An Interdisciplinary Approach to College English Education

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1. The Purpose of This Paper

This paper is intended to demonstrate the desirability of an interdisciplinary approach to college English education (specialized and general), taking account of its important role in education in international relations.[1] A substantial portion of our discussion is devoted to the idea of cultural understanding through bilingualism and its relevance to college English education. A brief discussion is also given of an interdisciplinary topic for inclusion in the approach proposed here. This topic is concerned with some historical aspects of American immigration, which is also in large part a story of emigration out of Europe.

2. International Relations through College English Education

College English education has a number of objectives, but they may quite justifiably be summarized in the two categories: *practical* and *cultural* (or, more specifically, *humanistic*).[2] The practical objective is to prepare the student for further study and for his future occupation by imparting to him a practical knowledge of written and spoken English. The cultural objective is to

1. In this paper no discrimination is made between the specialized type of education for English majors (or prospective teachers of English) and the teaching of English as part of general education for the students of every department. The discussion in the following applies to both of these branches of college English education.
2. A discussion emphasizing the humanistic aspect of foreign language teaching in contrast with its practical aspect is found, for example, in Joyaux (1965), pp. 102–105.

produce well-educated citizens. This is the general purpose of education, but from the viewpoint of college English education it needs a little further elaboration. It seems that to be a well-educated citizen in the present internationalistc world requires, among other things, the following intellectual equipment: a full awareness of his role in society and in the world as a whole, and a proper understanding of the community, whether local, national, or international, in which he is expected to play his appropriate part as an intelligent member. An intelligent citizen should have a certain amount of education in international relations.

This education can in part be accomplished by inculcating in the student's mind such attitudes as open-mindedness in considering international affairs, critical thinking for the solution of problems and for the discrimination among values, and a disposition to consider two sides of a question, to consult more than one source, and to listen to more than one commentator (cf. Hadley, 1958, p. 230). Some of these desirable attitudes can be inculcated through the discussion and debate properly conducted and actively participated in by the students of diverse opinions. For the same purpose, the very process of learning a foreign language will be of great value, because it is in itself a process of constantly adapting oneself to a different system of communication, a different set of viewpoints, and, as suggested by the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, even a different set of conceptual patterns.[3]

This approach must of course be complemented by providing the student with a good knowledge of the culture, history, geography, economy, as well as the language and literature of the foreign

3. For the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, see, for example, H. Hoijer, "The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis," in H. Hoijer (ed.), *Language in Culture* (Chicago, 1954), pp. 92–105; F. Fearing, "An Examination of the Conceptions of Benjamin Whorf in the Light of Theories of Perception and Cognition," *ibid.*, pp. 47–81; and several other articles and discussions in the same volume.

nations concerned. An equally important element of this education is a clear and appreciative but at the same time objective and critical comprehension of the cultural heritage of the student's own country. This comprehension can be reinforced by the comparison and contrast with a foreign culture. In view of the growing importance of Japan's role and responsibility in the world community in the 1970's and thereafter, an appropriate amount of education in international relations must be integrated into every branch of education, particularly into college English education.

English is now one of the most widely used means of international communication and understanding. At present and in the future we must not forget the importance of English as a means of communication with people of many different linguistic backgrounds. But to use English in a correct and respectable manner, it is necessary to have some knowledge of the life, ideas, and cultural heritage of the peoples who speak it as their native language. Thus, a certain amount of education in international relations should be incorporated into English education at all levels, the method of presentation being naturally dependent on the student's ability, readiness, and needs.

Before entering college, the student should have acquired sufficient practical skills to absorb and express any worthwhile knowledge through English. It is at the college level that the student is ready enough to be exposed to the original, unsimplified version of English materials dealing with international relations.[4] At this level it is not only practicable but also desirable to concentrate on the achievement of the cultural objective of English

4. On this problem of the student's readiness, Professor S. Ishii expresses the same opinion in his article, "The Cultures of the Englih-speaking Peoples and English Teaching in Japan" (in Japanese), *Journal of English Teaching,* Vol. IV (1971), No. 5, p. 304.

education.

