

A COURSE OF COLLEGE ENGLISH FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS

by

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## INTRODUCTION

From the beginning of World War II to the present, American universities have been deluged with students from foreign countries. Latin-American, Near Eastern, and Far Eastern students, finding European universities temporarily closed to them, have come to America for specialized training. American universities have always had a modest quota of foreign students, but before World War II they were students who proposed to do graduate work in science and who had adequate linguistic preparation for work in their fields of specialization. However, since 1939, students on the collegiate level with but meager knowledge of English have sought entrance to our colleges and universities.<sup>1</sup>

Most of our institutions, already confronted with major problems of post-war readjustment, though not unconscious of the problem, had inadequate time, few facilities, and virtually

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<sup>1</sup> There are at present approximately 104 foreign students enrolled at Kansas State College, and they represent the following 27 countries:

Argentina	Greece	Norway
Bolivia	Guatemala	Palestine
Brazil	Hawaii	Panama
British Guiana	India	Paraguay
Burma	Iraq	Peru
China	Israel	Puerto Rico
Colombia	Netherlands	Spain
Egypt	Netherlands West Indies	Thailand
Ethiopia	Nicaragua	West Africa

no specially trained teachers to meet the situation. The solutions arrived at by our schools fall into three categories:

(1) A few of the more heavily endowed and more progressive institutions established special foreign-language institutes; and foreign students were required to demonstrate a modest proficiency in the reading, writing, and speaking of English as taught in the institute before they were permitted to enroll for regular courses in the universities.

(2) Some colleges required their foreign students to take specialized English courses collaterally with their regular college work.

(3) Other colleges assigned their foreign students to the regular courses in freshman composition or communications and expected the foreign student and his teacher to find their way out of the language difficulty the best way they could.

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of this thesis is twofold:

(1) To survey and evaluate the steps the outstanding colleges, universities, language institutes, and federal agencies have taken to evolve an effective English course for foreign students.

(2) To suggest, on the basis of the survey and evaluation, elements of these courses that might effectively be used

by the small institutions of limited endowments in formulating such a course of their own.

The criteria upon which we have evaluated the courses surveyed are three in number:<sup>1</sup>

(1) Does the course offer sufficient training in basic phonology, vocabulary, sentence pattern, grammar, and the basic communication skills--reading, writing, speaking, and listening?

(2) Are the teaching methods, devices, and techniques of such a character as to enable the foreign student to enter regular college classes in the shortest possible time and with the least possible language handicap?

(3) Is appropriate emphasis given to the development of the general and cultural orientation to the student's new environment?

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<sup>1</sup> Although this thesis deals primarily with English for foreign students, it does reduce the principles of communication to fundamental elements; and, it is hoped that teachers of English, especially those who have students of substandard abilities, will find it valuable. It should illustrate new methods of teaching a foreign language to our teachers of modern language.

## NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Colleges with large endowments, adequate facilities, and a competent and diversified modern language staff will experience few difficulties in solving this problem. Separate land-grant colleges, denominational schools, and private colleges of limited endowment will have to be satisfied with more modest solutions than those of large institutions or those with ample means. Although the problem is more difficult in the smaller schools, a solution is not impossible. If departments of English, speech, and modern language will cooperate and pool the resources they now have, the cost of a specialized staff and necessary equipment can be kept at a minimum. The course as here outlined, written for the colleges with fewer facilities, presupposes such cooperation between the departments most actively concerned.

## METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

To obtain material for study, language institutes, federal government agencies, and universities having special courses for foreign students were asked how this problem was handled by the various institutions or agencies involved. Several times these schools and agencies referred to still other sources, which, they had found, contained useful informa-

tion. For example, the Federal Security Agency of the Office of Education supplied a list of universities offering summer orientation courses and English institutes for foreign students, and the names of the directors of these institutes. Much valuable information was obtained in this manner. Directors of institutes proved to be most helpful and generous in supplying data on course content, textbooks, and supplementary materials.

It is difficult to do such work as this completely by correspondence; so a trip was made to the Colorado School of Mines Summer Institute and the Denver University Institute. At these schools, consultations with those in charge of the foreign-student instruction yielded more material. Classroom observation also gave a practical insight into effective methods of presentation of material and the relative effectiveness of various teaching aids and devices.

The Colorado School of Mines, Michigan State College, and the University of California, Berkeley, have reports and bulletins on the courses offered for foreign students in these institutions. Denver University has a handbook prepared for the students in their Institute. The pamphlet issued by the Federal Security Agency has information concerning teaching aids, textbooks, films, and linguistic records available. In addition, textbooks and articles concerning this problem, the titles of many of which were obtained through correspond-

ence, have further information.

