

**MEMORANDUM**  
ON  
**PROBLEMS OF ENGLISH TEACHING**  
IN THE LIGHT OF A  
**NEW THEORY**

BY

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# THE PROBLEM OF LANGUAGE-TEACHING IN THE LIGHT OF A NEW THEORY.

## A MEMORANDUM

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### INTRODUCTORY.

1. The problem of teaching foreign languages is no new one, nor is it confined to any particular country. From the earliest times and in most of the countries of the world, foreign languages have been taught and studied. Various procedures have been used at different times ostensibly with a view to effective teaching, and have been embodied in countless "methods," good, bad and indifferent.

2. Apparently, however, educators have always felt that something has been essentially wrong in the various procedures adopted; and indeed most of us will readily admit that there is a striking disparity between the efforts expended by teachers and the results obtained by them, even in the most favourable of conditions. In short, language-teaching methods have

generally proved to be unsatisfactory because uneconomical.

3. Although various reforms of class-room procedure have been effected in recent years as a consequence of what has been called the "Direct Method movement," the majority of us will agree that the results obtained are still incommensurate with the amount of effort expended by teacher and student.

4. The failure to find any adequate solution to this age-long problem is probably due to the fact that the work of designing language-courses has hitherto been exclusively in the hands of "language experts." But philologists, grammarians and phoneticians, who may be experts in their own subjects, are rarely competent in matters pertaining to the psychology of Speech; they may know all about *languages* as such, but are generally ignorant about the mental processes by which people acquire the power of *using* languages.

To-day, however, for the first time, language experts are recognizing the help that psychologists are able to afford them, and psychologists are realizing the service that they can render to the language-course designers. It is only reasonable to suppose that this happy collaboration will result in the placing of linguistic pedagogy once for all on a truly scientific basis.

5. It would be premature to state that psychologists are coming forward in a body to present their views, and it would be an exaggeration to say that there exists any considerable quantity of literature on Speech-Psychology; at the same time

we note that certain individual workers, in an occasional lecture or review article, are beginning to express their views and to make their influence felt. It would be incorrect to say that language teachers as a body are appealing to psychologists for their help, but it is probably within the bounds of truth to assert that language-teachers, course-designers and Educational Authorities are becoming more willing to listen to their views and to give them the attention that they deserve.

6. Indeed the first contributions of the psychologists have already been made; unostentatiously it is true, and with no flourish of trumpets. Uninfluenced by classical tradition, relatively free from the illusions often prevalent among those who have not had the advantages of a scientific training, they have been calmly analyzing the subject, reducing it to its component factors, and determining the various psycho-physical activities involved in the course of the acquiring of one's mother-tongue or of a foreign language.

7. The object of the present Memorandum is to set forth as briefly as is consistent with clearness, the conclusions which we may legitimately form from the new evidence.

8. The evidence upon which those conclusions are based has been obtained partly through my own experience as a teacher and as a student of foreign languages, and partly from the writings and utterances of those who have been exploring the little known strip of neutral territory lying between



Linguistics and Psychology. In this connection I may quote the names of Professor Spearman (University College, London) Mr. Morris Ginsberg (University College, London) Mr. H. S. Perera (Phonetics Dept., University College, London), Professor F. W. Brown (Hokkaido Imperial University), Professor A. Sècheyay (University of Geneva) and the late Professor F. de Saussure (University of Geneva).

It is however, only due to say that the conclusions themselves are my own contribution, for the authorities whom I have quoted above may not assent to them nor approve of the use to which I have put their theories and terminology.

### "SPEECH" AND "LANGUAGE."

9. It is affirmed by psychologists that that heterogeneous and complex subject vaguely alluded to under the general term "language" is in reality two different and incommensurable subjects. These two subjects, although intimately bound up one with the other must be distinguished one from the other by all designers and users of Language-Courses. Let us provisionally term these two subjects respectively *A*. and *B*.

10. *A* may be defined as: **The sum of the mental and physical activities involved when one person communicates to another (by gesture, articulation or by written signs) any given concept (i. e. thought, notion or emotion).**

11. *B*. **The sum of the conventions adopted and systematized by a socialized mass of users of *A* in order to ensure common intelligibility.**

12. *A*, then, is a set of personal activities and reactions to stimuli, whereas *B* is a set of conventions, a code. A commercial code is not the same thing as the acts involved when transmitting a message by such code; the code of Marine Signals is not the same thing as the acts involved in hoisting the flags; the musical code of notes and rests is not the same thing as the acts performed by the musician; the code represented by a Railway Time Table is not the same thing as the acts performed by one who travels by train. In short, an act (or activity) is not the same thing as the code in accordance with which it is executed.

It follows therefore that the acts of communicating thoughts by language is not the same thing as the language (or language-code) by which the acts are executed.

13. Let us now designate *A* by the specific term "*Speech*" (思想傳達法) and *B* by the specific term "*Language*" (語學), remembering that from now onwards we shall use these terms not in the vaguer, more general and more popular sense, but in the strict technical sense of the definitions given above.

An English child of four years old is generally proficient in English Speech (i.e. he can generally communicate and receive successfully the rudimentary concepts appropriate to



his age), but he has no conscious knowledge of that code called the English Language.

A foreign student of "English" may be profoundly versed in the niceties of that code called the English Language, and yet be most unproficient in those personal activities which are called English Speech.

14. As a positive proof that Language is something different from Speech, let us note that many artificial languages have at different times been invented which have never been used for purposes of communicating thoughts, even by their inventors.

15. We must not be tempted to identify *Speech* with "Spoken Language" nor *Language* with "Written Speech," for the activities of Speech may be manifested through both the spoken and the written word, and the code called "a language" may be used both orally and graphically. Needless to say, the distinction between Speech and Language does not correspond to the useful distinction made between the "Colloquial" and the "Literary" dialects of a given language.

16. It will not suffice to dismiss the distinction between Speech and Language by saying that the former is *Practice* and the latter *Theory*, for we have the Theory and Practice of Speech, and the Theory and Practice of Language. The Theory of Speech is more or less understood by psychologists, and they explain it in terms of mental processes such as

*Associations and Circuits*. The Practice of Speech is manifested by the child in the nursery or by the pupils of the successful teacher of foreign speech. The Theory of Language is more or less understood and explained by such specialists as Jespersen, Bloomfield or Sapir. The Practice of Language is manifested by those who are engaged in teaching or studying the codes themselves. Each time we are successful in communicating our concepts we are practising Speech; each time we successfully analyze a mode of expression, paraphrase it or build up a foreign sentence by purely synthetic methods, we are practising Language.

#### A FIRST CONCLUSION.

17. The immediate conclusion that we may now form is that in all ages and in all countries disproportionate attention has been given to the *Language* side of the problem. The larger part of our teaching efforts have been directed towards the explaining of the foreign *code*, and the remaining part to causing our pupils to become proficient in performing acts of *Speech*, either receptively or productively.

18. Go to any bookshop, examine the pages of any book having such titles as "Aids to English," "The English Sentence," "Guide to Students of English," "Short Cuts to English," "Everyday Sentences in English," "The English



Language," "English in Theory and Practice," and you will find that the authors are devoting all or most of their attention to the explaining of English as a code, and ignoring the mental processes which alone will enable the foreign students of English to become proficient in performing English Speech activities. (Let the reader note that such textbooks for the study of English may be written in English or in any other vehicular language).

19. The "French Lesson" in the English class-room, or the "English Lesson" in the French or Japanese class-room, generally consists of a series of explanations concerning the the French or English languages (i.e. "codes"). These lessons are generally given through the medium of the written word, more rarely through the medium of the spoken word. Whether such lessons are well given or badly given, whether the explanations are successfully given or unsuccessfully given, or whether the texts are well chosen or badly chosen does not concern us for the moment. We may assume the teacher to be competent, the explanations to be valid, and the texts to be ideal, but the fact remains that the lessons are generally purely "language" lessons.

The teacher considers them to be so; it is rarely or never part of his intention to drill his pupils into performing acts of Speech; and if he does do so, such Speech exercises are subordinate to the main purpose: the teaching of the "code."

We have no legitimate cause for complaint against such teachers or such teaching; it is the logical outcome of the assumption that the terms "French Lessons" or "English Lessons" stand respectively for "Lessons in the French Language" and "Lessons in the English Language."

20. Hence, if we are desirous of bringing about an effective reform in the teaching of English, French, Japanese, etc. our first step, it would seem, must be towards the clear defining of such vague terms as "English," "French" or "Japanese." If we use the term "English Language" we must be clear in our minds whether we are using the term in the narrow technical sense which excludes "Speech" or whether we mean it to cover "English Speech" and "Language."

#### PRIMARY SPEECH AND SECONDARY SPEECH.

21. From now onwards in the course of this memorandum I shall say comparatively little concerning the teaching of Language, and shall confine myself to the neglected Speech aspect of the problem.

22. Assuming my reader to have grasped the idea of Speech as opposed to Language, I must now proceed to distinguish between what I shall term respectively *Primary Speech* and *Secondary Speech*.

23. *Primary Speech* I shall define as: "*Speech Activities*



as usually practised by the young child in the course of his normal linguistic development without organized pedagogic training (i.e. without reading, writing, translating, analysis, synthesis and other similar acts of reason)"; and *Secondary Speech* as: "Speech Activities as not usually practised by the young child in the course of his normal linguistic development, but which are initiated and developed by systematic pedagogic training (i.e. reading, writing, translating, analysis, synthesis and other similar acts of reason)."

24. To realize this important distinction and to understand why the terms *Primary* and *Secondary* are appropriate, it will be necessary to examine what are called "Speech Circuits."

25. An act of speech consists in communicating a concept from one brain to another. If we use the simplest and the most primitive circuit (i.e. the *Primary Circuit*) the following is the psycho-physical mechanism:

26. A *concept* is produced in the brain of a given person (whom we shall call *A*). He wishes another person (whom we shall call *B*) to become aware of his concept. (In simpler terms, *A* wants to make a communication to *B*.) The concept is identified in *A*'s brain with something called an *Acoustic Image*.

27. The acoustic image is the imagining that one hears or articulates one or more words. When you "think of a word" you form an acoustic image of that word; the process of

thinking itself is the associating of a succession of acoustic images to the corresponding concepts. According to psychologists, a concept is inseparable from some sort of acoustic image. You cannot think of the animal called "a cat" without imagining that you hear or articulate the English word spelt CAT, or the French word spelt CHAT, or the German word spelt KATZE, or the Japanese word spelt NEKO, etc. This fusion of the concept and of an appropriate acoustic image is so intimate and so natural that most of us fail to realize that an acoustic image has been formed at all. But a few experiments will soon convince us that the acoustic image is an indispensable concomitant to the concept. When you "say something to yourself" or "think something to yourself" you are simply forming acoustic images.

28. *A* forms the acoustic image appropriate to his concept, and at the same moment "*phonates*" it; that is to say, he converts his acoustic image into muscular activity; his vocal organs function and he makes certain articulate noises in accordance with some particular language code. The concept and the acoustic image are psychic activities; the phonation is a physical activity; it creates sound-waves.

