

Americans need to go beyond English

Q: What do you call a person that knows three languages? A: Trilingual.
Q: What do you call a person that knows two languages? A: Bilingual.
Q: So what do you call a person that knows one language? A: American.
Sadly enough this a joke told around the world in different countries and in different languages. The truth is that in order for us to keep up with the changes in the world we must make some changes of our own.

The last Superpower Summit was dubbed, "The Last Superpower Summit." The reasons for this distinction are self-evident. The Kremlin Wall is crumbling and the United States as a world influence is slowly fading. The United States and the Soviet Union are no longer the dominant forces that control the world like they used to during the Cold War.

A new kind of world is being molded and it has nothing to do with a superpower. America has been standing proud for over 200 years and our self-interest has moved us along. In the 20th century, we have gone to war and we have helped create the world that now stands (at least, before the recent changes).

The changes in Eastern Europe threw a loop in the American way of thinking, though. If we are to compete in the world market, especially in Europe and Japan, we must make a move to expand our knowledge of the world.

Here at this University we have a modern languages department like most universities. All liberal arts students that want a bachelor of arts degree are required to pass four semesters of a foreign language. In these classes, we learn basic speaking patterns used in everyday conversation, and we study the people's culture.

The knowledge of a foreign language is useful in many ways. I have personally learned more about the English language in four semesters of Spanish than I have in any English course. The reason behind this is that in order to learn another language, it must be taught in our native tongue. I have also



Rudy Cordova Jr.
Columnist

learned enough of the language to get me through a day in a Spanish-speaking country.

It's important to recognize that other ways of communication are available to the human resource. The other colleges of the University should implement a foreign language requirement for their students. With the world shaping up the way it is, it will be vital for Americans to understand other cultures. All industries and areas of employment will soon become worldwide, if they haven't already.

As Americans, we can't let ourselves fall behind because we're too self-centered to learn another language. As an Aggie, we wouldn't want to give up our position as "boss" because we don't know how to speak French, and our employer is opening a new branch office in Paris. The possibilities are limitless and it's up to us to capture the knowledge.

The world we live in has plenty of opportunities. The only way to achieve the success that the United States has had is to reach as many of those opportunities as we can. We're living in the best of times. So much is happening. There is so much to do.

Some day we'll look back at this century and wonder how we managed to survive. We'll tell our grandchildren that we stopped and took the time to pay attention to the change. Only the ones willing to commit to this change will survive.

We'll also tell our grandchildren the joke about the American that only knew one language. HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!

Right now, the rest of the world is laughing.
Rudy Cordova Jr. is a senior theatre arts major.

Tackle 'real problems,' not flags

EDITOR:

Americans are looking for another "feel good" summer, and politically we've got it. In Washington, every politician who wants to be re-elected has to take a stand. Yes, they say, I wholeheartedly back an amendment to the Constitution to ban flag burning.

But stop for a minute and think about the real problems facing our nation. The United States has the highest infant mortality rate of any industrialized country. Three out of every four young black men is either in prison, on parole or on probation. The savings and loan bail out will cost each American over \$2,000. Many of our children live in abject poverty.

None of these problems can capture the imagination of the average American. Look past the political smoke screen and see that burning a flag doesn't mean squat compared to these other national disgraces. Don't disparage those who burn the flag; do something to make it a symbol of a glorious nation, not just a glorious symbol.

Georgia McNamara '91

Lyrics only half of rap music

EDITOR:

For all you people out there who are criticizing Two Live Crew, I have some news for you. Obviously you do not understand rap music. Rap entails more than just the lyrics. The beat plays just as an important role as the lyrics, just as the jokes of Eddie Murphy and Andrew "Dice" Clay entail more than just profanity. For instance, on the hit song "Me So Horny," an old song called "Firecracker" by a group named Foxy is mixed into the song. This is what got my attention, not the lyrics.

As a matter of fact, I like the clean version just as much as the unedited version. Most of you "experts" on rap seem to be familiar with M.C. Hammer's "You Can't Touch This." The beat is also what got my attention on this song. An old hit by Rick James called "Superfreak" is mixed in with it. Most people agree that the song would have never been a hit without the "Superfreak" sample.