The following is the list of sources from which material was obtained and the names of the directors who were in charge at the time of the correspondence:

#### Universities and Language Institutes

The University of Florida--James L. Wilson  
 The Colorado School of Mines--Edward G. Fisher  
 The University of Indiana--David H. Dickason  
 The English Language Institute at the University  
 of Michigan--Charles C. Fries  
 The University of Oklahoma--Suzanne Lasater  
 The University of North Carolina--A. C. Howell  
 The University of Wisconsin--Paul L. Wiley  
 The University of Washington--Jane S. Lawson  
 Michigan State College--John N. Winborne  
 Columbia University--William C. Bryant  
 The University of Illinois--Helen Beveridge  
 The University of California at Berkeley--A. M. Quiros  
 The University of Denver--Catherine Ludy

#### Federal Agencies

Division of International Educational Relations, Office  
 of Education--Thomas E. Cotner  
 Orientation Center, Federal Security Agency--Margaret  
 Emmons

Of all the schools and institutes to which we addressed correspondence, only two failed to cooperate by giving what information they could. Wellesley, which has an Institute for foreign students, has made it a policy to answer such requests for information only when the person requesting the information has had his thesis approved by the National Association of Foreign Student Advisers. Mills College, which has a similar Institute, perhaps because they observe a similar policy, did not send any answer at all to the request.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS<sup>1</sup>

##### Hours Allotted to the Course and Time Distribution

It is expected that the students in the Course of College English for Foreign Students will meet two hours a day for five days a week for the first semester and one hour a day for five days a week for the second. The reasons for this requirement are quite obvious. A certain amount of time is spent at the beginning of each class period for the mechanics of roll-taking, announcements, and a brief review of the previous lesson. After these preliminaries, certain students will read aloud, certain students will be asked to give oral reports, or

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A.

the teacher may give them exercises in dictation. At no time should the exercises be prolonged to the point where the student loses interest. Certain of the class activities will require the full two-hour period. These will be short tours or field trips, in conjunction with the orientation program, which would be impossible to plan within a one-hour class period. Usually, during the second hour of the two-hour period, the class should be broken up into groups. Some will be reading at various levels of difficulty with the teacher as interpreter when necessary; some will be writing with the teacher as supervisor; some will be listening to recordings with the printed script before them.

#### Credits

The system of credits for this course of English for Foreign Students varies somewhat among the different schools, according to the various individual institutional requirements. Two plans seem the most commonly used:

- (1) Some schools offer no credit at all for the course, considering it merely a college-entrance requirement in which the student shows a deficiency. This practice of allowing no credit, however, is quite discouraging to the students. Most of them are here on a limited time schedule and with limited funds; to them it is imperative that they be graduated with as little delay as possible.

(2) Michigan State College considers the course to be of college caliber and allows the student credit for work in a foreign language; this seems a reasonable and logical solution of the problem. Even though a student be enrolled in a science course and not the arts, he will be allowed a few elective courses, and there is no good reason why English for Foreign Students should not be substituted for one of his electives.

How much credit should be allowed is another problem. Again, individual school regulations may make some differences of crediting necessary. Many schools, for instance, require a certain minimum number of hours, usually more than six, before any credit is allowed for any given foreign language. Unless special faculty regulations be made to cover English for foreign students, enough credit hours should be allowed to satisfy the institutional minimum. At Kansas State College, for example, regulations state a minimum of nine hours of a foreign language is desirable. However, in view of the fact some curricula such as music require some foreign language, but not nine hours, this rule is not rigidly enforced. The course in English for Foreign Students as outlined in this thesis assumes that five credit hours in foreign language will be allowed for the first semester's work, and three credit hours will be allowed for the second. If the student takes both courses, he should be allowed eight credit hours in

foreign language. If the result of his diagnostic examination is such that he may safely be exempt from taking the first semester's work, he should be permitted to take the second semester's work for three hours of elective credit in foreign language regardless of institutional regulations concerning minimal requirements for foreign language. It is not recommended that any credit be given for exemption from both courses. In such cases, the student should be required to take the regular electives for which students taking the course in English for foreign students have made substitution.

It is to be understood that this course would not exempt the foreign student from the regular courses required of English speaking students. As this course allows credit for a foreign language, and not for English, it will be merely a preparation for freshman work. The course as outlined is not meant to produce polished English in written or spoken form. It is felt the regular freshman English course does not provide specifically what the foreign student needs and that it takes too long a time for him to acquire the proficiency necessary to understand and prepare his other lessons adequately. The English Course for Foreign Students will give him in as short a time as possible a grasp of the basic language skills. From it the student may progress to the regular freshman course, where, it is hoped, his training

in English for Foreign Students will enable him to compete with less handicap with English speaking students.

#### FUNDAMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Fortunately the principles of the four areas of communication--reading, writing, speaking, listening--are the same in any language. Our major problem is to train the foreign student to competence in each of these areas. Since the principles of communication are the same in any language, our primary concern is the problem of method. The important caution is not to regard these principles as mutually exclusive. The four are interdependent and constitute a linguistic unity. For example, the question of vocabulary is equally important in each of the four areas. For purposes of clarification, however, the components necessary to achieve each of the four objectives have been analyzed.

For reading--oral, silent, or both--the student must have a general vocabulary, a special vocabulary, an understandable pronunciation, and an ability to take adequate notes from his reading assignments.

For writing, he will have to have a technical vocabulary in the field of his specialization as well as a more formal general vocabulary than he will need in speaking. His need for an adequate grasp of grammar and syntax will be most apparent in his writing. One difficult aspect of the writing

will be spelling.

For speaking, he will need a general, informal vocabulary, an understandable pronunciation, an understanding of the more common sentence patterns, and some feeling for the rhythm of English speech.

For listening, he will need a general--formal and informal--vocabulary and an understanding of the stream of speech.

Each of the fundamental elements of the course will be tested by a series of diagnostic entrance examinations.<sup>1</sup> Each student will thereafter receive special training in those areas in which he has proved himself to be deficient.

It is not the purpose of this thesis to present a fixed set of daily lesson plans for an English course for foreign students. Desirable, and even necessary, as some of our syllabi are for standard freshman courses, comparable plans for a course in English for foreign students would be of doubtful value, if not positively harmful. Suppose, for example, in a class of twenty-nine students, there are some five language groups represented. Suppose, in addition, the diagnostic tests show that all can read the language with a widely varying degree of proficiency, some can read and understand the language but cannot speak, or write it, and some can read the language but cannot speak or write it or even under-

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<sup>1</sup> Infra, pp. 17 and 18.

stand it when it is spoken. Manifestly, all should read as widely and write as voluminously in English as their respective vocabularies will permit. Those who cannot speak the language or who cannot understand it when it is spoken, should spend extra hours listening to recordings. Unlike assignments in other classes, assignments in the course of English for Foreign Students will not be uniform throughout the class. The only uniformity upon which the teacher can insist is the student's ability to pass the proficiency examinations in reading, writing, speaking, and listening to be given at the end of the course. Daily assignments will vary in direct ratio to the individual student's deficiency in each of these respective areas. All should read as widely as possible but not the same material; each should speak and write as frequently as possible within the limits of his vocabulary; some will be reading or writing outside of class, while others in the same class will be listening to recordings.

In addition to the development of a competence in the four fundamental areas of communication--reading, writing, speaking, and listening--another important purpose of the course is what has been termed cultural orientation. Foreign students, of course, face many difficulties in adjusting themselves to their new environment. Recognizing and surmounting the differences between his native mores and those

encountered in his new environment might easily consume too great a portion of a student's time. The teacher should realize that the foreign student's attempt to make such adjustments throws a mental strain on him vastly greater than that which the ordinary freshman has to surmount, and should do everything possible to acquaint the foreigner with his new surroundings.

#### METHOD

A discussion of teaching methods in the field of foreign language invariably brings about an argument between proponents of what is called the direct method and the indirect method, that is, teaching the language by using the native language and translating it into the foreign language. This thesis does not presume to decide which of these approaches is the correct solution. As in all such cases, existing conditions and individual factors influence an instructor's decision as to the method he chooses to follow. It would be quite impractical, for instance, for an instructor in a modern language to forego entirely any use of English in his course. In some foreign language institutes, such as the one at the University of Michigan, where the enrollment is so large sections may easily be made to include only those of one language background, the native language may be used with

considerable effectiveness. However, in schools where the foreign enrollment includes a few representatives from any number of different countries, it would not be possible to hold separate class sections for each group. With this factor in mind, as well as the obvious differences between learning a foreign language while in one's native environment and learning a foreign language while in the foreign environment, it seemed best to plan the course to use the direct approach, at least for the first part of the course. Mr. E. G. Fisher, of the Colorado School of Mines Institute, where the direct method is used almost entirely, said he found that a resentment grew among the other students when he used Spanish in explaining material or vocabulary to his Latin-American students, though the Spanish speaking students constituted the majority of his class enrollment. This would not imply, however, that drawing comparisons between English constructions and those of another language would be avoided, or that a teacher should hesitate to use a student's native language for explanation, if the student is one who understands a construction more readily when it is explained in terms of his own language.