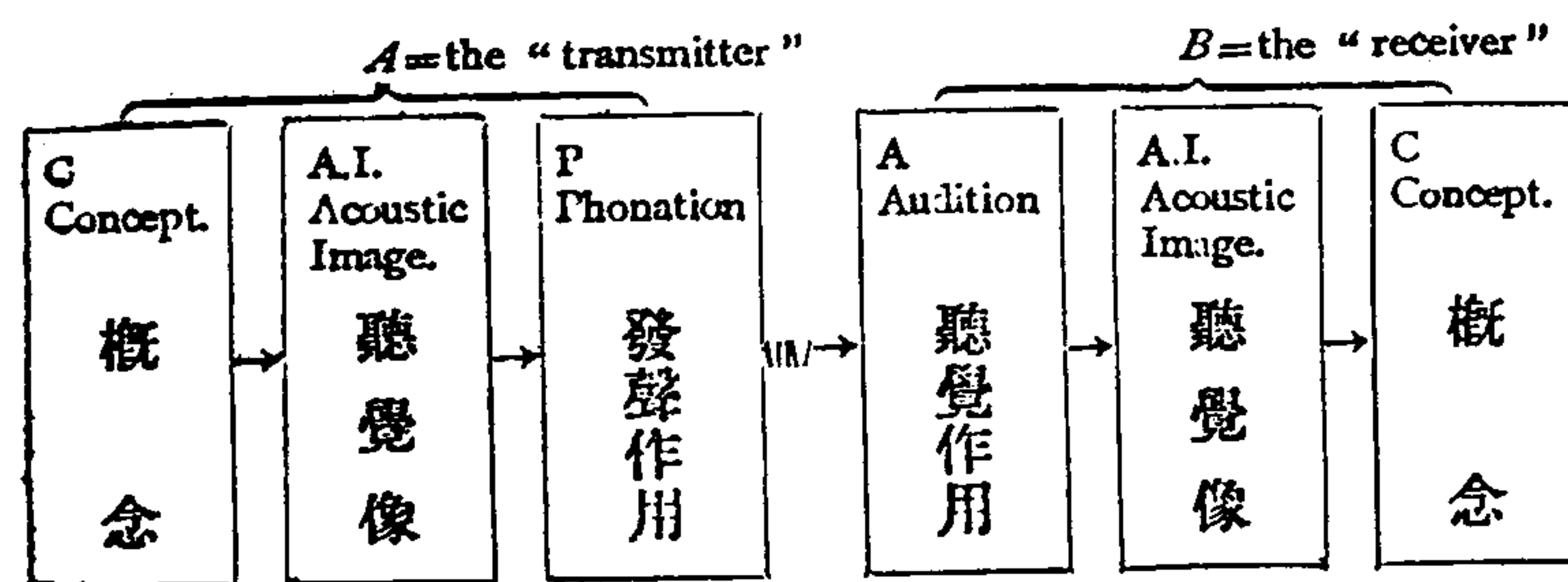
29. These sound-waves cause the diaphragm of *B*'s ear to vibrate, and *B* is aware of sounds. This is the act of *Audition*. If *B* is a foreigner unfamiliar with the sounds of *A*'s language, the matter will probably end there; *B* will have *heard* but



will probably have been unable to form any acoustic image; he cannot represent to himself what he has heard. If *B*, although a foreigner, is acquainted with the sounds of *A*'s language, the act of audition will evoke in his mind an acoustic image.

30. If however he is not acquainted with *A*'s language, the matter will end there; for the acoustic image will have failed to evoke any concept. He will say: "I hear a word or some words, but they convey no meaning to me." But if *B* is not a foreigner, or if, although a foreigner, he knows *A*'s language, the acoustic image will evoke in his brain a concept, and this concept will probably be the same as (or very similar to) the original concept produced by *A*'s cerebral activity. The speech circuit is complete.

31. Let us recapitulate the psycho-physical operations involved in this simple and primary speech circuit by means of the following diagram:



### THE SIX PRIMARY SPEECH HABITS.

32. The young child, without receiving any specific training or instruction, becomes proficient in performing the Act of Primary Speech. He phonates nonsense-words because it gives him pleasure to do so; he comes to form acoustic images by dint of involuntarily listening to others or to himself. He likes listening to nursery rhymes and stories; he finds that if he makes certain vocal noises, his wants are attended to more promptly than if he did not make them; and so he comes to associate rudimentary concepts with rudimentary acoustic images (both phonated and unphonated). He associates the concept *hungry* with the word *hungry* when he is hungry, associates the concept *dog* with the word *dog* when he sees a dog, associates the concept *bed* with the word *bed* when he is put to bed, etc. etc.

33. The question now arises: is it desirable or possible to cause school-children to become proficient in performing such primary acts of Speech?

The general concensus of opinion is that it is both desirable and possible. (See Jespersen, Passy, Sweet, Goethe, Storm, Atkins and Hutton, Kittson, etc. etc.). In the course of this memorandum I shall suggest that not only is it desirable and possible but that it is essential and indispensable.

34. A further question arises: assuming the desirability and possibility, how can we cause school-children to acquire such proficiency?

35. I suggest the following answer:

The young child invariably forms six speech habits. Thanks to these, and to these exclusively, he becomes proficient in performing the acts of Primary Speech. Let us therefore term these "The Six Primary Speech Habits," examine them, and show how each of these habits may be acquired by the older child in the class-room (or even by the adult in the course of his tuition).

**PRIMARY SPEECH-HABIT No. 1.**  
**"ORAL OBSERVATION."**

36. Students of Speech must form the habit of observing speech-material with their ears. Spoken Speech-material may be roughly defined as: sounds and intimate sound-groups, tones and intimate tone-groups, syllables and intimate syllable-groups, words and word-groups ranging from the most intimate word-groups to longer word-groups including sentences.

37. The average student, at the present time, forms this habit very imperfectly or not at all, being tempted or encouraged to replace it by *visual* observation, or being tempted and encouraged to confine his oral observation to isolated words.

**PRIMARY SPEECH-HABIT No. 2.**  
**"ORAL MIMICRY."**

38. Students of Speech must form the habit of mimicking with the vocal organs the speech-material as it falls from the lips of the teacher. They should do this aloud (=phonate it) or mentally (=form the Acoustic Image), not only at the moment of hearing (=Audition), but also, if possible, from memory.

39. The average student at the present time, being generally averse to mimicry (except as a joke), and not being specifically encouraged to mimic, forms this habit very imperfectly or not at all.

**PRIMARY SPEECH-HABIT No. 3.**  
**"ORAL MECHANIZING."**

40. "Mechanizing" means: performing a succession of movements repeatedly always in the same way until the succession of movements can be performed successfully without the performer giving any attention to what he is doing. If a pianist can execute a piece of music successfully while he is reading the newspaper or is carrying on a conversation, he may be said to have "mechanized" the piece of music.



41. Students of Speech must form the habit of mechanizing Speech-material, i.e. becoming able (by dint of repetition) to produce accurately, and without giving attention, chains of syllables, on reception of some appropriate stimulus.

42. The average student at the present time, being averse to monotonous repetition, being ignorant of its purpose and value, and not being specifically encouraged to do so, confines his mechanizing efforts to single words. He will mechanize such a word as *impossible*, but does not mechanize such word-groups as *it is impossible for me to go*. He is generally encouraged to replace *the mechanizing of word-groups* by *the improvising of word-groups*. See Secondary Speech-Habit No. 14.

#### PRIMARY SPEECH-HABIT No. 4.

##### "FUSING ACOUSTIC IMAGE AND MEANING."

43. Students of Speech must form the habit of fusing each word or word-group (long and short) with the concept to which it is assumed to correspond. The sight of a *pencil* should evoke the word *pencil*, the word *book* should evoke the concept of a *book*; the activity represented by the sentence *I get up* should evoke the words *I get up*, etc. etc.

44. Such fusions may be effected in various ways and in varying degrees. The average student, at the present time,

tends rather to fuse the foreign word with his native word, to neglect fusing it with its concept, and to consider the isolated word as the ultimate semantic unit, ignoring the word-group altogether.

#### BASIC SPEECH MATERIAL

45. The four Primary Speech-Habits set forth above, are sufficient for the purposes of acquiring what I shall now term "Basic Speech-Material." (In former works I have called this "Primary Matter" or "Memorized Matter." As the term *Primary* is required for other purposes, and as I now feel the term *Memorized* to be inappropriate, I propose to replace them by the new term "*Basic*.")

46. "Basic Speech-Material" is any Speech Material (see definition under Speech Habit No. 1.) which is learnt (i.e. memorized, learnt by heart) as it stands without modifications or additions, as when we have learnt to say and to use one or more sentences in a language which otherwise is quite unknown to us. One who confines his linguistic efforts to the successful memorizing of useful and authentic foreign sentences and who is content to use them exactly as he has heard them, will be unable to commit any errors of grammar, word-choice etc. but his powers of expression and understanding will be confined to this necessarily limited stock.



47. I have heard of a missionary in India who could preach one sermon and one sermon only in the Urdu language. He had memorized it from end to end, and so that sermon constituted his sole stock of Urdu Speech-Material (at any rate as far as preaching was concerned), and that was Basic Speech-Material.

A pianist who has learnt to execute (well, badly or indifferently) one single piece of music, but who is otherwise ignorant of piano-playing, may be said to possess Basic *Piano-playing* Material only, and that confined to one piece of music.

#### DERIVATIVE SPEECH MATERIAL.

48. When however we are expert enough to modify in some way a given piece of Basic Speech-Material, we are composing "Derivative" Speech-Material. Let us assume some person, otherwise unacquainted with English, to have learnt by heart the sentence *Where are you going?* That sentence is a piece of Basic Speech-Material. He learns subsequently that *were* is the past tense of the verb of which *are* is the present tense. He may then "derive" *Where were you going?* (a sentence which he has neither imitated nor so far mechanized). Or he may learn the word *when*, and risk the sentence *When are you going?* or perhaps *When were you going?* Or he may learn the word *coming*, and

risk *Where are you coming?* *When are you coming?* *Where were you coming?* or *When were you coming?* Or he may learn the word *they*, and risk *When are they going?* *When were they coming?* etc. etc. These sentences will be "derived" from the Basic sentence *Where are you going?* and will constitute "Derivative" Speech-Material. One who is too impatient to observe, mimic, mechanize, and fuse to meanings Basic Speech-Material, and who is over-keen on extemporizing Derivative Speech-Material, will form bad habits which are not Primary Speech Habits, and will run serious risks. He may learn the word *he* and may produce *Where are he going?* Or he may learn the word *live*, and may produce *Where are you live?* In other terms, a use of Derivative Speech-Material disproportionate to the quantity of Basic Speech-Material acquired will result in what is called "Broken English."

49. We may here note that there are three ways in which Basic Speech-Material is acquired:

(1). The tedious but very effective plan of daily repeating a given number of foreign authentic sentences provided to us by some competent teacher, while comparing them occasionally with an adequate translation in our own language. This is the only plan available for the beginner who rarely has the opportunity of hearing the language spoken or of using it himself in actual speech.

(2). Hearing a foreign sentence repeated so often that we



acquire it even involuntarily. This is the first method generally adopted by the young child. If the students hear their teacher say a foreign sentence on a sufficient number of occasions, they will tend to learn it by heart whether they want to or not.

(3). Successfully composing and using Derivative Material on several occasions so that the repetition converts the Derivative Material into new Basic Material. This procedure is generally only possible in the case of the more advanced student, and only then if he has been well trained in the Primary Speech Habits.

50. The first four Primary Speech Habits, I repeat, are essential for the successful acquisition of Basic Speech-Material.

#### **PRIMARY SPEECH HABIT No. 5.**

##### **"COMPOSING DERIVATIVE SPEECH MATERIAL."**

51. Students of Speech must form the habit of composing Derivative Speech-Material from the Basic Speech-Material that they have acquired by dint of Oral Observation, Oral Mimicry, Oral Mechanizing, and Fusing Acoustic Image and Meaning. They form this habit by means of specific exercises which train them to modify their Basic Material in accordance with the usages of the language they are studying. By so doing they will become expert in composing new sentences by

analogy with previously learnt sentences. If the exercises are appropriate, and the lessons well given, this analogical construction will soon be executed by the student unconsciously and successfully.

52. The average student at the present time, not being encouraged to form this habit, tends to ignore it and to replace it by Secondary Speech Habit No. 14. (Improvising Speech-Material by the help of Dictionary and Grammar Book).

#### **PRIMARY SPEECH HABIT No. 6.**

##### **"IMMEDIATE REACTIONS TO ORAL STIMULI"**

(in connection with the Primary Speech Circuit).

53. The five primary speech habits described above do not form a complete recipe until we add to them the habit of Immediate Reactions to Stimuli.

54. Students of Speech must form the habit of responding *immediately* to various stimuli. They must observe immediately, must mimic immediately, must so fuse the words to their meanings that one evokes the other immediately, must become so expert in analogical constructions that they can immediately form Derivative from Primary Speech-Material. The young child reacts immediately or not at all. Students must learn, for example, to answer questions without hesitation or delay; they must be prepared to name an object immediately



it is shown to them; they must learn how to perform the operation of substitution not only accurately but promptly. As for mechanizing, the production of a succession of syllables without a break is an essential part of the process.

55. The average student of the present day tends rather to reflect and to calculate before he reacts; he is rarely encouraged to react promptly, for the necessity for prompt reactions is not evident to those who have not given serious attention to the nature of speech activities as distinct from the study of the language itself as a code.

### HOW TO ACQUIRE THE PRIMARY SPEECH HABITS.

56. We must now enquire by what procedure it is possible within the limitations of the class-room to cause students to acquire the Six Primary Speech Habits.