In this connection, we must also take the student's need into consideration. After leaving college, most of the students will take employment in commerce, industry, journalism, education, etc.; and, as time goes on, the so-called "shrinking world" will force their daily transactions, whether in business or private life, to be increasingly international in relation and scope. At the present time and in the future, each student, when leaving college, must be well prepared to cope with this situation successfully. Though the rapidly changing world will oblige him to continue to educate or re-educate himself on his own or otherwise over his lifetime, the English education which he receives at college is an essential part of the "finish" of his sixteen-year formal school education. It legitimately constitutes the core of his education in the humanities and is to be the basis of his life-long education for effective adaptation to the highly internationalized world in the future. As college English teachers we must assume greater responsibility for the extent and depth of our student's preparedness for his future participation and involvement in the international community as well as his practical command of written and spoken English.

3. An Interdisciplinary Approach to Cultural Understanding

As stated before, college English education has two main objectives: practical and cultural. The practical objective is to develop the student's linguistic skills in English. The cultural objective is at least in part to provide the student with a set of well chosen data on the basis of which he can build up his own correct image of the international community he is to take part in. The choice of data should be based on justifiable assumptions of the student's future needs in the "shrinking world," and the data should

be organized around a wide range of such topics as can give him some useful guidance to cope with his future problems in the international community. To be accepted by the international community, we must first of all shake ourselves free from the insularism which is often mentioned as one of our national characteristics. To help overcome this insularism is one of our duties as college English teachers, for we are presumed to have a broader international outlook than the majority of monolingual people.

Every intellectual person who wishes to participate in the international community will be required to develop a good understanding of foreign cultures through the medium of at least one or more foreign languages. If the intellectual background of a monolingual person is at least in part made up of knowledge acquired through his native language about philosophy, art, economy, politics, etc., the intellectual background of a bilingual person should also be in part made up of knowledge about these subjects acquired through not only his native language but also the foreign language he has been learning. It is a justifiable assumption that the intellectual background of a bilingual person should contain a substantial body of factual knowledge about the life, ideas, and society of the speakers of the target language as well as a good command of the language. It would not be too much to say that to make our students "culturally bilingual" in this sense is the very *raison d'être* of our profession as college English teachers. We must educate our students in such a way as to enable them to graduate with substantial knowledge about a sufficiently wide range of subjects acquired and expressible through the medium of English. This objective necessitates an interdisciplinary approach.

At the college level, where the student can be considered to be ready to absorb much of the content of original English materials,

what is discussed in his textbooks is as important as or probably more important than the linguistic skills in which he is trained. The importance of practical skills in English has been advocated and has attracted much attention. But the content of English textbooks does not seem to have been given as much attention. It is often the case that the textbook is chosen on the basis of the instructor's interests or literary taste. This may not necessarily be an objectionable practice, provided his interests extend over a reasonably wide range, and the student is taught by more than one instructor. However, we must endeavor to eliminate any undesirable bias from our curriculum. In view of the importance of the textbook as a source and store of information, all possible contrivances should be resorted to for incorporating a well organized set of coherent and worthwhile modern topics into each of our textbooks.

Recently, several textbooks have become available which are edited on such principles, e.g., *Readings Now* (ed. by N. Shumuta, Kenkyusha) and *Advanced Reading and Writing,* Vols. 1 and 2 (Bunri-Shoin). Each of them contains a selection of articles on an extensive range of modern topics. In such a textbook, there has to be sufficient coherence between the topics of articles. It will be very inspiring and conducive to the satisfaction of the student's appetite for knowledge if each textbook keeps to a clearly defined major theme in international relations and discusses it in a series of related and logically sequenced articles. Otherwise, the textbook will tend to become a mere medley of incoherent bits and pieces of information transmitted through English.