The material in the four areas of communication should be presented in a cumulative rather than in a block manner. From the first the student will be given instruction in words, sentence, prose rhythms, pitches, and what Mr. C. C. Fries of the University of Michigan calls the "stream of speech."

From the start the student should feel that he is learning what will be most helpful to him in his college work. Therefore, at the beginning, he will have to confine himself to the fundamentals of the four areas of communication. As the course progresses, the material will become a little wider in scope. In questions of syntax, after the minimum essentials have been mastered, the student will in effect write his own grammar. As he finds constructions which puzzle him, he will receive an explanation.

The keynote of this course is the word basic. The course is not intended to be a substitute course for freshman English. It is not a course merely made easier for the foreigner by the elimination of unreasonable competition between foreigners and English speaking students. It aims only at giving as quickly as possible a framework of English upon which each will build his own language on the basis of his requirements. He will learn basic phonetics, basic vocabulary, basic sentence patterns, and basic grammar. These factors, as well as speaking and listening will be carried incrementally throughout the course, becoming increasingly detailed as the student progresses.

## DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

The course of English for Foreign Students has been prepared from the standpoint that the students who enroll in the first semester will be almost totally lacking in English. As the purpose of the course is to teach English as a means and not as an end, any student, as soon as he demonstrates his proficiency in the four basic areas of communication will be advanced into the second semester course or into one of the regular English courses. Therefore, one of the first necessities will be a series of tests which will evaluate accurately the student's command of the language. Several schools which have installed programs for their foreign students have worked out tests which they feel are satisfactory. Miss Catherine Ludy of Denver University finds the English Examination for Foreign Students, which has been designed by the Educational Testing Service of Princeton University, effective in measuring a student's ability to use and understand the language. The cost of the test is two dollars per student, and the testing service does the scoring. The contents of the test, as explained in the pamphlet sent out by the Princeton Testing Service, are as follows:

The examination measures the student's proficiency in two most important areas--silent reading and auditory comprehension. The former is tested through sections on English vocabulary, recognition of correct and incorrect grammatical forms, and comprehension of sentences and short passages in English.

Auditory comprehension is measured through questions based on passages which are played on phonograph records. In addition, the student's ability to pronounce English words is tested through his recognition of rhymes and of correct accentuation, but this portion of the examination is subordinate to the reading and the auditory sections. An essay section is included, but this is not scored by Educational Testing Service. This section--the candidates actual work--is forwarded to the institution concerned.

In recognition of the fact that a large proportion of the foreign student group comes to this country to study scientific subjects, a section of scientific vocabulary is included.

Because most colleges would like an indication of the applicant's general reasoning ability, such a test is given with the English examination and is required of all college candidates. This is a nonverbal test, which is most successful in predicting work in courses of a quantitative nature. Scores on this test are reported separately from the English proficiency scores.<sup>1</sup>

The University of Michigan has available several test forms--one for testing aural comprehension; one, an examination in structure; and one, a composition examination. For the first two, there are three equivalent forms, which make the Michigan tests very valuable for testing improvement at mid-term and at the end of the course.<sup>2</sup> A composition examination is constructed for entrance, mid-term, and final examination use. The entrance examination is available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, German, and Chinese.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey.

<sup>2</sup> A sample set, containing test booklets A. B. C., examiner's materials forms A. B. C., and answer sheets may be purchased for each of these two tests for 50 cents a set by writing to the English Language Institute, 1522 Rackham Building, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

<sup>3</sup> These are 1½ cents each and the scoring tables are 25 cents each. They are available from the above address.

Michigan State College, in addition to using the University of Michigan tests in structure of the language and aural comprehension, uses the California Maturity Test and the Iowa Silent Reading Test.

#### Composition Entrance Test

Other universities use similar tests for the evaluation of the student's ability and for placement purposes. Each school uses, in addition to whatever examinations it has, a composition written by the student. Though this may not give a fair estimate of his ability to write the language, since he is just new to the situation and may make rapid progress after a week or so, it does give a general indication of his capabilities.

The subject matter of this composition would be anything each school felt yielded the best results, but it is suggested that an autobiographic sketch is usually the most satisfactory.

#### Interview

Another valuable means of determining the student's knowledge of English is the personal interview. Most of the schools use the interview in conjunction with the tests and written composition. If the interviewer is skillful at putting the student at ease, this method can give a very satisfactory

indication of the student's command of spoken English and his ability to understand spoken English. The University of Washington is of the opinion that the interview and the written composition are such a satisfactory means of measurement it employs no standardized or college test at all; it relies entirely on the composition and the oral interview.

