

**A CENTENARY
TRIBUTE
TO
MICHAEL PHILIP WEST**

**SELECTIONS FROM
HIS WRITINGS**

**With an Introductory Essay by^o
M. L. TICKOO**

Edited By

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**A CENTENARY
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ENGLISH
A CENTENARY TRIBUTE TO
MICHAEL WEST

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PREFACE

Those who can, listen to the voice of the classroom, those who can't, listen to their own voice. As Professor M. L. Tickoo points out rightly, two of the greatest practitioners of our art in this century—Harold Palmer and Micheal West, 'listened to the voice of the classroom and allowed it to inform and influence much of what they preached and practised most of their lives. With them practice always prevailed.' We, at the RIE, have monitored the voice of the classroom for twentyfive years. That has been the source of our strength; and may be, our weakness, but we believe, that qualifies us to pay this centenary tribute to Dr. Michael West, the best part of whose working life was spent for the promotion of English language teaching and learning in this country.

India is a laboratory for the study of bilingualism. Dr. West was the first one study this phenomenon, long before language contact studies became popular. Dr. West's studies on a wide range of topics, his New Method Readers, the New Method Dictionary and the General Service List of Words have served the cause eminently for well over half a century. Dr. West will also be known as a pioneer in reading research. He knew why the Apus and the Abduls of Bengal could not read and how they could be made to read long before the query 'Why Johnny cannot read' was raised in the West.

Prophets suffer neglect not only in their own countries, but also during their own times. Every new voice, every new emphasis has to be different from what we are used to. Dr. West was different, in many senses unique. 'His enthusiasm for his work remained undiminished to the end,' notes an associate who had worked with him during his last years.

In the obituary published in the ELT journal (reproduced in this collection) we read Dr. West as saying, 'I am soon going to a place

where no publisher will ever go.' Wherever publishers go, we would like to imagine that this great teacher—researcher—writer has gone to the right place where he has his favourite classroom with as many eager children as he can possibly cope with.

Dr. Makhan Lal Tickoo in his introductory essay has given us a perceptive assessment of the importance of Dr. Michael West's work in its historical setting and also in terms of its contemporary relevance. The twelve articles chosen from Dr West's own writings cover a variety of topics which should be of interest to teachers and trainee-teachers alike.

Humble though this centenary tribute is, it is paid in great admiration and with great joy to the memory of Dr. Michael Philip West.

S. VELAYUDHAN

Introducing Michael Philip West

M. L. Tickoo

A. Away from the Mainstream

1. It has become necessary to begin this article on a somewhat polemical note. Michael West (1888-1973) suffered neglect for the best part of his life because he stood singly against the most dominant group and movements in applied linguistics and English language teaching of his days. For the same reason he suffered even greater neglect for a full decade after his death. Of late there appears to be a level of interest in some aspects of what he said and did (e.g. Howatt 1984). This ought to be a hope—inspiring development but is not entirely so. What in effect may be happening is a resurrection based on a miscomprehension of the man and his mission.

2. I begin with an example. In a book just published (White 1988) we read: "ELT evolved from an applied linguistics base established by the late nineteenth century Reform Movement and Palmer, West and Hornby, within the British tradition, and by Bloomfield, Fries and Lado within the American." For my purpose here it is not necessary to question the applied linguistics base of ELT; that deserves a separate scrutiny. What is important is to make it clear that Dr. Michael Philip West did not except in a marginal sense, belong to the same tradition as those pioneers (including the ones mentioned above) who professed the 'reform' or those others who got associated with the mainstream of the 'applied linguistics revolution.' West came to ELT from a different tradition and, once in it, he worked to achieve different aims, used measurably different means and left behind a legacy which stood opposed to much that represented both the 'reform' and the 'revolution'.

West was indeed part of a British tradition but not of "the British school" which stood out for combining "a longstanding concern with language use." (White, *Ibid*) If he shared one outstanding quality [with Harold Palmer, it was this: in measurably different ways the two men listened to the voice of the classroom and allowed it to inform and influence much of what they preached and practised most of their lives. With them practice always prevailed.] In this as in much else, West found himself alienated from the mainstream of applied linguistics.

3. West began his career as an officer in the Indian Education Service and worked in Bengal as teacher trainer, educational administrator and University teacher. Although he came to ELT with a degree from Christ Church, Oxford, he was not a linguist either by training or by conviction. In his early days in particular he in fact stood opposed to much that both Henry Sweet and Harold Palmer advocated. For Palmer, as for Sweet, phonetics stood at the base of good language teaching. For Michael West "With phonetics and pronunciation we are getting a slight veering back to Esotericism. an Esotericism which uses phonetic signs for its Cabalistic diagrams and incantations." (West 1914) For Palmer the Direct Method represented much that was good in language-teaching reform. For West "It has become associated with certain rather stereotyped oral methods of teaching, which are now recognised as very far from being the complete method of language study for which they were originally accepted." (West 1926). In his view such a method also did more harm than good in two related ways: one, it kept the learner "back in his reading to the pace at which he can learn to speak; and so, since the rate of learning to speak is very slow, he gets practically no reading practice at all," (West 1929). Secondly, especially in the circumstances where it was taught in Asia of those days, "It places so heavy a responsibility on the teacher of the lowest class who is himself usually one of the weakest units in the school teaching staff. The very early commencement of the active use of the language makes it possible for the teacher in the lowest class permanently to pollute the very fountain-head of the

child's knowledge by incorrect forms of speech." (West 1926). For Palmer learning to speak a language was by far the shortest road to learning to read and to write it. And to begin with learning to read or write it was as unnatural as "to cycle before having learnt to walk" (Palmer 1921). For West, reading came first and paved the way for the other skills. Reading was the easiest and the most natural gateway into language acquisition. And there were other differences of both approach and emphasis.

Michael West was different from most of his eminent contemporaries. His best was his own and it stood out even in those projects (e.g. vocabulary studies and materials writing) where he collaborated with other EFL practitioners.

Education, Bilingualism and ELT

1. The starting point of West's alternative was his exploration of the system of education in which the English language had come to assume certain important functions. He found this system fundamentally flawed in that it stood for wrong goals as well as ill-conceived means for achieving them. What India needed, he argued, was a system of education that would be primarily 'action-oriented. What existed through historical inheritance or imitative adoption/adaptation, was a system which, at its best, was wedded to the intellect and, at its worst, stood for "the recall of ideas independently of the demands of action" (West 1914).

What was true of education in general was no less true of the policies and practices of (English) language teaching within it. West found it rooted in a basic miscomprehension of India's multilingualism and therefore of the roles and responsibilities of the different languages in it. His first major task was therefore to redefine the place of English in a country (a subcontinent in fact) which needed the language for specific goals and purposes that were entirely different from those that it served in the land of its birth. This redefinition also formed the basis of the approach, methodology and materials which distinguished his work.

2. West saw mankind divided between countries whose own language served adequately the main purposes for which man needs language and those others whose language(s) did not. This was what made an essential difference between a unilingual country like England of those days and a bilingual country like India. In the former only a small percentage of children - "of more marked linguistic capacity, or of wealth and leisure" studied a foreign language at their own option; in the latter even the (below) average child "is compelled by hard necessity to acquire a second language." For this average child the learning of a foreign language became an additional burden and success in it was "often bought at the cost of a reduction of the time spent on other subjects which he is unable to afford." For such a child it almost always presented a dilemma - of having to choose between linguistic and educational insufficiency.

3. How necessary was it for such a child to suffer under the weight of this impossible dilemma? It would become unnecessary, West argued, if the countries placed in such disadvantageous circumstances precisely analysed their real linguistic needs for foreign languages and worked pointedly to answer these through their systems of education.

West's search for an answer began in separating the two major roles that a language plays in the life of a human being. "Language", he said "fulfils two needs, the Need to Express, and the Need to Communicate." (West 1926). The first of these is everywhere served by the child's mother tongue which is adequate for the expression of those dear and intimate feelings and thoughts which the individual shares as a member of a family, or group, or a linguistic community. The second makes the difference. There are countries where the child's mother tongue is fully capable of putting the user in touch with the world of exact thought and knowledge. There are others, India being one of these, whose languages have not been used to serve as languages of learning. They, therefore, require a foreign language to perform this function. English in India was meant to serve the roles of such a language.

4. Having thus delimited the role of English in the educational system of India, West showed the great advantages of making this understanding the basis of its teaching. He argued that "if a child's education is bilingual in its receptive aspect but unilingual in its expressive aspect, bilingualism is not necessarily a handicap." In other words what he stood for was a bilingualism in which the child's mother tongue - an Indian language - would become the medium of instruction and his second/foreign language would serve mainly as an additional language. But what precisely would be the place/role of English in his kind of 'receptive' bilingualism?

5. West gave a lot of time and thought to explain his concept and to work out its implications for the society and the system of education. He depended on a number of studies, his own and those of others, to understand the ways in which the existing system had failed. He found out that in aiming too high (e.g. all the four main skills and every aspect of English) it not only generated unacceptably high educational 'wastage' but also produced little by way of 'surrender value.' Moreover, in spreading its limited resources too thin, the system was unable to pay adequate attention to those aspects that needed it most. He next analysed the language needs of the society and how far these were being met through books and other publications. This showed him that although "the output of a literary matter" in the learner's mother tongue (Bengali) was "admirable both as to quality and excellence, the output of technical and informative matter" was "meagre in amount and poor in quality." He rightly inferred that the learner's mother tongue was not in a position to serve all the needs of learning and scholarship. All this led him to the main conclusion - that English in countries like India could serve best as the language of science and as the largest window on to the world of Western scholarship.

6. The next task that West gave himself was to work out precisely the educational implications of making English a main language of and for learning. Quoting with approval the views of the Calcutta University Commission (1917-1919) which was "dis-

posed to think that the educated classes in the various provinces of India will wish to be bilingual, to use their mother-tongue for those dear and intimate things which form part of life from infancy upwards and are the very breath and substance of poetry and of national feeling, to use English as a means of intercommunication necessary for the maintenance of the unity of India, and of touch, with other countries, for mutual exchange and stimulation of ideas in the sphere of scholarship and science, and for promotion of that interprovincial and international commerce and industry on which the economic future of India will largely depend", he argued against the need "to begin the Bengali's course in English by a laborious effort to make him pronounce English exactly like an Englishman", averring that we should be satisfied "if he pronounces it correctly and consistently according to the facilities of his own language", although he also supported the view that "correctness of rhythm" should become a necessary part of such English to give it international intelligibility. Above all, he found out that "the Bengali boy primarily needs the ability to read English, secondarily the power to write it, and last, the power to speak it and understand it when spoken."

The main points of West's theoretical stand which grew in his analysis of the system of education and of Indian bilingualism inside it, can be summarized in the following three points :

a. He established a distinction between active and receptive bilingualism and showed the possible advantages of adopting the latter in India. A foreign medium, he argued, was not just unnecessary but also undesirable.

b. He made a case for using English as a language of and for learning, justifying its place as the strongest window on to the world of science and scholarship.

c. He worked out the pedagogic priorities that became necessary to translate such a stand making a strong case for an approach through reading. What needs to be understood at this stage is that what West found out in his longitudinal experiments in Bengal

in the 1920s is, in its essence, still very largely true of English in India. There is reason therefore to understand both what he saw and how he arrived at it.

V. Three High Spots

Delimiting the roles of English and working out the pedagogic priorities, came first in West's pioneering work. What followed was a series of school-based studies to arrive at the most workable and fruitful strategies, materials and techniques to implement the programme. In my view what mainly distinguishes West's remarkable experiments is what he achieved in those years of tireless efforts in ordinary 'guineapig' classrooms. Parts of what stands out can be referred to under three related headings - reading, ELT materials and vocabulary. Under each of these I shall focus only those aspects where, in my view, he broke new ground.

West and EFL Reading

1. As a reading teacher West set himself the following task: "If we can ensure that every child who begins to study a foreign language shall, at the end of years, be able to derive pleasure from reading it, we shall have ensured that no child who begins a foreign language will ever in the future, be able to regret it afterwards as a waste of time." Having accepted this formidable challenge, he worked to discover and utilize the best possible means to achieve his objective.

The major questions he raised and answered included the following : a) what is good reading and what are its major components ? b) what do people read at different ages and what are their known preferences ? c) does reading in one language help the development of reading skills/habits in another ? d) what must be done to ensure that every learner becomes a habitual reader and having succeeded, continues to build on her/his strengths towards mature reading ?

2. West not only raised the basic issues in reading instruction,

he wanted to make substantial additions to the current understanding of their implications. For his first question he depended on the researches being done on comprehension and speed, on the laboratory studies of eye-span, eye-movements etc., and on the studies of good and bad habits of readers. To answer the second, he made use of the psychological studies of the reading interests of different age-groups adding a few of his own studies in Bengal. In both cases although much of what he found out may be part of today's common knowledge among reading specialists and teachers, the bulk of it was new and useful in his day.

3. What he discovered in answering his third question (c above), however, has a great deal to offer not just to reading in English but, more importantly, to bilingual education in countries like ours. A brief explanatory word therefore becomes necessary.

West spent a lot of time in experimental classrooms to find the best means to improve English Reading abilities. In successive experiments he was able to produce better results especially in silent reading. In one of these experiments he tested the reading abilities of a class of learners in English and in their mother tongue (Bengali). He, then taught them English for about 20 hours. As expected there was sizeable improvement in their ability (=both comprehension and speed) to read English. But there was an unexpected return too - the learners showed even higher gains in their reading of the mother tongue. The obvious inference was that "the practice - effect in English Reading is transferred to Bengali reading." But West studied the gains thus made over a period of time and came to the following conclusion: "Reading ability is a General power. It is not confined to one language: for improvement in the ability to read one language is transferred and shows itself in improvement of the reading of another language." West (1926b).

This major finding i.e. that reading is a 'general power' which transfers from language to language, has obviously received little attention inside India or outside. More recently it has found

support in longitudinal research and study (e.g. the Canadian immersion programme: See Cummins and Swan 1986) and ought to be used as part of a carefully planned programme of 'additive bilingualism' (in which two or more languages can be used cooperatively to serve broadly identical purposes in, for example, academic reading). Curriculum developers working at the Centre and in different states may find it useful to explore the feasibility of such cooperation across languages not only in reading but also perhaps, in the teaching of writing. Doing so appears to have immense possibilities especially in view of the fact that even the tertiary-level student in our country comprehends less well than do his/her counterparts in some other parts of the world.

4. The fourth (last) question above required for an answer not just defensible principles but also worked-out strategies and usable teaching techniques. West attempted both. He designed reading programmes which provided for different reading skills (viz. word recognition, word interpretation, synthesis, grouping and scanning; skimming) and also for different stages of reading that he established, viz. the core vocabulary stage, the skills development stage and the strategic reading stage. He found out that the secret of success in reading lay in giving the learner a 'sense of achievement and 'power' and an awareness of how much and how well s/he was doing at successive stages. Through his rigorously planned materials he systematically provided for these as well as for some of what is now known as 'comprehensible input' (Krashen 1982/1983) by way of, for example, his 'built-in plateau readers.' We shall see more (though certainly not all) of it in looking at parts of what he added to reading materials.

West also brought much new to 'how to teach reading.' A powerful concept that he developed early (West 1914), viz. the principle of 'specific practice'-formed part thereof. Under this principle which found experimental support in several longitudinal studies on the comparison of different methods of language teaching (e.g. Anderson 1947; Agård and Dunkel 1948) and which later

influenced, among others, Harold Palmer and J R Firth, effective teaching focussed on one (sub) skill to the exclusion of all other skills in order to guarantee the swiftest and yet the safest 'transfer of training'. In teaching reading West worked in stages and attempted to build each subsequent stage on the strengths of the stage (s) that preceded it. 'Specific practice' was a main instrument towards it.

A study of what and how much West added to the understanding of reading in a foreign language - its theory and practice - may yet pay rich dividends to planners and practitioners alike.

C. ii. West's ELT Materials-The New Method Readers (NMRs)

a) West's longitudinal studies in Bengali classrooms led him to the conclusion that a good text book could become the kingpin of effective reform. In his view a teacher working in 'difficult circumstances' (West 1960) had to mainly rely on good textbooks to help him do his job well. "Given a good textbook", he wrote "all that the teacher has to do, in most subjects, is to see that the children study it." (West 1926b) Having agreed with H G Wells that "One of the most wasteful things in the world today is the school textbook" (Wells 1903 edition) and found it absolutely necessary to provide it with all those refinements which characterised contemporary scientific inventions, (West 1927), he spent both time and effort to bring such scientific strengths to his English books for schools. Only some aspects of the refinement and rigour that he gave to this important teaching tool can be referred to in this brief paper.

a) In his belief that a textbook had to be kept 'always standing in print' West averred the basic need for experimental editions which had to be trial-tested in ordinary classrooms and revised to meet the needs of ordinary teachers working in 'difficult circumstances'. When he came to the business of textbook writing, he found the industry in the hands of "literary hacks, private tutors,

unemployed lawyers - or less successful schoolmasters." (West 1926b). His study of their theoretical basis showed him a total failure to incorporate the findings of psychology or of the laws of learning: "It is difficult to determine on what principle the present school courses and textbooks are constructed. It is possible that in part they are an inheritance from the period when the psychology of Combe was not wholly dead: certainly they show little sign of special adaptation to any specific need or purpose but resemble rather those general syllabuses which might reasonably be taught to an English boy." (West 1926). He therefore set out to bring to the science and art of textbook design all that was available in the relevant seed-bed sciences. What he achieved at the end of a long period of experimentation and model textbook production gave him the ability and expertise to produce the first ever book on how to write reading materials - 'The Construction of Reading Materials for Teaching a Foreign Language' (West 1927).

b). A different kind of analysis of the EFL books in use in the 1920s showed him that they were either imported from or modelled on the books produced in London for pre-school children or children in their early years in primary schools. Such books presented two major problems to the Indian child: in their subject matter they were meant for 3-5 year olds and therefore predominantly built on 'then-they-lived-happily-ever-after' stories. Such childish materials failed to interest the much older learner. In their vocabulary they contained many words that were difficult to teach in an ordinary classroom, were of little use to the learner and, in many cases, were tied to scenes and situations that were characteristically British. Such books made little appeal to the Bengali teenager in either subject matter or their language.