It is not necessary that every textbook contain diverse types of materials, for example, from a literary essay to a scientific exposition to a presidential address on pollution problems. The college student who studies English as the "first foreign language"

is required to attend at least four or more different English classes and will thus read four or more different textbooks. Assuming that he attends four classes A, B, C, and D, and that there is enough cooperation among the staff members of the English department, we can make such an arrangement as the following: Class A is to be organized around current affairs, Class B around a certain major theme in the humanities, Class C around a certain major theme in social science, and Class D around a certain major theme in natural science; the themes in B, C, and D will correspond to the three main divisions of general education in colleges. However, the themes in our English classes do not need to be based on the traditionally fixed disciplines. Our curriculum should be organized around any major theme that is expected to make a positive contribution to our student's successful adaptation to the international community which will be changing very rapidly in the future.[5] Themes like "The Generation Gap in the United States," "Pollution Problems in the United States and Japan," and "International Relations in the Post-Industrialized World" would be helpful for this purpose.

There may be an opinion that factual information of these themes are easily available and can better be provided through the medium of articles, books, and other materials written in Japanese. Valuable knowledge about Western civilization, for example, can be obtained through university courses conducted in Japanese. And actually many students will find this approach easier and more congenial to their receptive capability than the struggle to derive a substantial piece of information from English materials. But this is a "monolingual knowledge," which is acquired through

5. In this connection, we would have to keep in mind the futurist A. Toffler's comment that "nothing should be included in a required curriculum unless it can be strongly justified in terms of the future." Toffler, *Future Shock* (Bantam Book, 1971), p. 409.

a monolingual medium. Monolingual knowledge, however extensive and deep, will not avail in international communication, because its possessor is usually unable to share it with anybody except through his native language.

Even factual knowledge which we have acquired about certain subjects through the medium of Japanese cannot be readily or adequately communicated through English, unless we have familiarized ourselves not only with the technical terms and idioms but also with the specific ways in which the native speakers of English organize their knowledge about each of these subjects. To learn these ways, we must be exposed to English materials dealing with a variety of subjects. Otherwise, our communication capacity will be very much limited. For instance, an English major who has had enough of the struggle with Shakespeare, Milton, Keats, Scott, or Hawthorne but has not been exposed to a sufficient amount of modern English materials on other topics will not feel at home when trying to read a modern scientific exposition for lay readers. This will be the case even if he has some scientific background acquired through Japanese materials; because the difficulty involved here is partly a matter of difference in language itself. On the other hand, a biology major who is capable of deriving needed information from technical journals in English may not necessarily have enough competence to appreciate the appealing power of the inaugural address by John F. Kennedy. It is our duty as college English teachers to guide and assist our students to obtain a general acquaintance, through English, with a sufficiently wide range of subjects, and thus to prepare them to cope with a number of possible and probable situations. As it is necessary to acquire many-sided knowledge through our native language, so is it to acquire many-sided knowledge through our second language: English.

This objective calls upon us to familiarize our student with reasonably diverse types of modern English materials on a variety of topics, integrating such peripheral but relevant subjects as history, economy, and science, into our English instruction. This is an imposing task upon us teachers, and "in an age of specialization due to accumulated factual knowledge such a stand would seem anachronistic and, for many, academically unsound" (Lewald. 1968, pp. 308-309). Neither do we deny the possibility that "any oversimplification or shortcut attempted in the presentation of a foreign culture to our language students will be scrutinized severely . . . by professionals armed with an overwhelming array of resources in the field" (*ibid.*, p. 309). But we are competent enough in English, which is a very effective means of understanding and interpreting foreign cultures, especially the cultures of English-speaking nations. It is our duty to improve our own cultural understanding as well as our student's. We should utilize our competence to acquire new ideas and new knowledge about these cultures both for our own benefit and for our students'. We must make every effort to help our students develop their own competence to form their own correct image of their future encounters with the international community.

