Second General Session

CONTRIBUTIONS OF LINGUISTICS TO TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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English Education and the Renaissance Spirit

The bedrock of English teaching should be language—language as language—because language, rightly understood, can be the broadest and deepest of humanistic disciplines. Language and literature, with all they encompass to a modern mind, constitute an interdisciplinary field in themselves. This is the rich lode that we shall explore for contributions of linguistics to teacher education programs.

To me no subject is more vitally important, more difficult, more complex, more fascinating, than English education. The demands made upon English teachers at all grade levels require the spirit if not the attainments of the Renaissance man—but in an age characterized by a fantastic explosion of knowledge; by strict specializations, many of them unknown a generation ago; by rigorous scientific research; by team approaches to many problems. Can this seeming contradiction of the demand for broad generalism in an age of narrow specialization be resolved? Or is the Renaissance spirit extinct? Can twentieth century man learn all that he must know in his specialties and still remain an avid amateur of life, a generalist invigorated by the spirit of inquiry? Can existential man experience the sense of fresh discovery in many areas, if not actual discovery? Or is it all too late?

Modern teaching aims to cultivate in the child the Renaissance spirit of inquiry, aims to lead the child to ever deeper understandings of his world and his life through his own individual discoveries. How can the child learn if the truth is not in the teacher? Despite obstacles, I believe that we must revive the spirit of the Renaissance in a modern approach to English education, for both prospective teachers and those long in service. Let the English teacher stand with one foot in the camp of language and literature, the other in professional teaching. Let him incorporate within himself the elements of a one-man team.

The College and University Teacher of English Education

What kind of teacher is needed to teach the prospective English teacher and the thousands of inservice teachers who seek to inform themselves in linguistics? The person with conventional training in English graduate schools is notoriously maleequipped to teach Freshman English, not to mention courses for prospective English teachers in elementary and secondary schools. The person with conventional training in education and English methodology has a practical foundation, but probably needs to do serious homework in linguistics and literature. The technical linguist is not necessarily acquainted with English teaching at all, much less English education; he may astound you with such sayings as this: "I know nothing whatsoever about how to teach reading—all I can tell you is which
words you may use in reading instruction." My conclusion is that the college and university teacher who would develop English education generalists for classroom teaching must be a generalist himself, imbued with the Renaissance spirit, a professionally educated person having more than one string to his bow.

The professional with graduate training in English, or in education, or in linguistics, can qualify as an effective modern teacher of English education if he will modestly but diligently turn his scholarly attention to the fields in which he needs more educating. In linguistics his primary interest will be applied English rather than pure linguistics. Introductory materials, some with bibliographies, are accessible through the National Council of Teachers of English; many are listed under "Language, Grammar, and Usage," in Resources for the Teaching of English, 1965-1966. There have also been special issues on linguistics of Elementary English, English Journal, College English, and College Composition and Communication. As an introduction it would be hard to improve on the booklet by Charles C. Fries, Linguistics: The Study of Language. Harold B. Allen's Readings in Applied English Linguistics (Appleton, 1964), a comprehensive collection of articles, in an excellent survey. My own book, Linguistics and the Teaching of Reading (McGraw-Hill, 1964) deals with basic and primary skills of literacy from the point of view of descriptive and structural grammar; it has proved useful as an introduction to linguistics in summer institutes for teachers and in graduate courses in English or language arts methods in colleges and universities here and abroad. Writing by Patterns (Knopf, 1965), a worktext for grades eleven through fourteen containing a capsule structural grammar, by Helen E. Lefevre and Carl A. Lefevre, is also of interest here. Teachers found the 1962 test edition useful in methods courses as well as high school English and college composition classes.

The above comment suggests how college and university teachers can enlarge their effectiveness in English education. While we may not be able to provide large numbers of teachers matching this description, we must do our very best; we should cultivate the inquiring spirit of the Renaissance. Otherwise, our narrownesses, insularities, and biases may defeat our noblest purposes. I would caution particularly against requiring prospective English teachers to take technical courses in linguistics, taught by professors who make no pretense of a claim to any understanding of applied English linguistics in elementary and secondary school classrooms.

Since it is not feasible to develop such a rich topic as mine in detail or depth in a single brief presentation, the remainder of our discussion will be essentially two outlines of pertinent topics, with suggestive annotations. The two titles are: (I) Language courses, degree programs, summer institutes; and (II) What should the classroom English teacher know about linguistics?