57. The answer is simple: *these habits may be acquired by means of specific and appropriate exercises.* These differ from the time-honoured exercises which aim only at the learning of the language (i.e. "code"), or, at best the learning of what we shall examine later as the Secondary Speech Habits. Primary-Speech-Habit-Forming exercises aim at nothing but the successful and rapid formation of Primary Speech Habits. If, at the same time, they result in a certain acquaintance

with the "code" we may consider this as a useful by-product. As matters stand to-day in the average school, other exercises than these are given, and whatever Primary Speech Habits are formed are formed accidentally, and as a by-product.

58. Those who are pessimistic enough to doubt whether it is possible within the limitations of the class-room and of time to inculcate the Primary Speech Habits, should ask themselves whether, to their knowledge, specific exercises to this end have ever been given a fair trial.

59. What are these specific exercises? It would seem that they may be divided into seven groups:

1. Ear-Training Exercises,
2. Articulation Exercises,
3. Repetition Exercises,
4. Reproduction Exercises,
5. Substitution Exercises,
6. Imperative Drill,
7. Conventional Conversation.

These seven groups however are mostly *oral*.

### EAR-TRAINING EXERCISES.

60. These exercises (first devised by Professor D. Jones) are designed to cause students to observe sounds and to distinguish one sound from another. Briefly the procedure is as follows:



The teacher, after a preliminary explanation, makes various sounds (such as simple vowels, diphthongs, simple consonants, compound consonants, compounds of consonants and vowels) and calls upon the students to identify them, either by calling out the numbers which serve as their designation, or by writing down the phonetic symbols which serve as a sound-notation. At a later stage the teacher gives "Nonsense Dictation," an exercise which requires that the students shall write (in phonetic notation) whatever they hear dictated to them irrespective of considerations of sense or understanding. Such exercises specifically develop Primary Speech Habits 1 and 6.

### **ARTICULATION EXERCISES.**

61. These include "Mouth Gymnastics," calculated to make students skilful in the voluntary control of the muscles of their organs of speech, and exercises in mimicking the sounds, intimate sound-groups, words and word-groups as articulated by the teacher.

Such exercises develop Primary Speech Habits 1, 2 and 6.

### **REPETITION EXERCISES.**

62. These exercises are the further development of Ear-Training and Articulation exercises, but are designed specifically

to help the students in their work of mechanizing. The sentences repeated after the teacher may be useful conversational sentences, exemplifications of rules of grammar, or sentences designed to serve as the Basic Speech Material from which Derivative Speech Material will subsequently be composed.

Such exercises develop Primary Speech Habits 1, 2, 3, and 6.

### **REPRODUCTION EXERCISES.**

63. These form the logical sequence of those already described. The pupils are called upon to reproduce from memory the Speech Material that they are assumed to have mechanized. They may be carried out in various ways. The Gouin principle is one of these ways, the old Prendergast method is another; I have suggested a form of Translation Drill as another. Others are practically identical with those described below under the heading of "Conventional Conversation."

Such exercises develop Speech Habits 3, 4 and 6.

### **SUBSTITUTION EXERCISES.**

64. These consist of systematic exercises in composing Derivative Speech Material from Basic Speech Material by means of devices such as those used by Prendergast, and ex-



plained in my book "100 Substitution Tables." The procedure is simple but difficult to describe in the course of this necessarily concise memorandum.

These exercises develop Primary Speech Habits 4, 5 and 6.

### IMPERATIVE DRILL.

65. An ideal exercise for beginners, capable however of development in such a manner as to afford help to more advanced students. The procedure is simple. The teacher orders his pupils (either all together or singly) to perform certain actions; the pupils (either all together or singly) carry out his commands.

These exercises develop Primary Speech Habits 4 and 6.

### CONVENTIONAL CONVERSATION.

66. This must not be confused with "Normal Conversation" (an entirely different procedure). The technique of Conventional Conversation, and the explanation of its many sub-divisions would require more space than is available in the course of this memorandum. Briefly it may be described as a system of questions and answers in the foreign language. The questions may be trivial, but they must admit of accurate and rapid answering. They range between the elementary *What's a*

*cat? --- It's an animal and the difficult Do most people consider it usual or unusual to get a ticket when they want to go somewhere by train? ----- Most people consider it usual to get a ticket when they want to go somewhere by train.*

These exercises develop all the six Primary Speech Habits, and are therefore the most valuable and economical of all the specific exercises suggested as a means to the end under immediate consideration.

67. Detailed instructions to the teacher concerning the above seven groups of exercises can hardly be given in this memorandum. The reader, however, may refer to my "Oral Method of Teaching Languages" and find therein a full description of some fifty varieties of exercises calculated to initiate and develop what I have termed "The Six Primary Speech Habits."

### THE SECONDARY SPEECH CIRCUITS.

68. If the reader will turn back to § 23, he will be reminded that Primary Speech *is* and Secondary Speech *is not* usually practised by the young child in the course of his normal linguistic development. I might add that the savage or the idiot rarely employ any other Speech process than that which I have designated as Primary.

69. There are at least four reasons which justify us in



the use of the terms *Primary* and *Secondary* in connection with Speech.

(1). In the normal linguistic development of the individual, proficiency is attained in the use of the Primary Speech Circuit before any progress whatever is made in the use of the Secondary Speech Circuits. In other terms *Primary-Speech* means *First-Speech*.

(2). The acts of Primary Speech are executed by the inter-communicating parties without the aid of such artificial accessories as writing materials; we are provided by Nature with a complete set of apparatus for the transmission of concepts, viz. ears and the vocal organs. In other terms, *Primary Speech* means *Primitive Speech*.

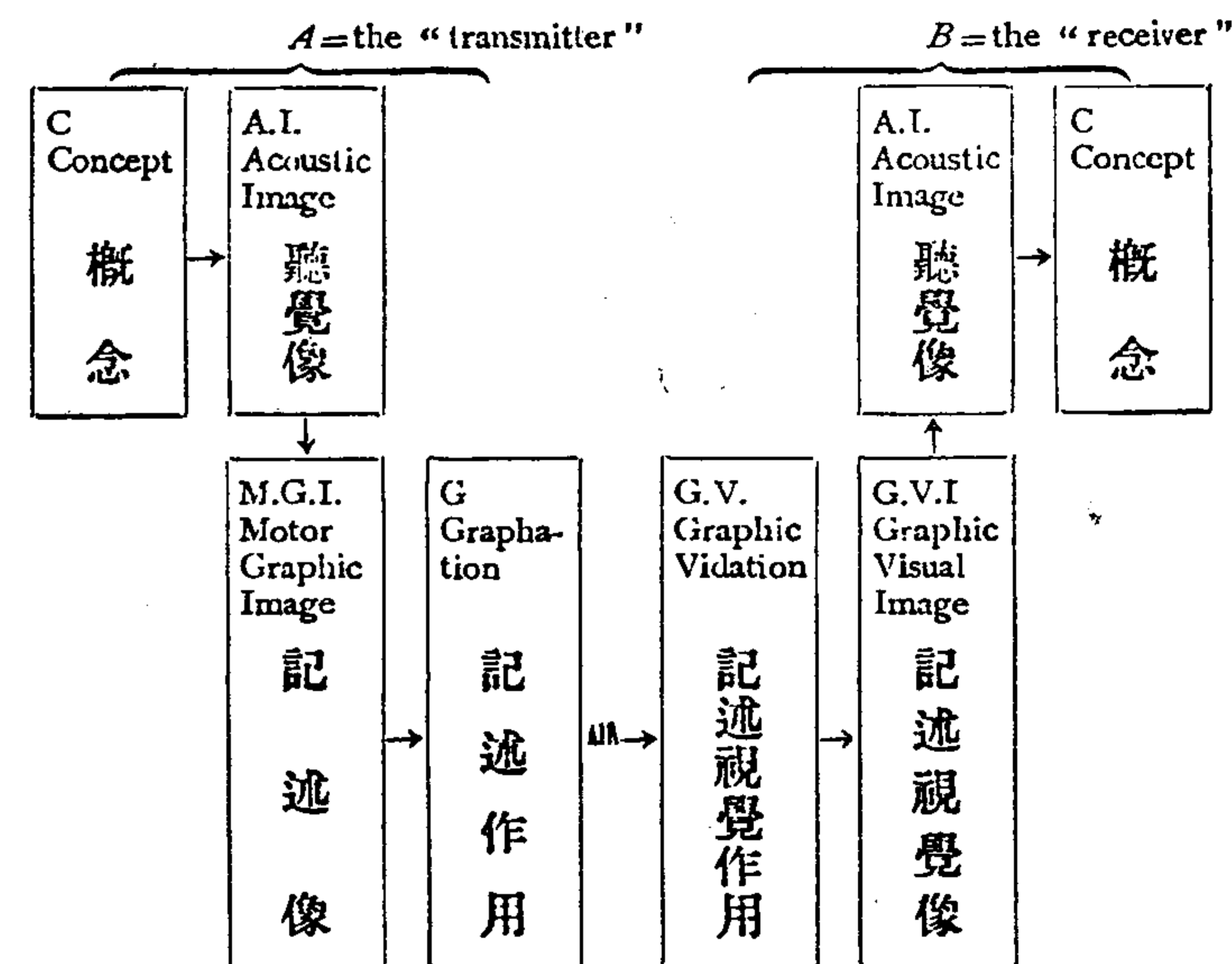
(3). The Primary Speech Circuit, as we shall see, is the shortest of circuits, and involves the minimum of psycho-physical acts. In other terms, *Primary Speech* means *Direct Speech*.

(4). An act of Primary Speech is performed without the intervention of the Secondary Circuits; the reverse is not the case, for the Secondary Speech Circuits are dependent upon the Primary Circuit. In other terms, *Primary Speech* means *Non-subsidiary Speech*.

70. We have already examined (§ 31) the mechanism of the Primary Speech Circuit and have seen that it is a single line from beginning to end. In what I term Secondary Speech

there are at least two "loop-lines" each of which may be used independently of the other or in combination with the other. Let us now represent in diagrammatic form the first of the two Secondary Circuits.

71. *The First of the Secondary Speech Circuits:*  
(i.e. the writing-reading circuit)



and let us examine its psycho-physical mechanism:

72. A *Concept* is formed in the brain of A (the transmitter of the concept).

This concept is immediately fused to a corresponding *Acoustic Image* (=A imagines himself to be hearing or



articulating the word or words corresponding to the concept).

73. Instead, however, of *Phonating* (articulating aloud) the word or words, *A* imagines that he is writing the word or words. This imagining constitutes what we may call the "*Motor Graphic Image*" (i.e. the succession of muscular sensations which one experiences in writing the word or words.) The *Image* has been transferred from the *acoustic* sensory centres to the *motor graphic* sensory centres.

[Should the reader experience any difficulty in representing to himself adequately what is meant by the *Motor Graphic Image*, let him take a pencil, hold it motionless over a sheet of paper as if on the point of writing, and then prepare to write, or imagine himself to be writing, some familiar word, word-group or even a single letter—his own name would be appropriate. Now the sensations that he experiences in the muscles of the hand and arm, and the impulse to write represent the *Motor Graphic Image*.]

74. The *Motor Graphic Image* is then transformed from a psychical into a physical activity. *A* carries his writing impulse into execution, performs movements and makes actual marks on the paper. This is the act of *Graphation* (i.e. the physical portion of the act of writing).

75. *A* (the transmitter) has completed his share of the circuit. What he has written comes before the eyes of *B* (the receiver). If *B* has never learnt to read he sees some

black marks on paper, he is aware of them and that is all. He performs nothing more than the act of what we shall call *Graphic Vidation*.

76. Assuming him however to be familiar with the system of writing used by *A*, the *Graphic Vidation* will result in a *Graphic Visual Image*; *B* recognizes the shape and arrangement of the written marks, and if he shut his eyes could probably visualize them. What he sees in his mind's eye is this *Graphic Visual Image*.

77. If *B* is familiar with the system of writing and with its approximate phonetic value, he will transform this *Graphic Visual Image* into an *Acoustic Image* (more or less the same as the one formed by *A*).

78. If *B* is familiar with the word or words written by *A*, the acoustic image will be fused with the corresponding concept, and this will be more or less the same as the one which, in the mind of *A*, started the circuit.

79. This secondary circuit may be called the "Writing and Reading Circuit." It is more complex than the Primary (or "Speaking and Hearing") Circuit, as in the case of both *A* and *B*, one additional mental activity is involved. It is a more difficult process than that of the Primary Speech Circuit, for one additional mental habit has to be acquired before it becomes effective.