The diagnostic tests, the composition, and the interview are the tests and methods used by various schools for diagnostic and placement purposes. As each school feels its tests and methods to be satisfactory, it can only be suggested that institutions which wish to put a course of this sort into the curriculum should procure copies of the different tests suggested and try them to see which they feel to yield the best results.

#### UNITS OF INSTRUCTION

Earlier in this thesis.<sup>1</sup> attention was called to the fact that teachers of the course would differ on the question of the direct method or the indirect method of presenting the subject matter. Teachers will also hold valid differences of opinion on the question of the cumulative method or the discrete block method of organizing the material to be presented.

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<sup>1</sup> Supra, p. 14.

There are distinct advantages to both methods of approach, and each teacher will have to decide for himself which method he prefers to use.

Michigan State College organizes its English for Foreign Students course upon the basis of the four fundamental areas of communication--reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Each of these four areas is made the subject matter of a discrete course. This method does have some advantages. It makes it possible to place students only in those sections in which they have less than average freshman ability. This procedure presumes, of course, that certain students will arrive with a satisfactory English background in, say, reading, and do not have need for the basic training in this area. They might, however, be unable to speak the language with any fluency, as is so often the case with students who have learned a foreign language in their own schools. In this way the discrete-block approach is supposed to spare the student much needless repetition. It also makes possible an effective check on the value of the course by means of a series of achievement tests given throughout the unit.

For purposes of clarity in presentation, the present thesis is organized upon the basis of the four fundamental areas of communication. Schools and colleges desiring to organize their course on this method of approach should experience no operational difficulties in putting into practice this thesis and the Michigan system exactly as they stand.

However, those teachers who insist that such a procedure is an arbitrary one are logical in their objection. They point to the fact that no child ever learned his language in any such artificial manner; they call attention to the obvious truism that vocabulary, prose rhythms, sentence patterns, phonetics, and grammar are basic to all four areas of communication and that these basics and not the areas as such, should be made the basis of the course.

For those who prefer to organize their course upon the basis of what might be called the cumulative rather than upon the discrete-block method, the course as taught at the Colorado School of Mines may serve as a model.

The daily assignment leaflets used at the Colorado School of Mines contain exercises and drills which give the students practice in each of the fundamental areas of communication. Following this plan, the student not only learns the language in a more natural manner but also acquires basic patterns in each principle early in the course, and is thus able to build more accurately his knowledge of English with what he hears and learns outside of the English class.

The first semester of the course will of necessity deal largely with the basic elements of vocabulary and grammar. Writing and speaking at the beginning will be more or less incidental. The diagnostic tests which the schools elect to use will have a definite value in placing the students in the

proper semester. It may be assumed that those with any command of English, acquired in schools in their own countries, will have their competency in the areas of technical grammar and reading. The tests from the University of Michigan would indicate this accurately enough to allow students receiving a certain percentage to pass over the first semester and on into the second. The more informal systems of testing, such as those used by the University of Washington, do not admit of an exact differentiation in abilities.

#### TEXTBOOKS FOR THE COURSE

As there are no textbooks available which can be used satisfactorily as the sole basis for this course, each school relies in large part on material worked up in its own English, speech, or foreign language departments. One of the most comprehensive and satisfactory examples is that used at the Colorado School of Mines. Here, each day's lesson is distributed to the student in mimeographed form. It is of varying length up to seventeen or eighteen pages. The complete lessons form a three-volume set.<sup>1</sup> Rather than distributing the material in book form, however, they found it more satisfactory to give out only one lesson at a time. In

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<sup>1</sup> This set of three volumes is available for \$5.00, and may be purchased from the Colorado School of Mines, Golden, Colorado.

this way students would not be tempted to hurry on to an advanced assignment before he had mastered the subject matter prerequisite to it. Whereas industry is a thing to be cultivated in most courses, in a course such as this, too ambitious a student may do himself more harm than good. It is well known that a habit is more easily made than broken, and the Golden school found that the students who worked ahead of the class on their own initiative too often made mistakes that were difficult to correct. It was much more to the student's advantage to exert his industry by going back over the material already covered and learning it more thoroughly than by doing new work by himself. Lesson leaflets of this sort, perforated to fit standard notebooks, would allow the students to make their own volumes.

The introductory lessons dwell more heavily on the basics of grammar than do the later ones. After these introductory lessons, the lesson plan is somewhat uniform, following a pattern something like this:

- (1) A short reading selection followed by questions over the reading. The questions are so phrased that one-word answers are not always possible. In this way the emphasis in the easier lessons may be purely a question of syntax and on a difficult selection may be on comprehension alone.
- (2) A section on grammar.
- (3) A dictated passage which at first is always read over

by the class before being dictated.

