five hundred million Chinese, the three hundred seventy million Hindus, and one hundred million Japanese cannot be dismissed easily, numerically speaking.

So, to do away entirely with envy among nations, a universal language is in order. Now, what can the universal language be?

Pham Xuan Thai of Saigon, Republic of Vietnam, apparently a linguist, gives the answer: Use FRATER, his own invention.

He claims that many linguists tried to invent universal languages but they were unscientific and complex — and difficult to learn. He mentioned **Esperanto**, **Volapuk**, **Mundolingua**, **Universal Sprache**, **Dil**, **Spelin**, **Velparl**, **Balta**, **LangueBleue**, **Novial**, and **Ars Signorum** which were proposed by their inventors during the different periods in the past, from 1661 the year, **Ars Signorum** was invented by Dalgarno and the latest in 1928, the year, **Novial** was invented by Jespersen.

The **Basic English** invented by Ogden which contains eight hundred basic words was recently proposed. However, it is still English, and it can not be accepted.

What is FRATER? It comes from Latin, meaning brother. From the word, **frater**, one can have **fraternal** (adjective), **fraternally** (adverb), **fraternity**, (abstract noun), and **fraternize** (verb). It is according to the inventor "based on Latin and Greek roots of international currency (and) is designed with due regard to needs of the Chinese, Japanese and other non-Aryan speech-communities." Further, he said: "Frater is usable as an efficient instrument of communication in everyday life and technical discus-

sion." The inventor chose FRATER to foster brotherhood among men. It should be the language of the great brotherhood of mankind.

Is FRATER easy to learn? Again, according to the inventor, it is. "It is easy to learn whatever the mother tongue of the beginner may be. The memory of the beginner has something to bite on thanks to the mnemonic method used in the Frater lexicon." "To learn, to read, to write and to speak it fluently, it would take an educated man three months and a plain man six months."

This writer happened to borrow a copy of FRATER from a friend, Mr. Ernesto C. Santos, to whom it was sent by the inventor as a complimentary copy. After going over its pages for one evening, this writer agrees with the inventor. He also believes that it is easy for Filipinos to learn for it has some qualities of our own languages. Chirino said that Tagalog has the qualities of Latin and Greek consequently FRATER must necessarily have affinities with Tagalog and other Philippine languages like Visayan, Iloko, and Pampango. This writer can speak and write both Tagalog and Visayan and is dabbling with Iloko and Pampango grammars. He can, therefore, speak with some weight when he agrees with the inventor that FRATER is easy to learn. In an evening, he was able to grasp the fundamentals of this new universal language. He also believes that others can do likewise.

Why is it easy to learn FRATER? It is a very simple language. It has no articles, no verb conjugations, no number, no mood, no person, no tense, and no ticklish prepositions that give headaches to grammarians, and the declension of pronouns is very simple. It is purely phonetical — it is spoken as written and written as spoken. The vocabulary approximates 1500 words and it is believed that they are not hard to memorize, for according to the inventor, it is mnemonics. To grasp the grammatical elements fully, one week for a studious and serious student will be sufficient, especially so if he is interested in languages. All parts of speech are based on the same root-words. Cecilio Lopez, author of *Manual of National Language* points out that the so-called "parts of speech" in the National Language may

be divided only into three: root-words, affixes, and particles. The same is claimed by Mons. Manuel Yap in his book, *Ang Atong Dilang Bisaya*. FRATER is, just like the Tagalog or Visayan with the exception that it does not use affixes. The Philippine languages use affixes hence they are called agglutinative languages. FRATER is not agglutinative although it uses combination of words, or stems, or particles. It is, therefore, much simpler than Philippine languages.

To initiate the reader into its grammatical elements, the declension of personal pronouns is hereby presented:

Singular	Plural	English	Equivalent
mi	mis	I	we
ni	nis	you	you
ili	ilis	she, he, it	they

To form the plural, just add *s* to the singular. The same forms are used in the nominative and objective cases. In the possessive case, the particle *OT* is used before the pronoun. *OT* is equivalent to *OF*.

#### Example

#### FRATER

#### English

Frater mi es beni, ot ni je. My brother is happy, yours too.

Mine is *ot mi*, yours is *ot ni*, and his, hers, its is *ot ili*. Used as a pronominal adjective, the pronoun follows the noun. *Frater mi* is *Brother my*. (In Tagalog: *Kapatid ko*. In Visayan: *Igsuon ko*.)

What about the verbs? The verbs have tenses but no conjugation, no number, no person and apparently no mood. It has voice, though.

The four tenses of the verbs are: past, present (apparently progressive, like Tagalog and Visayan) and future. The conditional or subjunctive is termed *probable*. To denote tense or time, one simply uses modifiers: *PAS* for past tense, *FUTUR* for the future tense, *INTEM* for present tense, and *PROBABLE* for probably or conditionally. So, there are no perfect tenses. Really, what are perfect tenses for, anyhow? My Chinese friend has good reasons for saying that we can simply say in Tagalog: *Ako kain ngayon, ako kain bukas, ako kain kahapon* or in Visayan: *Ako kaon karon, ako kaon ugma, ako kaon kagahapon*. Which in English is simply: I eat today, I eat tomorrow, I eat yesterday. What it meant is perfectly understandable. So, why complicate languages?

Similarly in Frater, the following examples show how easy it is:

#### Present

FRATER — ENGLISH		FRATER — ENGLISH	
Singular		Plural	
Mi ide. I think.		Mis ide. We think.	
Ni ide. You think.		Nis ide. You think.	
Ili ide. He (she, it) thinks.		Ilis ide. They think.	

#### Past

Mi ide pas. I thought.		Mis ide pas. We thought.	
Ni ide pas. You thought.		Nis ide pas. You thought.	
Ili ide pas. He thought.		Ilis ide pas. They thought.	

#### Future

Mi ide futur. I will think.		Mis ide futur. We will think.	
Ni ide futur. You will think.		Nis ide futur. You will think.	
Ili ide futur. He will think.		Ilis ide futur. They will think.	

All root-words are supposed to be in the present tense. *INTEM* suggests present progressive. *INTEM* is clearly a combination of *in time* or *in tempo* or *en tiempo*. *Tempo* is syncopated.

Asking questions is like or can be like Tagalog construction:

*Tem es kia?* What time is it? Tagalog: (Ang) *Panahon ay ano?* or *Oras ay ano?* *Tem* is time, *es* is is, and *kia* is what. Literally: Time is what? (Usual Tagalog: *Ano ang oras?*)

Is the vocabulary of FRATER rich? It seems so. To show how easily English can be translated into it, let us have the following passages:

The opening or the preamble of the Charter of the United Nations is hereby translated:

#### English

We, the people of the United Nations, Determined

#### FRATER

Mis, demomulti ot Nasion Uni, Fisa

To save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our life-time has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and...

Protek generasion future ot benine batal, na porta pas bi tem in bio ot mis benine logone a antrop, e...

Let us have a passage: And thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; this is the first commandment.

E ni obliga filo Dio ni kon kardi tute ot ni, e kon ide tuta ot ni, e kon forse tuta ot ni: dis es lega uni.

Well, PHAM XUAN THAI has something in his book which if adopted by us may yet solve the greatest language problem of mankind and that is to have a universal language to be invented from a dead language, Latin, and ancient Greek.