80. This secondary circuit has the advantage that a portion



of it need not be performed with the extreme rapidity which is inseparable from the execution of the Primary Circuit. *A* may take time for reflection, may perform the Graphation act in a leisurely manner, pausing even several seconds between each separate letter or word. *B*, also, may take his time; the written words remain before his eyes as long as he cares to look at them, whereas the spoken words are past and gone in a flash.

81. This advantage, however, is largely illusory; the comparative slowness of the writing-reading circuit conceals the fact that the transmitter or the receiver may be inexpert users of Speech. The using of this Secondary circuit by learners of a foreign Speech before they have become fairly proficient in using the Primary Circuit, will tend to give them undesirable habits. It will tend to make them slow in reacting (and they will remain slow writers and slow readers); it will tend to make them careless in effecting accurate fusions, and to neglect the habits of phonation and audition; it will also provide them with an alternate process to that of oral mechanizing — and they will eagerly avail themselves of this opportunity and pretext for avoiding the drudgery of oral mechanizing; it will tend to make them confine their attention to the isolated word (— whatever the true unit of speech and language may be, it is certainly not the isolated word); it will divert their attention and their energies from the Fundamental Primary

to the subsidiary Secondary Process of Speech, and tempt them to shirk the former. Worst of all, it will tend to conceal the fact that *proficiency in acts of Speech is proportionate to the number of accurate acoustic images (both long and short) which have been accurately fused to their corresponding concepts.*

82. All the evidence that we possess points to the conclusion that there is no direct road connecting concept with motor-graphic image or with graphic visual image. Consciously or unconsciously, when we write (in the normal acceptance of the term *write*), we are writing down the acoustic images which we dictate to ourselves. Consciously or unconsciously, when we read (in the normal acceptance of the term *read*) we are interpreting the acoustic images suggested to us by the written forms before our eyes.

83. An interesting piece of corroborative evidence is adduced by the fact that when we are uncertain which of two forms or constructions is the more normal or appropriate for expressing our concept, we mentally or even audibly articulate it, and the resultant acoustic image tells us which form to accept or to reject. It will be found that the teacher, when correcting his pupils' compositions, invariably resorts to this device in order to ascertain what words or word-groups to mark as wrong and what words or word-groups to pass as correct.

84. This, then, is the case for the "Oral Method," a

term which denotes a system of teaching is designed primarily to make pupils proficient in performing the psycho-physical activities involved in the Primary Speech Circuit so that he may later perform more economically the activities involved in the more complex Secondary Speech Circuits. The pupil having acquired in a reasonable degree the fifteen speech habits, he will be fully prepared to study the language *as a language* in its various aspects, historical, analytical, literary, stylistic etc.

85. As in the case of the Primary Speech Circuit, one becomes proficient in the writing-reading circuit by forming appropriate habits. The habits connected with this Secondary Circuit appear also to be six in number.

**SPEECH HABIT No. 7.**  
**"VISUAL OBSERVATION."**

86. The student forms the habit of observing Speech Material with his eyes. Written-Speech-Material may be roughly defined as letters (as of the Roman alphabet), syllable-symbols (such as the Japanese *Kana*), or ideographs (such as Arabic Numerals or Chinese Characters), used either alone or combined in words and word-groups. By visual observation we may become acquainted with spellings, both phonetic (as in phonetic transcription), semi-phonetic (as in traditional

orthographies) or non phonetic (as in most Chinese writing).

**SPEECH HABIT No. 8.**  
**"GRAPHIC MIMICRY."**

87. The student forms the habit of mimicking (or imitating) models of written speech material. He does so by acquiring skill in holding a pen (or other writing implements) and making the required muscular movements necessary to move it in the required direction. He does this either with the model before him, or from the memory of the models he has observed.

**SPEECH HABIT No. 9.**  
**"GRAPHIC MECHANIZING."**

88. The student forms the habit of writing words and word-groups accurately without his conscious attention having to be given to the movements made by his pen or writing implement. Accurate and rapid fingering on the keyboard of a typewriter may be considered as an extension of this habit.

**SPEECH HABIT No. 10.**  
**"FUSING ACOUSTIC IMAGE TO  
MOTOR GRAPHIC IMAGE."**

89. The student forms the habit of transforming accurately



and rapidly his acoustic images into motor graphic images with the result that he can write down what is dictated to him or what he dictates to himself.

#### **SPEECH HABIT No. 11.**

#### **"FUSING MOTOR GRAPHIC IMAGE TO ACOUSTIC IMAGE."**

90. This is the complementary habit to No. 10. The student forms the habit of transforming accurately and rapidly the graphic visual images into acoustic images. If he devotes a disproportionate amount of energy to the forming and practising of this habit, he will thereby tend to inhibit the more important (Primary) Speech Habit No. 4. (See §§ 43,44)

#### **SPEECH HABIT No. 12.**

#### **"IMMEDIATE ORAL or NON-ORAL REACTIONS TO ORAL or NON-ORAL STIMULI."**

91. The description of this Speech Habit is practically identical with that of No. 6 except that in the present case the reactions apply not to the Primary Speech Habits alone but to the writing-reading habits, or the two in combination.

### **HOW TO ACQUIRE THE SIX WRITING- READING HABITS.**

92. The exercises by which these habits are acquired may be divided into two groups:

(a). those which are concerned exclusively with the writing-reading (Secondary) Speech Habits, and,

(b). those which are concerned with both Primary and writing-reading (Secondary) Speech habits.

Of the first group there appear to be three divisions:

#### **EYE-TRAINING EXERCISES.**

93. These are necessary in the case of students who are learning for the first time some strange alphabetic, syllabic or ideographic system. Should the writing system be the Chinese, various types of exercises may be designed to encourage and develop the pupils' graphic visual sense. In a simple graphic system such as the Roman alphabet (including the Phonetic alphabet of the International Phonetic Association), these exercises are reduced to a minimum. The "look and say" method is probably one of the most effective.

Such exercises specifically develop Speech Habits 7 and 12.



### CALLIGRAPHIC EXERCISES.

94. These are all writing exercises designed to cause the student to form his letters in accordance with the best or the most desirable models. The chief of these is the use of the copy-book. Exercises in tracing may also be found effective.

Such exercises specifically develop Speech Habits 8 and 12.

### TRANSCRIPTION EXERCISES.

95. These consist of transcribing or transliterating a given system of writing into another. The student may be told to transcribe in the cursive or running hand, letters, words or a text provided him in printed capitals, or in ordinary printing such as the reader of these lines now sees before him. The student of Japanese writing may be given the exercise of transcribing Katakana into Hiragana (or vice versa), Kana into Chinese Characters (or vice versa), or Kana into Romaji (or vice versa), Chinese Characters into Romaji (or vice versa), or even Romaji Kwai writing into Nippon no Romaji (or vice versa).

96. A particularly useful form of exercise for students of English is to transcribe from the traditional spelling into phonetic notation and vice versa.

Transcription exercises specifically develop Speech Habits Nos. 7 8 and 12.

97. Of the exercises which are concerned with both Primary and the writing-reading (Secondary) habits there appear to be six divisions:

### NONSENSE READING.

98. Reading aloud without understanding the sense of what is read. (Professor D. Jones is able to read aloud, with accurate pronunciation, phonetic texts written in at least a dozen different languages, most of which are totally unknown to him.)

Such exercises specifically develop Speech Habits 6, 7, 11, 12, and incidentally 1 and 2.

### NONSENSE DICTATION.

99. Writing down Speech Material dictated by the teacher without understanding the sense of what is being written. This is one of the best exercises for training and testing the pupil's oral observation.

Such exercises specifically develop Speech Habits 1, 6, 10 12, and incidentally 8 and 11.

### READING ALOUD.

100. Reading aloud isolated words and word-groups:



isolated sentences and texts, with an adequate understanding of the meaning.

Such exercises specifically develop Speech Habits 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, and incidentally 2, 3 and 10.

**READING SILENTLY.**

101. Reading without phonating the same Speech Material, (more especially connected texts) with an adequate understanding of the meaning.

Such exercises specifically develop Speech Habits 4, 6, 7, 11 and 12.

**ORDINARY DICTATION.**

102. This, almost needless to say, should be given in the normal pronunciation with all the usual weakenings and assimilations.

Such exercises specifically develop Speech Habits 1, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, and incidentally 3 and 9.

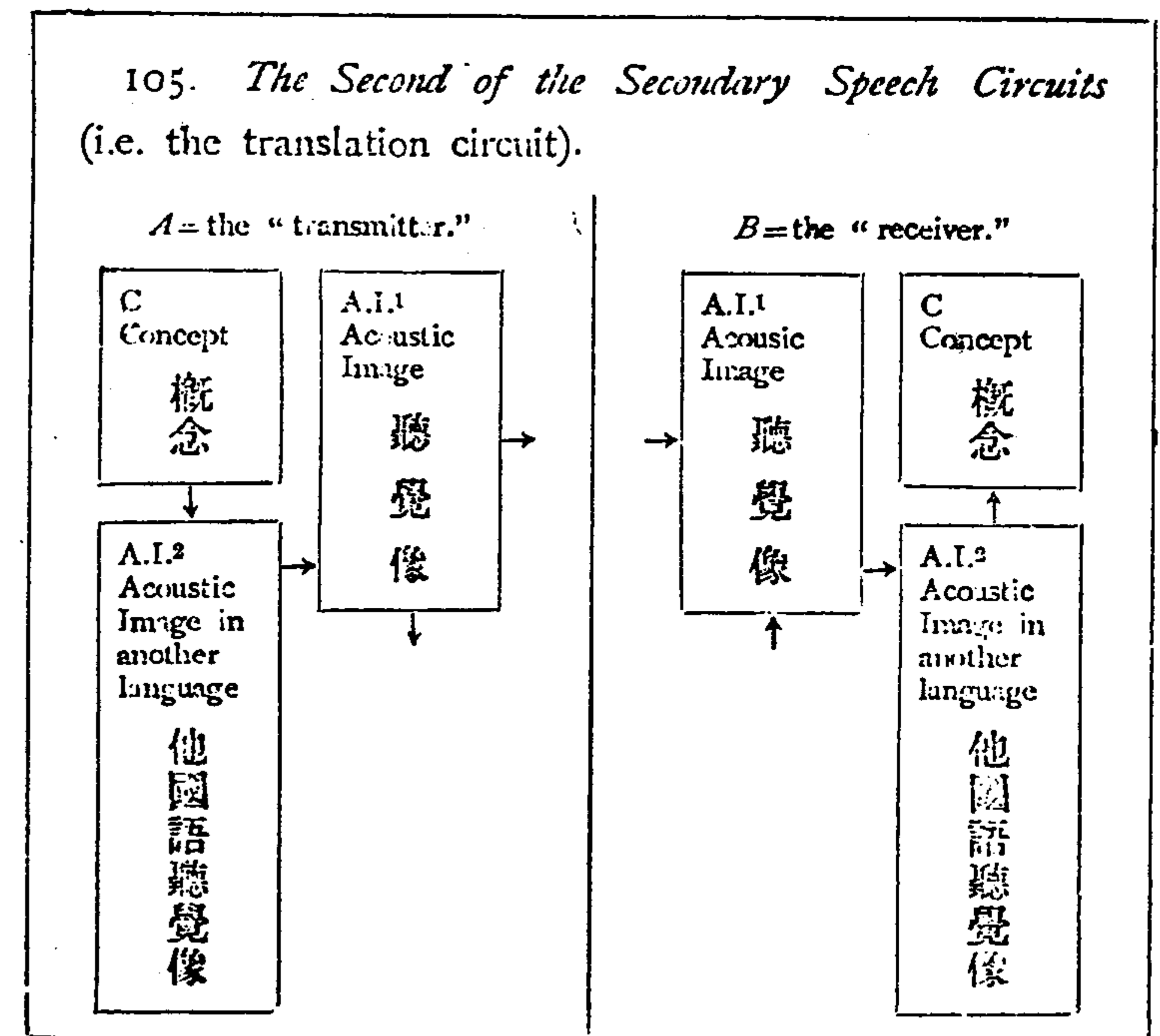
**AUTO-DICTATION.**

103. Writing down sentences, passages and complete essays (such as letters) dictated by the writer himself. This is nothing more or less than the well-known practice called *Composition*. Unless composition is auto-dictation it is not truly

composition at all, but either mental translation (See Speech Habit No. 13) or, worse still, improvizing (See Speech Habit No. 14).