(4) Vocabulary written in the regular alphabet and phonotically; a list of words which use the phoneme studied that day in initial, middle, and terminal positions; and non-sense syllables and sentences which also demonstrate the phoneme.

(5) The assignment for the following day and an analysis sheet used for analyzing some of the sentences of the reading selection.

This, of course, does not represent the entire day's work but only the mimeographed material for it, and in our course would constitute the first hour of the two-hour recitation period.

This method of providing subject matter does have distinct advantages. Printed as it is in sections, it provides a simple way to add, subtract, or change the materials at not too great a cost nor with too much difficulty. A course such as this is quite certain to require constant revision as the personnel of the class changes. With this type of lesson form, only a day's lesson or only a page of a day's lesson need be altered; extra pages may be added to those already mimeographed if the situation demands.

The course at the Colorado School of Mines is unique in that it was formed with the express purpose of meeting the needs of engineers; therefore, the vocabulary, reading exercises, and

all of the other materials that compose the lessons are of a scientific engineering nature. In spite of this, a teacher planning a course of this sort would be wise to obtain copies of the three volumes the Colorado School of Mines has prepared. There is much in the volumes that would be of great help to him.

#### FIRST SEMESTER--THE BASICS

The following four sections of the present thesis will be devoted to a detailed study of a basic phonetics, a basic vocabulary, a basic sentence pattern, and a basic grammar.<sup>1</sup> If a foreigner is to read, write, understand, and speak our language, he must be able to pronounce acceptably the words in his vocabulary and arrange those words in an order conformable to English syntax and idiom. The reading, writing, understanding, and speaking of English are the ends of the course; phonetics, vocabulary, sentence pattern, grammar, and idiom

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<sup>1</sup> It is hoped that the following three sections of this thesis will be as pertinent to the teacher of English as English, as they will be to the teacher of English as a foreign language. When as many as 25 percent of our students fail to pass the college entrance examination in English, it is quite obvious that something is wrong somewhere. The following sections in basic phonetics, basic vocabulary, basic sentence patterns, and basic grammar should give the teacher of English a check list for determining where the difficulty lies. It is also hoped that these sections will prove pertinent to the teacher of foreign language as a foreign language.

are the means for the achievement of those ends.

### Basic Phonetics

Phonetics is basic to an acceptable pronunciation in any language. It is most unfortunate for those trying to learn English as a foreign language that English is not spelled phonetically. Most students will try to pronounce a word as they see it spelled, because their own languages are, for the most part, spelled phonetically, and they will have an unconscious resentment toward the teacher because he insists that such is not the case in English. The problem, then, is to provide both visual and aural stimuli to help the students master this discrepancy between spelling and pronunciation.

Visual Approach. A set of phonetic symbols is perhaps the easiest way to establishing visual impressions, and there are three schemes of symbols which can be used:

- (1) The regular International Phonetic Alphabet.
- (2) Any system of symbols, probably a modification of the standard International Phonetic Alphabet, which a school may wish to devise for its own use.

- (3) Some one of the systems of diacritical markings.

The advantages of the standard International Phonetic Alphabet are obvious. Students who studied English previously may have used it and therefore would already be familiar with

the symbols and the sounds the symbols represent. As most standard phonetic textbooks use the International Phonetic Alphabet,<sup>1</sup> the instructor could draw on these books for exercises and drill, or perhaps sections could be used for class work by means of an opaque projector.

The two most important advantages of the International Phonetic Alphabet are that each sound of a language is represented by only one symbol; and, in many instances, these symbols are not a part of the Roman alphabet. In this scheme there can be no false association of the letter sound with the phoneme. The Colorado School of Mines at Golden uses the International Phonetic Alphabet.

The University of Michigan exemplifies the second alternative and has devised a system of phonetic symbols which is a modification and simplification of the International Phonetic Alphabet. Convenience in dealing with clusters and simplicity of writing symbols led Fries and his staff to adopt the modified symbols used in their alphabet.<sup>2</sup> Convenience

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<sup>1</sup> Voice and Articulation Drillbook, by Grant Fairbanks, is commonly used by colleges and should be found in most college libraries. As books of this nature are quite advanced and drill for more perfection in pronunciation than a course of this sort should try to achieve, they should not be used as textbooks by the class, but as reference for the instructor and only occasionally for class drill.

<sup>2</sup> C. C. Fries, Teaching and Learning English as A Foreign Language, footnote, p. 11.

and simplicity constitute the only advantage in formulating an individual phonetic alphabet, but by adopting the modified symbols, a school sacrifices the option of using standard textbook material plus the initial advantage gained if the students have already become acquainted with the International Phonetic Alphabet.

The third alternative--the use of a system of diacritical markings--has two distinct disadvantages:

(1) Most diacritical systems have more than one-letter symbol for a single phoneme.

