

Significant Books

Reviewers:

Elizabeth C. Wilson

John M. Kean

Linguistics and Reading. *Charles Carpenter Fries.* New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1963. 265 p. \$5.00.

Linguistics and the Teaching of Reading. *Carl A. Lefevre.* New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1964. 252 p. \$6.50.

Readings in Applied English Linguistics. *Harold B. Allen.* New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1964. 535 p. \$4.50.

The newer syntax of suprasegmental morphemes, tagmemes, and immediate constituents and the newest syntax of kernels and transforms seem to be totally unknown.¹

So speaks W. Nelson Francis in an article in *Readings in Applied English Linguistics*, edited by Harold B. Allen. As uninitiated teachers and curriculum generalists, our first reaction was "you don't say" or "so what?" Yet suddenly and sheepishly we remembered that we had made similar irreverent remarks when the mathematicians started talking about "sets" and "one-to-one correspondence." Later we had to eat our words and to sit down and learn what the "new mathematics" was all about.

Now alas, while we are still gasping for breath from the revolution in mathematics, we are faced with both an eso-

¹W. Nelson Francis, "Syntax and Literary Interpretation," in *Readings in Applied Linguistics*, Harold B. Allen, editor (New York: Meredith Publishing Company, 1964), p. 515.

teric vocabulary and some emerging theories and practices which jolt time-honored assumptions and methodologies in the field of English. For Nelson Francis is not alone. He is joined by the writings of other scholars like Benjamin Lee Whorf, Leonard Bloomfield, and Noam Chomsky; and by distinguished teachers like Robert Pooley and Paul Roberts. Indeed three of the recent books on the market—*Readings in Applied English Linguistics*, edited by Harold B. Allen; *Linguistics and the Teaching of Reading*, by Carl A. Lefevre; and *Linguistics and Reading*, by Charles C. Fries—use language and concepts similar to that of Dr. Francis. All of these books also make a plea for closer liaison between the scholar and the teacher—between experts in the science of linguistics and practitioners in the classroom. This liaison is becoming a familiar pattern in curriculum development throughout the nation.

For the beginner, the books by Professors Lefevre and Fries make an easier introduction to a fascinating but difficult subject than does the *Readings*. In fact, *Readings in Applied English Linguistics* presumes on the part of the reader considerable knowledge of the field. Many of the articles are highly technical in nature. The volume is a revision of an earlier source book for the student of linguistic applications. It is designed pri-

marily for use in college classes, although the editor hopes that the knowledge and theory contained within its rather comprehensive covers will someday be part of the background of every liberally educated person. The book contains a history and description of the field and sections on usage, on the teaching of grammar and composition, on the dictionary, and on literature. It is a ready reference for the serious student, and should, if heeded, provide a series of new professional tools for the well-trained English teacher.

Despite the catholic nature of the articles in *Applied English Linguistics*, the relationship between linguistics and the teaching of beginning reading is touched only tangentially. Professors Lefevre and Fries, however, move with confidence into this heated arena. Both give their versions of "What every teacher of reading ought to know about linguistics." Both gentlemen complain that "traditional reading methodology . . . does not concern itself rigorously with language."²

Dr. Lefevre goes on to say that reading specialists have dealt with the psychology of perception at the expense of analysis of the phenomenon to be perceived, namely, the graphic representation of the spoken word. In order to correct this defect and to further a theory of reading and reading instruction, Lefevre's book, *Linguistics and the Teaching of Reading*, supplies the reader with basic theories of linguistics, a history of the problems of reading teaching, and the elements of linguistic knowledge which have direct bearing upon reading, including intonation, sentence patterns, function order, structure words, word-form changes, spelling, word analogies

² Carl A. Lefevre. *Linguistics and the Teaching of Reading*. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1964. p. xi.

HE IS NOT YET READY TO READ
OR WRITE BUT...



HE HAS ALREADY FINISHED
A 3-YEAR COURSE IN THE
NEW MATHEMATICS!

He has been exposed to a programmed course of manipulatives from The Learning Center.

Have your children worked with programmed manipulatives?

Write for new 24-page catalog and chart.

THE LEARNING CENTER

Div. of Creative Playthings, Inc.

Princeton 6, N. J.



and phonics. It is a thorough but not frightening venture into what, for most teachers, is a foreign field.

Charles Fries, who has for years been a living example of a bridge between the academic scholar and the specialist in education, presents in *Linguistics and Reading* a clear and nontechnical description of modern linguistic knowledge. He not only applies this knowledge to a careful analysis of the reading process, but also describes some practical materials and sequences designed to teach reading to beginners. These materials and sequences are radically different from any standard methodologies. They will undoubtedly raise many eyebrows in the reading world. We are particularly impressed by his analysis of stages of reading from the "transfer" through the "productive" to the stage of "vivid imaginative realization."