There may be many forms and many grades of auto-dictation exercises. Some of these may consist of answering by writing the questions contained in the various types of conventional conversation.

Such exercises specifically develop Speech Habits Nos. 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, and incidentally 8, 9 and 11.





104. The mechanism of this circuit is as follows:

*A* (the transmitter) forms a given concept. It is fused with an acoustic image in his own language (say Japanese, and let us assume the acoustic image to be the Japanese word *neko*). This acoustic image brings up an acoustic image in the language of the person with whom he is communicating (let us say English, and the acoustic image of the English word *cat*). Thereupon he may phonate the word *cat* or may transfer it to the writing-reading circuit, and write the word *cat*. *B* (the receiver) hears or reads the word *cat* and the acoustic image will evoke in his mind the corresponding concept.

If the two participants are Japanese people speaking English, the speech circuit may take any of eight paths:

Four possible procedures are possible on the part of *A*, the transmitter:

- (1) C...A.I. "cat"...P. "cat"...
- (2.) C...A.I. "neko"....A.I. "cat"... P. "cat"...
- (3.) C...A.I. "cat"...M.G.I. "cat"...G. "cat"...
- (4.) C...A.I. "neko"...A.I. "cat"...M.G.I. "cat"...G. "cat"

Four possible procedures are possible on the part of *B*, the receiver:

- (1.) ...A. "cat"...A.I. "cat"...C.
- (2.) ...A. "cat"...A.I. "cat"...A.I. "neko"...C.
- (3.) ...G.V. "cat"...G.V.I. "cat"...A.I. "cat"...C.
- (4.) ...G.V. "cat"...G.V.I. "cat"...A.I. "cat"...A.I. "neko"...C

105. It is, I think, unnecessary to weary the reader with a more detailed analysis of the possibilities of such inter-combination of Speech Circuits. It suffices to point out that the Primary Circuit is most direct, that either of the Secondary Circuits is less direct, and that the combination of the Secondary Circuits with each other represent highly complex series of associations. We may note, however, that it is precisely these highly complex series that the average school-child is first caused to perform, and that the last thing in which he is generally exercised is precisely the simplest and most direct of the processes described above.

106. Few educators will be found to-day, I believe, who consider the practice of mental translation to be a sound one. Indeed the general opinion of experienced linguists seems to be that most forms of translation activities are uneconomical and unefficacious, and are therefore to be condemned.

107. I would suggest, however, that the use of certain specific forms of translation are economical and expedient, provided that such forms of work do not result in the habitual recourse to the "translation circuit" to the detriment of the more direct circuits. The *practice* of translation, after all, is a different thing from the *process* of translating. If I, for instance, as a student of Japanese, find it economical to have new words and constructions translated into English for my benefit, I do not therefore become a slave to the mental translation



habit. When the new word or construction has been explained to me in my mother-tongue I then proceed to fuse the Japanese word or words to the concepts to which they seemingly correspond.

108. The Translation habit may become a bad habit in that it tends to inhibit better and more economical habits. Good or bad, however, we have to include it among the Secondary Speech Habits:

**SPEECH HABIT No. 13.**

**"ASSOCIATING ACOUSTIC IMAGE IN ONE LANGUAGE WITH ACOUSTIC IMAGE IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE."**

Further definition and elaboration of this habit seems superfluous.

**SPEECH HABIT No. 14.**

**IMPROVIZING (OR INVENTING) SPEECH MATERIAL BY THE HELP OF DICTIONARY AND GRAMMAR BOOK.**

109. This habit seems transitional between the Speech Habits proper and Language-Habits. In that it does serve as a means of conveying concepts it may count as Speech. But

in that it amounts to an ingenious (although generally vicious) utilization of our familiarity with the niceties of the "code," it seems to fall under the heading of "Language."

This is the habit frequently acquired by residents in a foreign country. Instead of observing, mimicking and mechanizing Basic Speech Material, they take what appears to them to be the line of least resistance, and improvize foreign sentences in a way unknown to those who have formed the six Primary Speech Habits. In other terms, they seek to form "Derivative Speech Material" without having sufficient "Basic Speech Material" from which to derive it.

**SPEECH HABIT No. 15.**

**"IMMEDIATE REACTIONS TO STIMULI RELATING TO TRANSLATION OR IMPROVIZING."**

110. This means the habit of performing with lightning speed the mental operations (often vicious) described under the headings of Habits 13 and 14. We may consider this as the right way of doing the wrong things.

111. Consistency requires us to specify the types of exercises most appropriate to the forming of Speech Habits 13, 14 and 15. These would seem to be:



### **TRANSLATING ALOUD FROM THE MOTHER-TONGUE INTO THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE.**

112. Certain varieties of such exercises may be beneficial; others may have the contrary effect. Much depends upon the degree in which the student has already formed the more desirable Speech Habits, and upon the exact way in which these exercises are performed. If the Speech Material of the Foreign Language (or most of it) has already been mechanized, the procedure is likely to be efficacious. In the contrary case it is likely to be prejudicial.

Such exercises are likely to develop Speech Habits 3, 4, 5, 6, 13, 14 and 15.

### **TRANSLATING BY WRITING FROM THE MOTHER-TONGUE INTO THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE.**

113. The same remarks apply here as in the case of § 112. Such exercises are likely to develop Speech Habits 3, 4, 5, 8, 11, 12, 13 and 15.

### **TRANSLATING FROM FOREIGN LANGUAGE INTO MOTHER-TONGUE (ORALLY OR BY WRITING.)**

114. As long as this procedure does not inhibit the more

useful habits it may be beneficial.

Such exercises are likely to develop Speech Habits 4, 13 and 15.

### **SPECIFIC "LANGUAGE" EXERCISES.**

115. In addition to the various exercises and devices specifically designed to cause the student to form the fifteen Speech Habits, we must consider other exercises and procedures designed to cause him to acquire a conscious knowledge of that immense series of conventions the sum of which constitutes the code itself (i.e. the "language").

116. For those whose aim is confined to the use of the language for ordinary speaking, reading and letter-writing, the study of the code is of comparatively little value except, maybe, as a form of mental discipline.

117. Students who expect to produce literary works in the foreign language or to become expert translators will certainly find profit in an intensive and extensive study of the code as a code. So also will all those who expect to become teachers, for the teachers must not only be able to use the code as speech, but must also have an expert knowledge of the code itself.

118. The study of the Language proper (as distinct from the exercising of Speech Habits) may include the history and development of the language from the points of view of



phonetics (i.e. phonology), grammatical structure, semantics, and orthography. In other terms, the study of a language may be "diachronical" as well as "synchronical," whereas proficiency in speech habits is confined to the "synchronical" aspect.

119. The study of the language proper may include detailed analysis of its structure, etymological and syntactical; it may comprise courses of stylistics and literature, including the mechanism of versification. It may also be taken to include the art of translation, and this is perhaps the most difficult and most exacting of all the processes in the field of linguistics.

120. Of the appropriate exercises and forms of procedure to be used specifically in connection with the study of language I need say nothing in the present memorandum. Parsing and analysis, rules of the classical grammar, analytic reading of texts, paraphrasing, literary composition, translation from and into the foreign language, *cours de style* etc. are the chief procedures. All these are well-known procedures and are constantly practised in all countries where foreign languages, living and dead, are taught in schools.

121. It will be readily admitted, I think, that such procedures should be deferred until such time as the students have formed in a reasonable degree the fifteen speech habits catalogued above.

## THE DESIGNING OF THE COURSE.

122. It follows from the foregoing that about 20 main types of exercises or "Forms of Work" are available for the purposes of the teacher's work. Many of these may be subdivided in various ways according to their function, degree of speciality or of difficulty. It is probably no exaggeration to say that from one to two hundred procedures are at the disposal of the person who is loosely designated as the "language teacher."

123. From these one to two hundred procedures the teacher has to choose those which seem most likely to bring about the results that he wishes. The selection of these Forms of Work and the arrangement of them in the most expedient order constitutes the work of the "Course Designer." Every author of a "Language Course" is by implication a Course Designer. In view of the data set forth in the preceding pages it will be seen that his task is by no means a light one.

I suggest the following eight considerations for the guidance of those whose duty or pleasure it may be to draw up a programme of study for any given student or class of students.

### CONSIDERATION No. 1. PURPOSE.

124. What is the object of the course? What purpose



or purposes is it designed to serve? Are the students beginners or advanced students? Or are they students who wish to replace their bad linguistic habits by good ones? Are they children or adults? Do they want to learn or are they made to learn? Are the students taking private lessons or class lessons? Are they desirous of becoming proficient in performing acts of "Speech" or are they merely anxious to pass an examination in their knowledge of the "Language"? Is the course to last three months or ten years?

#### **CONSIDERATION No. 2. ECONOMY.**

125. Which is more desirable: for students to attempt to perform difficult and comparatively unimportant feats with doubtful success? Or for them to succeed in performing easy and comparatively easy feats? Is the following formula desirable or undesirable: "to produce the maximum of desirable results with the minimum of effort within the minimum of time"?

#### **CONSIDERATION No. 3. ORDER OF PROGRESSION.**

126. Are you convinced or unconvinced that the Primary Speech Habits should be formed before the Secondary

Speech Habits? Are you convinced or unconvinced that Speech is the key to Language? Are you prepared to act in accordance with your convictions? Or, in the absence of any precise convictions, are you satisfied with a hahazard and fortuitous order of progression?

#### **CONSIDERATION No. 4. GRADATION.**

127. Which is the right curve of progress? Is it desirable to start on a low gradient, trusting to its progressively becoming steeper? Or is it desirable to adopt a steep gradient from the beginning? Which do you consider the better maxim? "*Festina lente*" or "In order to get the best work out of the students, give them something which is three times beyond their strength"?

#### **CONSIDERATION No. 5. PROPORTION.**

128. Is it advisable or inadvisable to concentrate on one particular phase or aspect of the foreign speech or language? Is any "part of speech" more worthy of attention than others? Are there any particular features of the speech or language which should receive special attention? Is it true or not true that certain constructions and certain words are more worth learning than others? (Cf. Consideration No. 2).



### CONSIDERATION No. 6. INTEREST.

129. What is the difference, from the point of view of the class-room, between Involuntary Attention and Voluntary Attention? Is it possible or impossible to make pupils learn who are not interested in their work? Is it legitimate or illegitimate to make a lesson interesting at the expense of good linguistic habits? Which are the more interesting Forms of Work? How can we make the less interesting Forms of Work more interesting? Is it a good or a bad procedure for teacher or pupils to joke in the foreign language? To what extent may game-like exercises be introduced into the class-room? Is it true that students find no interest apart from the conventional "Reader"? If so, why? What is "illegitimate interest"?

### CONSIDERATION No. 7.

#### CONCRETENESS VERSUS VAGUENESS.

130. To what extent is it possible to make our teaching "concrete"? What is the relative value of Examples as compared with Rules? Is it possible or impossible to teach the leading principles of Grammar through Conventional Conversation?

### CONSIDERATION No. 8. ACCURACY.

131. Is it desirable or undesirable to insist on accuracy from the outset? Is it true that "Fluency is an integral part of accuracy"? To what extent may we tolerate inaccuracy in the initial stages? Is it expedient to trust to time in order to convert inaccuracy into accuracy? To what extent may we act in accordance with the fact that the baby's use of language is defective and that the educated adult's use of language represents an ideal standard? What is our ideal of accuracy? In what way do we compare the language usage of an illiterate native English speaker with that of an educated foreign user of English? Which is more important: to cause students to express their ideas in Broken English or rather to encourage them to remain inarticulate than to have them express themselves in un-English English?

### SCIENCE VERSUS EMPIRICISM.

132. A *Scientifically Designed Course* is one in which the most appropriate Speech Material is selected, presented through the medium of the appropriate Forms of Work, these Forms of Work being selected, proportioned and graded in a manner most likely to bring about the most economical and the most effective results.



133. An *Empirically Designed Course* is one in which little or no care is exercised in the selection of the Speech Material or in the selecting, proportioning and grading of the Forms of Work. The inferior types of such empirically designed courses may be termed "quack courses," and are as little worthy of the attention of serious people as any other products of charlatanism.

#### **THE MULTIPLE LINE OF APPROACH.**

134. In designing a course on scientific principles, the difficulties of selecting from and arranging such an immense quantity of heterogeneous material are so great that it becomes necessary to simplify the procedure. This may best be effected by making a collection of all the Forms of Work available and by classifying them in various appropriate ways. Those Forms of Work, for instance, which are designed to inculcate habits of pronunciation are brought together, grouped and graded, and these constitute what we may call the "Pronunciation Line of Approach."