West's alternative was not a replacement operation where one set of books took the place of another. He went deep into the malaise and produced an answer which gave EFL textbook writing a powerful new concept. Taking help from the psychologist's idea of 'mental age' as opposed to 'chronological age', West built the

concept of the 'mental age (M. A) of the book.' Put in a nutshell the basic principle here was that a textbook must be produced at the same M.A as that of its users : it must suit them in subject matter, in style of presentation and in language. West's own books were meant to serve as models of this view of EFL textbook design.

c) I said above that for his work on the subject matter of EFL textbooks West largely depended on the work of psychologists. Its results though impressive and visible in scores of his school books, many of which became models for his generation, have puzzled some of his critics. Howatt (1984) finds, for example, that West "lost sight of the early emphasis on practical, informative reading with which he started out in Bengal. There are more Robinson Crusoes and Black Beauties in the reader—scheme than 'How to mend a bike' or 'The economics of farming. "Although there is some truth in the criticism, West would perhaps have answered that he allowed the findings of research on 'what interests different age - groups' to decide the titles of his readers. The problem of reconciling learners' wants with their needs is as true today as it was in West's Indian days.

d) For his work on vocabulary selection and control he made use of the findings of word counters, the majority of whom, at that time, were once again psychologists working in the United States. In reality he greatly added to their findings and, in important ways, transformed them for use in EFL materials.

In what he did for word teaching inside EFL textbooks two 'lexical selection principle' and the second 'the lexical distribution principle'. Under the first, West made use of the most frequent words to write his earliest materials. We shall say more on it in the next section. Under the second the new/running words on every printed page appeared in a ratio which was based on well - defined principles. Also, each new word received careful attention ('spaced controlled repetition') to make it part of the learner's growing word-board. The best way to understand the strengths and limitations of the two principles is a study of one or more of West's NMRs which

were widely used in many parts of the world for many years after West left India. All that I can add here, on the basis of my analysis of a few such books, is that they brought mathematical precision to the art of EFL textbook writing. Difficult to emulate some of this rigour was perhaps somewhat unnecessary.

e) Another major addition to EFL textbooks was West's series of supplementary readers which included many 'built-in plateau readers'. The idea of producing such readers was related to West's strong belief that the measure of success in reading instruction lay in the learner's 'sense of achievement and power'. A most productive instrument in this direction was the story-telling material built on the words already known to the learner, reading which gave him/her a sense of conquest without asking for any extra effort in word decipherment. The built-in-plateau reader thus served as a major instrument towards mature reading. West wrote many such readers for his NMRs and derived a number of usable guidelines from doing so. He found out, for example, that it was possible to write any simple narrative within a vocabulary range of 1,000 to 2,500 words and any non-technical reading material within less than 5,000 carefully-selected words. He wrote a few such readers within as few as the first 100-odd words and at the same time, showed the possibilities in using great writings (including many English classics) for elementary-level EFL teaching.

Studies of West's NMRs and other materials should offer many insights to those interested in writing such books for use in our schools.

C. iii) Words

Part of what West gave to word selection is widely known. His A General Service List of English Words (GSL : 1953) is found in most EFL libraries and still used by many of those who write books for ESL/EFL learners. Misunderstanding appears to persist nevertheless and there are genuine scholarly doubts on why he produced what he gave to this important area of language teaching. A few noteworthy points follow :

1. West shared the contemporary view that 'use shows usefulness' and he depended on impressive frequency studies to arrive at what was common and useful. He was certainly opposed to 'language simplification' (Ogden 1930, West et al. 1934, Ogden 1935) especially if it was based on subjective criteria. But although, unlike Palmer, he trusted the findings of objective statistics, his major works on vocabulary study made use of many other criteria besides frequency. His GSL, which is mainly based on a much earlier work (IRVS: 1936), is, for instance, a product of many different criteria and several years of work done in classrooms and countries in Asia and the West. It is more. It is the first such list that attempts to provide guidance on the most useful meanings of the commonest words in English. Although most of the data that supports it is over 50 years old, many of the principles that gave it its special strengths are defensible in the 1980s.

b) West extended the basic principles of word selection to work outside the school level textbooks. His New Method Dictionary (1936) was one such. One of the first such dictionaries for EFL learners, it made use of West's definition 'vocabulary' (1933, 1934) of 1490 words. This vocabulary was arrived at through years of work on writing simplified mysteries within and outside India. Making use of basic vocabularies to define dictionary entries has since become an important, if somewhat controversial part of EFL dictionaries (See Longman 1987 and Collins 1987 for two opposing views and their application to current EFL dictionaries)

c) Producing lists of the commonest words for EFL learners and using them for various purposes was one of West's major aims in English language teaching. Singly or in collaboration he wrote dictionaries of scientific terms (1962) and of spelling (1964); he also produced a supplementary word-list for the writing of popular science and technology which he appended to GSL. He built various courses on conversation (1963-1957) on composition (1921, 1938, -51) and of course on reading at various levels. In all these he made careful use of his research and study of words and their meanings.

Critics have not always seen the point of West's insistence that the EFL learner be taught the essential words first. "It is not entirely clear, however," says Howatt "how using 'common words' makes reading easier for children for whom all the words are unfamiliar anyway. And on the surrender value theory, it could be argued that if words like plight were common in locally-produced texts that they should have been retained in the teaching materials." (Howatt 1984) West's answer, in this case shared by Palmer and others, was in the understanding that the commonest words are the ones that are used to produce ordinary reading materials, that a relatively small number of such words help effective communication and that the commonest words also very often form the basic core of everyday English. As both West and Palmer learnt through lot of study and experimentation, the first three thousand words constitute over 90% of English used in non-technical materials.

d) On word use in EFL materials and on word teaching in EFL classes, West shared a common concern with Palmer. It was the problem of knowing exactly what a word was. Both men realised that word counters had failed to define the word 'word' and so left many problems to teachers and learners. Ordinary English words are multiple-meaning units and very often the commonest of these e. g. 'for' 'make') are the hardest to master because of the range and diversity of their meanings.

Palmer thought of it as mainly a problem in linguistic classification and spent a lot of times and effort in providing a more dependable classification to separate what he called 'less than the word', 'word', 'collocation' etc. West, however, looked at it as a problem in teaching. In his view, 'In counting words we are counting fragments of that which the learner is trying to accomplish, namely some command over language—ability to read, or ability to speak and write the language.' (with Swenson 1934) He also related it to the failures of textbook writing, which created major differences between the authors' claims and the EFL learners' actual

learning burdens. He therefore set himself the task of saving the teacher and learner from all such 'vocabulary falsification'. His answer to this problem was what he called 'word rating scales' (Swenson and West 1934) based on the powers of perception of the user. These scales allowed him to judge new (cognate) words and new meanings of known words according to the degree to which they were 'perceptible', 'inferable', 'expandable' and 'twistable'. Using similar criteria he later built rating scales for spelling and pronunciation also.

Much like Harold Palmer West worked over several decades to bring perfection to the study and teaching of English words. Once again there is so much more to his work on vocabulary and much of it is of great relevance in ELT today.

Summing up: West stood alone among his contemporaries, taking up the cudgels for causes that were often either unpopular or unfashionable. At a time when the dominant groups looked for answers in linguistic research, he understood the need to place curricular decisions within educational and social environments, established schoolroom practices and a whole host of non-linguistic factors and forces. All his life he worked to understand the ordinary schoolroom, allowing it to inform the processes of materials design and methodological reform. If he went wrong in this, as he perhaps did in underestimating the 'average' learner and the 'ordinary' teacher or in taking an exaggerated view of what a reading-only programme could achieve, he did so in full view of the data he collected in his longitudinal studies in ordinary classrooms.

He published his first book in 1914 and was still publishing books and papers in the mid-sixties. In this half century of tireless work he produced numerous textbooks for schools, wrote on most aspects of ELT including testing, grammar teaching, composition and writing speech and conversational English, methodology and syllabus. He wrote theoretical works, practical manuals, scholarly papers and EFL readers.

The above review has been both selective and somewhat too thinly spread out. Its insufficiency notwithstanding, it has perhaps pointed out a few aspects of language and learning to which West made significant additions. For ELT in India today West's work appears to have three lessons which I would like to draw in three brief statements. First, that good ELT must risk allowing theory to be judged in ordinary classroom. Secondly, that curriculum renewal is a problem in education as a whole and not just language education and it therefore has to be based on neutral studies of the educational system in all its essentials. And lastly, that the four areas that West singled out for deep study and analysis, viz. Indian multilingualism, reading and its teaching, vocabulary studies and word teaching and materials design and development, ought to be focussed as much today as they were by him in his day; in this centenary year of West's birth there is once again the need to address the priorities in English language teaching.

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Michael West

When Michael West died in March this year, Dr. W. F. Mackey wrote: 'With his passing, one of the most imaginative ages in the history of language teaching has come to an end'. There can be few who would disagree with that assessment of the man who was for many years the elder statesman of English language teaching. As a publisher who was closely concerned with West's work for the last few years of his life, may I offer a brief tribute through the columns of your journal? I make no attempt to assess West's contribution to language teaching. This has been done by the leading authorities in the field. I should like simply to describe the man I knew, and to comment on one aspect of his work: his 'readers'.

West was already eighty years old when we first met. While travelling down to stay with him in Painswick, where he lived in a converted pub, I was not a little nervous. I suppose I was expecting to meet an intimidating legend. But the small, spritely old gentleman who opened the door quickly put one at one's ease.

One's first impressions of West were of his zest and humour. His enthusiasm for his work remained undiminished to the end. Every morning was spent writing: we spent many concentrated hours working on his books together. The same enthusiasm went into his many other activities. He played an active part in the community life of Painswick, working on committees which looked after old people's homes, hospitals, sporting activities, and the like. He was a keen gardener, with as fine a collection of roses as I have seen. His circle of friends was immense. He knew everyone in Painswick and loved nothing better than a good gossip. Anyone who wishes to gain an insight into the man may like to read a delightful detective story which he wrote: *Death in Cranford*. It has all the ingredients of

a good detective story, is as efficiently organised as was all his work. But the characters of the story are drawn with a sympathy and understanding which are rare indeed in detective stories. West shows us the pride, the weaknesses, the illusions, jealous secrets, and affections of ordinary people. He also shows his abundant pleasure in the good things of life: food and drink, open fires, conversation, the countryside.

The pattern of our meetings seldom varied. First, we would have a long session on his latest books. West took his 'readers' very seriously. This is how he described their origin: 'The *New Method Readers* were a by-product of my Ph.D. thesis: "Bilingualism with special reference to Bengal". In order to teach pupils to read a foreign language, it is necessary to have books for them to read. In India we tried material written for English children, but these books were no use because the vocabulary was too difficult, and the beginning ("cat sat on the mat") too babyish. So we decided to make our own.'

Over the years, West built up a library of over a hundred books: the famous *New Method Supplementary Readers*. West believed that a good story would survive re-telling in simple English. The voluminous fan-mail which he (and his publishers) received suggests that millions of students agreed with him. The best of his readers are probably the ones based on stories which West knew and loved when he was young: the collection of fairy stories, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Treasure Island*, the Rider Haggard stories, *David Copperfield*, and so on. He had a gift for getting to the essence of the plots and the characters in such stories, and conveying that essence in simple language. That gift remained with him to the end, and his versions of *Robin Hood* and *Tom Jones* are as faithful to the originals as anything he wrote. In his philosophy of language teaching, readers played a key part. They not only helped students to develop fluency, but also fired imagination and opened horizons. Whenever we discussed his readers, it was clear that he was thinking of the children who were going to read his books. He wanted, first and foremost, that they should enjoy what they read.

West continually searched for ways to improve his readers. The last time we met, he gave me some revisions of the word-lists which he used as the basis for his readers. (These lists were a variant of his General Service List.) He wanted more words which would help him tell good stories at an elementary level, so we added *fight, knife, lady, shout, sing, soldier, sword* and *win*. Strong, simple words, like the strong, simple stories he told.

After our work sessions, we would relax. This usually meant a brisk walk through Painswick. At least that was the intention. But we would only have travelled a few yards before the first of many friends would be met, hats raised, views exchanged, and compliments paid. Our brisk walk became jerky. When we passed 'those horrible new houses', anathema would be called down upon the architects responsible. A ritual would always be performed outside the church. Pointing with his stick at the wooden stocks, he would consign various prominent politicians to be locked in their grip.

In the evenings he liked to watch the news on television, but if a certain well-known politician chanced to appear, West's deaf aid would be smartly turned off. After dinner he would reminisce. He talked about his grandfather, who had founded Great Ormond Street Hospital early in the nineteenth century. He talked of his days at Marlborough in the 1890s and Christchurch at the turn of the century, and of his experience as a teacher in India before the first world war. (He was Principal of Dacca Training College in 1913, and later became Inspector of Schools in Calcutta.) He also told many good stories of his time as an officer in the 49th Bengal. A possession he showed with pride was a romantic novel called *Claire de Lune*. This was West's first published book; it came out in 1913. One heard too of the difficulties and excitements of his long collaboration with Harold Palmer and Lawrence Fawcett, out of which was to grow his pioneering work in English language teaching. Often, however, he would break into his reminiscing to discuss some point which had escaped his memory of the next project—his mind was rarely off the next book he would write.

He was conservative, and a bit cantankerous. But would that there were more people in English language teaching today who had humanity and deep understanding of your people.

Shortly before he died, West telephoned. 'Everything all right? Got the pictures for those Irish stories? Good. Wanted to make sure. I am soon going to a place where no publisher will ever go. Goodbye.'

1. At what age should Language Study begin?

I deal here with certain points raised by Mr. L. A. Hill of Delhi in a letter printed in *English Language Teaching*, Volume XIII, No. 3. He protests at my "attack on Dr. Penfield's neurological theory that the infant brain is peculiarly absorptive of language" (*E.L.T.*, XII, 4).

In deciding whether foreign language study should be begun in the Primary School or in the High School, we are not so much concerned with 'neurological theory' as with (a) the actual measurements made by the Experimental Psychologist, and (b) the practical implications of the earlier start.

The facts are of two kinds :

- (i) Measurements of the development of learning ability, and
- (ii) Achievement tests in foreign language comparing the progress of the Early Beginner with the Late Beginner.

The facts regarding the development of general intelligence and learning ability are fairly well established and may be found in any book of Educational Psychology. They are thus stated by Vernon (*Measurement of Abilities*, p. 70) : 'The year by year increase of intelligence in an average person seems to be reasonably constant from about 3 to 10 years after which the rate of increase diminishes and the M.A. (Mental Age) units become progressively smaller until a constant level is reached in the neighbourhood of 15 years.' Thompson (*Instinct, Intelligence & Character*, p. 221) gives the peak as 14, 15 or 16. The age at which deterioration begins has been set at about 40; but the tendency is to postpone this age to a considerably later date. This point was discussed in *The American Weekly*

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and a summary of the article may be found in the *The Reader's Digest* (February 1959). A summary of scientific studies of the subject is given in the report of the Conference on Ageing held at the University of Michigan in June 1958. The most quoted reference on this point is 'Adult Learning' (E. L. Thorndike). There is no evidence that the specific memory and other abilities required in language learning run counter to the development of general intelligence; indeed the coefficient of correlation of test results of linguistic factors with 'g' (General Intelligence) is high: 'Different tests may differ considerably in their g saturations . . . French, English, history and the like are also (with Classics) highly saturated' (Vernon: op. cit., p. 142.)

In spite of these facts there remains a very widespread popular belief that the young child is a particularly gifted language-learner as compared with the later beginner. Parents point to the remarkable way in which the young children of Europeans in India or in Africa pick up the native language, and similarly the young children of Indians, Africans and other races who are transplanted into an English-speaking environment.

This Phenomenon is due not to the special aptitude of the child but to the exceptionally favourable circumstances of his learning; the older learner would, with his more matured intelligence and learning ability, excel the child if he were given the same circumstances; but he very seldom is.

The ideal requirements for language-learning are—

1. *Strong Motivation.* Unless the young child alone in a foreign group acquires the language of his playmates he cannot join in the activities of the group in which he is a very small minority. (There is no such motivation in classroom learning at an early age.)

2. *Realistic Learning.* The young picker-up is learning the language in a real environment with real things and actual actions (not in the sterile environment of a classroom.)

3. *Practice in Speaking.* The young picker-up of language is speaking in duologue—one person to one person—or one person (himself) to various members of a group (whereas in the classroom the pupil is one of thirty or more speakers. In the classroom, allowing for teacher-talking-time he gets one-thirtieth of 30 minutes Individual Pupil-talking-time (—one minute per hour) and Mass drills are not so effective as actual one-to-one conversation.)