It is obvious that a good understanding of foreign cultures and empathy of foreign peoples is the passport to the international community. The ultimate goal of English education may be defined as empathy with English-speaking peoples and good understanding of their culture. The materials to be used in our English classes should be organized around such themes as will help attain this goal. A greater portion of the materials will naturally be concerned with contemporary problems. But the discussion about some of the past phases of Great Britain, the United States, and other English-speaking nations often gives us

the true understanding of their present situation and at the same time will give some insight into what the future of these nations might be like. On the basis of this consideration, themes such as "The Western Intellectual Tradition," "English Social History," and "The History of American Immigration" seem to deserve inclusion in the interdisciplinary approach proposed in this paper. As an example of such themes, some historical aspects of American immigration will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

4. Some Historical Considerations of American Immigration

In view of our definite ties with the United States at present and in the future, we should not spare our effort to acquire a deeper and more accurate understanding of the culture, ideas, and society of the American people. Many important clues to the understanding of a large sector of the American culture and society lie in the study of American immigration, because immigration was "America's historic *raison d'être*" and "has been the most persistent and the most pervasive influence in her development" (M. A. Jones. *American Immigration*, 1960, p. 1). Indeed, "the immigrants *were* American history" (O. Handlin. *The Uprooted*, 1951, p. 3).

In his book Handlin vividly describes how the peasants uprooted from the European soil by the social and economic changes ventured, in spite of many hardships, to transplant themselves into the American soil, struggling to adapt themselves to the new environment. The movement of these peasants has two aspects, i.e., emigration out of Europe and immigration into America.[6]

6. As to the distinction between *emigrant* and *immigrant*, note the following comment by Hansen: "The first use of the word 'immigrant' seems to date from 1817..., but during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the settler was known as an 'emigrant.' He migrated *out* of something; by 1817 he was migrating *into* something. That something was the new nation which had come into being." Hansen (1964), p. 11.

Correspondingly, there are two forces behind the movement: the "push" in Europe and the "pull" in America.[7] The motives of each migrant cannot be summarized in such a dichotomous categorization, but, broadly speaking, for the majority of migrants the "pull" was the greater economic opportunity and religious and political freedom in America, and the "push" was the changing economic and social conditions, political oppression, and religious persecution in Europe. To discuss any aspect of American immigration in detail may be beyond the scope of this paper, but the writer will attempt to mention a few points which seem to have definite pertinence to our college English education: the origin of the major dialectal differences of American English, the heterogeneity of the American society, and the population explosion in nineteenth-century Europe as one of the "push" factors.

4.1. The Colonial Origin of the Three Major Dialectal Differences of American English

A brief survey of the regional distribution of the immigrants (or settlers) in the seventeenth and the early eighteenth century will afford a plausible explanation of the origin of the three major dialectal differences of American English: Northern, Midland, and Southern, as described in Francis' *The Structure of American English* (1958, pp. 511-527, 580-581). This dialectal division roughly corresponds to the three regional divisions of English colonies in what is now the United States: New England, the

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7. In this connection, note the following comment: "The push-pull dichotomy can form the basis for a satisfactory typology of migration only when it has been refined to distinguish between people who move in order to gain the new (*innovating* migration), and on the other hand, those who leave in order to retain what they have at home (*conservative* migration)." Trewartha (1969), p. 141.

Middle, and the South.[8]

The Northern dialect (except western Vermont and Upstate New York) and the Southern dialect are characterized, among other things, by the loss of the post-vocalic *r* (as in *car, girl,* and *horse*), whereas the Midland dialect is characterized by its retention.[9] The retention of the post-vocalic *r* is one of the most noticeable characteristics of the English language spoken by the majority of American people today, while the loss of this sound is regarded as one of the similarities of the Northern and Southern dialects to Standard British English. The evidence shows that the majority of early settlers in New England and the Southern colonies came from the southeastern parts of England, where the post-vocalic *r* had been lost by the seventeenth century, when a large-scale migration to America was beginning to take place (cf. Baugh. 1957, pp. 442-444; Reed. 1967, p. 15). On the other hand, there is a good reason to infer that the majority of English-speaking settlers in the Middle colonies, particularly in Pennsylvania, spoke a northern variety of English, where the post-vocalic *r* was retained until later. They were the Quakers, who had a large number of followers in the northern half of England, and the Scotch-Irish (Presbyterians), who were Scottish Lowlanders in origin and had been living in northern Ireland for a few generations before coming to America (cf. Jones. 1960, pp. 19, 22-25). The large German elements in the Middle colonies acquired English from these speakers of a northern variety of English. The prevalent retention of the post-vocalic *r* in American English is account-

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8. In this division, New York City and New York State belong to the Northern dialect area, but in the division of colonies they are included in the Middle colonies.