(2) The symbols used are almost entirely letters from the Roman alphabet.

It would seem, however, there would be advantages in using the diacritical system of marking pronunciation if a satisfactory dictionary could be found, one which overcame in part, at least, these two handicaps. The American College Dictionary seems to be the most nearly suited to the purpose of a course of English for foreign students. It does have duplicate symbols for the same phoneme, but only twice is this the case. The y of yes and the u of use are given only one symbol by Michigan and Golden, but are given two symbols by the American College Dictionary. The a of father, and the o of hot are used for the same sound in the American College list, and Golden uses only the \_, and Michigan the \_.

Two decidedly favorable aspects of a diacritical system

make it worthy of consideration. One is that the student must learn eventually to use a dictionary and verify pronunciation as well as meaning by himself. If he learn only the phonetic symbols, he will be less able to rely on himself to find the proper pronunciation. If he is to use the dictionary effectively, he will still have to learn the diacritical alphabet.

The second advantage gained by using the American College system is that a standard typewriter can be used to write the phonetic spelling of the words for classroom materials. As each symbol is only a letter or letters of the regular alphabet, made distinctive by the diacritical markings, no special equipment would be needed for typing or cutting stencils. Though it would require careful work to make the marks legible, a stylus of a shape suitable for marking straight and curved lines, and one adapted to marking dots would be the only additional equipment necessary for cutting stencils. If the International Phonetic Alphabet is used, or a modification of it, either the stencils will have to be cut by hand, which is not particularly satisfactory, or a typewriter fitted with the phonetic symbols must be purchased by the department.

Although the International Phonetic Alphabet is best for scholarly purposes, our course is not striving for perfection of pronunciation. What we hope to accomplish is an understandable pronunciation, rhythm of speech, and a certain

knowledge of the phonemes of the American language. These modest objectives are within the range of possibility of the one-year course. If an occasional student cannot accomplish these ends in one year's time, we advise that he be assigned to the appropriate course in the department of Speech. For our purpose, the American College Dictionary system of diacritical marking is the more practical and is more easily used than the other methods suggested.

Table 1. A comparison of the Michigan, Golden, and American College phonetic alphabets--consonants.

I Michigan	II Golden	III <u>American College</u>	Word
p	p*	p	pin
b	b	b	bin
m	m	m	mine
f	f*	f	fine
v	v	v	vine
w	w	w	wine
t	t*	t	tin
d	d	d	din
n	n	n	net
s	s*	s	seal
z	z	z	zeal
š	ʃ*	sh	shell
ž	ʒ	zh	azure
č	tʃ*	ch	chest
ǰ	dʒ	j	jest, wedge, gem
θ	θ*	th	thin
ð	ð	tʰ	this
k	k*	k	coal
g	g	g	gull
ŋ	ŋ	ng	sting
h	h*	h	hen
y	j	y, u	yes, use
l	l	l	low
r	r	r	rope
	hw*	hw	when

\* voiceless

Table 2. A comparison of the Michigan, Golden, and American College phonetic alphabets--vowels and diphthongs.

I Michigan	:	II Golden	:	III <u>American College</u>	:	Word
i	:	i	:	ē	:	beat, weep
ɪ	:	ɪ	:	ī	:	bit
e	:	e	:	ā	:	mate
ɛ	:	ɛ	:	ě	:	met
æ	:	æ	:	ǎ	:	mat
u	:	u	:	ō	:	pool
ʊ	:	ʊ	:	oo	:	pull
o	:	o	:	ō	:	note
ɔ	:	ɔ	:	ô	:	autumn, bought
a	:	a	:	ä, ȝ	:	father, hot
ə	:	ə+	:	ə+=	:	across
ə	:	ʌ	:	ũ	:	but
	:		:	â	:	air
	:		:	û	:	urge
aɪ	:	aɪ	:	ī	:	eyes, ice
aʊ	:	aʊ	:	ou	:	how
ɔɪ	:	ɔɪ	:	oi	:	boy
	:	ju	:		:	you, fuel

+ used only in unaccented syllables.

= This is the only symbol in the American College system that is not on the typewriter. It could easily be represented in the lesson material as e, or by some other easily recognized sign.

As is noted by the Golden manual, c, g, and x are not used; k is used for the hard g, s for the soft; ks, (box) and gz (exact), for x; z for x (anxiety).

From the foregoing tables, it is readily seen that column III is as accurate and practicable as are columns I and II.

From the foregoing remarks, it will be observed that teachers of the course in English for Foreign Students have three options, so far as the study of phonetics is concerned:

(1) They may follow the Colorado system in using the straight International Phonetic Alphabet.

