

CLASSICAL STUDIES AND HIGHER EDUCATION*

Daniel Pierlot

* The speech of Mr. Daniel Pierlot delivered at the Faculty of Arts on the occasion of its 10th anniversary. It is printed on his permission

When I was invited to deliver a speech on the teaching of classical languages in European Universities, I wonder whether this was a joke or a trap. In some respects, it might indeed be ridiculous to try to interest Thai students and teachers in the teaching, thousands of miles away, of languages extinct for centuries now. Such a speech might also be interpreted, since the speaker is or was teacher of Latin and Greek, as an endeavour to launch the teaching of these languages in Thailand. I really never had such an idea.

However, I was tempted . . . Not only because a comparative research on educational systems may be a useful activity in providing new ideas and in initiating a review of what is going on in any country: educational systems, like anything else, can only be fully understood by way of comparison. But also, since I deeply believe that the role of any educational system can't be limited to training people to respond to the immediate and internal needs of a country (even if this objective is indeed a major one), the universities should also train people to other functions than the mere running and planning of their countries' activities.

And the learning of extinct languages may be one of the means of reaching this objective.

One cannot understand the importance given to classical studies in the higher education of the major European countries without some information on the origins of the Universities.

This word itself is derived from Latin "*universitas*", meaning in Middle Age Latin, community. The official title of the first university founded in France is "*Universitas Magistrorum et Scholarium Parisiensium*", that is the "*Community of Paris Teachers and Students*." Such communities were self-governed and excepted in many ways from the common laws and rules. But the word '*universitas*' also points to a universal knowledge and to the fact that the recruitment of the *universitas* was not restricted to the citizens of their host city or country.

The founding of the universities is one of the marking features of the late Middle Ages. The first of them in Bologna, Italy, dates back to the late 12th century, the University of Valence, Spain, was created in 1209, followed by Oxford, England 1214, and Paris 1215. About forty of them were disseminated in Italy,

Spain, France and England at the end of the 15th century and fifteen more in Northern and Eastern Europe.

Why Latin was so important in these Universities can now be explained: Latin was, at this time, the medium of instruction, and in fact, everything written was written in Latin in-so-far as the major subject matters are concerned. Other languages, such as regional Italian or French languages were used in poetry and novels, but not in sciences, laws, nor of course, philosophy and religion. It is only during the late 13th century that some legal documents and private correspondence began to be written in French, and only during the 14th century that French language was used for judiciary purposes. It was also during the 14th century that some Latin books were translated into English.

Another reason to select Latin as a medium of instruction was that both teachers and students had a wide variety of mother languages, and that the linguistic unity of the major states was far from being completed. Up to this century, most Italians would only speak and write their local dialect, France was divided into the northern dialects and the southern dialects, and so on. Whenever a famous professor would run into trouble with the bishop, the lord, or the local community of one city, he would move away to another university, followed by his students. The same would sometimes happen to the university itself, and the whole community would then move to another location and therefore would find

itself in another linguistic area.

The students themselves were organised into smaller communities called "nations" more or less on a linguistic basis. But all relations between these groups had to be conducted in latin.

Learning Latin therefore had to be a first and major step in entering the educational system. In fact the faculty of arts was the basis of the university.

The teaching of Greek was a new feature in the universities' curriculum when it was introduced, some time during the 15th century in Italy, and later on in the rest of Europe. Although it could have been an entirely different subject, the fact is that it remained closely linked to Latin in the "Classical stream" of studies. Initially the study of Greek was promoted by scholars who wanted to get a better knowledge of the Holy Bible, which was translated from Hebrew to Greek (with the exception of those parts originally written in Greek) and from Greek to Latin. But the discovery of the ancient Greek literature, fine arts and civilization, until then known only through the Arabs, brought about major changes in the western culture.

When secondary schools were developed, mainly by religious orders, back in the 17th century, Latin and Greek remained the basic subject matters. Napoleon and later the Third Republic developed a scientific stream, but left the classical one untouched.

