

- This interesting and sound article in favor of the use of English in the higher schools in the Philippines deserves the attention of educators and leaders.

## A BRIEF FOR ENGLISH IN PHILIPPINE EDUCATION

Let us assume for the sake of argument that Pilipino can be an effective medium of instruction for high school and college; the next question is: "Who are the great scholars who are going to translate all the great classics and all the technical books into Pilipino?" We already stated that the INL couldn't even translate the instruction on how to plant seedless watermelons. Only recently Mr. Romeo Vertutio translated Dr. Zhivago into Tagalog. This is a very commendable task. But let us not kid ourselves. Vertutio's translation is not genuine. Why? Because he translated the English version of Zhivago. So it is actually a translation of a translation. Translation, they say, is treason. So to translate from a translation is compounding a felony. The same is true of Rufino Alejandro's Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam.

It was not translated from the original Persian, but from the English translation of Fitzgerald. The Tagalog version of the Bible was also executed in the same way — not from the original Hebrew and Greek, but from an English translation.

What about science? Our educational authorities since time immemorable have been highly concerned with the population explosion problem. Now we have another explosion — the information explosion. It is no longer valid to simply say that we live in the Atomic Age. For we also live in the Cybernetic Age, the Space Age, and the DNA Age. Of all the scientists that existed since Man began, 90 per cent are alive today! The other ten per cent are spread back as far as 100,000 years. The great achievements of science were made in the

past 50 years — notably during the past 20. Scientific knowledge is doubling every 10 years! One half of the vocabulary of all advanced languages consist of scientific terms. There are no less than 70,000 scholarly journals published regularly! If placed on top of one another, it would be 500 meters high. Russia has had to employ 26,000 translators just to keep up with American research.

The Lupon sa Agham (Committee on Science) has reportedly completed a 6,000-word "English-Pilipino Integrated Science Vocabulary" — but even this is a mere drop in the bucket. Not to mention the fact that compiling words is one thing. Getting them accepted and understood is another. And the real question is: Can they ever hope to cope with the tremendous amount of translation that would be necessary? We will repeat: Scientific knowledge is doubling every decade! By the time a translator has finished a book, it may be obsolete.

In this aspect, we Filipinos are fortunate because we have the English language already established as

our medium of instruction. The Philippines today is either the third or fourth largest English-speaking nation in the world. Next to Chinese, English is the most spoken language on earth. But Chinese is concentrated only in Eastern Asia. English is spoken all over the globe. It is in fact the closest thing to an international language that the world has ever known. English today is the leading scientific tongue. Even the Japanese scientists who traditionally had employed German as a medical language are now substituting it with English. Are we going to forego this tremendous advantage? And if so, what advantage would we get? It seems to us that a shift from English to Pilipino in our school system would be the greatest leap backward that we could make. It would be tantamount to committing national suicide because it has been already established that an economically underdeveloped country is nothing else but a scientifically underdeveloped nation. — *By Alejandro Roces in Sunday Chronicle, June 16, 1968.*