9. For the retention of the post-vocalic *r* in western Vermont and Upstate New York, see Francis (1958), p. 516.

ed for by the prominence of the Scotch-Irish in the constant advance of the western frontier. Thus, one of the most noticeable characteristics of American English has stemmed from the dialect spoken in the Middle colonies (cf. Baugh. 1957, pp. 444-445).

4.2. The Heterogeneity of the American Society

The Middle colonies were symbolic of the American society in another way. The Middle colonies were ethnically and religiously more heterogeneous than the Puritan-dominated New England, where the population was homogeneously of English origin even at the time of the Revolution, and the Southern colonies, where the white population was predominantly of English origin. In the Middle colonies as a whole, the English comprized about half of the total population but there were large German, Dutch, and Scotch-Irish elements. In Pennsylvania, the English amounted to only one-third of the white population, scarcely outnumbering the Germans (cf. Jones. 1960, pp. 29, 34-35). This ethnic heterogeneity was due to the religious tolerance, which attracted the Quakers, Presbyterians, and the German pietists and other sectarians to that area (cf. Jones. 1960, p. 19).

From the viewpoint of our college English education the heterogeneity of the American society deserves particular attention. The American society consists of people of different national origins, with different religious, cultural, and lingustic backgrounds. In spite of or because of this heterogeneity, the American people have built up one of the wealthiest and most powerful nations in the world history. The unification of the diverse groups into one single composite nation and their successful cooperation can be viewed as a great experiment of mankind, which sheds some light upon the way in which the present and future generations of mankind could build up a single community where all the different groups of people would live in

harmonious cooperation.[10] Thus it will be for the benefit of our students to know something about the way immigrants of different backgrounds struggled to adapt themselves to the new environment, the new social institutions, to become "Americans." The impact of the ethnically, religiously, and culturally strange environment upon the individual immigrant's life and outlook will be beyond our imagination, for we Japanese have been living in an ethnically homogeneous society secluded in an insular country. To have some understanding of the adaptation of individual immigrants to the new ethnic environment and the impact of the immigration of different nationality groups upon the American society will enhance our own adaptive capacity to the international community.

America is often compared to a melting pot, but the various elements in the pot seem to have had different "melting points," i.e., they seem to have had a varying degree of difficulty in adapting to the "host" society and "core" culture, which may roughly be defined as basically Anglo-Saxon and Protestant.[11] This host society (and core culture) was brought about by the overwhelming predominance of the English during the first two generations of settlement, and later immigrants were obliged to adapt themselves to it, being unable to alter it basically (cf. Jones. 1960, p. 36). To this host society were easily adapted the immigrants from Great Britain, the Low Countries, Scandinavia, and Germany. Immigrants from other parts of Europe had greater difficulties, depending on their cultural and religious back-

10. The unification of diverse ethnic groups in America is largely ascribable to the influence of the new environment. See, for example, Handlin (1950), p. 23.

11. Note the comment that "the colonial English adapted Anglo-Saxon institutions to the environment of the New World and gradually emerged as the host society and core culture." Anderson (1970), p. 20. Cf. also *ibid.*, pp. 13-14; Kennedy (1964), p. 11.

grounds. The Catholic Irish may have found it more difficult to adapt to the basically Protestant American society than the immigrants from other parts of the British Isles. On the other hand, the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the Irish may have helped to make their adaptation easier than the immigrants from eastern and southern Europe. These and many other different groups have adapted to each other, and made America "a heterogeneous race but a homogeneous nation" (Kennedy. 1964, p. 63).