4. *Spaced Practice.* The major problem in language work is (not Learning but) Not Forgetting. The curve of forgetting found in every textbook of educational psychology, e.g. 'Memory' by Ian M.L. Hunter, Pelican, page 29ff) shows a very rapid initial fall in number of items still recalled which very gradually flattens out so that more is forgotten in the first hour or few hours after learning than in the subsequent days. The picker-up is using the language on and off all day and every day so that he is constantly being reminded: his loss by forgetting is very small compared with the classroom child who has one class period with all the rest of the day to forget it in, and all Sunday as a help in forgetting the week's work, and periodical holidays and vacations to ensure the maximum possible loss.

The remarkable achievement of the young learner as noticed by 'parents, teachers and educational administrator' is, we believe, due simply and solely to these enormous advantages. These advantages are not always found in the case of the immigrant. The immigrant is sometimes handicapped by just this fallacious delusion which we are discussing—the belief that he is 'too old to learn': that childhood is the only effective period for language learning. More important than this, he tends to be one of a group and to spend much of his time speaking his own language to other members of the group: he may even form an encysted foreign settlement impervious to linguistic assimilation. The correct adult parallel to the child picker-up would be the Indian or African wife of an English-speaking person introduced into an all-English-speaking environment. Here she would have the same favourable circumstances as the child, with the more

developed intelligence of the adult in seeking out every opportunity of converse, as well as a more conscious motivation. Given the same circumstances the older learner must inevitably prove superior.

We have shown that none of these favourable circumstances apply to the *young classroom learner*. He has no strong motivation (save in an exceptional case noted below) ; his environment is unrealistic, a mere injection of foreign language into his mothertongue world. He has far less opportunity for practice ; his practice is not spaced, so that he loses much by forgetting. Inevitably, considering the lower stage of his mental development, he is a less effective learner than the older child—as is confirmed by an elaborate investigation of this exact point detailed in the report of the American and Canadian Committees in Foreign Language Study (The Macmillan Co., 1931) : 'Achievement Tests in Foreign Language', by V. A. Henmon. The achievements of Early Beginners and Late Beginners are compared, and it is to be noted that Early Beginners tend to be pupils of private fee-paying schools and of rather superior social and educational origin. Professor R. Herndon Fife sums up the outcome of these researches, made in England, Canada and U.S., as follows : 'The results (of tests) reveal that by the end of 4½ years the group which began in Secondary School had overcome the initial advantage of the other two groups (of earlier beginners) and the norms of all three tended to be the same.'

The factual evidence of these tests is thus all against the early beginning ; but Mr. Hill implies some general educational and perhaps political reasons for the early beginning. In spite of the Primary Schools pupil's disadvantage as a language learner compared with the older pupil, it may yet be necessary or desirable to introduce the language at the earlier stage so as to increase the tendency of High School pupils to pursue the study or in some way to facilitate their work. We have to consider the practical implications of this.

This ideal requirements of foreign language teaching are (i) a small class, (ii) a well graded class and (iii) a good teacher. Classes in Primary Schools in the city tend to be large, and all Primary classes

tend to be ill-graded, containing some pupils who are incapable of mastering the speech of a foreign language, some who might acquire no more than a usable reading ability, and some who cannot hope even to do that. Moreover a considerable proportion of the pupils where primary education is compulsory or at any rate free are such as will not need English in their later lives.

The pupils may not in fact need English, may not have any prospect of being able to learn it ; but their parents may think otherwise. A correspondent from Canada tells of an almost hysterical demand for foreign language study in the junior classes, and the same phenomenon may persist in India. This writer as an Inspector of Schools remembers when, unexpectedly approaching a Primary School from the back, he was greeted by a shower of English books thrown out of the windows : the British government discouraged English teaching at the Primary level. Perhaps this belief in the special aptitude of the young child as a language learner is one of those delusions so deeply rooted that it must perforce be humoured.

If this is to be done the major problem would be the supply of English teachers. The supply of good English teachers for the High Schools is very inadequate ; if those available are to be spread out over the Primary grades the situation would become even worse than it is. BUT, if that supply of teachers in the High School is so inadequate, we might perhaps take advantage of this demand for English in the Primary grades to economize the time of the English teacher in the High School. It would save a great deal of the precious time of the English teacher in the High School if his pupils came to him already able to read sufficiently to make use of a textbook. No great measure of skill or knowledge is required in the Primary Teacher in order to achieve this.

There are two difficulties here. Even with a course which aims merely at reading ability there must be some oral beginning, even if it is no more than that contained in the first twelve Berlitz lessons or Palmer's Practice Book Lessons 1 to 5 : ('This is a/my.... Show

me.... Where is....?, There is a....on/in/....'; & c.). Perhaps with a very simple 'Teacher's Book' the untrained teacher might be able to do this even if the pronunciation will need a lot of correction later on. Teaching to read after this initial oral stage is mainly a matter of a textbook such as the New Method Primer or other no doubt better books aimed primarily at reading. The difficulty is to get the teacher to stick to that aim and not to attempt to produce active uses of the language with which he is unqualified to cope. For this reason it is undesirable that such a Primary Reading course should go very far. The further it goes the greater is the danger that the teacher will take to the sterile methods of the inadequate language teacher, formal grammar and translation, and not only waste the time of his pupils but engender also a distaste for further study. Something of the sort suggested above, an initial purely reading course going no further than a vocabulary of some 300-400 head words with no emphasis on or test of the active use of the language, might be helpful in acting as a placebo for the public and a stimulus to, as well as time-saver in, later study in the High School.

We have, in conclusion, to consider a special case in which active study of the language in the early stage is necessary in spite of the cost to the pupil. He could learn the language much more rapidly and effectively if he started later but he *must* learn it now. This special case is, of course, the multilingual area and one in which the native language is incapable of dealing with the content of even the most elementary education. All the children must learn English in order that they may be taught through the medium of English. Such children are inevitably handicapped as compared with the unilingual child of an adequate mother-tongue. Many who can ill afford the time have to learn two forms of expression where the other child can do with one. But, although their learning-ability is below its peak, they have this one advantage with the other child — intense motivation; even at this early age they know and feel how essentially necessary it is: in this respect they are in the position of the picker-up who must speak or starve.

2. Bilingualism

These General remarks on the subject of Bilingualism are included in *ELT* in the hope that they will evoke notes on the language situation from persons working in various bilingual areas. It will be of interest to observe how far those notes confirm or contradict the statements below.

(It is hoped that the notes will be brief so that a wide area may be surveyed in the subsequent article.)

* * * *

'Bilingualism' tends to be rather a political than a linguistic term, a sop to rival language-groups in an area. It tends to imply an equal facility in either language on all subjects. This in fact is never, or almost never, the case. The two languages always tend to become specialized: the one language (which we will call the *In* Language) is predominantly the language of the home and the other (the *Ex*-Language) is the language of the school, and later of affairs. Even in the classic case of Louis Ronjat, in which each parent consistently addressed the child from the earliest age in his/her own language, the two languages ultimately become specialized in this way. The father's language became specialized as the *Ex* language.

Such specialization is to be encouraged since otherwise there is duplication of function. Moreover, the *Ex* language, being free from the emotive connotations of the *In* language, is more effective in dealing with the factual situations of life outside the home.

Where the two languages are thus specialized bilingualism is not necessarily a great disadvantage. Even in a monolingual person the languages of the home and of the profession or office are very different.

There are, however, three grave disadvantages of bilingualism. The first is the danger of degradation of the In language. It tends to become an inaccurate dialect. Thus, in Gibraltar the In language is Spanish, but it is a dialect of a dialect (Andalusian which is itself the comic dialect often parodied on the stage). Hence the intellectual classes tend to express themselves in the socially more respected Ex language; hence there is no filtration of ideas from them into the In language, and the In language does not develop a literature. Lacking any literature expressed in the language of the home the people tend to become emotionally warped or sterilized.

The second disadvantage is the effect upon the substandard child. Children who in a monolingual country would not learn any second language are compelled to study the Ex language in a bilingual country. They cannot really spare the time or energy for this without sacrifice of other more essentially necessary accomplishments; moreover many of them fail to attain any usable mastery over the second language and their studies are a dead loss.

The third disadvantage is the elimination from higher studies of the gifted pupil who lacks language-learning ability. This happens to some extent in the monolingual country where all students are required to pass an examination in Latin or some other foreign language in order to be admitted into the University. Had Newton been unable to learn Latin, he might have remained a farm labourer or mechanic.

Bilingualism is certainly no advantage to any country as a whole, and a policy of artificial bilingualism, as in Ireland, is to be deplored unless it is restricted to the real aim which motivates it. That aim is the preservation of national individuality and tradition. For this purpose the main emphasis should be on the creation of reading ability, speech being very limited and a mere preparation for reading. National spirit and tradition are achieved in such a case rather by reading the literature than by discussing everyday affairs in a language which survives as living speech only in a few rural areas and which indeed often lacks the vocabulary required.

A second form of artificial bilingualism is seen in upper-class families where the Ex language is used in the home with the intention of helping the children to become proficient in it at school and outside the home. This is a very undesirable practice, since it tends to degrade the In language, and to use the Ex language for an unsuitable purpose. It tends to produce the denationalized individual who is Indian (African, etc.) only in appearance but neither the one national nor the other in soul. Moreover the practice is based upon the fallacy that early childhood is the most favourable time for language learning. Studies in Canada and elsewhere and Thorndike's studies of adult learning show that this is not a fact. There is little or no decline in language-learning ability up to the age of twenty or even beyond. The all important factor in language learning is motive. Thus the adult refugee picks up more English in a year than he would learn in six or eight years or even ever unwillingly at school.

Recognizing bilingualism as an inevitable disadvantage, what are the best means of mitigating its evils? The following measures are suggested:

1. Start the learning of the Ex language as late as possible so that the less gifted have been eliminated, and the residue have a realized motive for learning. Moreover, the number of competent teachers being limited, this selected body of learners can be effectively taught.
2. Specialize the function of the Ex language. Do not teach it as if the learner were going to live in England or use it in his home. Build up an adequate set of structures and a neutral undomesticated vocabulary. Stress reading especially for the acquisition of fact rather than for emotive values as in poetry and belles-lettres. Such ability to read is in most cases of greater practical value and in all cases of greater educational value than the ability to speak.
3. The main difficulty in language-learning is not so much Remembering as Not Forgetting. The first year of language

learning should be highly concentrated, as many periods as possible per diem being given to it. Three periods a day for one year are worth far more than one period a day for three years. After this flying start aimed at the acquisition of a minimum vocabulary and real mastery in its use, periods may be reduced. Once the fundamental skill has been attained the rest is merely extension and improvement to such a smaller or larger extent as is demanded by the pupil's circumstances and ambition.

There are two main obstacles in the way of a sound and realistic language policy in a bilingual country. The first is the use of Ex language-teaching as a mistaken form of propaganda. The Ex language should not be taught with the object of making the learner a semi-Ex national but because the language is a necessary and practical complement to his In language personality.

Secondly, there are the social ambitions and demands of the parents. There is some social distinction in being able to say 'MY child is learning English' even if the child is at an age at which foreign language teaching is relatively ineffective and disadvantageous, and even if the child is not certain to be able to master a second language or likely to need it in his future career. If the Government schools do not provide language teaching in their infant classes, the parents boycott them and send their children elsewhere.

The best solution of this difficulty is, perhaps, to give in these lower classes some English teaching as a *placebo*. For that purpose after a brief oral beginning, a reading course is most suitable since it makes little demand on the skill or knowledge of the teacher and the pupil is more likely to reach some achievement recognizable as such by the pupil and his parents.

3. Learning English as Behaviour

The Problem

This article discusses a certain theory of language learning (which we may call the 'Realistic Method') and describes the construction of teaching material designed to test it.

Language is a form of behaviour : it is a reaction of the organism as a whole to a social environment. Words are only part of that reaction, which includes also posture, facial expression, gesture, and in the linguistic part there are pauses, intonation, exclamatory noises. All these things, together with words go to make up a total of which language as taught in the classroom is a lifeless and unrealistic distillation.

Would a 'Realistic' method which would include all these elements if used even from the earliest stage, make language learning more interesting? This perhaps it would. Would it also make it easier? Would it produce less loss by forgetting? Would it produce a more natural use of the language in the later stages, a use more closely related to that of persons who employ the language as a mothertongue?

Assuming that there may be advantages to be obtained from teaching a language as behaviour from the earliest or from a very early stage—How should this be done? and What is the earliest stage at which this method can be used?

The Relation of Language and Behaviour

The earliest language of the child in infancy is purely behaviour. Words are added which make the self-expression more exact and

enable the speaker to deal with concepts. As time goes on behaviour is diminished and modified as an element in language, but it still retains its emotive function. Indeed the more emotional the context, the more does behaviour rather than words express it; but there is a feeling tone in all conversational situations which interprets and gives value to the verbal expression.

Take the following conversation :

X. Excuse me, what is this ?

Y. That ?

X. Yes. What is the English word ?

Y. That ? That's a ball-pen.

This conversation may have four different interpretations according as X is timid or aggressive and according as Y is co-operative or bored and brusque.

Foreign language learners in the early stages are learning merely a language without a behaviour pattern; hence their language work is to some extent unreal and uninteresting. As they progress they must use *some* behaviour pattern, and they therefore fit on their own behaviour pattern, that of the mother-tongue, to the foreign language. In fact they speak English as a Frenchman (or Indian, African etc.). In the final stages they may perhaps endeavour to fit the foreign language behaviour on to the foreign language, to speak English as an Englishman; but in order to do this they must uproot the previously used mother-tongue behaviour as fitted on to the foreign language, and such an uprooting is never wholly successful.

The earlier we can introduce behaviour into language teaching the more successful the final outcome will be in respect of realism and naturalism in the end product.

The Need for Behaviour

As has been discussed elsewhere (*E.L.T.*, XII, 4, 1958, 'Factual English')² there are some learners who do not require any behavioural

2. This essay is included in this volume.

element in their foreign language, though it is possible that some behavioural treatment might facilitate their learning. Those who have need of the behavioural element are :

(i) *The Immigrant*. The immigrant needs social adaptation. A behavioural element protects him against becoming encysted in the community of his own people. The better his social adaptation is, the more he will be able to learn the language outside the classroom by making contact with and speaking to the natives of the country.

(ii) *The Student*. Students coming to this country to study in universities or technical colleges would obviously benefit very greatly from a prior course in English as a form of behaviour so that they might make social contact on their arrival. It is probable that social contact depends much more on correctness of behaviour than on mere correctness of language. An Indian might speak English extremely correctly yet be hampered by the un-English behavioural element in his conversation, whereas a very incorrect speaker (e.g. of a dialect) is acceptable because the non-verbal part of his conversation is congenial, and normal.

(iii) *Foreign Students sent to England to 'improve their English'*. What can these students learn here in England which they cannot learn in their own country? So far as pronunciation and structure are concerned they can get that in their own schools and colleges. What they can acquire in Britain, which they cannot readily get elsewhere, is this behavioural aspect of language; but we know of no systematic course designed to teach that alone, nor any course which lays a very special emphasis on the non-verbal behavioural requirements.

(iv) *Students of English 'as an education'*. One of the reasons for learning a foreign language stated in books on Education is that it gives 'understanding of a foreign people'. Those who merely learn the language as a form of verbal expression do not get such understanding: the understanding of a people is the understanding of their

emotions, their feeling tone and ways of conveying them—for example, the Englishman's tendency to over-express mild emotions and under-express strong ones. In order to understand the English it is not enough to know *what* they speak but *how* they speak, or rather how they converse.

Behaviour as a Factor in Learning a Language

In *English Language Teaching* (XIV, 2, 1960, p. 75). Dr. Lee writes: 'My own very young children, copying with the same bilingual environment which I had coped with, picked up the foreign language with much greater accuracy and speed'. It is a general experience that young children do pick up a foreign language remarkably quickly (though this is not an argument for introducing classroom teaching of the foreign language at an early age: *ELT*, XIV, 1). Is it possible that the adult, learning a language in a foreign environment, and the young child picking up the language in the same environment are really doing two different things? The adult is imbibing a linguistic distillation from the environment, whereas the child is making a behavioural adjustment to the environment, of which adjustment language is only a part. The adult may speak words more correctly than the child, but the child *behaves* the language more naturally: it is a part of him an adjustment of himself, not a mere added skill.

Behavioural Learning and the Problem of Forgetting

It has been said that language-learning is not so much a matter of remembering as a matter of not forgetting, that language-learning is like trying to fill a bucket with a hole in it, and well-distributed practices and frequent revisions are advocated as a counter-measure to this.

One of the earliest symptoms of increasing age is the failure of verbal memory. Names of people fade away, whereas on the contrary it has been noted by those who have to deal with such cases that behavioural patterns (with their attached word, e.g. 'Thank you,

'Good morning', 'Please sit down'....etc.) persist even in the most advanced stages of senile decay and even of acute neuroses. This suggests the possibility that a language learnt merely as a set of words, phrases and structures might be more evanescent than a language learnt realistically as behaviour, and that perhaps a behavioural method of language-teaching might make language-learning not only more interesting in the early stages but more permanent—and possibly quicker because of the diminished loss through forgetting. This hypothesis may be worthy of experiment.

Combined Procedure

The classroom learner using a logical build-up of structures and a carefully selected vocabulary acquires a correct but perhaps lifeless command of the language, whereas the picker-up getting his grammar and vocabulary in order of need, selected only by need and uncorrected by any book or master, may tend to acquire an incorrect though vital command of the language including a repertory of behaviourism—such as the Non-verbal exclamations, Social clichés, Delay words, Emphasis scales, which are not to be found in the grammars or textbooks of the classroom.

In a behavioural method of teaching it is necessary to combine these two things and get the advantages of both—to get a correct and systematic build-up of linguistic elements and to join on to it or combine with it in some way a vital and behavioural use of the language.