This historical background is important to understanding why Latin and Greek were, in the first place, taken up

as major subject matters in European universities. But the fact that Latin, back in the fourteenth century was the medium of instruction, does not in itself explain why Latin was still so important in the curriculum only 20 year ago. And the same goes for Greek.

It is a fact, (which in a young and dynamic university might be unknown, but is bound to appear in older institutions) that universities are very traditional. Part of this is common to all organizations, which tend to keep up all the structures, programmes and activities successfully initiated at earlier times, even when they prove to be ill-adjusted and inefficient when confronting a new situation. Part of this is, of course, related to one of the functions of the universities, which is to preserve and to pass on to new generations the knowledge of the past, so that they are more interested in the past than in the future or even the present.

Moreover, Latin, and to a lesser measure Greek, were still very much in use in Europe until the 18th century. Latin was still the language of diplomacy together with French. It was also the international language of science and most of the research work was published in Latin. Physicians used Latin, partly because it was dignified, partly because their patients found it difficult to understand a very technical discussion in what is called back-kitchen Latin "*Latin de cuisine*." Kings, scientists, lawyers, from all over Europe used Latin or Greek as a means of communication among them-

selves. In central and eastern Europe, Latin was the common language of many nations, and one Parliament went on using Latin for all official purposes, until about 1850.

Another important cause for the permanence of Latin was the Roman Catholic Church. Until Vatican II, Latin was the official language of the Catholic church and used in all ceremonies. Although universities were no longer the training institutions for priests, Latin remained a language which was heard, if not understood, by a majority of Europeans every Sunday.

However, after the World War II, the teaching of Latin and Greek, especially in secondary schools, came under heavy attack.

This was a time when the problems of rebuilding the European countries after the war and of setting up a modern industrial system were given absolute priority. The need for scientists, engineers, technicians was enormous. The war had been won by sophisticated equipment and weaponry, by penicillin, by scientific research. It had been lost by a country which had been deprived of its best scientists by emigration, and won by the country to which these scientists immigrated. The feeling that development, progress, independence, relied on scientific and technical strength emerged. Of course, the faith in indefinite progress generated by science was not new in Europe, and had slowly developed all through the 19th century, but it was not the same kind of science. People such as Victor Hugo

believed that science was the way to improve the life of people, by reducing their workload, curing the body and enlightening the mind. After the World War II, science was geared to producing more and more sophisticated equipment and products at lower costs, to promote economic strength and influence. The concept of development based on industries and external trade was emerging, and countries began to be listed as developed or under-developed (later as developing).

While this major change in the state of mind of most people was occurring, along with many other changes, of course, the educational system remained, more or less, exactly what it had been before the war, especially in France, but also in England and Italy. Due to its former evolution, Germany had already included technical and scientific medium level training in its system.

In fact, in most European countries, most students still took Latin, and to a lesser degree Greek, as subject matters (best students were streamed to the classical sections.) In France for example, there were three streams: the classical one, with Greek and Latin, a semi-classical one with Latin only, and a "modern" one, in which the major subject matters were mathematics and physics. But the "modern" stream was despised, not only because the curriculum was thought incomplete, but also because the weaker students, who could not cope with Latin, would have to follow this "last chance stream". There was, of course, high level

scientific and technical training in the upper secondary classes, in universities and especially in "*grandes écoles*", specialized institutions of international prestige. But a majority of the students who passed successfully the competitive entrance examination to these institutes had a very sound background in Latin, and even in Greek.

The people who criticized this system mainly stated that the students were losing a lot of time in the study of subject matter which was quite useless for their advanced training and their professional lives; that the prestige of the classical stream was seducing the best students away from mathematics and physics; that at the university level, departments involved in literature, languages, law, were overflowing with students, while the faculties of science were not able to recruit a sufficient number of students to provide for the expected needs of the country.