The same thing applies to groups such as N.W.A. While the lyrics of their songs are violent, the music makes the song. Their music is done by Dr. Dre, who also does the music for J.J. Fad (Supersonic) and Michelle (Nicety) that have gone over very well on the pop charts.

Also, more emphasis tends to be given to the lyrics by whites as compared to those by blacks. Maybe this is the reason that the majority of white people tend to "treble" rap music while black people tend to "bass" it, so to speak. Many times the music is "bassed" so hard you cannot even hear the lyrics. This is one of the reasons that Run DMC and the Beastie Boys last albums have largely flopped with the black audience. While the lyrics on the latest releases ("Tougher Than Leather" and "Paul's Boutique," respectively) were as good as they were in the past, the beats were very weak.

Mail Call

When you extract only the lyrics from the music, you are destroying half of the art of rap. Mr. Mixx, the Live Crew's DJ, is one of the best in the rap industry, please, at least try to understand the art of this music before you criticize. Oh, I almost forgot Mr. Liebmann, a rap thang, and you wouldn't understand!

Raymond Jackson '90

A&M conservatism sickening

EDITOR:

After attending A&M for seven semesters, I have finally reached my wit's end as far as Aggie conservatism goes. And I do not mean conservatism in a political sense, mean this in a social sense. The compelling need to dress, talk and act like everybody else for the sake of not being different is bafflingly alien to me. (In misleading contrast "anti-conformists" who act differently for the sake of being different, claiming this to be anti-conformism, are identical.) But none of this really bothers me. When people begin looking to their peer group for a way to think, I am bothered.

When I am in a campus computer room discussing someone's reaction to homosexuals, and am interrupted by someone whom I have never met exclaiming, "Kill the fags!" I am bothered.

When I overhear a conversation about gay people and somebody brags about their "many gay friends," and they think righteously of themselves because they "treat homosexuals the same" as their "normal" friends, I am bothered.

Finally, in reply to Michael Kraft's letter on homosexuality: Yes, it is "clear that, as citizens, their rights cannot be infringed upon or restricted any more than the rights of other citizens." However, they will be. And they will continue to be until society (that's us) no longer thinks of homosexuals (or blacks or women) as a group that needs to be guarded, and "we" no longer refer to "them" as "they." Our society will never become comfortable with itself until we realize that being "gay," "black" or "white" is just a physical description. It does not describe a person's opinion, personality or way of life. Stereotypes do that quite inaccurately, and there is no need to discuss the morality of personal traits.

Let's be individuals, and be happy about it.

Michael D. Denison '92

Have an opinion? Express it!

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Chinese haven't improved human rights, emigration policies

It seems that Andy Keetch is confused about the true purpose of the Jackson Amendment to the 1974 Trade Act and how that amendment should be applied to violent governments such as China's current regime. The amendment was originally intended to deny Most Favored Nation trade status (MFN) to certain countries such as the Soviet Union in order to give them economic incentives to improve their emigration and human rights policies.

For example, at the recent summit meeting, Gorbachev requested MFN status for the Soviet Union. That country's record on human rights has been improving at a good, steady pace over the last several years. Thus, our government considered granting them MFN status, and at the end of the summit, Bush told Gorbachev that if emigration conditions for Soviet citizens improved sufficiently, then MFN status would be granted. Keetch argued in his letter June 12 that the Chinese government also deserved MFN status, and praised Bush for granting the Chinese government MFN status.

However, the Chinese government's human rights policies and emigration laws have not improved over the last

Irwin Tang

Reader's Opinion

year. Rather, they have reached a bloody low. In the last year or so, the Chinese government has carried out two brutal crackdowns on unrest. Shot into crowds in Tibet, a country that they continue to militarily oppress. Then came the crackdown in China that began with the Tiananmen Square massacre and continues to this day with political imprisonment, executions, torture and re-education.