Thus in the classroom drill we have 'Put your book on the desk', 'Put your pen in your book—Where is your book?—Where is your pen?' The behavioural adjunct has a dialogue between a man and his wife hunting for lost spectacles (see Example below), or a mother telling her daughter where to put various things in the kitchen. Where the classroom has 'Open the door—What have you done?', 'I have opened the door: the door is open' etc., etc., we may have a mistress asking a servant 'Have you washed the....? Have you put away the....?

Have you done (various household tasks)?' Or we may have the return of holidaymakers finding some Good Fairy has made all ready for them and we have their exclamations of pleased surprise.

Our first attempt on these lines was not wholly satisfactory. We endeavoured to get the order of vocabulary and structures by drafting the dialogues and then 'writing back' from them, that is to say, finding what a dialogue required in the way of structural and other linguistic elements and then leading up to it with drill and classroom procedures. This produced a chaotic result. It is better to take a fixed linguistic course and to build on to it, to make the behaviourist adjust himself to the linguist rather than the reverse. There should be a co-operative work, a linguist and a behaviourist quarrelling together and evolving something which may suit both.

In the present experiment *faute de mieux* it was necessary to take some ready-prepared linguistic course and build on to that. For this purpose Palmer's Practice Books were used; these present a fully worked out and detailed system, whereas the ordinary Teacher's Book plus Class book course leave so much latitude to the teacher that they are not an adequate guide.

The Behaviour Dialogue

Linguistic behaviour demands two personalities, a situation, and feeling tones. The feeling tones are those which would be produced by those personalities; for this reason a serial system as employed by the B.B.C. and some gramophone courses is not satisfactory. Where one has a family carrying on from lesson to lesson one does not get sufficient variety of feeling nor can one adjust the feeling to the particular linguistic problem. Each dialogue must use new personalities selected and adjusted to the requirements of the linguistic elements embodied in the situation. Thus we may have the policeman who is in a hurry and wants to get back to his tea and the fussy and meticulous observer of an accident, the dictatorial doctor with the resentful patient who is not willing to accept his dietetic vetoes; so

also the shopper who cannot make up her mind and the exasperated salesman.

A dialogue must be short and pointed. It was found in a previous experiment (in using a book called *Improve your English* Longmans) that not more than eight exchanges should ever be used, indeed it is better to have less. This is necessary because the dialogue has to be thoroughly mastered.

At first the idea was to have it learnt by heart, and to supply guide words for the weaker members which would help them in reproducing it. This, however, was a bad system because guide words caused the learners to look down at the book, whereas in conversation one should look up at the person whom one is addressing. Moreover learning by heart may, if overdone, tend to produce a parrot production of the dialogue without thought of the meaning, such as is found in actors performing a play towards the end of a long run. The best procedure seems to be to have the dialogues learnt by the read-and look-up method. The dialogue is sufficiently memorized so that each speaker can take a quick glance at the book while the other person is speaking and then look up and speak to him. There is an absolute rule—'Never speak when you are looking at the book.' Those who have memorized the passage fairly well may be able to dispense with these prompting glances.

The Score versus the Libretto

Behavioural dialogue differs from an excerpt from a play in this respect, that it is a Score, whereas an excerpt from dramatic material is a mere Libretto. Different actors may perform a play in many different ways, but the behavioural dialogue shows completely in every respect exactly how this piece of behaviour is to be done: the stresses, rhythm, and pauses are marked; also the neutral vowels (because very often a half-stress is given merely by not neutralizing

a vowel which would otherwise be neutralized); and there is the intonation. This must be shown in full detail, for which purpose Roger Kingdon's system is very convenient as it does not involve the use of any special type nor disfigure the page.

All this is not sufficient because it is necessary to explain why the speaker pauses or gives a certain intonation. It is necessary to add, as it were, stage directions, e.g. where they look up, because the intonation depends very often on looking up. Indeed, for perfection one needs not only the carefully marked and annotated score but also a gramophone record; and even that is not enough. Ideally one needs television or a film so that the pupil may not merely hear how the English language is behaved but see it behaved as well.

Difference of vocabulary between a linguistic and a behavioural course.

In the present instance the two Palmer's Practice Books have a vocabulary of about 720 words, whereas the dialogues based upon them have a vocabulary of 940. Of these there are about 150 head words used in the dialogues which are not used in the Practice Books. But these figures have little meaning because it is almost impossible to count the items of a behavioural course: there are so many delicate shades of meaning. Thus the non-verbal *H'm* has four different meanings.

The main differences in behavioural vocabulary are:

- (i) *Politeness and Conversational Cliches.* For example, 'Oh, I don't know', as a polite contradiction.
- (ii) *The Non-verbals.* These are 36 in number, having 53 meanings. They are discussed in a separate article.
- (iii) It is necessary to bring in some high-power words, such as 'Terrible', for use in expressing low-power emotions, and similarly it is necessary to introduce some very low-power words, such as 'Cross'

(=angry), and 'Not bad' (=very good) in order to cope with high-power emotions.

It is inevitably necessary to introduce a certain number of words outside the desired vocabulary range, but these can be kept few in number. Thus we have Foods (e.g., mutton, cabbage) 6; Environmental (table-cloth, stool) 7; Displaced (genuine, financial) 4, and Ad hocs—words not indexed as of no vocabulary-value (e.g., Leap year, Guy) 6.

There are some 62 different feeling-tones in the 100 dialogues, some specific to the situation, others arising incidentally. Thus we have the following: abashment, admiration, alarm, amusement, anger, anxiety, appreciation, archness; complaint, confidence, confidential speech, contempt, contentment, coyness; despair, dignity, disgust, dislike, distress, distrust, doubt; evasiveness, exasperation, excited, gossip, excited pursuit; fear, frustration; gratification, gratitude; hate; indecision, impatience, indignation, irritation; lack of interest; misunderstanding, mockery; pain, paternal attitude, plausibility, pompousness, protest, puzzlement; quarrel; reassurance, rebuke, relief, resignation; secretary, self-admiration, self-pity, shame, shock, show off, shyness, surprise, suspicion; timidity; unwilling assent; warning, weariness.

Grammar displacements

In the present instance it was necessary to follow the order of tenses, etc., as in Palmer, but if we were doing the work again some argument would be required between the linguist and the behaviourist as to order. For example, the question expressed only by intonation is extremely common and should come in at a very early stage. The Present Continuous tense is not an early necessity: 'What are you doing?'—You can see what he's doing; In conversation, expressions of intention are very common and need variety: for example, 'I go to Paris on Wednesday'—the future use of the present tense seems to have a higher place than is usually accorded to it. The present perfect of state (but not of indefinite past action)

needs to come in early—'I have opened the door', and the present perfect continuous — 'What have you been doing?' 'I've been painting the small back room'. The simple past is only occasional. Who and Whom, Shall and Will, Should and Would, naturally present a problem because the conversational usage differs from what the students are accustomed to find in their books.

The Next Stage

No doubt this work will be useful to the more advanced students in making their use of the language more realistic and more true to the behaviour pattern of those for whom it is a mother-tongue. This, however, is known already from a previous attempt. The very interesting question is whether this Realistic Method could be used much earlier, or even from the start.

The vocabulary of these dialogues is controlled, being built up from zero, and structural drills have been added, but neither structurally nor in respect of vocabulary do they with their drills provide a Minimum Adequate Course. They provide rather an experiment in method.

School teachers may like to devise and use Behavioural End-pieces for their normal class lessons and observe the effect on interest and retention.

A fully satisfactory Realistic Minimum Adequate Course has yet to be devised.

EXAMPLE

The Lesson

Put your (1) (2) your (3). Where is your (1)? My (1) is (2) my (3).

1. (pen, pencil, right hand, etc.)
2. (on, in, under, behind, etc.)
3. (book, desk, seat, pocket, head, etc.)

The Libretto

The dialogue as below but without any markings or 'stage directions'.

The Score

X is an old man. Y is his wife: she is bored because X is *always* losing his glasses. Y, sitting in front of the fire, has her back to X who is sitting near the table. X speaks more and more irritably—Y speaks quietly in a bored manner.

(Intonation marks omitted)

X 'Where are my 'glasses ?

Y 'Look on the 'table.

X They are 'not on the 'table.

Y Hh! (*sigh*) then / look 'under the 'table,.....in 'front of your 'chair.

X 'No ! Not 'under the 'table. Where "ARE they ?!

Y Be'hind you, /'in your 'chair.

X Oh 'yes. (*He gets up*) 'No! They are 'not in the 'chair.

Y Then they *are* 'out in the 'garden.

X They are "NOT ! They are ,somewhere/"IN/"THIS/"ROOM !

Y 'Ha ! 'In your "pocket. "That's where they 'are !

X 'Not in 'this pocket....'Not in 'that....'Oh ! 'Here they are !

Y 'Where? (*she turns round*)

X 'On my 'nose !

Y "Well !! (*anger*) "Heh !! (*Resignation.*)

4. Language Without Words

An article by Byron W. Bender on 'Pretences in Language-Teaching' and one by Sir James Pitman on 'Communication by Signs' have reminded me of some experiments made many years ago in India. These may be of interest (or, at least, amusement) to language-teachers today, whether as a subject for further experiment or as a pleasant diversion from the customary question and answer lesson.

Dr. Bender writes of the 'Pretence at the beginning that the teacher and students have no language in common'. The fundamental problem in teaching a foreign language is of exciting a wordless idea in the learner's mind and attaching a foreign word to it. The ideal way of doing this would be by telepathy, as in science fiction; but, since that is not possible, the teacher has to use objects available in the classroom, or pictures, or actions. This procedure is fully described in H. E. Palmer's book *English through Actions* (Longmans, 1959).

This procedure has three disadvantages :

- 1) It tends to produce an undue proportion of *teacher talking time*. A language is learnt by listening and by practising; but, as in acquiring any skill, much more time has to be devoted to practising than to observation of the model. In the oral lessons as indicated by Palmer at least 60 per cent of the time tends to be T.T.T., but usually more than that.
- 2) The range of vocabulary is necessarily rather limited.
- 3) The conversation does not take place in a situation, with the inevitable emotional tinge or feeling tone but tends to be disjointed and unrealistic in the sterile environment of the classroom.

Is there any way (other than telepathy) whereby one might tell a story to the class and then silently project the successive ideas of that story into the minds of the learners so that they might reproduce it fully and correctly ?

The thought of this problem brought back to me an incident which I observed when visiting the School for the Deaf in Manchester with a group of students. I came out of the room alone and one boy pointed to me questioningly. The other answered *One finger : Waggle all fingers : Show a square with his hands : Point with thumb over shoulder*. (He's one of that crowd in the room we've just come out of.) The thumb gave the idea of past tense.)

I visited the small local School for the Deaf in Dacca (Bangladesh) to see if they had a similar sign language. The two teachers (one=sign of spectacles, and the other=sign of large abdomen) were very helpful and, among other information, they got a boy to tell me the following story :

Two men (*show two fingers*) lived (*move left hand quickly over heart*) in a house (*finger making a roof*) near (*palms close together*) a river (*way downwards movement*). One man (*one finger*) took (*hands moved inwards*) his net (*criss-cross with finger*) and went (*walking movement with hands*) to (*point*) the river (*as above*). He threw (*over-arm motion*) his net (*as above*) into (*point down*) the river (*as above*). A crocodile (*elbows together, fingers as teeth*) seized his leg (*mime*). He shouted (*hand to open mouth*). The other man ran (*movement of hands*) from the hut (*hut sign : point to it*) to the river (*point : then river sign*). [After this a mime showed forcing open the jaws with hands and foot, and carrying the man back to the hut].

The teacher can tell this story to the class, accompanying it by the gesture signs and making sure (with sketches or occasional use of the mother tongue) that it is understood. He then uses the gesture signs for *prompted recall*—orally, or, with a more advanced class he may give silent dictation.

This does not mean that the teacher or the class have to learn the sign language: the ideas are easily recalled by the gestures which were given when telling the story.

It is not difficult to invent one's own signs, once one gets an idea of the technique. There is, in fact, no standard sign language of the deaf: it grows up, against the wishes of the teacher, like schoolboy slang in each school; but pictures of 450 signs of the south-eastern British dialect may be found in *The Language of the Silent World*. A visit to a school for the deaf and dumb is not only desirable, but also very interesting.

Jacques Barzun emphasizes that good teaching of a foreign language requires some 'dramatic flair'. The use of gesture language, to be effective, may need some of this flair, and there are some teachers, especially in the Orient, who might find it 'undignified'. Moreover, it demands continuous activity of the teacher. He cannot leave the learners to practise by themselves.

We need some prompt which, written on the blackboard or on a big piece of paper, will serve as an aid to the learner in reproducing material which he has already heard. But the Second Pretence of Dr Bender is 'The pretence that the language being studied is unwritten'.

The *strip cartoon* is useful only in the later stages when learners are able to frame sentences for themselves: with beginners one needs to record not only the exact sequence of ideas but also the form of the sentence. One can use 'guide words' (a few key-words with dots indicating intervening omissions); but guide words assume a written language. Can we have guide words without words, the written skeleton of a story in an unwritten language?

The answer is *glyphs*. The United Nations in *International Cooperation Year, 1954* seeks to encourage the use of glyphs (e.g. traffic signs, hospital, toilet, radioactive, etc., etc.) 'Icograda' is a student project having a similar aim. These signs are not, but

should be, internationalized. The Society for Experiment in Deaf Education is endeavouring to extend the range of the vocabulary of glyphs. Sir James Pitman in an article in *The New Scientist* doubts the possibility of this. But for our purpose we do not need to look to the future for a solution to our problem; it was solved many thousands of years ago—namely in the pictographic and ideographic symbols which preceded and led up to the alphabet.

Sir James points out that for purposes of communication it would be necessary to memorize at least some 800 symbols; but in our present instance the symbols are (as in the case of the gesture) used only as *reminders*, their meaning having been already given in the first telling of the story. And, since we are not communicating, it is not necessary to employ standardized symbols: it is not necessary for the teacher to acquire a compendium of Chinese or Semitic symbols. He may devise his own, as I did in my experiment, and he may find much amusement in doing so. My original experiment is reported, with pictographs, in *Language in Education* (Longmans), but as that book is out of print I give here a translation of part of the gesture story into pictographs. In my original experiment I found it useful to use some conventions: a line under a noun showed plural; ← under a verb = past tense, → = future: ' (apostrophe) shows possession or possessive pronoun: an asterisk showed symbolic meaning, e.g. ○ = sun, ○* = day, ←
 difficult word, e.g. 'lived', one might use merely the initial letter, although *sit** or *heart** might serve. There is a sign for *he*, but to save trouble it may be written.

Dots show omitted English words.

2 men lived in a hut near a river

 The pictographs consist of: the number '2', a stick figure, a person sitting on a stool, a circle with a dot inside, a house, a curved arrow pointing from the hut towards the river, another circle with a dot inside, a wavy line representing a river, and a plus sign.

One man took his net and went to the river

 The pictographs consist of: the number '1', a stick figure, a person carrying a net on their back, a grid representing a net, an ampersand, a stick figure walking, an arrow pointing right, a circle with a dot inside, a wavy line representing a river, and a plus sign.

He threw his net into the river. A crocodile came

 The pictographs consist of: a stick figure throwing a net, a grid representing a net, a circle with a dot inside, a wavy line representing a river, a plus sign, a circle with a dot inside, a wavy line representing a river, a plus sign, and a crocodile.

It seized his leg. He shouted

 The pictographs consist of: a circle with a dot inside, a wavy line representing a river, a plus sign, a stick figure with an arrow pointing to its leg, a plus sign, a stick figure with an open mouth, and a plus sign.

As the teacher tells the story he writes (or points to) the pictographs on the blackboard. Then he says 'Look at the signs and practise telling the story, and then I will test you.' And, if they are able, they may then write it.

It would be interesting to hear if any teachers have found these ideas helpful.

5. Factual English

During the period of British rule in India, English was taught as a language of literature. From school text-books which had a rather literary bias and contained poetry, the learner proceeded to the anthology and the set book or books, and thence to a B.A. with literary English as a subject. To some extent this remains today. The teachers are accustomed to it; it is readily amenable to classroom treatment; it is easy to examine.

Lately there has been some swing towards oral methods. English, like all other languages, 'is essentially a means of oral communication, a medium of conversation. Only secondarily is it a language of reading and writing. A word in itself has no meaning: it derives its meaning from the situation: with one intonation and in one setting it means one thing; otherwise another—or another. Hence the spoken phrase and its situation are primary and essential elements in learning.' Such is the argument upon which the oral or 'Linguistic' method is based.

We believe that neither of these approaches completely covers the needs of the present day. Both cover the needs of some, but both the groups so covered are very limited—both those to whom English is a language purely of literature (as are Latin, and Sanskrit) and those who have occasion to have personal intercourse and hold conversations in English.

There is a large and ever-expanding group to whom English is merely a medium of factual intercommunication both spoken and printed. These are the students in schools and colleges of science and technology, and the workers in factories and laboratories. At present English is a subject in the courses of these schools and colleges; but it is taught by teachers who have grown up in the

literary tradition and they teach it as literature using literary textbooks. More rarely the teacher is a modernist, a follower of the Linguistic Method who believes in the spoken phrase and sentence as a unit and minimizes the importance of the mere 'lexicographical word'.

Requirements of the Student of Science and Technology

Let us endeavour to set out just what are the requirements of this group: What do they need? and What do they not need?