135. Those Forms of Work which are designed to teach the elements of reading may be brought together, grouped and graded, and these constitute what we may call the "Reader Line of Approach." Those Forms of Work which require on the part of the teacher and pupils bodily activities

(such as Imperative Drill) may be brought together, grouped and graded, and be considered to constitute what we may call the "Oral Ostensive Line of Approach." By so classifying the Forms of Work under the headings of such broad "Lines of Approach," the course designer converts a heterogeneous array of teaching devices and expedients into homogeneous divisions, the sum of which constitutes an organized whole; he marshals his forces and places them in a convenient and practical form at the disposal of the teacher.

136. Each "Line of Approach" may be a self-contained unit and may be used independently of the others and yet complementing and being complemented by the others.

This is my conception of a Scientifically Designed Course.

137. The following Lines of Approach will probably be found the most suitable and convenient for a school-course.

#### **LINE OF APPROACH No. 1. "PRONUNCIATION."**

138. A properly graded and proportioned series of Forms of Work, teaching devices and expedients calculated to produce the most economical and effective results in all matters pertaining to pronunciation.



**LINE OF APPROACH No. 2.**  
**"ORAL OSTENSIVE."**

139. A properly graded and proportioned series of Forms of Work, teaching devices and expedients requiring on the part of the teacher and pupils bodily activities. The chief subdivisions of this Line of Approach seem to be :

- (a). Imperative Drill,
- (b). Action Drill (modified, Gouin),
- (c). Conventional Conversation accompanied or illustrated by gestures, movements, objects and pictures,
- (d). Story-telling with the aid of pictures.

**LINE OF APPROACH No. 3.**  
**"ORAL CONTEXTUAL."**

140. This consists of Conventional Conversation of the "Contextual" type, ranging from the most rudimentary and most drill-like forms, through the various stages and degrees to the most developed of the "Sequential" Series.

**LINE OF APPROACH No. 4.**  
**"GRAMMAR AND STRUCTURE."**

141. This line of approach is designed specifically to make the student compose derivative Speech Material by analogy

with Basic Speech Material previously mechanized and fused to meanings. It consists chiefly of:

- (a). Substitution Tables,
- (b). Analytic Tables,
- (c). Progressive Exercises in Sentence Building.

**LINE OF APPROACH No. 5.**  
**"READER."**

142. A properly graded selection of pieces suitable for reading aloud or silently, dictation, and other subsidiary purposes. It would seem that this line of approach is valueless (or even positively harmful) in a First Year School Course. It may perhaps be initiated during the second year, and from this moment onwards increases in importance until finally it may be used to the exclusion of all other lines of approach.

If, however, by convention a First Year Reader is composed in the sense of Preliminary Exercises in the Use of Roman Writing, it will probably be neither valueless nor harmful. But a "First Year Reader" of this type belongs, properly speaking, to

**LINE OF APPROACH No. 6.**  
**"WRITING."**

143. If the foreign language is written with a system of writing differing largely or entirely from that of the student's



mother-tongue, a special line of approach is necessary, having as its specific object the teaching of the unfamiliar symbols. At the outset this line of approach may be treated as a teaching subject entirely unconnected with the "English Lesson." Indeed young Japanese pupils may start by acquiring proficiency in transcribing Japanese words (e.g. Personal and Place Names), or even Japanese texts, in some appropriate system of Japanese Romanization.

The general concensus of opinion to-day seems to be that the traditional English orthography should be excluded from any First Year School Programme; which means that if any English spelling is introduced at all, it should be according to some appropriate system of phonetic transcription.

#### **LINE OF APPROACH No. 7.** **"CONVERSATION."**

144. Those who have given insufficient attention to the theory and practice of Course-designing generally realize imperfectly the essential differences between a "Conversation Lesson" properly speaking and a lesson in the course of which "Conventional Conversation" and similar teaching devices are used for the specific purpose of forming the Primary Speech Habits. They tend to group indiscriminately all forms of oral work under the general and ambiguous term

"Conversation."

A more careful analysis and a more precise system of definitions shows us that *oral work* is not necessarily *conversation* nor is *conversation work* necessarily *oral*.

The Conversation Line of Approach is not to be defined as "a line of approach in which conversational methods are used" but as "a line of approach specifically designed in order for the pupil to acquire proficiency in conversing on everyday topics in the foreign language".

145. The Conversation Line of Approach, as I see it, is largely non-oral. The students are given authentic models of more or less colloquial English; they are expected to mechanize them at home by dint of the systematic repetition of the sentences provided by the teacher (or the course designer) in *written* form. These are supplemented by forms of oral work in the performing of which the student will use in actual speech the various models that he is assumed to have mechanized. He is moreover expected to compose "Derivative Speech Material" appropriate for conversational purposes.

146. The Conversation Line of Approach is intended to give the students the means and the opportunities for carrying on not "conventional" conversation as defined, but actual normal conversation in the most general acceptation of the term.

147. Other possible, and even desirable Lines of Approach



may be suggested by such titles as "Composition and Translation," or "Composition" and "Translation." These, however, may conveniently be merged in other lines of approach such as the "Reader," "Grammar and Structure" or "Oral Contextual." To these we might add a line of approach entitled "First Aid to Travellers," this being designed specifically to meet the needs of those who intend to travel abroad or of those who come into daily contact with foreign visitors in one's own country.

148. Should the student be one who wishes to become proficient in Commercial Correspondence, a special line of approach may be designed for him in which will predominate forms of work enabling him to understand and to compose letters and documents pertaining to the world of commerce, industry and finance. Other similar special lines of approach may suggest themselves to my readers.

### CLASS-ROOM PROCEDURE.

149. Having examined the various principles and procedures connected with Course Designing, and having seen that these are based on the findings of psychologists, we may conclude by a brief examination of the work actually carried out by the teacher in the class-room.

150. The teacher will be guided by considerations similar

to those which inspire the course-designer.

151. He will bear in mind the *purpose* of any particular line of approach or any of its component forms of work, and see to it that these are used in accordance with the purpose for which they are designed. He will recognize, for instance, that the purpose of a "conversation" lesson is different from the purpose of exercises in the Primary Speech Habits.

152. Like the course designer, he will endeavour to be economical of the students' time and efforts. Hence he will not require them to mechanize comparatively valueless speech material, or to teach in one way what could more effectively be taught in another way.

153. Like the course designer, he will observe a rational order of progression. He will have a clear idea of the starting point and of the direction in which it is desirable to proceed.

154. Like the course designer, he will apply the principle of Gradation. He will cause the student to *receive* before calling upon him to *produce*; he will cause the student to receive fresh speech material first through the medium of the acoustic image rather than through the graphic visual image. He will see to it that "drill-work" precedes "free-work" and that "chorus work" precedes "individual work."

155. The teacher, in a far greater degree than the course designer, will see that the interest of the pupils is aroused and maintained. It is to him to prove that an oral lesson



may be made more interesting than any reading lesson.

156. The teacher, in a far greater degree than the course designer, will see that all information is given in a concrete rather than in a vague form, and that all theory should be taught through practice.

157. The teacher, in a greater degree than the course designer, will insist on accuracy from the outset, but, while correcting, will be very careful never to "over-correct" his students, i.e. to correct when correction is needless or superfluous.

158. The teacher must interpret the principle of the "Multiple Line of Approach" in such a way that his pupils specialize successively in the several subjects of their activities along lines of approach, which, nearly parallel at the outset, gradually converge in the course of their complete programme of study. He will not try, for instance, to make the Oral Ostensive Line of Approach produce results which are more economically produced by other lines of approach, nor teach pronunciation through the Reader, nor teach normal conversation through the medium of the Oral Contextual.

159. The work of the teacher in the class-room will carry out the intentions of the course-designer in his study, just as the work of the course-designer will be carried out in accordance with the findings of the grammarian, the philologist, the phonetician and the speech-psychologist in their studies

and laboratories.

160. The object of this memorandum had been to set forth the conclusions that we may legitimately form from the new evidence by tracing the connection between the psychological theory of Speech through all the intermediate stages up to the actual work carried out by the teacher in the class-room, and to show that the modern methods which are gaining ground in the schools of many countries are justified and explained by the results of modern psychological research. In its present form it is necessarily brief and concise; at a later date, however, I trust to embody its contents in a more voluminous, and thereby clearer, form and to append the evidence from which these conclusions have been formed.

Harold E. Palmer.

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## APPENDIX A.

to my "Memorandum of English-teaching in view of a New Theory."

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The matter contained in this appendix is addressed specially to those interested in Mental Tests, Mind Measurements etc.

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Let me start by saying I am not fully acquainted with the theory and practice of Mental Tests. I know something of the Binet-Simon scheme, have seen something of the tests used in America and am in sympathy with all those who are endeavouring to replace the present haphazard examination system by something more scientific or better organized. I am also in sympathy with the idea that intelligence may be tested, and perhaps developed, as apart from mere memory. If I am not fully conversant with the aims and the technique of those who are fathering the new movement, neither am I conversant with any arguments which may be adduced against such aims or technique.

If the "Mental Tests" people have not already pushed their investigations into the field of "Language Study," it is probable that they will shortly do so, and I therefore consider

this an opportune moment to call their attention to the ideas that I have collected and set forth in the accompanying memorandum. At the risk of being rebuked for presumption, I would address a word of warning to those who propose measuring and testing the capacity for "Language Study."

My word of warning is this: *before setting out to measure or to test, be quite certain what it is that you are setting out to measure or to test.* This warning is needed, for the followers of Binet and Simon may be less conversant with my subject than I am with theirs, and they may not realize, as I do, how utterly misleading is the term "Language Study."

Of all the subjects in which capacities for study are measurable, this subject is perhaps the least well defined. The term "Language" is so vague that to half-a-dozen different specialists it may correspond to as many interpretations. Were we to see a book entitled "Language," this title would convey little information as to its contents unless we knew whether the author was a logician, a philosopher, a philologist, a phonetician, a grammarian or a *littérateur*, a teacher of the deaf and dumb, or a foreign-language teacher. Even vaguer are such terms as "English," or "French." "English," as the name of a review or of an association, would leave us in complete doubt as to the contents of such review or the aims of such association.

If indeed, as it is now asserted, the terms "Speech" and "Language" as defined, stand respectively for two entirely



separate things, each with numerous subdivisions, it is vain to set out to measure "language-learning capacity." If "Speech" stands for a set of personal linguistic activities and "Language" stands for a code-like set of given linguistic conventions, to merge them together as one and the same subject is a procedure unworthy of those whose aims are to promote scientific precision.

If it is indeed true that the term "The Study of English" differs fundamentally in meaning according to whether the students' mother-tongue is or is not English, then it is absurd to teach English" to foreigners (whose English "Primary Speech Habits" have not yet been formed) as if they were English children (whose English "Primary Speech Habits" have certainly been formed). And if this procedure is absurd, then to subject foreigners and native children to the same (or even similar) sorts of mental tests seems to me to be an inconclusive and meaningless procedure.

I suggest the following types of independent tests:

#### **GROUP A. THE MOTHER-TONGUE.**

A.1. Tests for proficiency in the exercise of the six "Primary Speech Habits" in connection with the mother-tongue, either as a whole, or (better) as six separate subjects.

This should show to what extent a child is su-

perior or inferior to other children of the same language, in respect to his capacity for orally communicating and receiving the simple concepts appropriate to his age.

A.2. Tests for proficiency in the exercise of the six "Secondary Speech Habits of the writing-reading circuit," either as a whole, or (better) as six separate subjects.

This should show to what extent a child is superior or inferior to other children of the same language in respect to his capacity for communicating by writing and receiving by reading the simple concepts appropriate to his age.

A.3. Tests for proficiency in understanding and applying (studially) the rules which are assumed to embody the "language" conventions of his mother-tongue.

This should show to what extent a student is superior or inferior to other students in respect to his capacity for the conscious use of his language considered as a code. This "rules" may concern sounds, spellings, word-structure, sentence structure and semantics.

The mother-tongue being the normal means of communication, and the instrument of intelligence itself, the three types of tests which I suggest under Group A, are partly tests of "English" and partly tests of general intelligence.

### GROUP B. A GIVEN FOREIGN LANGUAGE.

B.1. Tests for proficiency in the exercise of the six "Primary Speech Habits" in connection with a given foreign language, either as a whole or (better) as six separate subjects.