1. LANGUAGE COURSES, DEGREE PROGRAMS, SUMMER INSTITUTES

Bachelor's Degree Program

Freshman English. Language should be the central subject of the introductory English course: Wide readings in language topics and local field investigations
can provide subjects for expository writing, simple platform speaking, and structured group discussion. Communication theory is also appropriate both as subject for speaking and writing and as guide to form and sequence. This course should include a rigorous introduction to applied English linguistics, with attention to the work of Trager-Smith, Fries, Chomsky, and Pike; school grammar can be related to these materials. Broad topics covered would include dialects, speech communities, idiolects; differences and interrelationships between speech and writing; language in terms of ontogeny and phylogeny; form, style, rhetorical devices; dictionaries; logic and persuasion; paralanguage and kinesics.

In a one-year, three-hour course, students can acquire substantial new knowledge and new understandings of themselves, particularly with respect to language; moreover, they can begin to develop humane attitudes toward language learning as a basis for humane teaching when their time comes. They can also develop speaking and writing skills fully equivalent to those developed in traditional speech and composition courses.

**Literature.** Prospective elementary teachers need a solid course in children's literature, taught not as a library reference course but as literary interpretation of language and form; children's literature is to be appreciated not as some cute little thing, but as part of all literature. Students should write children's literature (poems, stories, plays) and practice oral interpretive reading; they should also read widely in children's literature and write serious literary criticism of selected works and of each other's creative writing.

While children's literature as described above would be a good requirement for all English teachers, it is probably impracticable to require it of all. Both elementary and secondary teachers should study a variety of forms of world literature of many ages, as well as the literatures of America and England. Focusing on literature as language and form can enrich other aspects of literary study; students also need to become familiar with applications of Kenneth Pike's tagmemics to literary analysis.

**Speech.** It would be an excellent thing if all English teachers took advanced work in speech, acting, and oral interpretation, as deep background for teaching composition and literature. This experience would also develop their skills in classroom teaching as one of the performing arts. Here linguistics can contribute valuable insights into intonation, paralanguage, and kinesics.

**English language.** Secondary English teachers, at least, should study the history of the English language, including American English, from the descriptive point of view. Advanced English structure should be offered, and secondary teachers advised to take it.

**Advanced writing.** All English teachers need at least one advanced writing course incorporating linguistic insights, in either expository or creative writing, according to needs and preferences of students, and subject to professional advisement.

**Foreign language.** Every English teacher would profit greatly from studying a foreign language according to modern linguistic techniques, including use of a language laboratory; as much literature as feasible should be included in this study.
English as a second language. A sequence in English as a second language may be offered for prospective teachers in bilingual communities, or for those desiring to teach English to immigrants in this country, or to other nationals overseas. Still another sequence may be offered dealing with the language problems of "the inner city."

Methods. Elementary and secondary methods courses should draw heavily upon the content of the language and language-centered courses. A course in audiovisual media and methods is urgently needed.

Master's Degree Programs (Later Afternoon, Evening, Saturday, Summer)

Four groups of courses may be offered, with varying proportions assigned to elementary and secondary teachers according to needs and preferences and subject to professional advisement: (1) Introductory and applied linguistics; (2) Intermediate and advanced linguistics, grammar, and structure; (3) Speech—acting and interpretation, persuasion, rhetoric; and (4) Literature: language and form. Individual programs can provide depth in two of these areas, including the writing of major papers.

Summer Institutes in Applied English Linguistics

Inservice teachers profit from short (two-three weeks), intensive, all-day courses in linguistics and applied linguistics; these courses can provide an entry into a graduate program of late afternoon, evening, and Saturday classes. After the first introductory summer course, succeeding institutes can offer courses at several levels of difficulty for elementary and secondary school teachers. The new NDEA provisions will enable many schools to offer such institutes.

II. WHAT SHOULD THE CLASSROOM ENGLISH TEACHER KNOW ABOUT LINGUISTICS?

Linguistics as a cultural-anthropological field. Broadly conceived, and in historical perspective, linguistics alone is an interdisciplinary field. It is rooted in and has grown out of anthropology, specifically the scientific study of language systems of peoples remote from Western culture, whose speech was structurally quite different from Western languages and had never been reduced to writing or print. Insights gained from such studies established the primacy of speech; they have proved invaluable to an understanding of language structure generally and, for us, of the structure of English.

Language is viewed as culturally determined human behavior. It is a system of vocal symbols by which men in a given culture communicate, interact, and cooperate; if a writing system develops, it is a secondary symbol system based upon and derived from the primary symbol system, which is speech. The study of literacy involves understanding the complex ways in which the two symbol systems interact.

Psycholinguistics. Language—a complex system of vocal symbols that is not instinctive but must be learned—is what makes human beings out of babies. Lan-
language is very close to the individual, closer than his skin of whatever color, closer psychologically to his personality and individuality, closer to his self-image, closer to his sense of merging with his social group. Language is the sociopsychological bond that unites the human being with his speech community. Thus, to attack his language—or his dialect—is to attack the person. Making such an attack, or creating the impression that such an attack has been made, is one of the most destructive things, psychically, that one human being can do to another. For English teachers, it is the unpardonable sin, beyond all hope of redemption.