The ethnic heterogeneity of the American society can be interpreted in terms of the history of American immigration. The history of American immigration can be divided into five periods which have, all except (5), predominant ethnic characteristics, as indicated in the following:

(1) Period of Anglo-Saxon Immigration (Colonial Period: 1607 – c.1780)
(2) Period of Celtic Immigration (Pre-Civil War Period: 1815 – c.1860)
(3) Period of Germanic Immigration (Post-Civil War Period: c.1860 – c.1890)
(4) Period of Italo-Slavic Immigration (c.1890 – 1924)
(5) Period of Restricted Immigration under the Quota System (1924 – Present)[12]

This list needs a few brief explanations. The wars in America and Europe during the few decades between (1) and (2) almost stopped the flow of immigration, and this circumstance helped accelerate the Americanization of the thitherto unassimilated groups, such as the Dutch and Germans (cf. Jones. 1960, pp. 64-

12. The "national origins" system became fully operative in 1929, but the provisional arrangements had already come into effect in 1924. Cf. Jones (1960), p. 279; Kennedy (1964), pp. 74, 93; Handlin (1959), p. 147.

79; Hansen. 1961, p. 71). During the one hundred years between the restoration of peace in 1815 and the outbreak of World War I (i.e., (2), (3), and (4)), more than thirty million people migrated from Europe to the United States.[13] The immigrants in (2) were predominantly the Irish, Scottish Highlanders, and Germans. The majority of these Germans, according to Hansen (1961, p. 9), may be regarded as "Celtic," because they came from the upper Rhine Valley, where the rural economy and agriculture had descended from the ancient Celts and thus had more in common with the prevailing system in Ireland than it did with the systems in the purely German lands to the east. In the next period (3), the overwhelming majority of immigrants came from England, Scandinavia, and northern Germany. Around the year 1890, there was a significant shift in the geographical origin of American immigration. Now the immigration from Scandinavia and Germany declined, and in (4) an unprecedentedly large-scale immigration from the eastern and southern parts of Europe started and continued until 1924. In the concentration of particular ethnic groups in particular periods, as shown above, lie a number of important clues to interpreting the particular patterns of distribution of these groups in the United States, e.g., the strong Irish concentration in large cities along the Atlantic coast (cf.

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13. The following is the statistics concerning the ten principal sources of American immigration, as appears in "The Principal Sources of Immigration to the United States, Total Immigration Therefrom, and Peak Year, During 130 Years Beginning 1820 and Ending June 30, 1950," quoted in O. Handlin (ed.), *Immigration as a Factor in American History*, 1959, p. 16. The figure immediately following the name of the country indicates the total of immigrants therefrom, and the figure in the parentheses indicates the peak year for the country: Germany; 6,248,529 (1882); Italy: 4,776,-884 (1907); Ireland: 4,617,485 (1851); Great Britain: 4,386,692 (1888); Austria-Hungary: 4,172,104 (1907); Russia: 3,343,895 (1913); Canada and Newfoundland: 3,177,446 (1924); Sweden: 1,228,113 (1882); Mexico: 838,844 (1924); Norway: 814,955 (1882).

Jones. 1960, pp. 118-119), the predominance of Americans of German and Scandinavian descent in many parts of the Middle West (cf. Johnson. 1951, p. 11; Jones. 1960, p. 119; Hansen. 1961, p. 188), and the concentration of immigrants from eastern and southern Europe in large industrial centers (cf. Jones. 1960, pp. 216-220).

The names used in (1), (2), (3), and (4) can be delusive; because there was a large-scale German immigration during the Colonial Period; there was a constant and sizable flow of English immigration throughout the nineteenth century; and the immigration from the British Isles, Scandinavia, and Germany did not completely stop in the twentieth century. But the above ethnic-oriented names, at least (2), (3), and (4), indicate the shift of the center of gravity of European emigration, which reflects the shift of the center of gravity of the social and economic changes taking place in nineteenth-century Europe.