Another factor was of considerable importance. During the second part of the 18th century, the European countries had developed a network of primary level education so impressive that the rate of literacy in many countries exceeded 95%. One of the reasons why primary education had been developed was the Industrial Revolution, which created a need for a huge numbers of workers, with basic skills in reading, writing and arithmetic, the famous "*three R's*." During the 1950's the second industrial revolution, triggered by the progress of techniques and the rebuilding of Europe after the

war, was based on an extensive use of machines, which had to be maintained by engineers and technicians. Due to this fact, and to the urge for a better life in the lower classes, the number of students entering the secondary school system increased regularly, until it was decided that education would be compulsory from the age of 6 to the age of 16. This trend brought into the secondary school system a huge number of students coming from families, which, heretofore, had not participated in the "bourgeois" culture. The French literature, the origins of our arts and culture, even the familiarity with the upper classes' language, were not part of their breeding, and of no interest to them. While motivation was decreasing, the number of students was increasing, and newly recruited teachers, whose training was hurriedly acquired, found it more and more difficult to maintain a proper level of knowledge.

Consequently, the universities suffered from this situation: while the few "*grandes écoles*" specializing in teacher training (Ecole Normale Supérieure) attracted the best individuals by means of increasingly difficult competitive examinations, the universities had difficulty accomodating previously unseen numbers of students in the faculties of art. Very soon it appeared that the graduates of these faculties were unable to find jobs matching their qualifications. There were as yet no real problems of unemployment, but a number of graduates had to undergo additional training in fields quite different from their academic background, or resort

to underpaid positions for which they were over-qualified.

All this, added to the general problems of the students situation in society, was felt all through western Europe. England was less concerned with university problems, since higher education was not free. In Germany a numerous classes limited the number of students.

However, on the whole, the need for reform was obvious, and the teaching of classical languages appeared as a major barrier to such reform. Late in the 1960's, European countries, under pressure, had to bring major changes to their educational systems.

Nowadays, classical studies have lost their prestige. In the French secondary schools, while all students are exposed to Latin during a few hours, it is no longer compulsory, and the number of learners has dropped dramatically. There are but a few thousand students taking Greek as an optional subject. The higher education institutes still train teachers in classical studies, meaning French, Latin and Greek languages and literature, and there are still many more candidates than positions available each year. Competitive examinations for these teachers positions are still quite selective. The mathematics and physics streams in secondary school attract the best students, followed by economics and biology. The situation is more or less the same in other countries and the trends are similar.

I regret that this historical background was so long but I deem it necessary so that you can understand how

important the classical languages were in European educational systems until a few years ago and also why they were given a tremendous amount of attention.

I shall now briefly describe what was in fact taught, i.e., the contents of the curriculum and the way it was taught the methodology.

Any language is indeed a very intricate and complex reality. It has a history, and undergoes deep and extensive changes while it is in use; it makes use of a number of elements, such as sounds, letters, words, structures; it conveys ideas; it is also used for “*artistic*” purposes, what is called literature.

Greek was a language or more precisely a variety of languages used from the beginning of the 2nd millenium B.C. in the eastern part of the Mediterranean. While the major location of Greek speaking people were the coasts of Asia Minor, Greece itself and the islands, Greek was also in use at different times all around the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. One specific feature of Greek is that it is not an extinct language. After being the official language of the Byzantine Empire for about one thousand years, until 1431, it was and still is used in Greece. However, the changes in the language are such that modern Greek is quite different from ancient Greek.

Latin was one of the languages spoken in southern and central Italy at the beginning of the first millenium B.C. Its extension was due to the fact that it was the language of Rome and of the Roman Empire. Thus Latin came to be

in use in all southern and middle Europe, in North Africa, and even in the British Islands. From the 3rd century A.D., the grip of Roman citizens (and people having Latin as a mother language) on the Empire began to weaken, and increasing number of natives from Germany, Spain, France, Greece, North Africa, were entrusted with responsibilities in the Empire. This was the beginning of the so-called Middle Ages, where the common language throughout Europe was a very simplified Latin (*Lingua Franca*). Latin was also the official language of the Church. It is this *lingua Franca*, which gave birth to some of the southern European languages: Spanish, French, Italian, Romanian, etc.

