UU LEN BAS
CUBA-ENGLISH (FEATURE)
' IDEOLOGY APART, ENGLISH IS STILL CUBA'S TOP FOREIGN LANGUAGE:
BY LIONEL MARTIN
HAVANA, SEPT 1, REUTER - DESPITE TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS OF ISOLATION FROM THE UNITED STATES, INCLUDING A U.S BAN ON TRAVEL AND TRADE, ENGLISH REMAINS CUBA'S MOST IMPORTANT SECOND LANGUAGE.
A CUBAN EDUCATOR NOTED THAT +NOT ONLY IS IT THE MOST POPULAR FOREIGN LANGUAGE AMONG ORDINARY CUBANS BUT IT IS VIRTUALLY THE ONLY SECOND LANGUAGE TAUGHT TO THE ISLAND'S MORE THAN 400 THOUSAND SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS.
THESE STUDENTS, BETWEEN THE AGES OF THIRTEEN AND EIGHTEEN, ARE REQUIRED TO STUDY ENGLISH DURING ALL SIX YEARS OF THEIR JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION.
THE CUBAN MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, WHICH DOES NOT RUN THE UNIVERSITIES BUT DOES CONTROL THE CURRICULUM FOR PRIMARY, SECONDARY, QAND TRADE SCHOOLS AS WELL AS THOSE FOR ADULTS EMPLOYS SOME 5000 ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS, THE EDUCATOR SAID.
IN THE LATE SEVENTIES, HE SAID, THE MINISTRY DECIDED TO GIVE A BOOST TO THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE IN VIEW OF THE ISLAND'S CLOSE TIES WITH THE SOVIET UNION. IT DECREED THAT 30 PERCENT OF THE NATION'S SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS STUDY RUSSIAN. BUT BY THE EARLY EIGHTIES THE PLAN WAS DROPPED AND ENGLISH CONTINUED TO BE TAUGHT TO ALMOST 95 PERCENT OF THE STUDENTS.
THE REASON FOR THE TURNABOUT, THE EDUCATOR SAID, WAS THE UNDESRSTANDING THAT ENGLISH IS A LINGUA FRANCA, WHICH IS MORE IMPORTANT TO CUBA THAN ANY OTHER FOREIGN LANGUAGE.
ENGLISH IS ALSO COMPULSORY ON A UNIVERSITY LEVEL IN CUBA. STUDENTS IN THE SCIENCES, HUMANITIES AND ENGINEERING MUST STUDY ENGLISH DURING THEIR FIRST TWO YEARS AND MANY OPT TO TAKE MORE ADVANCED COURSES. ENGLISH IS CONSIDERED A NECESSITY BECAUSE SOME OF THE TEXTBOOKS AND MANY OF THE UP-TO-DATE REFERENCE MATERIALS ARE IN ENGLISH.
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UU LEN BAS
CUBA-ENGLISH (FEATURE) 2HAVANA

CUBA'S MEDICAL STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO STUDY ENGLISH DURING ALL FIVE YEARS OF THEIR COMBINED PRE-MED AND MEDICAL SCHOOL COURSE. A CUBANPUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIAL SAID THAT ENGLISH LANGUAGE STUDIES WERE INCREASED FROM TWO TO FIVE YEARS IN THE MID-EIGHTIES AT THE INSISTANCE OF CUBAN PRESIDENT FIDEL CASTRO.

CUBA'S TOURIST INDUSTRY ALSO STRESSES ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TRAINING FOR ITS EMPLOYEES. WHILE SOME TOURIST GUIDES ARE TRAINED IN FRENCH, GERMAN AND OTHER LANGUAGE, ENGLISH IS CONSIDERED A NECESSITY FOR MOST HOTEL AND RESTAURANT WORKERS WHO DEAL WITH THE PUBLIC.