4.3. Population Explosion in Modern Europe as a Cause for Mass Emigration

As one of the causes for mass emigration out of Europe, the rapid population growth in nineteenth-century Europe deserves our particular attention.[14] Population growth is caused by either a decline in the death rate or a rise in the birth rate or by the combination of these two factors. There seem to have been diverse causes for the population growth in nineteenth-century Europe. The rapid population growth in Ireland after 1780 is attributed by

14. Hansen (1961, p. 17) states that "the exodus was so directly the outcome of the unprecedented population increase of the nineteenth century...."; and Jones (1960, p. 95) mentions "the doubling of the population of Europe in the century after 1750" as the first of the social and economic factors underlying the mass emigration out of Europe. As to the rate of this population growth, Langer (1963) says that "from an estimated 140,000,000 in 1750 it (=European population) rose to 188,000,000 in 1800, to 266,000,000 in 1850, and eventually to 400,000,000 in 1900." *Readings on Population*, p. 2.

Connell (1950) to agrarian improvements, especially the introduction and wide use of the potato as a main element of the peasant's staple. The land planted with potatoes could produce three times as much food per acre as the land cultivated with wheat. This circumstance made possible the fragmentation of the peasant's holdings and thus the creation of new households by marriage, which led to an increase in the birth rate (cf. *Population in History,* p. 429).

Somewhat in a similar fashion, the sudden increase in rural population in nineteenth-century Prussia is attributed by Conze (1969, pp. 67-68) to the liberal agrarian reform, which afforded greater opportunities for obtaining holdings as bondsmen and for founding families. Habakkuk (1953) also ascribes the acceleration of the population growth in England in the later eighteenth century to a high birth rate resulting from the economic development of the period. On the other hand, however, Mckeown and Brown (1955) state that the medical evidence "seems . . . to suggest that a decline in mortality is . . . a more plausible explanation of the increase in population than a rise in the birth rate" (*Readings on Population*, p. 17); and Razzell (1965) emphasizes the importance of inoculation against smallpox as a cause of the population explosion in eighteenth-century England.

It is thus considered that the population growth in nineteenth-century Europe was not caused by economic improvements alone. The population increase in nineteenth-century Sweden and Norway is considered to have come about primarily because of a fall in the death rate, particularly in child mortality, as a result of smallpox vaccination and improvement in food supply by the adoption of the potato as a main dietary element (cf. Utterström. 1954, p. 114; Drake. 1965, p. 111). Italy's accelerated population increase towards the end of the nineteenth century is regarded as

the result of a sharp decline in infant mortality (from c.1870 onward) which was due more to improved medical and hygienic practices than to change in economic conditions (cf. Cipolla. 1965, pp. 581-582).

This population growth and the accompanying social and economic changes in nineteenth-century Europe seem to show a number of characteristics similar to the population growth and at least some of the social and economic changes which have taken place in Japan during the past one hundred years and which are now taking place in the so-called developing countries. A brief survey of what happened in modernizing Europe in the nineteenth-century will give us some idea of what is happening and what is going to happen in at least some of the other societies which are now in the process of modernization. The accelerated population growth in nineteenth-century Europe was one of her most serious problems of that time. The world's overpopulation will be one of the most serious problems we are to face in the near future.[15] It will be necessary for us to help our students acquire some understanding, through English materials, about these problems common to the future generations of all countries. It is our duty to prepare our students for all possible situations.

5. Summary

In this paper the writer has proposed an interdisciplinary approach to college English education, laying a greater stress on the knowledge which our students acquire about the international relations than the practical skills in which they should have received enough training before entering college. The materials to be used in our college English classes are important as a source of information and they should be organized around such themes as

15. See, for example, Boulding (1965), pp. 121–136.

will make a definite contribution to the student's successful adaptation to the realities in the international community. The materials should be varied enough to cover a large part of the domain of general education, from the humanities to social sciences to natural sciences. Each textbook should preferably keep to a well defined major topic to be discussed in a series of related and systematically arranged articles. One topic has been suggested for use in such an interdisciplinary approach, the topic being the history of American immigration and its relationship with the development of American English, the heterogeneity of the American society, and the population explosion in nineteenth-century Europe.

It is true that we should devote our full attention to the language we teach, but we should give at least as much attention to the content of what we teach. We teachers have an imposing task to improve our cultural understanding as well as our student's. What has been proposed here is not the disintegration of the English department but the clarification of its diverse functions and a fuller exploitation of its potential competencies.

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