It is easy to understand that teaching all the Greek dialects, and the different stages of Greek and Latin throughout their history would be an impossible task. Not only because of the magnitude of the subject matter, but also because some parts of the history of these languages is scarcely represented by any texts at all.

Classical Latin is easy to define: it is the literary/philosophical language of Rome, in the first century B.C. and the first century A.D. A few comedies in “*early Latin*”, a few texts in “*posterior Latin*” were also included in the curriculum of the universities.

Classical Greek is a bit more difficult to define. Mainly it is the language written in Athens, one of the Greek cities, around the 5th century B.C. but it also includes Homer, a partly mythical poet,

whose works, until then unwritten, were collected in Athens in the 6th century B.C. Some texts of later periods, provided they were neo-classical, were also explained.

Let us say, by way of comparison, that if French were taught in the same way nowadays, students would be quite familiar with 17th century literature, and exposed to some 18th century literature, while students in England would know only the Elizabethans, and students in Germany the 19th century. Literature of earlier or later periods would be quite difficult to read and understand, since the language and the literary patterns would be so different.

The teaching focused primarily on grammar, then on translation, then on literary comments.

To be quite clear, I would like to list what was not taught. Since classical Greek and Latin are now extinct languages, spoken Greek or Latin were not supposed to be understood except for a few quotations which it was still fashionable to use on some occasions. Obviously one was not supposed to speak Greek and Latin. Of course one could read, but the way French students used to read Latin was quite different from one school to another, and still more different from the way German students pronounced it. The Church used an Italianized pronunciation, some teachers used the traditional French value for the letters, and others a different system, which was called "*re-constituted*". As a result the same word

√

"ecce" could be rendered as εΤσε
εΚσε
or εΚΚε

This sounds very confusing but all the students and the teachers had their books open on their tables, so that it was really unimportant. Germans used to mark the tonic accent which is of utmost importance in every Latin word, but neither the French nor the English nor the Italians marked accents. The same kinds of differences occurred in reading Greek.

It may look odd but in the 1950's or 1960's the students were not really supposed to know the vocabulary, even the basic one. This was not true in the 19th or early 20th centuries, but even then a student would not have been expected to translate a Latin or a Greek text without an extensive use of the dictionary. They were not supposed to use even the words they knew without looking into the dictionary for the proper use by the best classical authors. It was only in highly specialized training that a running translation from Latin or Greek was supposed to be part of the curriculum.

Until late in the 19th century students, even at the secondary level, were able to write Latin prose and verse. I have to admit that it was usually quite a poor example of literary production even when signed Victor Hugo or Arthur Rimbaud. However, I am not sure that this was the main reason for discontinuing such training.

As a matter of fact, I have to confess that while western European students

were quite unable to write in Latin, their eastern counterparts were very good at it. In the late 1950's one of my friends used to typewrite his letters to me on aerogramms, expressing himself in very classical Latin verse. I am ashamed to say that I never tried to answer in the same way!

So, what was the real content of the teaching? Latin and Greek are both languages in which most words are basically composed of a stem and one or two suffixes. The suffix will relate to the number and the grammatical function in the sentence, to the person, the number, the mode, the tense and the voice if it is a noun. Let us take an example in Latin of a noun.

homo hominem homines homini
homine

homines, homines, hominum homi-
nibus hominibus

The same thing happens for adjectives:

in Greek for a verb:

λυω λυμψ λυδμψ

λυψψ

λυεΐψ

έλυσην

Obviously, language of this nature requires special attention. First there are a seemingly indefinite number of forms to be learned. Of course, there are paradigms, i.e., a few words which have to be perfectly known, since a huge majority of the others would follow exactly the same pattern. Once you know one, all

those of the same pattern are known. The catch is that when a word appears, you have to relate it to the right stem, so that you can infer which from is appearing and its function. It is not always easy especially in Greek.