This differs very considerably from the tests under A.1. As far as the mother-tongue is concerned, all users are assumed to have had approximately equal opportunities for acquiring proficiency. This is not the case when the language is a foreign language. The purpose of B.1. is apparently to ascertain to what extent the student has been successful in applying to the foreign language those Primary Speech Habits in which he is doubtless perfectly proficient in the case of his mother-tongue. We must assume however, that the student has had opportunities for acquiring proficiency in the Primary Speech Habits of the foreign language. In view of the present conditions of teaching foreign languages in schools, the student will very rarely have had such opportunities.

B.2. Tests for proficiency in the exercise of the "Secondary Speech Habits of the writing-reading circuit," either as a whole or (better) as six separate subjects.

The importance and relative difficulty of these tests

depends largely upon whether the foreign language is written with the same alphabet as that of the students' mother-tongue.

The writing-system may be entirely different (e.g. Chinese writing for a European), the alphabet may differ (e.g. the Russian or Arabic alphabet for an Englishman or Frenchman), the orthoepic usage of the same alphabet may differ (e.g. English spelling for a Frenchman), or the test may be conducted through the medium of an artificial alphabet (such as that of the International Phonetic Association). Professor Jones advocates the use of dictation by means of phonetic symbols in an unknown language as one of many possible tests for general capacity to learn foreign languages. In this last case the student may or may not be familiar with the alphabet itself. The nature of the B.2. tests will differ according to whether the student has already formed one or more of the Primary Speech Habits in the foreign language. On the whole the B.2. tests will be inconclusive unless used in specific circumstances for specific cases. In any case they differ entirely from the A.2. tests.

B.3. Tests for proficiency in understanding and applying (studially) the rules which are assumed to embody the "language" conventions of some foreign language.



These appear to me to be tests of intelligence in the sense of conscious analysis and synthesis, comparable to the mathematical type, the popular term for which is *mental gymnastics*. My impression is that this is the sort of intelligence that people refer to when they speak of a "gift for language learning." It has little in common with that which is tested by B.3., less still with that represented by B.2., B.1., A.3. and A.2. and nothing at all in common with that represented by A.1.

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## APPENDIX B.

to my "Memorandum on English-teaching in view of a New Theory."

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The matter contained in this appendix is addressed specially to Teachers of English who may be called upon for the first time to teach English as a foreign language.

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If you expect to be called upon to teach English to those who have never had the advantages of learning it in childhood as their mother-tongue, you will probably not be able to perform your new work effectively nor to your own satisfaction unless you realize that your new calling and your old calling have little in common.

You, as a teacher of English to English-speaking people, are concerned with causing your young learners to gain the habits involved in the secondary speech circuit called writing-and-reading (in other terms, you teach them to read and to write), and your most advanced learners to become consciously familiar with the English language considered as a "code," and to use it effectively and artistically. But your pupils, let us remember, were already perfectly proficient in what I have

termed the six Primary Speech Habits before ever you started giving them instructions. It may be (or have been) part of your work to cause them to modify these habits in various ways (such as causing them to replace some undesirable by some desirable dialect), but it is generally no part of your work to initiate your pupils into the acquisition of these Primary Speech Habits.

The pupils you will have to deal with, however, have rarely, if ever, formed these Primary Speech Habits. They will probably be unable to perceive most of the sounds you use, nor to make them; when they do use words they will probably produce them one by one instead of in fluent groups; when they do understand your words they will probably do so by dint of translating them mentally into their mother-tongue. The sort of ignorance of English which your future pupils will manifest is quite different from the sort of English which your present pupils manifest. Things which may be found of elementary simplicity and ease to your present pupils may be found of almost impossible complexity and difficulty to your future pupils. Your present young pupils may be ignorant of the names and functions of such things as definite and indefinite articles, subjects, objects, infinitives, auxiliaries, prepositions etc., but they will certainly be proficient in using them in the same way that they have heard them used by the people who constitute their environment. Your future students may be

aware of the names and the functions of these same things, but they will probably be unable to use them in any manner approximating to the manners in which they are used by English-speaking people.

Just as the term *Sculpture* may stand for two things as different as wood carving and stone cutting, so does the term *English Teaching* stand for two different things. Just as the tools used when carving wood are different from those used when cutting stone, so do the forms of exercise used by those who are doing your present work differ from the forms of exercise used by those who are doing your future work. Just as the sort of skill exercised by the wood carver differs from the sort of skill exercised by the stone cutter, so does the sort of skill exercised by those who are doing your present work differ from the sort of skill exercised by those who are doing your future work.

English teachers of English in England and America have been trained specifically to do their work. French teachers of French in France, German teachers of German in Germany etc. etc., have also been trained to teach reading and writing, and to teach grammar, composition and literature to students who had already become perfectly proficient in the six Primary Speech Habits pertaining to their respective languages. English teachers of English to foreigners, French teachers of French to foreigners etc., however, very rarely (I may say practically



never) receive any specific instructions in the more difficult and highly technical work necessitated by their profession. I know of only one institution in the world where English teachers receive some training in the science and art of teaching English to foreigners (i.e. the Phonetics Department, University College, London); if there are other centres I should be most interested to hear of them and would do my best to make them known.

It is indeed curious to reflect that, although there must be thousands of people teaching their native language to foreigners, hardly a single one has ever received any professional training whatever; every one has had to pick up his subject in some haphazard way, and those who do become expert do so by dint of their own personal and unguided efforts. I do not say that most of them perform their work inefficiently, but I do say that if they do perform their work efficiently it is due to fortuitous circumstances.

Hence it is that so many teachers of foreigners neither seek nor desire advice, pretexting, as well they may, that no institution exists that is competent to train them, and that they know their business as well as (or better than) any persons who may claim to have expert knowledge in this matter.

For this profession of teaching one's native language to foreigners is a curious one in the sense that it is at present the business of no Education Authority of any country to

encourage it or to improve it. Why should the English Board of Education spend energy and money for the benefit of non-English students of English (generally foreigners)? Why should the French Ministry of Instruction concern itself with the troubles of foreign students of French? Why should the Japanese Department of Education trouble about the needs of those foreigners who want to learn Japanese? Charity begins at home.

The inevitable consequence of all this is that professional teachers who start for the first time to teach their own "language" to foreigners must tend to work in much the same way as if their students were fellow-countrymen.

English children require no specific training in hearing and making English sounds, then why should the foreign student of English require such training? English children require no specific drills in mechanizing or in forming direct semantic associations, then why should the foreign student of English require such drills? English children require no specific instruction in the art of building up simple sentences in imitation of previously learnt Speech Material, then why should the foreign student of English require such instruction? And so the most fundamental training, drilling and instructing of foreign students of English is neglected.

I suggest to the future teacher of English to foreigners that the time and effort that he spends in studying the subjects

covered by the present memorandum will repay him. I suggest that he should not dismiss them as being too elementarily simple to be worthy of his serious attention, for some of them are not as simple as they may look. Nor should he dismiss them as being too hopelessly technical and complicated. Technical they may be (for after all the teacher of English to foreigners has chosen a profession which requires technical knowledge), but they are certainly not complicated. On the contrary the theory set forth in this memorandum should have the effect of converting a complicated subject into a simple one.

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### APPENDIX C.

The New Psychological Theory of Speech as set forth in this Memorandum was submitted to the educational world for the first time on December 10th, 1923, at the Seijo Gakko, Tokyo, when, at the invitation of Dr. M. Sawayanagi, President of the Imperial Educational Association, the author had the honour of addressing a group of some thirty eminent educationists.

The following is the text of the address in question.

Dr. Sawayanagi has given me this opportunity of meeting you, and of submitting for your consideration a Paper or Memorandum entitled:

“The Teaching of English in the Light of a New Theory.”

For reasons which I shall set forth in the course of this lecture, I feel this an opportune moment for taking fully and frankly into my confidence and counsel such a body of eminent educationists that I now have the honour of addressing.

Some two years ago, when I was still in England, it was intimated to me that the Japanese Educational world, both official and unofficial, was practically unanimous in considering the present system of teaching English in Japan as being uneconomical and inefficient.



I was told that the results obtained by students are out of all proportion to the immense amount of time and energy devoted by the Department of Education, teachers and students.

Dr. Sawayanagi invited me to come to Japan in order that I might make a very thorough investigation of the whole subject, and subsequently to draw up a report with recommendations, with a view to the more economical and more profitable use of the time, energy and money so lavishly expended in this matter of English teaching.

It has been imagined in certain quarters, I believe, that my mission is particularly to set up some new standard of pronunciation, or to set up some new standard of grammar, or to put into immediate execution some new method of teaching, or to raise a flag of revolt under which all the malcontents may fight the wicked people who are standing in the way of progress and enlightenment.

I need hardly assure you that these things do *not* represent the nature of my mission nor the scope of my activities.

The moment is not yet ripe to set up any one rigid standard of pronunciation, nor any one rigid standard of grammar, nor yet to put into execution any radically new methods of teaching.

As for the red flag of revolt, I have not yet become conscious of any necessity for it, for I have found no band of people, wicked or otherwise, standing in the way of progress

and enlightenment.

On the contrary, I have seen nothing except a keen desire on all sides to encourage the bringing about of a more salutary state of things in the English-teaching world. If any reactionary and conservative faction exists, I can only say that I have so far not encountered it.

The mission with which I have been entrusted is no easy one, my task is no light task. It is not one which I can accomplish by suggesting a few empirical remedies or by recklessly introducing a new system of teaching which science and experience may prove to be unsound or inapplicable to school conditions in this country.

It is a task which requires patient investigation in many fields.

We must ascertain: "What are the Aims of English Teaching in Japan?" and "To what extent should they be utilitarian and to what extent cultural?"

We must enquire as to the Mentality of Japanese school children in order to ascertain whether it is true or false that the Japanese child is incapable of learning a foreign language with success.

We must enquire as to the capacities of Japanese teachers for teaching English, and ascertain whether it is desirable or possible to afford them better opportunities for technical training.

We must enquire as to the capacities of Foreign teachers

for teaching English to Japanese students, and ascertain whether it is desirable or possible to afford them better opportunities for technical training.

We must institute a very thorough enquiry as to the authenticity and validity of the Rules of Grammar and the Rules of Translation embodied in the many Japanese and foreign textbooks used in schools, for there are strong grounds for suspecting that Japanese students are being trained to use constructions unknown to modern educated English or American usage.

In these and in other fields of investigation I now have the advantage of help and collaboration on the part of my friends and associates of the Institute for Research in English Teaching.

One field of investigation, however, is more particularly my own, and that is:

### THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF TEACHING ENGLISH.

Rightly or wrongly, I consider this to be at present the most important of the various fields of enquiry. Rightly or wrongly, I consider this to be the most fundamental of all the various lines of investigation, and it is on this subject that this afternoon I am inviting not only your patient attention

but also your approbation and consent.

At first sight it may appear that I am putting the cart before the horse, that I am considering the lesser before the greater, that I am treating that which is accessory before that which is essential.

Some of you may say or think (and indeed it is only reasonable that you should say it or think it) that until we have determined the aims of English teaching, it is vain to give our attention to what I am calling the "Technical Aspect."

But what do I mean by the "Technical Aspect"? I mean this term to cover far more than methods of class-room procedure; I mean it to cover far more than Course-designing; I mean it to cover the very definition of the most fundamental terms that we use when we talk of or even think of the subject of Language teaching.

What is the meaning of the term "English"?

"teaching"?

"language"?

"speech"?

"oral"?

"translation"?

"pronunciation"?

"phonetics"?

"reading"?

"writing"?



What is the meaning of the term "conversation" ?  
 "composition" ?  
 "dictation" ?  
 "grammar" ?

Here are fourteen terms chosen almost at random from among the terms that we all use at every moment when we are discussing the problem which is the object of my work and mission.

Here are fourteen terms which we must use when we are discussing such things as the *Aims of Teaching English*, the *Mentality of Children*, the *Capacities of Teachers*, the *Validity of Textbooks*. Such terms as these are the very instruments of our thoughts, of our deliberations, of our discussions and of our judgment.

Now even among technicians these (and many other) terms are used so loosely and so vaguely that misunderstandings are the rule rather than the exception. *A* uses the term "grammar" in one sense; *B* uses the term "grammar" in another and quite different sense. The result is that *A* declares the teaching of grammar to be a profitable, salutary and essential feature of teaching, while *B* declares the teaching of grammar to be a useless, harmful and stupid procedure.