Dr. Fries and his talented wife have

had marked success, we are told, with groups of children they have taught themselves. The natural next question of the somewhat skeptical school teacher is what happens when the methodology is used by the ordinary teacher, not by the master who devised it? Will it work on a broad scale? Evidence of live evaluations of the ideas of both Drs. Fries and Lefevre would seem to be in order.

Meanwhile, it behooves the teaching profession to become literate in linguistics. These three books suggest the enormous gap existing between the usual teacher preparation in language and the knowledge required of the sophisticated teacher of tomorrow. One way to start narrowing that gap is to read these books, suprasegmental morphemes and all.

—Reviewed by ELIZABETH C. WILSON, Director, Office of Curriculum Development, Montgomery County Public Schools, Rockville, Maryland.

Modern American Criticism. *Walter Sutton.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963. 298 p. \$5.95.

Fifty Years of Children's Books, 1910-1960: Trends, Backgrounds, Influences. *Dora V. Smith.* Champaign, Illinois: The National Council of Teachers of English, 1963. 149 p. \$2.95.

Themes, Theories, and Therapy: The Teaching of Writing in College. *Albert R. Kitzhaber.* New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1963. 175 p. \$4.95.

American Grammar. *Edwin S. Leggett.* New York: Greenwich Book Publishers, Inc., 1961. 111 p.

One price we pay for lack of knowledge about the disciplines that make up the instructional field of English is



Yankee Doodle Boy

*A Young Soldier's Adventures
In The American Revolution
Told By Himself*

By Joseph Plumb Martin

Edited by George F. Scheer

Maps & Drawings by Victor Mays

Grades 7 up, reinforced \$3.50

Historian ...

"This story has a 'you were there' quality to it which gives a direct and immediate understanding of what life in the Continental Army was like. It is extremely readable."

—BRUCE CATTON

Librarian ...

"... a stirring eye-witness account of the daily lot of the common soldier. The line drawings are a suitable complement to Joseph Martin's masterful use of the English language, his apparent patriotism, and his vivid, sometimes ironic, humor. This is a narrative of literary stature."

—*SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL

Examination Copies On Approval

WM. R. SCOTT, INC.

8 W. 13th STREET, NEW YORK 10011

book reviews that somehow must synthesize literary criticism, children's literature, college writing, and traditional grammar into a critical appraisal of so-called related topics.

The first two books, Sutton's *Criticism* and Smith's *Children's Books*, can indeed be treated as complementary volumes, since they both attempt to survey aspects of the literary scene in 20th century America. Sutton particularly has presented a fine piece of scholarly writing, sorting out in a very logical way the mainstreams of American literary thought in the 20th century in a combined historical and critical discussion that highlights both the contributions and the limitations of critical traditions in this country. He treats the early psychological criticism, the new humanism, liberal and Marxist criticism, the new criticism, neo-Aristotelian criticism, psychological and myth criticism, and the

recent histories, theories and critiques of criticism.

However the most enticing feature is the treatment of individual critics by Dr. Sutton. In an attempt to provide a focus for the consideration of the main streams of criticism, he synthesizes, explicates and summarizes the work of some of the major critics, shows their points of convergence and divergence, their changing allegiances, and the struggle that many of them have had in shaping the theories and concepts that govern their work today.

Criticism is one of 13 volumes in a series of Princeton studies attempting to survey the contribution of American humanistic scholarship to world culture. The series promises to be a significant contribution not only to the scholarship in the areas under consideration (which run from musicology to Chinese painting) but also to the liberal education

NOW—learning to write
is **EASIER**
MORE FUN
MORE REWARDING

Learning to write can be fun for your pupils. And it is—with this new version of the nationally popular Zaner-Bloser system of handwriting.

The result of years of research and classroom teaching, **GUIDING GROWTH IN HANDWRITING** is based on the concept of handwriting as a communication art. It starts with manuscript writing in the lower grades, and progresses easily and naturally to cursive writing. Attractively illustrated throughout, it coordinates writing technique, forms of written expression and content areas. It correlates writing with language arts, social studies, health, science and other subjects. It allows

GUIDING GROWTH IN HANDWRITING

for transition from manuscript to cursive in either Grade 2 or Grade 3. It provides two professional Reference Manuals for teachers—and a separate pre-writing book for kindergarten.

Easy for teachers, easy for students, **GUIDING GROWTH IN HANDWRITING** is the new, easy, practical way to teaching and learning better penmanship.

Write for **FREE** full-color brochure

Zaner-Bloser
612 N. Park St., Columbus, Ohio 43215
Dept. EL



of Americans. To teachers of English at both the elementary and secondary level, this book offers an opportunity to roam through an area which their concentration on other duties may not have previously allowed. With Lewis Leary's *Contemporary Literary Scholarship* (NCTE, 1958) as a companion, Sutton's *Criticism* provides an ample picture of one of the discipline areas of English teaching.