Another catch is that as you noticed in my examples some forms are exactly the same while their meaning is quite different. You have to find out which function is needed in the sentence to be able to understand. Greek is particularly tricky since a number of forms differ, in their written form, by only one detail—an accent iota or breathing (marking something like the English “h”), but not pronounced, at least not in the French tradition: η̂ η̄ η̃ η̇ are very different words.

I shall not say much about the syntax, meaning the way to arrange sentences. You all know that a Thai and an English sentence follow different patterns. Since Latin and Greek are Indo-European languages they are not really without relationship with those used in French or German. The main difficulties arise from the fact that Latin is rather poor, and uses only a very limited number of words and sentence patterns, with very strict constraints, especially in the classical period; while Greek has a huge number of words (many more than French or English) and is very prone to intricate sentence patterns.

All this grammar was summarized in rules and tables and had to be learnt by heart.

The objective of all this was for the students to be able to translate from and to French for example. A few eccentric teachers even tried to have their students translate from Greek to Latin and I must confess I myself tried a few times to torture my students with this exercise. I remember they were quite happy when I gave up. The texts translated were all literature: war memoirs, political and speeches, history books, philosophical treatises, poetry, especially the epics. Since the civilization of Rome and Athens were not studied at the same time, the students had the impression that these ancient peoples spent most of their time on war, court proceedings and political bickering—very quarrelsome people indeed.

I mentioned that grammar had mainly to be learnt by heart. The major tasks in translation were by way of homework and oral translation in the classroom, which was prepared at home and followed by comments on the text—mainly of grammatical and literary interest. There was a lot of long and tedious homework of course, since you had to use dictionaries all the time. One of my secondary school teachers used to require us to learn Latin and Greek texts, mainly poetry, by heart. He was not popular...

Such was the system, briefly explained. In all fairness I must add that in universities, students reading for a BA in classical languages had to take classical languages had to take classical philology as a compulsory subject. This was a history of Latin and Greek back to their common origin, Indo-European. This

Indo-European source generated major European languages including the German family and also Sanskrit and some of the languages spoken in India. Since it was never written its words and patterns had to be derived from languages we know.

Additional note has to be made on the MA level and doctoral degrees which usually consisted in the publication of an ancient book, of which the original form was reconstructed from manuscripts and earlier faulty publications.

Such was, and as far as I know still is, the curriculum in classical languages. When it came under attack my colleagues and even a few others came out in defence of the teaching of ancient languages.

I shall briefly sum up their arguments before trying to assess their value. I wish to say that on that issue I was in favour of a deep reform of the educational system and was not at all sorry when such a reform happened. I have mentioned above that the teaching of classical languages after the World War II was already deteriorating. After a few years it was really so bad that getting rid of it became a necessity, especially in secondary schools. I shall try to explain why. At the same time I shall try to explain why such a training, which is seemingly absurd, produced not so bad results, provided certain conditions and constraints were respected.

What did the self proclaimed advocates say in defence of Latin (which was the main defendant) and of Greek (little more than an accomplice)?

The major argument was that it was

impossible to have a truly deep knowledge of French without having a sound knowledge of Latin, and Greek too, if possible. The French language not only originated from Latin, since the old inhabitants of our country switched from their native language to Latin during the Roman empire, but at various times, has been enriched with words, structures, sentence patterns, "borrowed" from Latin or Greek. Our own classical writers were very familiar with Latin and Greek and were influenced by both of these languages. Even in science and technology a majority of the words are still borrowed from Latin and Greek—or composed from their stems.

Another argument is that all our culture is based on the Latin and Greek cultures. Not only are the arts and literature derived, up to the 19th century, from what is left of Latin and Greek artifacts and books, but mathematics and medicine also originated in Greece, and were transmitted back to Europeans by the Arabs around the 15th century. Greeks founded astronomy, geography, history. Their philosophers are still very important. Even linguistics, pedagogy were discussed by the ancients. Discontinuing the study of their languages would not only endanger their inheritance, but it would leave our own culture rootless, and bar us from a true understanding of our history as Europeans.