In the last year, the Chinese government has also continued its military support of the genocidal Khmer Rouge. The emigration policies of the country have also worsened tremendously. Most of the people that the Chinese government allows to leave the country are people that they can trust or can have substantial control over. Thus, when these people's visas expire, they will not return to China with any "counterrevolutionary" ideas about democracy. And if they do spread such ideas, they will surely be silenced. It is obvious that granting the

Chinese regime MFN status would only give them the green light for more violence and tight restrictions on emigration. It would demonstrate to the Chinese government that they must suffer no consequences from their unrestrained violence and that they can continue their violent behavior and still suffer little profit loss. And yes, profits are tied into policy-making; a look at how the Chinese government works reveals how an MFN policy would work.

The elite bureaucratic class controls the government in China. They are the ones whose children are allowed to travel freely out of the country. They are the ones who enjoy an easy lifestyle as the rest of China toils. And they are the ones who take the profits from selling Chinese products in the U.S. with low MFN tariff rates. Thus, they are the ones who would suffer profit loss from a retraction of MFN status. And they are the ones who would be encouraged to change the violent policies of the government that they control in order to retain a high profit margin.

Of course, retraction of MFN status is like a punishment: the stick. The carrot is the granting of MFN status.

Unfortunately, President Bush has already thrown this carrot to the Chinese regime without requiring any policy improvements. The U.S. should, at the very least, insist that: (1) executions and torture be stopped, (2) all political prisoners arrested since June 3 be released, (3) emigration out of the country be eased so that more qualified Chinese students are allowed to study abroad, and (4) dissident physicist Fang Lizhi be allowed to live freely or live outside China.

Bargaining with the MFN status to achieve human rights goals should only be a part of a whole pro-human rights policy that is geared to improve conditions for people affected by the policies of the Chinese regime. American foreign policy should be alert and responsive to conditions in China. Opposite to popular belief, the Bush administration did not stop military shipments to China after the Tiananmen Square massacre. All transfer of military and police equipment and technology should cease immediately. Transfer of equipment that allows the monitoring of people should also cease. Such trade should only be allowed when China's military

and police work only to protect the people.

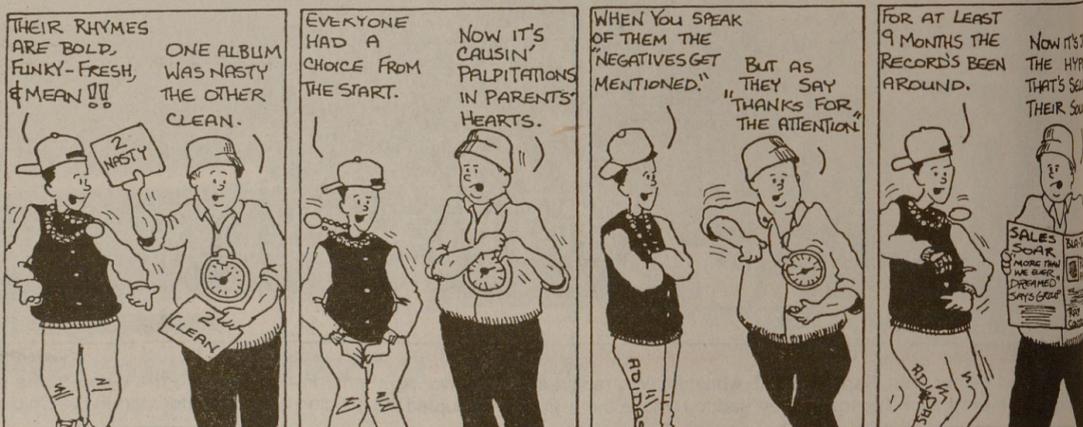
Unfortunately, Bush has wasted diplomatic opportunities by having business celebrations or toasting the Tiananmen butchers (ala Scowcroft, Eagleburger). All diplomatic opportunities should be used to express American concerns over human rights and to encourage the development of a true people's government — a democracy. But I have mentioned three facets (MFN requirements, sanctions and concerned diplomacy) a complete foreign policy that would stress the value of human life rather than that of the dollar. Once such a complete foreign policy is achieved, prospects for a kinder government will be much brighter.

It is not too late. The combination of old, unhealthy hard-liners steadily dying off, continued internal unrest within China and a more humane foreign policy towards China can cause a more humane Chinese government to be squeezed out. And perhaps it will be government that will choose to give power to the people one day.

Irwin Tang is a junior political science major.

by Brett Bridgeman

FAX



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