The teacher has to convey facts of science or technology to a class which may consist of students of three or four or more different mother-tongues. He has to explain and use a number of English technical terms. We say 'English' because, though most of these terms are of classical origin and international usage, he gets them from English, the most international language. Suppose that all the students in the class speak and understand Hindi he might teach in Hindi introducing the foreign terms in Hindi or other spelling. This is what our Saxon ancestors did: they took over the Norman terms of law and gastronomy and embedded them in the Germanic structure of their language. This no doubt tends to happen today in the lower grades of craftsmanship, for example in the garage and the domestic electrical repair shop. But it is not a desirable process or one to be encouraged educationally. These students are highly likely to meet persons who do not know Hindi, which is indeed far from a universal language even in India; they will have to read and understand directions and technical words which cannot all be translated into Hindi, and converse with non-Hindi-knowing experts. They may go outside India. Hence English must be the choice.

Let us see what this teacher and his pupils need of English. A spoken language is made up of five things—(1) *Structure*, (2) *Vocabulary*, (3) *Pronunciation*, (4) *Intonation*, (5) *Behaviourisms* (Delay words, polite clichés, gestures, wordless noises.) For the written and printed language we must add (6) *Writing and Spelling*, (7) *Reading* and (8) *Symbols*.

Let us study the requirements of this group in each of these eight departments or aspects of language ability.

(1) They need the most economical structure which is still normal English—not pidgin—but has no frills.

(2) They need a vocabulary which is capable of explaining the meaning of the technical terms required in the course. (It is useless to attempt to list or predict the technical terms themselves since these will be taught not in the English classroom but in the technical lessons and laboratories or workshops).

(3) They need a standard of pronunciation which is intelligible among themselves and to other Indians. Those who have contact with foreigners may need a rather higher standard although it is incumbent upon the European settled in India to learn to understand the Indian pronunciation of his language and in some measure to adapt his own speech to it. Those who will visit Europe will need a higher standard. There is, however, no justification for inflicting upon all a standard which will be required only by a few; modern phonetics is sufficiently advanced to make it comparatively easy to improve or alter a system of pronunciation. Film actors are constantly having to do so.

(4), (5) *Intonation and Behaviourisms* These are of less than usual importance since English is here needed as a means of factual communication rather than of conversation. This point is elaborated below.

(6), (7) *Writing and Reading*. Writing is of much less importance than reading. Only in the higher stages will these students be required to write reports and engage in technical correspondence. Written composition might be important if the examination is of an essay type; this would be an argument for not using the essay type, but rather the multiple short answer which is more easily marked and less confused in its evaluation of a student by errors of language

which are not errors of fact or reasoning. Reading ability and comprehension of the spoken word are of the greatest importance. A reading vocabulary is needed which is much larger than the vocabulary of normal communication. The ability to use a dictionary is to be stressed; also in most sciences (as Flood¹ has shown) such knowledge of roots and prefixes as will enable a student to break up and interpret scientific words—tel : angi : ectasis, fili : branchia hept : ode.

(8) *Symbols.* These will be acquired in the technical classes.

Linguistic elements which are not required

Let us turn now to the things which they do *not* need. Here we shall be able to make some estimate of the present wastage of effort and perhaps so be enabled to outline a more economical method of dealing with the problem as a whole.

We shall (in the Appendix) show some examples of selection of linguistic items—of structure, vocabulary, etc.—for these students. We shall put ourselves in the position of their teacher and enquire of each item whether it is really necessary and useful. Some items may be rejected altogether, others may be deferred to a later stage of the course. Our prime consideration is for the majority of students rather than for those fewer ones who are outstanding and may go far. We must find an effective minimum, but that minimum must be adequate.

Before making such a detailed scrutiny it is necessary to clarify the distinction between Conversational, Literary and Factual English.

English as Conversation

A conversation is a form of behaviour of which language forms a part. It may form a very small part, as in this example: The Eight wells'.
—

¹Flood, W. E., *The Problem of Vocabulary in the Popularization of Science*, Baker & Boyd, 1957.

X Well ?

Y

X Well !!....Well, well, well.

Y Well ? !

X We-e-ll. O well !

The conversation is purely intonational. X and Y are collaborators in a scheme which Y has just offered, unsuccessfully to the Manager. Translated into words it would run thus :

X What did he say ?

Y (No answer; therefore No)

X I am angry and astonished. (Long pause).
What a pity !

Y Surely you are not going to give up ?

X I am doubtful....But I suppose we must go on trying

The content of this conversation is almost wholly emotional; but there is, needed, an emotional undercurrent in every conversation, whether in the form of expression of feeling, or of concealment, or avoidance of provocation of feeling, in the other person. Words in such a setting may mean less than their lexicographical definition ('Such a delightful party !') or more ('Bad show !') or the exact opposite (['Thank you so much'] 'Not at all ! It was nothing.')

Teaching of this sort of English, including all those elements of feeling and behaviour, is very valuable to the immigrant and the refugee, hence it has tended to be stressed, perhaps overstressed, in England and America, where these are the main problems, as if it were the only sort of language-teaching worthy of consideration. But here we are dealing with a very different problem—the teaching of English to people who use a mothertongue for social and emotional intercourse and need English only for factual communication.

Exclusion of Emotive Elements

Factual English is the language of scientific and technical fact: it has no room for emotion. All the intensives and emotive words such as *frightfully*, *enormous* are excluded from it. If a thing is big, state its size: if it is abnormal, how far does it differ from the norm. The worst crime of the scientific writer is to overstate.

Fixation of Meaning

In Factual English a word means the same thing whatever its context. A Benzine ring is exactly what it is in every setting where as a ring (apart from its multiplicity of meanings) might in the one meaning (a group of persons) be pejorative in reference to an auction or appreciative in reference to friends and helpers. The main difficulty in scientific terminology is to compel the terms to mean one thing and one thing only. *Stomach* is a trouble-some word: it may mean the whole digestive cavity and its contents—the addomen, or only the enlarged part of the digestive tract just below the oesophagus. The prefix *gastr-* and the adjective *gastric* have to be employed to clarify the meaning but, alas, there is no distinctive noun. The same difficulty arises in regard to the whole of a factual vocabulary. *Heat* must be confined to its limited sense measured in calories and be distinguished from *temperature*; *stress* and *strain* must have their exact meanings—*not nervous tension*. It is very convenient in the limited vocabularies of story-books to have nice elastic words such as, *Put up*,—*up with*—*up at*—*in for*—*across*; *skirt* (*dress—edge—go along the edge*) and to use words figuratively, e.g. *hot*=*exciting*, *dangerous* and *cold*=*unemotional*. Provided that these 'stretches' are inferrable they are harmless and helpful; they take their meaning from the context; whereas the first thing which the student of science must learn is to be exact in his terms, to define them precisely and use them according to their definition.

Causes of duplication

The chief causes of duplication in vocabulary are two: (1) Stylistic levels, (2) Avoidance or repetition.

We may say 'A Fellow'—'A Person'—or 'A Personage', 'Have a shot at'—'Try'—'Endeavour'—and so on. These differences are essentially emotional. The Low Stylistic level implies a chummy, friendly attitude; the High Stylistic level is intended to suggest pomp and dignity. Both of these, *chumminess* and *pomposity*, are feeling-tones. It is as if we were to write this equation

$$(x + y)^2 = x^2 + 2xy + y^2$$

$$(x + y)^2 = x^2 + 2xy + y^2$$

or

$$(X + Y)^2 = X^2 + 2XQ + Y^2$$

—according to how one felt at the moment of writing.

This high level style is one to which scientists are particularly prone. It results in an excessive use of the form Abstract-noun + Passive Voice. Instead of 'I tried' we find 'An endeavour was made'. Partly this is done so as to keep the statement modestly impersonal, but, since the author or authors sign the article, this is a rather meaningless convention and one which gives a lot of trouble to foreigners, especially those in whose language there is no passive voice or one which is rarely used; and such languages are many. Moreover the abstract noun is always more difficult to understand and to use than the concrete noun or the equivalent active verb.

The sole aim of Factual English is simplicity, clarity, truth. Stylistic levels, whether High or Low, have no place in it. Its function is to tell what we know or think; not what we feel.

The second cause of duplication is Avoidance of Repetition. In the case of nouns we have 'the former—the latter—the aforesaid—the...mentioned below' etc.

This stylistic bogey of non-repetition had perhaps its origin in the period when reading aloud was more common than it is today. Captain Charles Wade is referred to in a novel as 'Our hero. The Captain, Wade, Charles, My son, Her fiance, etc. etc.'

In Factual English if the same thing is being referred to, the same word should be used. As Flood suggests, Algebra would become very confusing if $(x + y)$ were expressed as the former multiplied by the former plus twice the former multiplied by the latter plus the latter multiplied by the latter.

Even pronouns should be used with caution; Gray has drawn attention to them as a major factor of misunderstanding.

A second form of avoidance of repetition is the use of synonyms which have little if any difference in meaning: *Luminous, Shining, glowing, lambent, lucent*, etc. In Factual English there can be no irresponsible variation of terms merely for the sake of variety: *luminous* means giving out light without heat; *fluorescent* means taking in energy, e. g., from X rays, and giving it out as visible light whereas *phosphorescent* means giving out light after the exciting rays have ceased. Such words as *refulgent, rutilant, luculent*, etc., have no meaning. Nor is there any need for the student to learn any words except those of the fundamental vocabulary, e. g. *bright*, and those others which are specific and carefully defined limitations of it.

Limitations of Structure

Those factors which cause dilution of vocabulary are operative also in respect of Structures. Thus we have 'suppose he is, if he be', 'Were he, if he were, if he was.' The words *should/would* may signify intention (I should if I could) or habit (He would be the library every day) or supposition (This should/would be the library.) or obligation (I should go, but I won't). On the principle 'One word—one meaning' we can eliminate all idiomatic sub-usages incidentally, in the early stages at any rate, much economy of learning effort may be made by dispensing with Reported Speech: He said 'I will' instead of 'He said that he would.' At all stages long passages of Reported Speech should be avoided. They are very troublesome in respect of the verbs and to most Indian mother-tongue the pronouns can be very confusing. The Question tag (*is, isn't it*

does, doesn't it, etc) is a grammarian's delight but a headache to the foreign learner. In fact its main function is an emotional one, a polite blunting the edge of a bald statement. It has little place in Factual English: we do not say 'Cl OH₃ + Na OH becomes Na Cl + 2H₂O. *doesn't it?*

Selected Vocabulary and List of Structures

The required vocabulary for a course in Factual English has already been suggested in the Appendix to the General Service List (Longmans) and in Flood's 'Problem of Vocabulary in the Popularization of Science'. It amounts to some 2,000 words. This does not mean that no words except those so listed are to be used in a teaching-course; it means that the aim of the course is to build up that vocabulary (together with an adequate set of structures) and that the examiner may assume that vocabulary as known. Naturally in teaching any vocabulary the teacher will be compelled to use a number of *ad hoc* words or usages; these should be so indicated in the text-book; they are not listed and are not subject to test. The examiner also may use *ad hoc* words, but would supply their meaning. Apart from these *ad hoc* words there are Assumable words such as *jute* in Bengal and Universals such as *Lemonade, Coca-Cola, Fordson*. These are all legitimate instruments, but not a part of the aim.

In Appendix I we have given a detailed examination of the vocabulary of a good, well-constructed text-book in the light of the requirements of Factual English. Its chief fault is its domestic background. These students are not learning language for discussion of everyday life and the home: they use their mothertongue for that.

In Appendix II we have examined some structures and usages in Hornby's 'Guide to Patterns and Usages'.

Practical Conclusion

Suppose that this concept of Factual English is accepted, how would it be put into practice—embodied in text-books, used in teacher-training, taught in the school, tested in examination?

It is easy to say how this should not be done. The natural tendency would be to issue it as a detailed syllabus and leave it to the text-book writers and publishers to do their best—or worst—with it. This would merely produce a mass of guess-work and hasty adaptations of existing material. The problem is much too complicated for such rough and ready treatment.

In teaching Conversational English the teacher is all-important. He is teaching not a code but a form of behaviour. His text-book and course do not matter very much: he is the course and he maybe trained 'up in the air' without specific reference to any one course or book.

It is not easy to produce such teachers; it takes a lone time and only a relatively small number of teachers are capable of assimilating such training. But, in order to cope with our present urgent problem we need a rapid turnover in our training and we cannot pick and choose those to be trained. On the other hand, our problem is much simpler that of producing competent teachers of conversational English. The learning material of a course in Factual English can be embodied in a text-book and the function of the teacher is to help the pupil to acquire it: he is introducer, aid and supervisor but not direct linguistic source and inspirer. There is, however, the embarrassing problem of using the training colleges and official short courses to propagate the use of one uniform text-book. It follows that it is desirable that this text-book should be the property of the Department of Education as author although the actual process of production and publication may be done by a commercial firm.

This procedure is desirable for another reason. It is not difficult to produce a new book on an existing pattern: it is an extremely difficult and protracted task to produce a new pattern, especially if this is to make exceptionally low demands on the teacher to carry it through. Almost any text-book can be successful in the hands of a highly-trained teacher armed with an elaborate 'Teacher's Book', but here we have to produce something which almost any teacher can use successfully with a minimum of training and instruction. This demands trial editions observed and tested in the hands of average

and below-average teachers. It is a task best carried out by a Department of Education or by persons deputed for the purpose. It is worth doing well because the cost of waste of time in schools due to faulty instruments is fabulous and the gain from careful groundwork in preparing such instruments far exceeds the cost of preparing them, however high that may be.

The examination must be keyed to the course, and vice versa. This itself requires experiment, how best to measure those qualities required in the learner; for it is the examination which ultimately determines what happens in the classroom, regardless of syllabus, text-book, teacher-training or anything else.

Appendix 1. Words contained in the vocabulary of a good normal text-book which might be unsuitable in a course of Factual English.

BOOK I

apple	christen	hairdresser	saddle
armchair	clergyman	jug	sermon
baker	coach	kettle	shorn*
birthday	concert	kiss*	tattered*
breakfast	conductor	liner	tennis
bus	crumpled*	murder	toss*
cafe	daddy	parcel	wedding
cake	forlorn*	park	whisky
ceiling	goldfish	programme	

BOOK II

awry	cemetery	grave	Reverend
bacon	cloakroom	hiking	sardine
barrow	cricket	javelin	sausage
bees	darts	limerick	silly
billiards	doll	lipstick	skate
boarding school	Easter	mare	slang
broom	Emperor	martyr	smash
burglar	florin	oath	tomato
butcher	fox	olive	toy
cigar	fridge	pickpocket	velvet
cabbage	funeral	pork	
caravan	ghost	queen	

**Ad hoc* words from a nursery rhyme.

Appendix II

The General Service List shows how relatively infrequent some of the less usual structures and usages are, but in many cases a relatively frequent item may be ambiguous, e.g., I should = ? would, ?, and ought therefore to be avoided, or easily replaceable by some more direct expression (e.g., Rich as he is → Although he is very rich).

The following items selected from Hornby's *Guide to Patterns and Usages* are intended only as suggestions as to the sort of items which might be included in a 'Black List' in preparing a course in Factual English.

Structural items which might perhaps be deferred (D) or excluded (E) in a course of Factual English → = should be, may be.

1. Inversion. 'Little did I know' E
2. Question tags. 'Is, isn't it', etc. D
3. I shall (except in Questions, Doubt, & Inevitability) D
4. You shall (compulsion) E
5. I should....You, he would :
(Prefer 'I would' and reserve 'should' for obligation, probability and subjunctives).
Where possible prefer 'ought to'. D
6. Dare as anomalous finite. (Prefer Do you dare ?
I do not dare.) E
7. Think to = expect. 'Never thought to see you' E
8. Passive voice : 'Was he seen to jump?' → 'Did anyone see him....' E
9. (Ditto) 'I was made to do it' → 'They made me....' D
10. Let there be → We must have (Keep Let for Allow) D
11. I would have you know → want you to E
12. Have my hair cut → get D
13. Have = allow. 'Can't have you doing that' E

14. Keep preposition near verb. 'Put your hat on'
→ 'put on your hat' D
15. Avoid abstract nouns. 'Insisted on his
innocence' → 'that he was innocent' D
16. Avoid indirect report : 'Confessed that he had
made a mistake' → said, 'I have....' D
17. me → for me. 'Cash me a cheque' E
18. Exclamatory : 'What a big one !' E
19. Exclamatory : 'How big it is !' E
20. Avoid the Past perfect tense as it reverses the
order of events. Prefer 'He did this ; then
he did that'. D
21. 'You will have heard' → 'I suppose you have....' E
22. *Can* = *may*. 'They can be dangerous' → may be,
are often. Reserve *can* for possibility.
Reserve *may* for permission. Prefer 'are
often,—sometimes, likely to be' where that
is the real meaning. D
23. *Will* expressing habit : 'He will get up at
six every day.' E
24. *Would* expressing habit E
25. *Will* expressing supposition : 'This will be
the library?' E
26. *Grow* = *become* : 'It grew late' D
27. Avoid omission of *that* and *who* D
28. Exclamatory inversion : 'Off she went!' E
29. *Must* = *is likely to* D
30. Subjunctive : 'If it were true.'
(Prefer colloquial 'was') D
31. Asked if he were at home → was E
32. *Will* = insist on, are always : 'If you will
be so foolish' → Why are you so....? D

33. *That*: 'I am not a fool that you should suggest such a thing.'
34. *Being poor*→As he was poor
35. Infinitive expressing cause: 'Sorry for him to have failed'→sorry that he failed or He was failed: I am sorry for him.
36. *Though* at the end of a sentence: 'He's quite honest, though.'
37. *May* expressing concession. 'He may be rich, but....'→'Although he is....'
38. Rich as he is (Concession)
39. *For*=*in spite of*: 'For all his wealth'
40. Keep 'since' for time (not 'because')
41. Avoid *for*=*because*
42. Keep 'While' for time (Not 'Although')
43. *If*→although. 'Will do it if it takes a year'.