In a different vein, Smith's *Children's Books* provides a warm and personal view of a literary area that is often forgotten in our hurry to make children into adult readers. The variety and richness of reading fare that has been made available to children in the past 50 years is paraded before our imaginations as if Dora Smith herself had personally handed us the books to read.

In the preface, Smith says that she wanted to "bring happy recollections and a few new facts to those who have enjoyed a lifetime of reading and to lead those new to the field to taste its joys." She has done more than this. By documenting the history of children's literature and by interpreting it in the light of her own theories of children's reading, she has fulfilled the role of the teacher and made literature live especially for the children who have become lost in the forest of primers, readiness tests, and controlled vocabulary.

Her topic ranges over the changing concepts of books for children, the development of publishing trends, the cooperative action of the educational organizations, the creators of books, the publishers, and the users, and the selection of books in order to bring children and books together.

From Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* (1908) to Roy Gallant's *Exploring the Planets* (1958), Smith recalls all the good books that many of

her readers will remember with some nostalgia but also with more faith in our ability to provide children with the books that they need. *Fifty Years of Children's Literature* is, however, not a call to return to a dead era, but rather a challenge to assess what is real in children's literature and to make better judgments than we have made in the past about those qualities that make books live for children. She has restored the magic but also added a touch of sophistication to an area of literature that too many schoolmen have forgotten in the search for better school programs.

Kitzhaber's *Themes, Theories, and Therapy* is a telling commentary on the teaching of writing to college freshmen. Based on a Dartmouth study of student writing, Kitzhaber's report documents the inadequacy of college writing classes. Surprisingly the study indicates that freshmen do improve their writing in the two semesters of freshman English, but on the other hand, seniors write worse than freshmen.

In his report, Kitzhaber analyzes the trends in freshman writing programs—citing uncertainty about aims, content and methods as the primary causes of weakness in the programs.

He ends with recommendations concerning freshman writing and writings after the freshman year that exhort college professors to pay more attention to the problem, while at the same time condemning students for being careless and unconcerned about the quality of their writing.

On the whole, his recommendations take us nowhere that we have not been before. However, his analysis of what exists, in spite of some faulty assumptions in research design, offers a penetrating and dynamic view of the teaching of writing in college—a view that should

temper any college condemnations of high school English teaching.

Yet his warning that "Freshman English in the nation's colleges and universities is now so confused, so clearly in need of radical and sweeping reforms, that college English departments can continue to ignore the situation only at their increasing peril" amply justifies the reading of this book by all interested in the teaching of writing.

Switching from the informative, provocative, and engagingly written texts of Sutton, Smith, and Kitzhaber, we come to the subject of English grammar—pardon, American grammar—as outlined by Edwin S. Leggett, identified as "a hale-hearted-husky-hermit" who, in the spirit of Dr. George W. Crane, has prepared "his own version of profitable study, for classroom or at home."

Mr. Leggett's book is not only unrelated to "American" grammar, but seems even to be unrelated to reasonable scholarship on the status of the English language.

He begins by stating that "Vulgarism and colloquialisms are commonplace in our language of today. . . ." The second part seems fairly safe, however redundant, since our everyday language is by definition colloquial. And included among his American "colloquialisms" is this example: "*Huswif*, in original English a highly respected lady of the house, was altered to *housewife* in American. Present day rustics now garble the word to *hussy*."

Now aside from such misinformation as is provided, like the example already cited, the reader will be treated to definitions, that aside from being 30 to 40 years outdated, include such important terms as "triphthong" and "model auxiliaries." If the reader is still concerned about the differentiation of *shall* and

will, he will find them divided here according to determination, simple futurity, resolution, promise, desire, or willingness. Leggett's inclusion of the past perfect tense of the passive subjunctive mood and the passive imperative as working terms in American grammar seems particularly useless for modern students.

His absolute certainty about grammatical items that even the scholars contest is sad. The study of language, of its phonology, its morphology, and particularly its syntax loses its fascination and its character when treated as Mr. Leggett has treated it.

—Reviewed by JOHN M. KEAN, Bureau of Educational Research, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio.

Affective Climate—McAllister

(Continued from page 485)

longings, interests, etc., so that they influenced learning favorably for the 200 students; whether it taught getting along with human beings by making the student so secure that he could fight quiet battles of prejudice in terms not merely of black and white but of understanding between people; whether it resulted not only in the student's ability to engage in intellectual life but in ability to enjoy it; whether it changed the lives of pupils and teachers so that there was a sustained concern for human values, for spiritual sensitivity and regard for the human spirit was difficult to *prove* with *scientific evidence*. The true evaluation of the project lies not only in the future of Mississippi and other states in which the participants will live and work but in the underdeveloped and culturally disadvantaged countries of the world in which the participants and persons influenced by them may also live and work in years to come.

Copyright © 1965 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.