

Bengali To Russian, Modern Languages Teaches It

Russian and Czech language instruction and printing of Bengali series publications are among multi-faceted programs of the Modern Language Department at Texas A&M University. Course offerings of the department headed by Dr. Jack A. Dabbs annually attract 10 per cent of the student body, while special programs prepare the university's technical assistance officials and teachers for assignments in Pak-

istan, Tunisia, the Dominican Republic, Central and South American countries.

Dr. Dabbs' office accessories include fonts of the 54 basic letters and numerous letter combinations of the Bengali language. They are used to prepare dictionaries, texts, work frequency lists and glossaries of scientific terms for publication.

Program diversification is inherent, however, as it is in any

department that instructs service type courses. Majority of the more than 1,200 students enrolled in modern languages this fall are liberal arts and science majors satisfying two-year language requirements.

They study French, German, Spanish, Russian, Czech and English—the latter as a "foreign" language for international students—under 16 department faculty members.

Linguistic study is aided electronically, in study and classroom labs containing 64 recording booths where students practice pronunciation and compare results with pre-recorded passages.

"We have as many as three classes using 34 lab booths in one hour," Dabbs said. "It requires close coordination to move a class in for 12 to 15 minutes, do work and clear the way for the next class."

Student practice is conducted in 30 booths in a "study hall" recommended by professors.

"Students aren't required to use it, but making an 'A' in a course without lab work is pretty difficult," Dabbs noted.

Students taking language as an elective and the department's 56 undergraduate majors also benefit from automated instructional devices.

"The theory is that instructors

can devote more time to explanations. The total result has been course upgrading, with tremendous improvement in language teaching in the last dozen years," Dabbs explained.

More than 150 students, chiefly Ph.D. candidates, take Russian courses. Developed by Dr. John M. Skrivanek, the course is designed to teach enough Russian so that graduate students can read technical books and articles

in their professional fields. The importance of Russian scientific literature makes it desirable for students to go to sources for material, rather than wait for translations.

Rapid growth of Czech enrollment reflects a basic population fact of Texas.

"After English and Spanish, the most widely spoken language in the state is Czech," the department head stated. "The state's population of Czech extraction is estimated at a half million."

He noted that several Czech fraternal organizations have made scholarships available to students studying Czech language and culture. Seven state newspapers are published in Czech. The U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare classified Czech as a critical language.

Departmental responsibilities go further. Dominican Republic students coming to A&M for agricultural studies under Agency for International Development contract receive an accelerated summer English course.

"We try to give them the English capability to take college courses," the A&M professor of 17 years said. "It usually requires 500 contact hours to advance a student from a no-English capability to the level of college work. We achieve 450 contact hours during summer sessions."

Special instruction also was designed and conducted by Dabbs for state school teachers who toured Central and South American countries last summer under A&M's Programa de Educacion Interamericana.

Modern languages professors never saw the teachers. Special tape recordings and instruction manuals were furnished Program participants. Examinations were by mail.

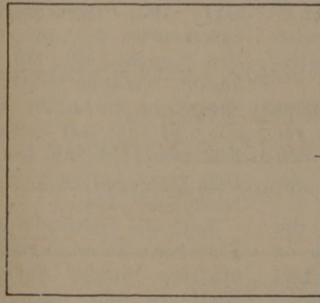


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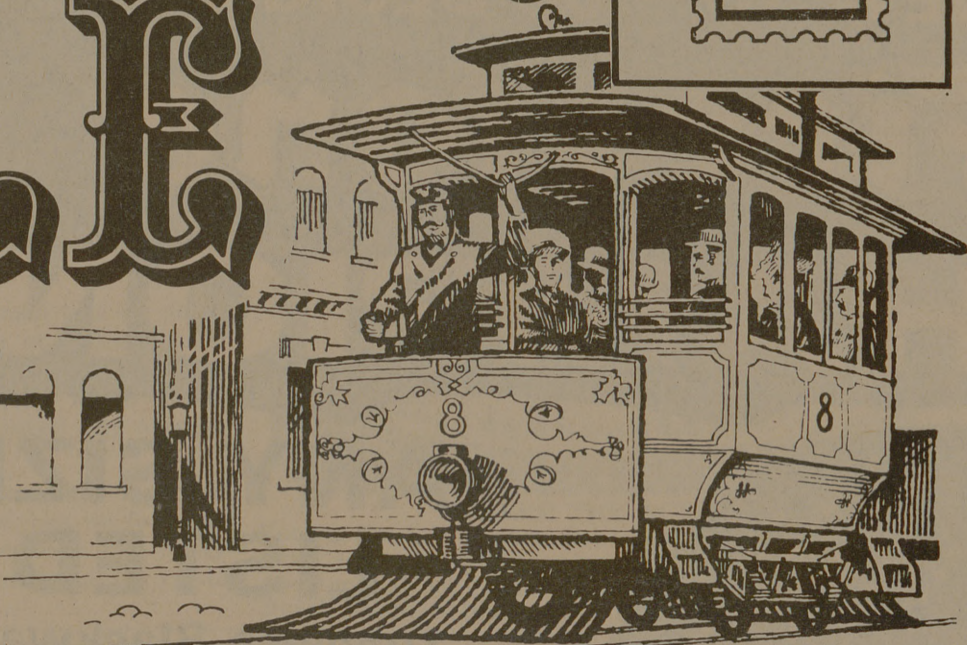
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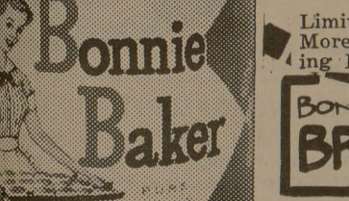
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TTI Receives Study Grant

Texas A&M University's Texas Transportation Institute has been awarded a \$150,000 contract to study access control for major highways, announced Charles J. Keese, TTI director.

Keese said the two-year project will be conducted for the National Cooperative Highway Research Program which is administered by the Highway Research Board-National Academy of Sciences.

Objective of the study, Keese explained, is development of access control guidelines which provide maximum benefits to the motorist without imposing undue restraints.

The study will involve such factors as accident frequency, cost of physical construction and right-of-way, legal considerations, service to the highway user, road user costs and property values.

Another aspect of the study will be documentation of the implications and types of development occurring with and without access control, Keese added.

Use and design of such medial access control elements as median strips and left-turn lanes will be evaluated and recommendations made for their future application.

The research also will include improved design of street layout and access points to the abutting land. Existing authority, laws and regulations governing control of direct access to public streets as highways will be reviewed for suitability and effectiveness in terms of today's traffic needs.

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