These considerations bear importantly on possible outcomes of “bidialectism” as now advocated by some linguists to solve inner city dialect problems that are presumed to be a major cause, if not the major cause, of unemployment in our society. Whatever degree of causation we assign to substandard dialects—in contrast, say, to automation—we must be extremely careful to motivate the learning of a second dialect. It cannot be forced. (See the next topic.)

Language learning (including all dialects) as an astonishing intellectual feat. Each individual infant and child goes through a process of creating his own version of the language and the dialect he was born to; he personally shapes it to his own uses in his particular speech community. This is an unparalleled intellectual feat, requiring mastery of a complex and highly abstract system of vocal symbols, an accomplishment of every normal human being. But once the child achieves mastery of the basic system, his native linguistic processes become automatic and sink below the threshold of consciousness. Language is a system of ingrained habits that have become unconscious by the time the child goes to school.

Developing literacy, the prime task of the schools. The child from five to seven years old enters school with the hope of becoming literate and of learning to use language fluently in reading, writing, speaking, listening, thinking. If the child is not aware of this hope himself, it is very likely that members of his family and intimate speech community are well aware of it. Either way, a main task of the teacher is to be a model of language skills, showing the way, and not a harsh judge or an avenging fury sent by the speakers of a prestige dialect. A relaxed approach to language, descriptive rather than prescriptive, provides a healthy climate in which children’s language can grow. The arts and skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening—thinking, above all—can grow only by increments, sequentially, through trial and error, in a spiral ascent into maturing experience; the best classroom teachers will find opportunities at every point along this rising, widening curve to share their love of literature with children and young adults. The ultimate goals of language learning and language skills as means of access to experience and knowledge may be approached in school programs, but they may not be realized until later in the life of the individual, if they are ever realized fully. The ultimate goal is cultivated individual maturity.

Basic knowledge needed by all teachers who have anything to do with English instruction.

Intonation. Intonation is an important part of the English structural system, involving both obligatory and optional (or interpretive) features. The basic sys-
tem as described by Trager-Smith consists of four degrees of loudness (accent, or stress); four levels of pitch; and four terminals, ways of interrupting or stopping the stream of speech. Kenneth Pike has also written extensively on English intonation.

Intonation makes native speech sound like native speech; faulty intonation is an unmistakable mark of foreign speech. Intonation is a specialized study, but the teacher, especially one equipped with a tape recorder, can rely on his intuitive command of it for many practical applications in reading and writing.

The fade-rise and fade-fall terminals are perhaps the two basic intonation features for English teaching, particularly for reading and writing. The fade-fall terminal is the dropping of the voice that marks the end of most sentences, as well as many questions; in sentence-level utterances it signifies finality. The fade-rise terminal is the "rising intonation" that marks the end of certain questions; it often occurs within sentences at points marked by commas in writing, where it signals the end of a syntactical element and promises something more to come.

Optional (or interpretive) intonation is what gives quality and variety to oral reading and interpretation; many linguists call it paralanguage. Paralanguage and kinesics—the nonlingual, visible accompaniment of speech, such as bodily movements, nods, shrugs, gestures of all kinds, winks, "mugging," and so forth—underlie the art of acting. Kinesics is the basis of pantomime, and of the dance as a performing art. Both paralanguage and kinesics have a bearing on the study of literature.

Syntax. Despite differences between structuralists and transformationalists, they agree that the English sentence in all its variety is a basic meaning-bearing language pattern; they agree that it can be described. It is also agreed that syntax involves basic sentence patterns, or kernel sentences, capable of infinite variation by means of inversions, expansions of many kinds, substitutions, and transformations. The chief difference between the structuralists and the transformationalists is that structuralists tend to limit themselves as closely as possible to language as meaning-bearing code, but with emphasis on the objective code as code; whereas transformationalists concern themselves largely with the subjective message. Their concern with message rather than code gives them a remarkable resemblance to traditional grammarians. The explicit assumptions of the structuralists are those of science in general, of behavioral science in particular; the assumptions of the transformationalists are not always explicit, and often wear the face of neo-Platonism.

English teachers interested in applied linguistics should know that fewer than ten basic sentence patterns are generally agreed upon by structural linguists. These correspond to the declarative sentences of school grammar, and all have inversions or passive transformations as counterparts. Other major patterns are questions, requests, and commands. All these patterns are capable of virtually infinite variation.

Certain elementary applications of transformational grammar have been put forward as means of writing more sophisticated sentences in contrast to the less mature; so far, these applications do not differ much from what English teachers have always recommended to their students without benefit of lin-
guistics. It seems possible that applications of Pike's tagmemic theory may help provide a breakthrough from the grammar of the sentence, whether structural or transformational, to a "grammar," so to speak, of paragraphs and many other forms of extended writing, including literary forms.