6. The Minimum Adequate (A Quest)

I HAVE BEEN connected with the teaching of English as a foreign language for some forty years, and for a large part of that time I have been engaged in a quest—still unfulfilled. No doubt someone, somewhere, will succeed

That quest is for the *initial minimum Adequate*—the smallest unit of a foreign language which will enable a learner to make contact with and converse with native speakers of the language. Until he can do that—make contact and converse—he has an unusable stump of language incapable of living growth or adaptation to a living environment.

This contact involves the possession of a minimum of naming words, of collocations, operators and structures, and units of language behaviour. It involves a minimum intelligible pronunciation. And, lastly, it involves a most efficient method of learning.

Naming Words

The child in his mother-tongue starts with mere names of things needed. So does the castaway on a foreign shore. But the tendency in many schools is to aim at initial perfection in pronunciation, grammar, and structure, using a small selection of classroom or immediately available objects, so producing an unusable stump of language—a handle without tools.

A *minimum adequate* must be complete. You cannot hold a conversation with a foreigner about pens, books, doors, windows: you must acquire a sufficient supply of naming words to talk about. One of the most difficult problems in a *minimum adequate* language-unit is 'How many naming words?', and 'Which?'

Perhaps the most useful method of selecting naming words is the technique of negative selection. Assume a certain area and certain learners. Define as exactly as possible who these learners are, male or female, age, rich/medium/or poor, city or town or country. The selected words must be useful to *all* the students. All will need some other words, but for a selected vocabulary we can choose only those items which are useful to all.

Such a list is a minimum. It gives a suitable range of names within which a teacher or textbook-writer may construct his teaching material instead of ranging wildly and haphazardly and introducing a lot of words which will subsequently be forgotten.

But what about the margin—the other words which will inevitably be needed by some learners on some occasions?

I tried to make a classified list of marginal words arranged in such a way that the user might most easily reach the word he wanted. I selected from the Thorndike word-frequency list all the words relevant to a particular subject and classified and reclassified till there were only about ten words in each section. It was not a very successful experiment.

It was years later when I discovered what seemed to be the correct solution to the problem of the complementary marginal vocabulary: it was to include in a minimum adequate list a set of definitions; that is, words which will enable a speaker to explain the idea for which he needs the word and so get the required word from the person to whom he is speaking.

Grammar and Structure

There was—and still is—an idea current among teachers that one should build up a 'sound foundation' of grammar and structure on which the learner may subsequently build. Otherwise his knowledge of the language will be founded upon sand and he will acquire errors from which he will never subsequently be rid.

The same idea applies to phonetics.

This is quite contrary to the practice of children. Their grammar and pronunciation in the early baby stages are quite atrocious. As they get older they improve. How far they improve depends on the motivation produced by the circumstances of their later lives, on whether they grow up into a lower, middle, or upper class environment.

The same policy may be applied to our present problem. We want to get our pupils able to converse in the language as soon as possible with natives of that language. So we need a minimum adequate grammar and structure. For example, the pluperfect tense: 'After he had written the letter, he went for a walk.' *He wrote the letter, then—*. So also *although* 'Although it is cheap, I do not really need it' *It is cheap, but—*. One can (for the present) avoid lengthy passage of reported speech—that joy of examiners! Use direct report. The rarer uses of *will/would*, and other 'heavy' words, are obviously unnecessary at this stage. 'Every day he would go for a walk by the sea.' *He always, or usually, went*

The figures of Thorndike's semantic count given in the General Service List may be a useful guide in detecting these unnecessary usages; but it is, in my opinion, not strict enough.

Phonetics

At this early stage all we want is an intelligible pronunciation. They can improve it later. Once they are able to converse they will have the motive to do so, and having the native model in their ears, they will automatically do so.

The phoneticians are very interested in intonation. How much does intonation matter? Chi-Chi is English spoken with an Indian intonation. It is perfectly intelligible. What is of vital importance is rhythm—the strong regular beat of English stresses; which makes Welshmen, Scotsmen, and all native English speakers intelligible to each other in spite of their very different vowel-systems.

If a learner has a minimum intelligible pronunciation he will soon learn to improve upon it through contact with the native speaker.

Language as Behaviour

Suppose that we have got our minimum adequate list of operators, naming words, grammatical items, structures, collocations and items—what else is needed?

Language does not consist of words, or collocations, or all the other items discussed above. It is a form of behaviour. It is the reaction of the organism as a whole to a social environment; words are only part of that reaction. There are pauses, silences, meaningless clichés, exclamatory noises, and non-verbals. There are those politenesses which are essential in any human contact. Language is words, names, and connective tissues. We forget names, but we do not forget behaviour. Even in senile dementia the patterns of polite behaviour remain. All the courtesies (*How do you do?* *Please sit down*, etc.) remain when all the rest has gone. Language as behaviour comes back as a complete unit. Just as one never forgets how to ride a horse, or to swim, so one never forgets a language learnt as behaviour. Examples of behaviourisms will be found in my book *Easy Dialogues* and in *ELT* XVII/4. They constitute the difference between saying a language and being a language.

Method

We learn to speak by speaking. A grant has recently been made for the teaching of French in junior schools. I witnessed a lesson recently in which the teacher—a trained teacher—talked about 70 percent of the time. He spoke sentences such as 'What is the colour of the curtain?', and as often as not the pupils gave a one-word structureless answer, e.g. 'Green.' Surely he could have introduced the unit of the lesson—'What is the colour of this and that? Where is this and that?'—and divided the children into pairs. A questioning B and B questioning A.

Many years ago I made an experiment. Using a book consist-

ing entirely of question-and-answer exercises of various kinds. I used a stop-watch to discover what was the best I.P.T.T. (individual pupil talking-time) which could be produced. How much of the total lesson-time was spent by each and every individual pupil in the whole class in speaking the language? Deduct T.T.T. (teacher talking-time) and silences, and divide the residue by half (since pupil working in pairs are questioning and answering each other). The result was over 40 percent, about 25 minutes in the hour. Contrast this with a teacher teaching a class by the usual oral method; 'You!' 'You!' 'You!' From one hour take half away for teacher talking time (usually much more!) and divide the rest by 30 the number of pupils in the class. Answer: one minute. (Mass drill is not conversation).

In a recent issue of *ELT* a writer asks: 'Should the teacher independently make up his own lessons, or be tied to a book?'

Consider what is required of a teacher constructing his own lessons. He has to think out interesting and realistic material: this needs some literary ability. He has to keep within a certain vocabulary so as to avoid over-teaching things which have been learnt already, and he has to avoid introducing extraneous items which will not be revised and will be inevitably forgotten. He has to produce effective drills and short dialogues for work in pairs. To produce one really well-constructed lesson takes several whole days of work, maybe as much as a week or more. And when it is tried out it is sure to contain some faults which need improvement or re-writing. To ask the individual teacher to do this for himself is to demand the impossible—and, even if he attempts it, is to produce second class material and to waste the teacher's time, and a lot of time of the class.

We have to consider two other points in this connection:

- (1) the supply of trained teachers able to cope with an oral method, and

(2) the size of the class.

(1) Owing to the loss of English-teachers by drift away to betterpaid jobs, and (in the case of women) by marriage, it is very difficult for training colleges to keep up the supply, still less to increase it.

(2) The teaching profession in many, or even most, countries is under strength. As a result we have large classes—of 35 or even 40. It is not possible to teach a foreign language by the oral method in a large class.

The only effective solution is to have a self-teaching book prepared by an expert or team of experts. The teacher introduces and demonstrates the lessons, he supervises the class while it is doing the lesson, and they continue practising as homework. Finally he tests.

The essential requirement of such work from a book is the rule *Read and look up*. Never speak to the book. Glance at the book, then look up and speak to someone—to the pair.

The type of the lesson should be a preliminary exercise leading up to and preparing for a short dialogue which exemplifies the structural items and other vocabulary being taught and makes them real—a piece of linguistic behaviour. I have given an example of this in my *Easy English Dialogues*. This has been adapted to Canada by Bricault and his version is in many ways superior to mine. In any case both could be much improved upon. They are, I hope, a pattern of a new type of teaching, a realistic type of language learning.

Training of Teachers

We have mentioned the difficulty of keeping up a supply of teachers. It takes at least a year to train a teacher for the oral method, and the supply of teachers is limited to those who have sufficient knowledge of the foreign language to use it with ease and confidence in the classroom. In the textbook-based system the

teaching is done by the book; the teacher is introducer and tester. He needs little more than understanding of the language and an adequate pronunciation, helped perhaps by a gramophone or tape-recorder. The training for this type of teaching can (as I have learned by experiment in Syria and Jordan) be done in about one month, in the teacher's own class.

Summary

What I look forward to is a *minimum adequate course* which will enable the learner to get in conversational contact at as early a date as possible with native speakers of the language.

Once such contact is established the learner can expand and improve. His language becomes real. He is no longer imprisoned in the unreal environment of the classroom.

I have tried to indicate how such a *minimum adequate* may be selected in respect of words, grammar, structure, pronunciation.

I have emphasized the importance of treating language as a form of behaviour.

Finally I discussed the subject of method—not language-teaching method, but a method of assisted and controlled language-learning with the maximum of P.T.T.—pupil talking-time and dialogues to bring the language to life

That has been my quest. I hope that someone, somewhere, in some language will make it a reality.

7. The Syllabus, the Textbook, and the Examination

I have discussed elsewhere the function of the Textbook and of the Examination¹ in Language teaching. The function of the Syllabus is a more difficult subject to deal with because what has to be said might easily be misinterpreted if it were written by anyone who has an interest in some particular method of teaching the active use of English (English speech and writing).

Now, the Madras Syllabus for English in Madras schools² reaches me at peculiar juncture I have no interest in textbooks for the teaching of English speech and writing in India but I am at present engaged on an experimental course which will become the property of the institute which carries out the experiment. In constructing that experimental material I am finding this syllabus of the greatest value: it is very detailed not only in matter but in method so that if will, I hope, act as a useful control in this experiment. In these special circumstances I can write freely about a subject which has been troubling me for some time.

There are in India at the present time a number of different syllabuses for English work drawn up with great care by various provincial Departments of Education. Some are very detailed as to all the items to be taught, number of words, etc., etc.; others are less so. Is it perhaps desirable in the interests of the teacher that the syllabus

¹Articles in *English Language Teaching* reprinted in *Learning to read a Foreign Language and other Articles* Longmans, 1955.

²Reported in an article by Dr. Forrester in *Teaching English* (Orient Longmans for the British Council, August, 1954).

should be detailed and even instructive as to the method of presentation?—or is a looser syllabus desirable as allowing more competition between varieties of method and a larger market to attract expert textbook-writers and to reduce the cost of the books?

The answer to these questions is to be found in a consideration of the exact function of the syllabus, its relation to the textbook, and the relation of both to the examination.

Nothing here set down is to be considered as an adverse criticism of the Madras Syllabus in particular. As stated above, I have much admiration of it as a list or lay-out of items to be taught.

The question which I wish to raise here is not one of detail but the larger problem, what is the function of a syllabus? In all language subjects we have three Teaching Directives—three things which control and affect the teacher in his work—the Syllabus, the Textbook and the Examination.

Now in a non-linguistic subject such as handwork, art, physical training, there is no textbook. The knowledge and skill are the teacher's head and hands; he conveys them direct to the class, and he is guided in what he conveys and in what order by the syllabus. He is, as it were, both teacher and textbook. But in a linguistic subject (or even a symbolic subject such as mathematics) we have a textbook intervening between the teacher and the class.

No teacher, however brilliant, can expect to teach a language entirely unaided by a textbook. The teacher has certain structural items (grammar, collocations, patterns, word-order accidence and suffixes etc., etc.) to implant, and in doing this he has to use a certain restricted number of content words (names of things and their adjectives etc.). If (as was the custom among certain older exponents of the oral method) he is so concerned with his structurals that he lets his Content words go hang, (does not select them, nor index them), he gets his structures flooded and masked by a mass

of useless Content words—useless because so seldom repeated that most of them are forgotten and lost. For this reason the Madras syllabus very correctly indicates approximate levels of vocabulary but it does not indicate how the "words" are to be counted: e.g. Is *Painter*, *Teacher*, *Cutter* (instrument) 2?—3? or 1? My personal opinion is that, whereas words with their range of inferring ability can be counted in a reading-text, in a speech-course item-counting is the only satisfactory procedure. (See "The Selection and Counting of Words", *Year Book of Education*, reprinted in *Learning to Read & Other Essays*.)

The point is that the teacher of a foreign language must, for any degree of efficiency, have a textbook if only to save his own labour and the class needs a textbook for out-of-school practice, reading, written work and review.

Just what sort of textbook depends on the teacher and the class. We have the skilled teacher with good command of the language who can carry an oral lesson in his mind and needs only a scheme and outline; on the other hand there is the unskilled who cannot be trusted to speak correctly and needs all the help that a textbook can give him. We have the city child who sees and hears English names of things all around him and has even adopted many into the vocabulary of his own language (lemonade, ticket, cigarette, tennis, table, station . . .) so that content words are a light burden and may be liberal; on the other hand there is the village child to whom almost every content word is a new learning item. There are children who know the English alphabet; children who do not; children in over-large crowded classes where oral work is difficult; children in moderate-sized classes in spacious classrooms; children whose language diverges in certain ways from English structure (He said *that* "I will go"); others with different divergencies. Various textbooks may be written taking into account these different types of need and disability.

But there is also divergence among the writers of textbooks themselves. The aim of a Director of Education is that the children

in his charge should have the very best instructional material that it is possible to supply—the best suited to their needs, the most skilfully constructed, those proved to be best by experiment and experience in each particular circumstance. A Director knows roughly what his children need (what items of grammar, of idiom, of content words, of reading ability, etc.) and how much they can be expected to achieve in a given time. Let us suppose that he lays down exact requirements and expectations in a list of items to be taught. That would, in fact, be hardly sufficient because it would leave several matters indefinite. What standard of pronunciation is demanded? What fluency is demanded? What is there to be an oral test? What speed and quality? Will these be about spelling and handwriting (speed and quality); will these be tested specifically?—or merely penalized if too bad? What about speed of reading? Will there be a reading test?—a speed test? or merely a test of comprehension? Will there be a test of range of reading vocabulary outside the smaller active vocabulary of the speech and writing course? Will there be any translation? To? or From? or both? In fact, we need, besides a detailed syllabus, a Pattern Examination paper. As I have pointed out elsewhere, where syllabus and examination conflict the examination always wins.

Now supposing we know exactly what is required and invite Dr. Palmer, Mr. Gatenby, Professor Pattison, Mr. Hornby, Professor Fries, Mr. French. (or any other competent persons we please) each to compile a textbook fulfilling these requirements, we shall find that each and every textbook is different, because the authors all have different techniques and emphases. Some would teach all the pre-positives in a mass; some would spread them out. Some would prefer pictures for teaching 'There is' 'Have/has' (Has Mr. X a big car?; some prefer classroom objects. Fries would tend to teach phrase and sentence units; Palmer would fancy substitution tables: Hornby might lean towards sentence patterns, Some would teach the simple past tense orally in the classroom. "What will Ram do? What did he do?"; others will deal with it through story material. Some, eager for early reading, will bring in past tenses as soon as possible; others may defer them to the latest possible moment.

Indeed, after the first three or four lessons not one of them will introduce the items of the syllabus in the same order or in the same way. They will all be equally right, all equally prepared to admit the rightness of the other five, and all certainly unwilling to be ordered by anyone to do anything different from what they have done.

That is where one cannot but be at loggerheads with the compilers of the Madras Syllabus.¹ A syllabus should tell the teacher where he has got to get to; it is not its business to order the teacher how to get there: at most it may make the most tentative suggestions (like the British Ministry's "Suggestions to Teachers"), but they are very tentative and are no part of the syllabus.

We must, moreover, remember that the direct impact of the syllabus is not on the teacher but on the textbook-writer. We (the compilers of the syllabus) are not giving directions to a lot of graduates or even failed B.A.'s in High Schools, we are telling the greatest experts in India or even in the world what and how much to teach. That we *may* say—but are we wise in telling them how to impart it? Such directions might be a hindrance rather than a help. As for the less expert authors, why should the Department write their books for them?

It is on this point that one tends to disagree with this otherwise excellent "lay-out" of work to be done. It seems to fall between two stools. To use a metaphor from building, either it might be a statement of requirements, leaving the architect and contractor the

¹The Preamble to the Madras Syllabus states that authors are free to work out their own schemes provided that they cover the items of grammar and usage set out in the syllabus, do not exceed the prescribed limit of vocabulary, and point out where they diverge from the syllabus. But so detailed a syllabus as this must inevitably tie an author's hands: he may allow himself some minor divergencies but will all the time be asking himself "Am I keeping close enough to the beaten track?"

widest possible latitude in their crafts,—or it might be a Detailed Plan and Specification, in which case there is no latitude at all and only one possible building can be erected according to those specifications.

In fact, this is not a syllabus; it is not a statement of aim but a statement of method; and that, in our opinion, is a confusion of the function of a syllabus.

The teacher has three directives in his work:—

1. *A Syllabus*— which tells him where he has got to get (the result which he has to produce within a given time). It may merely detail the achievement required at the end of the (four) year course when the first public examination is held, leaving the year-by-year allocation of items (tested only by school exams.) to the discretion of the textbook-writer.
2. *A Textbook*— which, by one route or another according to the technique of the writer and the capabilities and circumstance of the teacher, helps him to get there (to produce that result).
3. *An Examination*—which tests whether he has reached his goal (whether he has produced that result). Incidentally the examination helps to clarify and demarcate the aim set out in the syllabus.