The value of learning these extinct languages for the training of young people is important. The objectives of the students in learning them is not just a

materialistic one—you cannot expect them to be useful in daily life—and, short of becoming a teacher, you cannot hope to make money with them. You learn them just because you want to be more than an engineer, a doctor or a lawyer. You learn them because you feel the need to understand exactly how our society emerged, how it was built, destroyed, and built again, because you do not want to be rootless, cultureless. Furthermore, a close attention to language is a priceless experience, not only in grasping global meanings, but also in understanding how the language and the human mind are working, and how really to grasp the minds of great men.

The move to substitute mathematics and exact sciences for classical languages will deprive education of a precious human dimension. Ancients may be far away but they are not abstractions. By learning their languages and studying their works the student gets close to the thinking, loving, hating and thinking of people.

As you well know, these arguments did not convince the law makers and educational planners. It is true that French is derived from Latin, but not really from that Latin which was taught in schools and universities under the name of "classical Latin". Of course, an important number of words and patterns have been taken from Latin, especially in professional specialized language, but the same can be said of every language in the western world. The basic features of our language are derived "naturally" from the Latin

in use in our country for military and administrative purposes during the Roman empire. But everybody knows that war is not fought by writers and poets, and that the kind of language used in barracks has little to do with the elegant speech in use in the best circles of society. What happened to English, which developed into pidgin all the world around, happened centuries before to Latin in Europe. To make it clear let us take an example: tête (head) is derived not from caput, but from testa: broken part of a jar and cheval (horse) from caballus: a very bad horse. The verbal system of Latin, too intricate for our ancestors, was torn to pieces and eventually replaced, bit by bit, by our system of tenses, which is one of the most complex and delicate ever known. It has in fact a very close relationship with spoken Latin, with the kind of language a Roman soldier would have used to give orders to a native. And to worsen the situation, the Roman soldier would (most probably) not be a native speaker of Latin, but a German or Spaniard.

A language, at any given time of its history, is a system, meaning that the inter-relationships of its various components are sufficient to produce communication and transmit a message. Past developments, the origins of the language, may explain why the components are such and such and when such a relation emerged, but they cannot be of interest to the language users. What they need is to know the components and how the systems works.

Another point is that contemporary

French differs widely from the one in use for literary purposes back in the 16th or 17th century. If the role of the universities and schools is now expanding to the training of professionals other than teachers and high level scientists, scholars and officials, a perfect knowledge of this classical French is no longer a must. It is true of course that many words used by professionals come from a Latin/Greek origin, but what a scientist is interested in is not that microscope is derived from μικρος and σκοπεῖν, he wants to know how to use the instrument.

It is true that our culture is based on its Latin and Greek inheritance. But the knowledge of the language is not necessary, at least for most people, to familiarize them with these classical cultures. Translations, museums, scattered all over the country, the extensive use of movie TV broadcasts provides an easier and more effective access to the past and takes less time. You know more about Greek architecture, if you are interested in it, after 15 days in Greece than after six years of studying the language.

Education in modern times has to be as effective and economical as possible. Learning extinct languages is a terrible waste of time since similar benefits can be obtained from learning modern languages, and we are short of translators, interpreters, and professionals who can read or speak the languages of their colleagues.

The kind of intellectual training you get from mathematics and the exact sciences, associated with learning modern

languages, is as valuable as the one you draw from learning classical languages.

This approach was indeed very popular, and seemed to be pragmatic and realistic. Furthermore, many people had very bad memories of their Latin and Greek courses. They had been bored, they dropped out, and they felt frustrated because in fact, they felt that being familiar with these languages still carried much prestige.

True to say, a very important reason for discontinuing the classical stream or at least for reducing dramatically its importance was never publicly discussed. It became a very low level course. Since so many students used to enter that stream, it was crowded. The classes included a number of learners who could not see in anyway the point in learning extinct languages. Instead of being a thorough brain training, translation just became some callisthenics with a dictionary, some kind of mental weight lifting.