This is no exaggeration on my part. I could quote you authentic instances of such misunderstandings with names, dates and circumstantial details.

*A* uses the term "pronunciation" in one sense. *B* uses it in another and totally different sense. Conclusion: *A* declares pronunciation to be of vital importance, and *B* declares it to be without importance.

*A* uses the term "translation" in one sense. *B* uses it in another and totally different sense. *C* uses it in a third sense, again totally different from the two preceding senses. Conclusion: *A*, *B* and *C* are still quarrelling at the present moment as to whether translation is an admirable and essential class-room procedure, an admirable but unnecessary class-room procedure, or an invention of the devil.

Every one of the fourteen terms I have quoted is a highly ambiguous term, liable to contra-interpretation among experts and technicians.

As for the untechnical person, the man in the street, or the amateur teacher, such terms are used with so little precision that they have become meaningless or worse than meaningless.

To those of you who are engaged in the teaching of science in its various branches I need not labour the point. You will immediately recognize the futility of teaching (nay even of considering) a mathematical problem before defining mathematical terms. You who are chemists will refuse to discuss the nature and properties of *salt* unless you know whether we are speaking of *sodium chloride* or of *salt* in the wider but more precise sense of chemistry. Those of you who are

politicians or geographers are careful not to use such a term as *America* without having it clear that you are using the term in the wider sense of *the American Continent* or in the narrower sense of *the United States of North America*.:

I am going to suggest to you that the terminological precision which is considered to be essential in all branches of knowledge and in all fields of discussion is *ipso facto* essential in that branch of knowledge and field of discussion concerned with the teaching of foreign languages.

Of what avail is it to discuss the place of *reading* in English teaching, of *translation*, of *conversation* or of *grammar* when we who discuss such things are using each of these terms in different and even in diametrically opposite senses?

The essential prelude to any enquiry or discussion is the defining of the terms. The more complex the subject of enquiry or the more controversial the discussion is likely to prove, the greater the necessity for exact definition.

This is why I consider the Technical Aspect of Teaching English to be more fundamental than any other aspects, for it is in this field of investigation that we define our terms and endeavour to ascertain exactly what it is that we are talking about.

Year after year, almost century after century, the most violent discussions have raged about the subject of Linguistic Pedagogy. In recent years we have heard or we have read

the contradictory discussions between the respective partizans of  
 Phonetics and Anti-Phonetics,  
 Pronunciation-teaching and Anti-pronunciation-teaching,  
 The Oral Method and the Anti-Oral Method,  
 Translation and Anti-Translation,  
 Direct-Method and Anti-Direct-Method,  
 Reading and Anti-Reading,  
 Grammar and Anti-Grammar,  
 Conversation and Anti-Conversation.

Violent discussions, I repeat, amounting to quarrels and abuse. We have seen persons of intelligence and learning flatly contradicting each other and storming at each other in varying degrees of abuse for their wickedness and pity for their ignorance.

Let me now quote the following illuminating suggestion from page 280 of the (British) Government Report on the Teaching of English in England.

“When a subject is thus hotly debated, and when it is difficult to discover a general concensus of opinion among practitioners upon any aspect of the matter, it is legitimate to suspect that the problem has hitherto not been sufficiently analyzed or envisaged, and that the confusion of tongues arises from confusion of thought.”

This passage is followed by the words “Under such circumstances, we believe that the most useful thing we can



do in this Report is to make some attempt to set the problem in its proper proportions."

The problem alluded to in the words that I have quoted is that concerned with the teaching of English Grammar to English children, and in the Report in question the authors proceed to show the different senses in which the term *Grammar* may be interpreted.

If, then, the most useful thing that a Report can do is "to set a minor problem in its proper proportions," how much more useful is it that we in Japan should first set the whole and most comprehensive problem in its proper proportions.

Whatever discussions may arise in Japan in connection with our efforts to make English teaching more economical and more effective, we must avoid discussing at cross-purposes; we must avoid misunderstandings.

I have therefore considered it as my first duty to attempt to unravel the tangle of latent or active misunderstandings in connection with my subject by submitting it to the most careful analysis.

For the past twenty months I have devoted the major part of my energies to this task. I have been in consultation with some of those who have dared probe very deeply into the fundamentals of linguistics, and have been materially helped by them.

The result of my analysis is now displayed to you on this chart.

I said just now that the moment for submitting this piece of analysis to your attention is an opportune one. It is opportune in the sense that upon the correctness or incorrectness of this analysis depends the validity or the invalidity of my future work in Japan.

If this analysis is not in accordance with facts; if it is disputed by competent psychologists and by competent language-experts, it must be amended, for we cannot afford to proceed on a long and costly programme of research on a faulty foundation.

If, on the other hand, competent psychologists and competent language-experts agree that it is substantially an accurate analysis of the nature of our technical problem, I am ready to proceed, and, with the help of my colleagues, to design various language courses in accordance with it; language courses suitable for use in Japanese schools by Japanese and foreign teachers.

The moment for submitting it to you who are present is an opportune one, for if this analysis is exact, then a very important stage of my work and my mission has been accomplished.

In the course of this afternoon's talk I am going to make to you the following eleven suggestions, and to put them before you as constructive and positive propositions:

1. That no discussion is profitable until we have defined



the chief terms used in such discussion, and use them according to their strict definition and in common agreement as to their definition.

2. That what is generally vaguely termed *Language* or *Linguistics*, or *English*, or *French* or *Japanese* etc. turns out in the light of analysis to be two different and incommensurable things, one being: *The act of communicating concepts* (i.e. "Speech") and the other: *The conventions by which we communicate concepts* (i.e. "Language" or "Language-Code"), and that to merge together indiscriminately two such incommensurable subjects as if they were one and homogeneous is a procedure contrary to the claims both of reason and of expediency.

3. That the nature of what I have here termed "Speech" cannot be adequately apprehended until we are familiar with the psycho-physical mechanism involved when we communicate our concepts, and that we must therefore have recourse to the data furnished by speech-psychologists.

4. That it is necessary for us to distinguish clearly between what I have termed "Primary Speech" and "Secondary Speech," and, above all, to note the extreme importance of a factor known as the "*Acoustic Image*" in both the Primary and the Secondary Speech Circuits.

5. That Primary Speech, from every point of view, is of primary importance, secondary speech of secondary importance,

and that Language (considered as a code) is of tertiary importance.

6. That we become proficient in Speech by dint of forming things called *Speech Habits*, probably 15 in number, 6 of which are acquired spontaneously by the normal child in regard to his own language.

7. That we should frankly recognize that, at the present day, practically no efforts whatever are directed towards the forming of the six Primary Speech Habits by pupils in schools, but that such practice is generally positively *discouraged*.

8. That we should frankly recognize that, at the present day, the efforts of the average teacher and student are directed almost exclusively towards the fostering of the "Secondary Speech Habits" and of the "Special Language Habits."

9. That there exist such things as specific exercises for the initiation and development of each of the 15 Speech Habits.

10. That Course-designing should become a recognized subject, with its own technique based upon this or some very similar psychological theory, and carried out in accordance with considerations of linguistics and expediency.

11. That the only practical way of composing a complete language course for school purposes is to adopt the principle of the Multiple Line of Approach, either as shown in this chart or in some similar way.

[At this point, Mr. Palmer, using for the purpose of



his demonstration a large synoptic chart, outlined to the audience the theory as set forth in the Memorandum, and concluded as follows:]

This synoptic chart and the theory which it illustrates must necessarily seem complicated to the uninitiated.

It may give to some of you the impression of being needlessly complicated.

Some of you may be thinking that much of what I have put before you is beyond the point.

Some of you may have gained the impression that those who are responsible for the theory have been engaged in splitting hairs, and otherwise turning a simple subject into a complex one.

It must be a natural thing to gain such impressions. I also gained similar impressions when from time to time I listened to lectures or read articles in which the subject was treated on such lines.

For I would have you understand that much of what I have put before you is not my own original work. My contribution to the subject has been more the piecing together of the evidence in such a way as to produce a coordinated and logical whole.

On listening to psychologists at various times I have been interested, but have asked myself towards what conclusions they were driving, and how their theories would affect the

actual work of the course-designer and the teacher in front of his pupils.

I have at times been appalled and frightened by the seeming complexity of the subject when fully analyzed, and have sought refuge in the thought that perhaps, after all, such things as speech circuits and acoustic images are merely of theoretical and academic importance, with no real bearing on the problems at immediate issue.

Thanks to the generosity of Japanese benefactors and true friends of scientific research, it has been possible for me for the past twenty months to devote my almost entire attention to the subject; and twenty months of intense research should not be without their effects.

Adopting from the outset, as I have already said, the attitude of the open mind, I have not hesitated to face facts as I find them.

Resisting the many temptations which have been offered of plunging immediately into programmes of reform, or of carrying on actual experimental work in schools, I have devoted myself to patient enquiry and the search for actual facts as apart from mere hypothesis and conjecture.

A complex subject? Yes, indeed, a complex subject; as complex as any of those subjects which come within the purview of the investigator.

But if a given subject is by its very nature a complex one,

we must face the facts and acknowledge it as such.

We cannot convert a complex subject into a simple one by refusing to examine its complexity.

We cannot convert a difficult subject into an easy one by shutting our eyes to the difficulty.

We cannot turn a difficult subject into an easy one by explaining it in popular but meaningless terms.

We cannot make a complicated thing simple merely by clothing it in a popular but inadequate or inaccurate terminology.

But we certainly can make a complex and difficult subject simple and easier by *analyzing* it.

To rename "water" as " $H_2O$ ," to the uninitiated is a complication, but in the light of exact knowledge, it is a simplification.

To rename "Tokyo" as "a point 35.43N. and 139.45E" is a complication to the uninitiated, but in the light of exact knowledge, it is a simplification.

To rename "Reading" as "A series of psycho-physical processes by which a succession of acts of graphation are converted into a succession of acts of graphic vidation, thence into acts of visual imagery, thence into acts of acoustic imagery, thence into "concepts" is a complication to the uninitiated, but in the light of exact knowledge, it is a simplification.

Hence I consider that this work of analysis is a process of simplification in that it shows us our various problems and

difficulties in the light of exact knowledge.

This chart appears complicated, it is true; but a detailed map of any geographical region, with its streets, roads, railway-lines, hills, rivers and other similar features, also appears complicated.

The only point which need really concern us is not the question of any relative complexity or simplicity but the question as to whether the theory, complicated or simple, is in accordance with facts as we find them.

Let us remember, too, that the psychological theory of speech, admitting its complexity, is a subject for psychologists and course designers, and not necessarily one for teachers or students.

Just in the same way, the abstract phonetic theory, admitting its complexity, is a subject for phoneticians and not necessarily one for teachers or students.

Or, just in the same way, the abstract theories of Grammar and Semantics, admitting their complexity, are subjects for grammarians and "semanticists," and not necessarily subjects for teachers or students.

But whether we are treating Speech, or Phonetics, or Grammar, or Semantics, or Mathematics or whatever the subject may be, the business of the investigator is to get down to the bare facts, and to face them, however complex or unwelcome they may turn out to be.



I repeat; this analysis of Linguistics turns out to be more complicated than most of us ever suspected, but it is for us to face the facts as we find them, supported by the evidence as we find it, so that we may draw valid and permanent conclusions without fear of contradiction or disappointment.

I have asked you to examine with me the problems of English teaching in the light of a New Theory. For this new theory we are indebted to a few isolated individuals in different countries, who may be called speech-psychologists.

To my mind this theory is conclusive. It fits the facts as I have always found them; it furnishes a perfect explanation of the apparent paradoxes that have puzzled so many of us; it provides us with a complete justification for the various procedures that we have found so effective in practice; moreover it affords us a clear insight concerning the causes and nature of the latent or active conflict between those whose aims are directed towards the teaching of speech and those whose interest is confined to the codes which are the vehicles of speech.

My "Memorandum" is in the hands of the printer. Before long I hope to present each of you with a copy so that you may be able to examine it at your leisure.

It would be unreasonable for me to call upon you here and now to accept this theory in all its details and ramifications, without adducing all the evidence which goes to support it.

What I have wished to do, however, has been to submit this theory to you as *prima facie* evidence. If it seems reasonable to you, if this theory, on the face of it, bears the impress of truth and expediency, I would ask you to assent to it. If it seems unreasonable to any of you, if this theory, on the face of it, bears the impress of the fantastic, the fanatic or the crank, I would beg you to come forward while there is yet time and give us the benefit of your criticism and advice.

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