A CUBAN OFFICIAL EXPLAINED THAT ENGLISH IS THE LANGUAGE THAT BEST SERVES CUBA'S GOAL OF FIGHTING ITS WAY OUT OF UNDER-DEVELOPMENT. HE SAID THAT U.S TECHNOLOGY IS GREATLY ADMIRED BY THE CUBANS AND THAT ENGLISH IS ONE KEY TO LEARNING ABOUT IT.

THE OFFICIAL SAID THAT IN 1972, WHEN CUBA'S ENGINEERING SCHOOLS DECIDED TO IFFER THEIR FIRST MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMME IN THE NATION'S HISTORY, THEY TURNED TO CANADA.

UNDER A GRANT FROM THE CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY, THE CANADIAN UNIVERSITY SERVICE OVERSEAS (CUSO) RAN THE MASTER'S PROGRAMME WHOSE CLASSES, BY CANADIAN PROFESSORS, WERE GIVEN IN ENGLISH. THIS REQUIRED INTENSIVE COURSES, GIVEN BY CANADIAN LANGUAGE TEACHERS, FOR ALL THE POSTGRADUATE ENGINEERS.

ALTHOUGH CUBA HAS BEEN CUT OFF FROM THE UNITED STATES SINCE 1961, ENGLISH IS STILL AN INFLUENCE IN CUBA. A VISITOR IS QUICKLY INTRODUCED TO A LANGUAGE CALLED +SPANGLISH+, A CROSS BETWEEN ENGLISH AND SPANISH.

IF YOU WANT YOUR RUM NEAT AT A HAVANA BAR, YOU ASK FOR A +ESTRAI+, DERIVED FROM THE ENGLISH, +STRAIGHT+. THE CLUTCH IN AN AUTOMOBILE IS CALLED A +CLOCH+ IN CUBA, RATHER THAN THE CORRECT CASTILLIAN +EMBRAGUE+ WHICH THEY USE IN SPAIN. IN BASEBALL, CUBAN FANS CALL A TWO-BASE HIT A +TUBEY+, A HOMERUN, A +JONRON+ AND MANY CUBANS POLITELY SAY +SANKYOU (THANK YOU) INSTEAD OF GRACIAS.

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UU LEN BAS
CUBA-RENGLISH (FEATURE) JHAVANA

IT HAS BEEN ILLESAL UNDER U.S LAN FOR ANY BUSINESS TO TRADE WITH CUBA SINCE 1960. NEVERTHELESS, EVEN NOW, THE TRADE MARKS OF FAMOUS U.S.-MADE PRODUCTS HAVE NOT BEEN FORGOTTEN. A REFRIGERATOR IS COMMONLY CALLED BY THE BRAND NAME +FRIGIDAIRE+ EVEN THOUGH IT WAS MANUFACTURED IN THE SOVIET UNION. A BLENDER IS CALLED +OSTERIZER+, ANOTHER AMERICAN TRADE MARK AND A DISTRIBUTOR FOR YOUR CAR'S MOTOR, NO MATTER WHAT MAKE, IS CALLED A +DELCO+, THE BRAND NAME OF DISTRIBUTORS MANUFACTURED BY GENERAL MOTORS.

CUBANS ARE STILL FREQUENTLY EXPOSED TO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. SOME LISTEN TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE STATIONS BROADCAST FROM FLORDIA AND PLAY POPULAR MUSIC. THEY ALSO WATCH TWO, THREE OR FOUR BRITISH OR U.S MADE ENGLISH LANGUAGE FILMS WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES EVERY WEEK ON CUBAN TELEVISION.

IN EXPLAINING THE IMPORTANCE AND INFLUENCE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN CUBA, ONE GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL REMARKED, +WE WILL ALWAYS BE A NEIGHBOR OF THE UNITED STATES AND SOMEDAY RELATIONS WILL IMPROVE SO IT IS A GOOD IDEA FOR US TO KNOW ENGLISH.+
==REUTER/LEM
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UU LEN BAS
CUBA-SENGLISH (FEATURE) 3HAVANA
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