I believe that it will be in the best interests of education if these three functions were more clearly realized, if Syllabus-compiler, Text-book-writer and Examiner could eliminate mutual interference, but rather co-operate in serving their pupils with the maximum efficiency.

8. The Problem of the Textbook

In the editorial of "Teaching English" (January 1955) we find these sentences: "In countries where foreign languages have been taught for a long time writers have in the process of time been able to produce textbooks which, based on actual classroom experience, in themselves constitute a syllabus. But this is not the situation in India, and there is, therefore, a great need that a syllabus should be as detailed and specific as possible in order that it may offer the maximum guidance to teachers and writers."

We may paraphrase this as follows: "India wants to produce textbook-writers, wants textbook-writers in India for Indian pupils. Therefore let us produce very detailed syllabuses telling the teachers what to teach and how to teach it."

With the first sentence there can be no quarrel, but the conclusion does not follow. It should be "India needs textbook-writers; therefore let us teach people in India how to write textbooks." Let us have a set of lectures and classes given by expert textbook-writers to would-be authors on this highly difficult art. Let this course not be confined to foreign languages, but cover the Mother Tongue, and even other subjects. Let them write sample lessons and have them criticised, and see them taught and tested in typical classes—weak classes for choice, and by weak teachers as well as good ones. Let us have research workers engaged upon this subject (the technique of the textbook) in Teachers' Colleges or Departments of Education.

The fundamental error contained in the above quotation is the idea that by giving a list of items to be taught you can *ipso facto*

produce a good textbook. The technique of the textbook is a problem in itself. You can have an excellent textbook based on a thoroughly bad syllabus, or a bad textbook based on an excellent syllabus. The What and the How are two completely different problems.

The phrase "maximum guidance to teachers and writers" shows just this confusion. The guidance to writers has to indicate WHAT (the aim to be attained by the textbook); the guidance to teachers is HOW to use the textbook. The confusion has resulted in the type of textbook in which the teacher's part of a lesson is embodied in the pupil's book. We see books which contain pages and pages of dialogue:—

Teacher : What is this ?
Pupil : That is a book.
Teacher : Is it my book ?
Pupil : No, it is not your book,
etc., etc.

In the classroom as often as not this matter is read aloud and translated in the traditional manner, just as the Fable of the Hare and the Tortoise used to be read aloud and translated before the "Direct Method" came into vogue.

Alternatively we find an attempt to distinguish the teacher's function and the function of the textbook by providing an enormous Teacher's Handbook to accompany a rather dwarfed Classbook. This Teacher's Handbook (usually written by a very accomplished teacher) consists in a more or less verbatim account of the lesson as he himself would give it. The teacher is told exactly what to do, and the lesson may cover two, or three, or even four printed pages of dialogue and description :

The teacher takes a book from Pupil 1's desk:—
Is this my book?

No, it is not your book.

Is it his book? (pointing to Pupil 2)

No, it is not his.

Is it their book? (pointing to Pupils 3 and 4)

No, it is not theirs.

Whose is it?

etc. etc etc.

What is the less skilled teacher supposed to do with this? Memorize it? Read it aloud in class—but reading aloud from a handbook can hardly be considered an effective form of teaching, and in the more complicated lessons the class may not respond according to plan. Should he make a synopsis of the lesson as presented in the Handbook? That is as difficult as making a synopsis of one act of a play.

We turn to the classbook. It contains a brief continuous passage: "This is my book. It is my English book. Ram has an English book. It is his book", etc. What is the pupil supposed to do with this? Read it over and over? Copy it out? Or what? If, of course, the teacher skillfully follows the elaborate directions of the Handbook all that the class needs as a supplement is no more than a Handwriting copybook. But how many teachers will, or can, follow the Handbook? We have to remember that the output of trained teachers is, compared to the total teaching strength, very small and in many areas does little more than replace the deaths and retirements, and most of the few trained teachers tend to be absorbed in the highest classes. What help is a mere copybook to the pupil in his out-of-class practice in oral English? We have to remember that many of our teachers are working in classes of about 40 (or more) pupils, and they have some four hours a week for that subject. In a 40 minute period each pupil will get half a minute's individual speech: the rest of the time is listening or speaking in chorus, an act which requires no effort

of recall: one can shout in chorus almost subconsciously without mental effort and without subsequent impression.

The highly detailed syllabus is not the answer to the problem: it leads straight to the monster Teacher's Handbook and to techniques of teaching practicable enough in the hands of the trained teacher but impracticable elsewhere.

What then is the answer? The answer is to be found in a proper assessment of the function of the textbook and of the teacher and in a realisation that language is a skill, and skills are learnt: they cannot be taught.

There are certain things that only the teacher can do: it is the function of the textbook to set him as free as possible for those things.

A textbook cannot give individual attention, encouragement, rebuke, praise. A textbook cannot correct mistakes, or (still better) anticipate and prevent them before the fatal word is spoken or written. But a textbook can do something which the teacher cannot do. It can control its vocabulary, bringing in item by item one thing at a time, and never anticipating something which has not been taught yet, spotting shifts of meaning or traps of grammar which might easily be overlooked in improvised oral discourse. A textbook-writer can spend a whole day thinking over and working over and over an exercise to make it interesting, fool-proof and as effective as possible. He can improve his work by testing it on all sorts of classes to discover just where his exercises fall down and re-writing again and again.

The function of a textbook is to present material to be acquired under the direction and guidance of the teacher. Ideally it should be completely automatic so that the clever pupil needs a minimum of help and the teacher's attention can be mainly directed to the slow and the careless. It is necessary to invent the pattern of a book

which will do this. To a large extent such a pattern exists in mathematics (though the explanations given in the textbooks often leave much room for improvement). Has any systematic research been done to discover (by actual writing, re-writing, testing and re-testing) the ideally best introduction to some of the more difficult concepts? Such a pattern existed in the classical method of teaching languages: there was the grammar and the annotated textbook. In both these subjects (Classics and Mathematics) the teacher was rather a master than a teacher; he was a supervisor, goader and director of learning. Such a pattern exists in the "Reading Method" of learning to read a foreign language. In all these subjects the teacher set work, made sure that the pupils knew what they had to do, supervised and helped while they were doing it, and tested whether the work had been done. Moreover, the learning process was not imprisoned in the classroom: actually more learning was often done outside the classroom (as home-work and preparation) than in.

The effect of the Direct Method and the Oral Method has been to throw the whole emphasis back on to the teacher, to make foreign language learning a classroom subject, a study which ceases (except for some writing) when the bell rings. The Detailed Syllabus will not rectify this: it may make the situation worse.

I am not attacking or criticizing the principles of the "Direct" or "Oral" Method. It originated in Europe, in the Language schools and among the highly skilled teachers of the State schools on the Continent of Europe—though even there we find far too much teaching and too little learning. The results of French work in England are far from satisfactory so far as ability to speak the language is concerned. But the answer to the problem does not lie in the highly detailed syllabus; nor even in better trained teachers: it lies in a new and better type of textbook to be evolved by research and experiment.

The chief obstacles in the way of such research are the cost of printing and the difficulty of obtaining "guinea-pig" classes. These

are almost insuperable under European conditions: India and similar sub-tropical or tropical areas are the ideal places for such work, and work there might indeed set a pattern for the rest of the world—as indeed India has twice done already.

The hints for the solution of the problem are lying about here and there already—in some of Palmer's techniques, in a device used by French in Burma, in work done long ago in Dacca, and perhaps most of all in the individual "Self taught" and "Teach yourselves" courses (of very variable merit) retailed at high prices by the Language schools.

9. Conversational Tags

These linguistic items are not, I believe, to be found in any book of grammar. It is not very easy to define them precisely, but one might explain what they are in a conversational way somewhat as follows :

'Well, they are those things, you know, which don't actually mean very much, of course ; yet they are in fact necessary in English conversation as behaviour.'

If one found the above sentence in the report of a conversation in a novel it would probably read as follows :

'Conversational tags are those things which do not mean very much yet are necessary in English conversation as behaviour.'

If the reader compares the two sentences he will notice that in the second the following words have been omitted—Well, You know, Actually, Of course, In fact. These are conversational tags ; they do not mean anything and the sentence is perfectly intelligible without them.—Why then are they so commonly used in real life ?

Persons answering questions in almost every interview on television start their answer with a 'Well'. About 80 per cent of the answer of such occasions begin 'Well'. This 'Well' serves two purposes. In the first place it shows that the answerer has heard the question, and (secondly it gives him a moment in which to frame his answer.

Delay Words

When there is considerable doubt or hesitation about the answer which should be given, the 'word' may be drawn out : We—e—e—ll—

Thus George asks John to come to dinner on Friday and John answers :

'We—e—ll. Well, now. Let me think. Friday ? Yes, Yes. Really, I think my wife has actually got tickets for a show that night'.

These are all Delay Words, noises which John makes while he is thinking up an excuse for not going to dinner with George.

Notice that John uses the words Really and Actually. Actually and Really are used to emphasize the truth : but the truth does not need emphasizing if it is true ; hence these two words are usually employed to emphasize an untruth and make it seem true.

Silence Fillers

Some people, including, I believe, the Japanese, do not use Delay words : they just stay silent until they have thought of an answer. Thus one might say :

'Would you kindly tell me the way to the Royal Hotel ? (Silence) Would you kindly tell me the way to the Royal Hotel ? (Silence—I wonder if he has heard ? wonder if I ought to ask him again?) Would you kindly....' Then at last he answers :

'First turning on the right and third on the left.'
The advantage of the conversational tags here is that they show that you have heard the question. Thus, for example, the conversation might really go as follows :

'Would you kindly tell me the way to the Royal Hotel ?'
'Well Well now, yes, the Royal ? The Royal ? Let me see Just a moment, Ah yes : first turning on the right and third on the left.'

All these conversational tags—'Well', 'Well now', 'Let me see', 'Just a moment', 'Ah yes', 'The Royal, the Royal', help to fill what would otherwise be silence.

Notice *how he* repeats the words—'the Royal, the Royal'. Some people have a habit of repeating the last words of anything which is said to them, just so as to show that they are listening. As for example,

'This street is called The High.'
'The High.'

'That college is Queen's.'
'Queen's.'

'And that is University College.'
'Ti-College.'

This habit of repeating the last syllable of a word is particularly annoying; yet it is very common: I have a name for such persons—
'Ticollegers.'

Evasive Tags

Another use of conversational tags is to avoid giving an answer if one has not heard the question, or to avoid giving an opinion when one does not wish to be involved in an argument or to contradict someone and perhaps hurt his feelings. The evasive tags are 'Oh, I don't know', 'Perhaps?', 'Not really?', 'Oh, do you think so?', 'Indeed?', 'Does it?', 'Would you say that?'. In fact one avoids giving an answer to the question by replying with a question, as for example here:

'What do you think of that painting of Sir Edward?'
'Oh, I don't know.'

'Perfectly dreadful. Isn't it?'
'Mm! Mm! Is it?'

'It doesn't look like him.'
'Oh, is that so?'

'It makes him look so fierce.'
'Indeed?'

'Of course, he was really rather a weak man.'

'Oh, was he?'

'These modern painters are terrible, and Wilkins is the worst of them.'

'Oh, would you say that?'

Evasive adjectives are often very necessary as for example in replying to the question 'How are you?' or 'How's business?' One does not wish to say that the thing inquired about is worse than usual or better than usual. The adjectives which may be used are: 'So so', 'Not too bad', 'Might be worse', or various phrases such as 'Rubbing along'. For Example:

'How are you, James?'

'Oh, so-so.'

'And how's business?'

'Might be worse might be worse, you know.'

'You know' in its proper place is used to avoid giving offence by telling a person something which he knows—or ought to know—already. For example—I ought to know that Ann left school two years ago: so when I inquire: 'Well, how is your daughter Ann getting on at school?' I get the answer: 'Oh, she's left school, you know' and I say: 'Oh, yes yes, yes of course! I remember., I ought to have known that she had left school.'

The trouble with these conversational tags is that they tend to become a meaningless habit. 'You know' is a particularly bad offender in this respect. It is interesting to listen to conversations and count the number of 'You know's' which occur in them. Thus, after I had rebuked a young person when she had said five 'You know's', she still only just avoided using three more.

This brings us perhaps to a definition of the conversational tags. Conversational tags are used when one wishes to speak without saying anything.

10. Practice-Teaching in the Training of Language Teachers

Practice-teaching is, in all subjects, the teacher-trainer's greatest problem: it is not only the teacher-trainer's greatest problem but the trainee's. To him it is the most outstanding and memorable part of the course: here he is not part of a crowd listening to a lecture, nor represented to his teacher merely by written script: he is alone and in personal contact with members of the staff. Moreover this is the point in which the theoretical portions of the course are brought down into contact with reality. If they fail to fit reality the student's confidence in the course is shaken; whereas if he fails to fit practicable theory onto his own realities, the benefit of the course is wasted.

One is tempted to begin an article on this subject with some anecdotes of the more ludicrous incidents which have occurred in practice-teaching, for indeed this is a part of the course which is highly productive of such things. One remembers the student in training for work in village schools in England who came into the classroom accompanied by a big drum to illustrate a lesson on sound. He was indignant when asked whether he would really do this in his village classroom. There was a 'Dramatic Method' of teaching history which was very successful in the Fielden Demonstration school in Manchester, but the student who attempted to transfer this system to a lesson on the Battle of Hastings in a large class in one of the tougher schools in that city produced a riot and a queue to the First Aid room. There was the asphyxiating demonstration-model of the eruption of Vesuvius made of plasticine; and the Indian woman teacher who disappeared in the course of a lesson on the melting point of various fats and other substances. The apparatus

was a spirit lamp, a small pan and a thermometer: I leave to the reader the problem—Where was the teacher? These anecdotes merely illustrate what can happen in an ill-designed system of practice-teaching.

Let us investigate the individual problem:

- (1) *Where should the practice-teaching take place?*
- (2) *How should it be supervised?*
- (3) *How should the final result be measured?*

The Location of Practice-Teaching

There are three possibilities: (1) the Model School attached to the training institution, (2) classes in other schools in the same place, and (3) elsewhere.

We suggest that the Model School is the one school in which there should never be any practice-teaching. It is supposed to be a model, and students may go into it and see what should be done, what can be done under the very best conditions, and the results which can so be obtained. The very fact that it is a model makes it unsuitable for practice-teaching since it is necessarily unrelated in many respects to the conditions in which the trainee actually works himself. His school is *not* a model; whereas if half-trained teachers are allowed to function in the Model School it ceases to be a model.

The second possibility is classes in local schools. The danger is that these classes may not be sufficiently related to those in which the trainee will actually have to work. Thus it is undesirable to give practice-teaching in the schools of a city to a teacher who will be employed in a rural area. A second difficulty which may arise in the case of a training institution situated in a not very large city is the problem of numbers. For a course containing fifty students one needs to have available some three or four thousand pupils if each class is not to be used by more than one student and if in every other year the practice classes are to be allowed to lie fallow. The over-practised class can be a nightmare to the trainee and a very unfair test of his abilities.

One may say perhaps that practice-teaching in the local schools is a useful introduction to establish the main points of the methods which are being inculcated, assuming of course that the greatest care is taken not to recommend or to commend any procedures which

would not be practicable in the trainee's actual home conditions: it is no use advising or allowing the use of apparatus which would not be available in the student's own school in his native country. Tape records, episcopes, magic lanterns, enormous slate blackboards covering one end of the room, copious distribution of coloured chalks, cutting up of magazines, construction of models, and so on, are all very possible in the liberally provided schools of Britain or metropolitan cities but far less so in penurious conditions elsewhere. All these things should be banned to those students who will not be able to enjoy such advantages when they return.

As the final course of practice-teaching on which the trainee will ultimately be judged we believe that training in teaching in alien conditions is not fully effective as practice nor fair as a final test.

Supervision

It is not ordinarily possible nor desirable to have the supervision of practice-training done by the ordinary class-teacher himself. Though he may be an excellent teacher he has not been recently trained and perhaps does not know those points upon which the Teacher's College specially wishes to insist. It is however common to see him sitting in the class at the back during the practice-teaching. He may be doing this merely from interest so as to see what these new ideas are, or he may be there for the sake of discipline. His presence is, however, apt to be embarrassing to the trainee and preventive of any test of the trainee's discipline. A trainee may indeed get away with things which he would not ordinarily be able to do were the class teacher not present.

In some cases a Supervisor sits through the whole lesson of a trainee, though this is not very usual and certainly very undesirable, since it tends to make the teacher design a 'show-off' lesson in which the teacher is active all the time and the class does relatively little except look, listen and intermittently respond. Education is a system of learning helped by the teacher and large tracts of any well-conducted lesson, especially in languages, consist of work by the pupils

under individual supervision and guidance: there is therefore nothing much for the Supervisor to see. The best system, we believe, is one in which the Supervisor looks in at three adjacent classes, spending a few minutes in each, or possibly a long time in one but very little in the others where the teacher is getting on nicely or the subject is one in which very little active instruction from the platform is required.

The very evil effect of all systems of practice-teaching and that which has most carefully to be guarded against is the show-off lesson: indeed teacher-training in the past has tended to do much harm in the schools by producing a type of classwork which is all teaching and little learning. The so-called Practical Exam has now fortunately disappeared and students are judged on the record of the observations of the Supervisors co-ordinated in intermittent consultations. Yet even so there is inevitably a tendency to show off. The ludicrous instances quoted above—the big drum, the Battle of Hastings, the Plasticine model of Vesuvius, are all instances of show-off lessons intended rather to impress an onlooker than to promote a learning effect in the pupils.