So, why should one look back with some nostalgia to the times when Latin and Greek were widely and properly taught? Why should so many professionals regret they had no opportunity to learn them, or be so proud they still can read them? Why should this very lecture be given?

To understand this, we may have to raise the question of objectives: What are the objectives of teaching and learning and learning any subject matter, and more precisely a language?

One objective is obviously to be able to communicate through this language and this would most probably be the answer of most people. However, com-

munication is not a simple process, and as you all know, four major abilities are involved in it: the ability to understand the spoken language, the ability to speak this language, the ability to read it, and the ability to write it.

Another objective is to help the learner become acquainted with civilization, the way of life and mode of thinking, the history and fine arts (including literature) of the people who speak that particular language. Of course, this objective can be better achieved through a knowledge of the language than through translations. But, obviously the kind of language to be taught, as well as the competences to be developed, would have to be carefully selected. In this case the language may very well be the language, or one of the languages, formerly used in the country of the learner or important in the building of his own civilization. Or on the contrary, it may be one used only in far away countries.

Another objective can also be found. The emphasis may be not on the language itself, but on the process of learning, and the objective may then be simply that of training the learner's mind. In such a case some communication will be implied, as well as some knowledge of the civilization, but these are not the main issues. For example, reading in one's own language, translations or studies about the civilization concerned is an easier and quicker way of gaining such a knowledge. The teaching of a language, if its objective is to develop and train the students' minds, will focus on those exercises which imply and make use of intellectual abilities, without presupposing any special

knowledge.

This last objective was obviously the one assigned to the teaching of Latin and Greek in western Europe until recently. Almost nobody was able to communicate in these languages, and few of the alumni would ever care to read a book written two or three thousand years earlier. Histories and studies of Rome and ancient Greece were, as they still are, best sellers in their categories. What was really important was the intellectual ability gained through the educating process. Let me try to give a few examples: students were trained to read carefully, to pay attention to the exact meaning of each element in the sentence, not only the words but also the style. In order to write a proper translation they had to try many different phrases in their mother language and in the foreign language, to render as closely as possible not only the meaning but also the process of thought of the original. They learned to write carefully and to balance exactly their phrases and sentences. They were able to memorize a number of complex rules and to make constant use of them. They learned to spend time in so-called disinterested activities, in apparently aimless studies, for a benefit which was not immediately clear or even probable.

This kind of training, which I would like to call "*mind building*", in the same way that some physical exercises and techniques are called "*body building*" is not an aim in itself. It enables those who had the patience to undergo this mind building to use their skills in very different and diverse professional activi-

ties

A dead language, or any language, is not absolutely necessary for this process of mind building, although there is a human touch in a language which does not appear in mathematics for example.

In some ways, one might feel that this objective should not be forgotten when the curriculum for the teaching of a foreign language is drafted. Are the students really going to use the foreign language in their daily life? In their professional activities? How important is it for them to have a first hand knowledge of the civilization, history and literature of a foreign country? Since they will be offered a course in this foreign language, what is the intended benefit, for any of them? And how can we teachers best help them to obtain this benefit? What is important for them, a definite knowledge or the intellectual skills which may be applied in very different fields and to very different activities?

At the beginning of this lecture, I said that my intention was not to promote the teaching of Latin and Greek in Thailand. And I believe you now understand why I felt that nevertheless the topic suggested to me was interesting. I am not professionally concerned with the teaching of the classical languages, but with the teaching of foreign languages, especially in developing countries. But I think the experience we had in Europe with classical languages may provide a basis for opening discussions on the objectives of the teaching of foreign languages. And now, I am ready to hear your questions.

ขอขอบคุณ

บริษัท ยานตรกิจมอเตอร์ จำกัด

ผู้จำหน่ายรถยนต์แลนเซีย

ขอขอบคุณ

คุณสวัสดิ์ ปานเจริญ

ห้างหุ้นส่วนจำกัด เงินทวีกิจ