Structure words. English has a subsystem of about three hundred words whose primary function is to serve as joints or glue between syntactical elements; although relatively few, these words occur with very high frequency in speech and writing. The most important are five sets of markers: (1) noun markers (articles and all other words that fill the positions of articles); (2) verb markers (auxiliaries and other words that function in the same positions); (3) phrase markers (prepositions of all kinds); (4) clause markers (two kinds, so-called coordinating and subordinating conjunctions, and all words that fill the same positions); (5) question markers (such words as who, why, and how, when those words initiate question patterns). Structure words are of great importance in both reading and writing; detailed knowledge and experience with them is invaluable to the English teacher.

Word-form changes. Grammatical inflections and affixes are the two kinds of word-form changes. Grammatical inflections include noun singular, plural, and genitive forms; the parts of verbs; and the forms for the comparison of adjectives and adverbs. This residue of an elaborate Old English inflectional system is the basis of many differences between standard English and substandard dialects; so, of course, are the forms of pronouns. Affixes comprise the remarkable system of English derivational prefixes and suffixes; generally, suffixes added to word bases (roots) change the word from one form class (part of speech) to another, and prefixes change the meaning of a word without changing its class; but there are enough exceptions to "prove" this rule many times over: it is not a rule but a statement of common occurrence. Just as with the subsystem of structure words, a detailed knowledge of affixing is invaluable to the English teacher.

Phonemes and graphemes. Phonemes are the basic sounds of language which combine in larger patterns; phonemes do not occur singly, in isolation. Graphemes are the letters and combinations of letters that represent the basic sounds in standard spellings. Study of phonemes and graphemes is of great utility in spelling, and has the same relevance to reading that spelling has. In thinking about phonemes, an English teacher would do well to consider the linguistic phenomenon that Pike calls "smearing" or "slurring." This insight might help avoid the egregious error of asking students to "pronounce all the letters in every word." (See the next topic.)

Phonemes, the basic structural units of language. For clarity in his own mind, and for the sake of good English instruction, the English teacher should take the trouble to understand the difference between phonemes and phonetics. Phonemics deals with the smallest distinctive and significant classes of sounds in the language system. Phonetics is the scientific study of speech sounds of all kinds, with no necessary concern with phonemes at all.

Phonemes are basic structural units of a language or dialect; in descriptions of phonemes, phonetics can deal with nondistinctive variants of phonemes, allophones; allophones are the members of the significant and distinctive classes
of sounds collectively designated as phonemes. Consider, for example, the four $p$ sounds in pin, spot, suppose, and top. In pin, spot, and suppose, there is some degree of aspiration, but in top there need be no aspiration; other differences are caused by the sounds before or after the $p$.

The native speaker automatically disregards the nondistinctive, nonsignificant variants of phonemes; he has learned to group them all together into classes of sounds which he unconsciously treats as identical. For the communicative purposes of the language system, they are identical: that is what the term phoneme means.

Clarity on these distinctions is essential to good English teaching.

*Humane attitudes.* It is just as important that the English teacher develop humane attitudes toward language and language learning as that he acquire knowledge and proficiency in language, linguistics, and language-centered studies. The plain truth is that if a choice had to be made, humane attitudes are far and away the more important, because without them, all else will surely fail.

Have a heart. Let the child grow. Help him grow.

**CONTRIBUTIONS OF CURRENT THINKING ABOUT RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION TO TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

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English teachers have for years deplored the fact that the usual manuals used as textbooks for composition and communication courses, especially in college, have changed very little since the days of Aristotle and the Academy at Athens. We have had good reason for change too, particularly during the past fifty years or more, when the social sciences began to provide us with a wealth of insights about ourselves and how we think and talk and get along with other people.

There have been attempts at a "new" rhetoric. But they seem to have been limited to a strictly psychological approach to rhetorical persuasion or confined to a kind of negative criticism of our language. Though these attempts have helped us much in other ways, they cannot easily be applied to our classroom need for a rhetoric that will give our students a science and art of expression that fits their uses for it.

Perhaps part of our failure in this regard is due to our looking for improvement from one isolated angle or another rather than starting afresh and attempting to see the whole of rhetoric from all the angles possible to us. It would seem, then, if this be true, that we need a thorough look at the philosophy of our language and of our thinking. We need to examine the fields of logic and epistemology, since these disciplines are central to the way we choose words and build propositions. We need an ethic for the responsible and mature use of lethal weapons like words and ideas. And beyond this we shall have to search the outside fields for whatever contributions they are able to make to a new art of expression. Perhaps the most likely and pertinent of these would be linguistics, psychology, and sociology, along with their histories.