It may be useful to describe what proved to be a very satisfactory system. The Supervisor had a loose-leaf notebook. On each page there was a small photograph of the student: this was helpful in a short course where one had to acquire the students' names very quickly, or where one had to see a rather large number of students. It was helpful also in recalling students trained in past years: indeed this Record Book might contain personal notes besides the remarks on practice-teaching. Every visit to a student's class was recorded with its date and a note on the teacher's progress. Even when no note was necessary the date was entered so that one might know that the student had been observed sufficiently often. The loose-leaves of the various Supervisors were collected together at the end of the course and put into the student's file, so that one could see what the various Supervisors had thought of him. Together with this there was of course the final judgment after staff consultation.

In addition to the Supervisor's books there was the trainee's own book, that is, a small notebook which was placed on the table in the classroom while the teacher was teaching. On entering the room the Supervisor quickly snatched up this book and carried it with him to the back of the room where he made notes on it for the student's guidance. The student could therefore see what had been said of his work from the very beginning and by the various Supervisors. Moreover it was useful for a Supervisor to look back over other Supervisor's remarks.

There was no practical examination for all the students but there was a Practical Examiner to whom special cases were referred, that is, cases in which the supervising staff at the college differed very widely in opinion: and marginal cases of possible First Class and possible Failure. In these cases only a teacher might be called upon to give a lesson in front of the External Examiner.

A Demonstration Lesson tends to be unreal because it has to be given with a relatively small class compared with the student's normal class. One can hardly give a demonstration with a class of forty or fifty or more pupils: the class must be sufficiently small for the observers to be able to get close and see what is going on. The same difficulty applies to the Criticism Lesson. It may, however be partially overcome by a simple device. The effect of teaching a large class when there is actually not a large number of pupils can be obtained by having a big gap between the teacher and his platform and the front row of pupils. So also in practice-teaching where a teacher accustomed to dealing with large classes has to do his practice teaching with a split class or some small group, a large gap between teacher and front row of pupils tend to prevent the 'fireside chat' style of teaching which is quite inapplicable to the teacher's normal conditions. It is, with the help of this device and a suitable Lesson Form, possible to teach a small class as if it were a big one but it is not possible to teach a big class as if it were a small one and it is a highly undesirable result of practice-teaching if the teacher's training tends to make him do so.

The Criticism Lesson tends to be very productive of show-off types of teaching. We believe that the only sure preventive of this is a set of fixed lesson-forms, laying down procedures which compel the teacher to treat language work as a learning process. A standard pattern of lesson is one in which (Step 1) the teacher introduces a task and deals with foreseeable difficulties and then (Step 2) sets the class to study and practise. Finally in Step 3 he tests (1) Teacher sets task; (2) Class practises; (3) Teacher tests—this is the standard pattern, whether the lesson be speech or writing or reading or dictation. The attempt to fit a language lesson into the Herbartian lesson plan is obviously fantastic, whereas set lesson-forms described in detail in the lectures and followed in the student's plans of lesson are a useful guide and a saving of labour. Indeed the elaborate lesson notes customary in some training institutions may well be dispensed with. It is enough to state the material taught and the lesson-form to be followed.

We believe that all practice-teaching is inevitably somewhat unrealistic and it is most unrealistic of all in the case of the foreign student who is being trained in a country which is not his own, whether it be the French teacher doing practice-teaching with English children in England, the African teacher doing practice-teaching in Wales, or the Mahratti students doing practice-teaching in Bengal. There can be preliminary practice as a part of the training course so as to get the idea of the lesson-forms and go through the motions; but the final practice-teaching and the final estimation of the candidate as a teacher should (we believe) be made in his own class, or at least in a similar one in his own country. On his return to his own country he may do a period of practice-teaching under the guidance of a qualified person who will give a final recommendation necessary before the absolute certificate is granted. Such a system would not be very practicable where the teacher is teaching in a free style without any set lesson-forms, but where there are set lesson-forms it is much easier for an independent Supervisor to judge his effectiveness in carrying out those forms. He knows (from the lesson-forms) what the teacher is supposed to be doing; his judge-

ment is mainly one of businesslike procedure, class control, avoidance of lecturing and so on: he does not have to judge lesson-plan of technique: those are laid down.

Conclusion

I have ventured these opinions on this most difficult of all subjects in the hope that others will disagree or perhaps in some cases confirm them. It would be useful to obtain the opinions of teacher-trainers in the various countries and indeed also of ex-trainees.

Practice-teaching is the part of the training course which affects the student-teacher more intimately and has the greatest effect upon his real efficiency in the classroom. It is the ultimate practical test of his training and indeed of the efficiency of the training institution itself. The institution may stand or fall upon the work in this one department. There is not only the effect upon the student to be considered: there is also the effect of realistically conducted practice-teaching upon the staff. The Supervisor of practice-teaching can often learn quite as much as the student in training—if the work is realistic: practice-teaching acts as a filter separating the practicable from the ideal.

11. The Problem of Spelling

English Spelling is a major trouble not only to the foreign learner but also to the native English writer.

There are three ways of dealing with this problem:

- (1) by learning and using the rules of spelling;
- (2) by remembering opposite examples as patterns;
- (3) by forming in the mind clear visual images of the correct spellings, and avoiding blurred or incorrect images.

The Rules of Spelling

It is not easy to find a complete set of the rules. Some of them are given in all books, others in some books, but a concise statement of the complete set of 30 rules is, so far as I know, to be found in only one book.

Some of the rules are not very useful because they have so many exceptions. Thus the rule that words ending in consonant + -o form their plurals in -oes has so many exceptions as to be almost useless. Indeed, it is perhaps better to reverse the rule and say that words ending in consonant + -o form their plurals in -os unless they are words definitely adopted into the English language, such as *buffaloes*, *cargoes*, *echoes*, *heroes*, *negroes*, *tomatoes*, *torpedoes*, *veto*, *volcanoes*. English is very slow in 'naturalizing' foreign words and more of them enter the language every year: even *commando/s* has not yet been anglicized. The Concise Oxford Dictionary has *porticos*, but the Authors' and Printers' Dictionary has *porticoes*.

On some rules even the dictionaries disagree, e.g. -able or -eable. In the case of fourteen words (*blameable*, *bribeable*, *hireable*, *likeable*, *liveable*, *nameable*, *rateable*, *rebukeable*, *unrideable*, *saleable*, *sizeable*, *tameable*, *timeable*, *unshakeable*), some dictionaries disallow the -e-, some allow it, some enjoin it. The -e- certainly makes the word more easily recognized.

There is similar disagreement about the *e*-in *eringeing*, *hingeing*, *impingeing*, *tingeing*. *Homey* is preferred by Webster and the Shorter Oxford, but Fowler disagrees; *nosy* is general but Chambers has *Nosey Parker*.

In the case of *-ise, -ize* Chambers prefers *-ise* in all cases, so one cannot be wrong; but Oxford and others (including Webster) put *ize* except in 24 cases.

Pattern Words

It is easier to remember an example than a rule, if that example is well-chosen. Thus for the rule 'One syllable, One vowel letter + one consonant—double when adding *-ing, -ed, etc.*', we may use:

Bat—*batting* but *Boat*—*boating*

The rule applies to words of more than one syllable if the last syllable is accented:

Forget—*forgetting* but *Fidget*—*fidgiting*

Final *-l* is doubled, even if unaccented:

Travel—*travelling*

(This is the major difference between British and American spelling; *traveling*—25 percent of the variants.)

For plurals, *-ies* after a consonant, we may use—

Pony—*ponies* but *Donkey*—*donkeys*

For *-able, -e* after soft *c* or *g*, we may use—

Implacable but *Replaceable*

Navigable but *Marriageable*

Here again dictionaries disagree in the case of *likeable, saleable, sizeable, unshakeable*, and twelve other words. Where the dictionaries disagree, we may do as we like.

Spelling is a visual memory. If the word *looks* right, it *is* right. Conversely, every time a writer guesses and writes an incorrect spelling, or evades the problem by smudging the problematic letters, he

leaves a wrong or smudged image on his brain, and this may take years to eradicate or even leave a permanent hesitation.

The best of all rules of spelling is:

When in doubt, look it up before you write it.

It is difficult to observe this rule when using an ordinary dictionary in which spelling items are about 0.3 percent of running words, the rest of the space being occupied with pronunciation, meanings, phrases, and etymology.

A dictionary of spelling (e.g., one of those listed below) should contain nothing but spellings and have no appendixes.

A test showed that it took an average of 24 seconds to find a spelling in a normal dictionary, but only 11 seconds in a dictionary of spelling. In some cases it took a very long time, e.g., 'What is the plural of *cul-de-sac*? Is it hyphenated? Is it italicized?' The subject of the test failed to find the word in the body of the dictionary so turned to the Appendix of Foreign Words, failed to find it there, turned back to the body of the dictionary and discovered it as a sub-item of *cul-de-four*, but failed to discover the plural or whether it is italicized. This needed a reference to another dictionary which italicized it (but did not give the plural). Since the word does not seem to be italicized ordinarily, reference was made to a third dictionary—after first discovering how italics are indicated in it (by the sign) no italics. Reference to a dictionary of spelling gave all the answers in ten seconds.

Much time may be taken in an ordinary dictionary where the meaning affects the spelling, since this involves reading through the definitions and examples, and sometimes a reference to the other spelling in its alphabetical position. Examples: *balk|baulk,|bail|bale-staved* (off disaster), *stove in* (the boat). Sometimes the spellings are merely shown as alternatives and the distinction is not discoverable.

Like the other aspects of language, spelling changes—too rapidly in some cases for the normal dictionary to keep up with it. The misspelling *tyre* (due to registered names of Britain Companies) has been accepted in Britain, but not in the U.S.A.; but the dictionaries still prefer *brier-pipe* and *castor sugar*, though the trade has definitely decided on *briar and caster*. So also *alarum clocks* are now (in the opinion of a manufacturer) *alarm*. The misspelling *callouses* (for *calloses* or *callosities*) is in course of becoming established, and *porage* (helped by *Scott's Porage Oats*) threatens *porridge*.

The dictionaries are most out of date in respect of hyphens. Any two words affianced by a hyphen tend, if frequently used, to become one; but dictionaries do not readily approve of such companionate marriages. The dictionaries of spelling print *textbook*, *today tomorrow tonight* as one word but other dictionaries hyphenate. The hyphens in *copy-book* and *psychoanalyst* are found only in some dictionaries not even in ordinary printing. The hyphen in *good-bye* seems etymologically unjustifiable, and tends to disappear.

The lexicographer is faced with a problem where the accepted spelling conflicts with the correct spelling. Thus *Buncombe* is the name of an American Congress-man who made silly speeches; hence the word has come to mean 'nonsense,' but the accepted British spelling is *bunkum*, and a standard dictionary has *buncombe*—See *bunkum* (Correct—See Accepted). On the other hand, we find *kowtow* (Accepted) referred to *kotwow* (Accepted—See Correct). So also in the case of preferences: one dictionary gives *aline align* (Correct, Accepted): another gives *align, aline* (Accepted, Correct).

In the case of a dictionary of spelling the accepted must, of course, be preferred, though the correct may be mentioned.

There are some problems on which book-references are not enough: individual enquiry has to be made of Lloyd's Register, the College of Arms, Forest Products, etc.

The greatest problem of every lexicographer is what to put in,

In the case of a dictionary of spelling one should include those words likely to be written by the user, and, of these, those likely to be misspelled (or misused in respect of preposition, tense, suffix, plural, feminine, etc.). Clearly one should not include misspellings possible only in the case of persons too young, or too illiterate, to use a dictionary, e.g. *There/their*. The Thorndike/Lorge word-frequency list of 30,000 words is of some help as a guide to exclusions. Apart from that the selection must be influenced by the prospective user.

Judging which words are likely to be misspelled is a still greater problem, and the most valuable help here is the actual misspelling observed in journals, books, formal letters. Thus a London daily newspaper misspelled *cyanide*, a school calendar *fleur-de-lis*, a lawyer *by-pass*, and *supersede* is commonly misspelt by non-Latinists.

12. Synopsis of the Rules of Spelling

Correspondents have asked, 'Where can one find the rules of English spelling?' The answer is, 'In a clear, concise, complete form (to the best of my knowledge) nowhere.'

Spelling, G. H. Vallins (Andre Deutsch) is complete, but not concise. It is the most recent and scholarly book on the subject.

How to Spell, C. Whittaker Wilson (World's Work), is clear, but not complete.

There are numerous spelling books for school use but these are not concise; some give no rules; others give some rules interspersed with numerous exercises as for classroom use.

The following briefest possible presentation may be useful to readers.

(i) Adding a suffix beginning with a vowel, e.g., /-ed, /-ing, & c.

(a) One vowel + one consonant, accented: double the last consonant.

Bat—batting

Reve't—revetting

but Boat—boating.

but Ri'vet—ri'veting.

(Handicapping, Kidnapping, Worshipping are exceptions.)

(b) Final /-l is doubled in all cases.

Fulfi'l—fulfilling

Travel—travelling.

(c) Words ending in /-ac, /-ic: insert k.

Picnic—picnicking.

(ii) Changing /-y to /-i-.

(a) Consonant + y. change /-y to /-i-.

Tidy—tidied

but Survey—surveyed.

Merry—merriment

but Employ—employment.

Ready—readiness

but Grey—Greyness.

Exception: Words of one syllable: Dryness, Shyness.

Slyness, Wryness; Flyer, Fryer, Shyer, Tryer.

Notice: A Business but Busyness (state of being busy).

(iii) Dropping final mute /-e.

(a) Drop final mute /-e before /-able except in the case of /-ce and /-ge.

Smoke—smokable but Unplaceable, Changeable.

Note: This rule is not observed where the word is likely to be misread: e.g., Blam(e)able, Sal(e)able. In fact the writer may drop or keep the /-e at his discretion.

(b) Drop final mute -e before /-ing. Here again the /-e- may be retained wherever misreading is likely: e.g., Ageing. The dictionaries disagree and the writer may use his discretion.

Notice: (1) Singe—singeing (to distinguish from Sing—singing).

(2) /-oe of course retains the /-e: Canoeing.

(c) Drop final mute /-e when adding /-y.

Here again the rule is not observed if there is danger of misreading: e.g., Bluey, Gamey, Holey (from Hole).

(d) Keep final mute /-e before /-ly and /-ness.

Bluely—blueness.

Exceptions: Duly, Truly, Wholly.

(e) Keep final mute /-e before /-ment.

Exception : Argument.

Notice : Abridgment, Acknowledgment and Judgment are spelt with or without /-e/ ; without is preferred.

Note : Ski—skied (preferred to ski'd)....skiing ; Taxi—taxied—taxiing.

(iv) *Plurals*

Words ending in /-f. In doubt and where there is an alternative, prefer /-fs to /-ves.

Handkerchiefs, Hoofs, Roofs, Scarfs, Turfs, Wharfs ; but /-ves is obligatory in Leaves, Loaves, Thieves, Halves, Elves, Shelves, Selves, Wolves.

Notice : Thievish, but the rest are /-fish, Elfish, Selfish, Wolfish.

Words ending in /-i. All form plurals in /-is. e.g., Skis, Alkalis except Chillies (but many are Latin plurals, e.g., Literati).

Words ending in /-is. All form plurals in /-ises, e.g., Irises, except Bases, Oases ; also technical words in a technical context (Axes, Psychoses, Aphides, Apsides). Crisis and Thesis in colloquial may have /-ises, but use /-es in formal writing.

Words ending in /-o. The great majority from the plural in /-os : the exceptions are words definitely adopted into English (Cargoes, Echoes, Mangoes, Mottoes, Mosquitoes, Negroes, Potatoes, Tomatoes). In doubt and where there is an alternative, prefer /-os. /-oo, of course, becomes /-oos. Igloos.

Words ending in sibilants (/ -ch, / -sh, / -s, / -ss, / -x). Add /-es,

Words ending in /-um Ordinarily the plural is /-ums, Albums ; but note Addenda, Bacteria, Data, Errata. Use Aquariums in colloquial, Aquaria in technical contexts. There are, of course, many scientific words ending in /-um : these form their plurals in /-a, e.g., Labium, Mycelium, &c

Words ending in /-us. Prefer /-uses in non-scientific contexts. Focuses (photography), Terminuses (railway) ; but Foci (mathematics and science), Termini (medicine). For flowers /-i is preferred. e.g., Gladioli, but notice Convolvulus, Crocuses. Polyanthuses.

Notice : Corpora, Genera.

Words ending in /-y Consonant + y becomes /-ies, e.g.: Fly—flies but Bov—boys.

The current plural of Money is MonEYS ; monies should be restricted to legal documents.

(v) *Possessive cases*

The Princess's car—The Princesses' cars Singular /-s', e.g., Midas' gold, is obsolete and found only in prayers, e.g., Jesus' name, For Jesus' sake ; also For goodness' sake, (Avoid For conscience'—and For peace'—.)

(vi) *Past tense : /-ed or /-t*

Prefer Burnt, Dreamt, Knelt, Learnt, Spelt, Split, Spoilt, Bereft is factual (Bereft of his senses) ; Bereaved is emotional (Bereaved of her child).

I before E except after C

This rule applies only where /-ie/ is pronounced as in Grieve, e.g., not in Their. The exceptions are : Counterfeit, Plebeian. Seize, Weir, Weird.