(2) They may follow the Michigan system and use a modified International Phonetic Alphabet.

(3) They may use the system of diacritical markings employed by the American College Dictionary.

For reasons already cited, our course strongly recommends option (3).

A second method of establishing visual impressions, used by some schools, is to use cut-away models of heads showing the position of tongue and vocal organs and the parts of the mouth that are used in forming the sounds. Drawings illustrating the position of the tongue in producing sounds are available and used by these schools. This method is a more thorough approach than we feel is necessary. The students should be able to imitate a sound if given only a few words of explanation. The teacher can demonstrate the production of sounds by exaggerating the use of tongue and lips, probably with more effect for these students than the most accurate and scientific charts and diagrams.

Aural Approach. The second problem in Basic Phonetics is the establishment of aural stimuli, and one of the most common methods is, of course, imitation. Miss Margaret Emmons, Director of the Orientation Center in Washington, D. C., corroborates this by saying, "At the Orientation Center we find mimicry one of the best teaching techniques. Mimicry is used not only for teaching sounds, but for teaching words and rhythm units."<sup>1</sup>

The second method--that of drawing similarities between phonemes of the English language and other languages--is open to some controversy as there is differing opinion concerning the similarity of phonemes of different languages. Perfectionists in the field of phonetics will contend that each language is composed entirely of sounds peculiar to it alone. It would seem that this is an extreme refinement of differentiation which need not be observed in this course. If there is a difference between our a in father, and the continental a's of padre, Vater, or aller, it would not be so great as to override the advantage in drawing this comparison to a student from Spain, Germany, or France. It would seem quite feasible to enlist the aid of the modern language department in compiling lists of comparable sounds between English and as many

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<sup>1</sup> Orientation and English Institute for Students from other Lands. Federal Security Agency, Office of Education, p. 15.

languages as there are authorities in various languages in the department. Heffner confirms this by listing sounds of different languages which are similar enough to be used in making comparisons.<sup>1</sup>

Jack Rogers Parsell has copyrighted a little book called World Fonetic Alfabet in which he has experimented also with this idea. He has composed an alphabet using some International Phonetic Alphabet symbols and some of his own, and illustrates which ones are used in English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Latin, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Hindustani, and Arabic. Though this book would not be of value for general classroom recitation, it would be worthwhile for an instructor to obtain one for reference. It might prove exceptionally valuable in the first days of the course for those students who do not speak any European language or who are accustomed to an alphabet different from our own.

Kinesthetic Approach. There is a third appeal, neither visual nor aural, which should be mentioned, although probably most students will find the visual and aural appeals adequate in learning to speak. This appeal is kinesthetic. For those students who seem unable to hear a sound properly or to see how the sound is produced, an additional stimulus may be that of

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<sup>1</sup> R-M. S. Heffner, General Phonetics, pp. 70-71.

feeling the vocal muscles as the sound is produced. This, of course, is one of the methods of teaching the blind and deaf.

The students must be told from the very beginning and often thereafter that English is not a phonetic language. They must realize that a word is not pronounced as it is spelled, and that it can not be spelled as they hear it pronounced. For Spanish speaking students this will pose a particularly difficult problem, as their language is extremely phonetic. Because of this difficulty, work on phonetics should begin immediately. Another reason for starting phonetics at the first is that each student is going to have to learn some new sounds. Which ones he will have to learn will depend upon his language background. This situation too will be difficult, especially if the student is somewhat older than the usual entering college student; for language habits become so fixed it is sometimes virtually impossible for an adult to introduce a new sound into the stream of speech. Although it would be unwise to let the students feel that they might not be able to learn to produce a new sound accurately, the teacher should keep this fact in mind, and not be too exacting, especially in the case of Chinese speaking students. He should drill and practice them in the sounds, but should realize that he will have to be satisfied with something less than perfection.

A certain period each day should be set aside for work in phonetics. The first day the students should be told why they are to use the symbols for sounds and how this training will help them. The problem of the lack of phonetic spelling in English should be explained. After this introduction, new sounds should be introduced at regular intervals. There are forty-four symbols in the American College list. Considering a sixteen-week semester with five meetings a week, there will be approximately eighty class meetings. Probably then, a new sound should be introduced every day so that the student will have had drill in all of them well before the end of the semester.

To present the student with the sound, write the symbol on the board. Then demonstrate the production of the sound in whatever manner is easiest: by explanation, by exaggerated use of lips or tongue, by simply giving the sound, or by kinesthetic appeals. Some of the students will probably be shy at first, but repeated practice will give them confidence. The mimeographed pages devoted to that sound assigned in his textbook should then be consulted, and practice should be given in the words indicated. These exercises may vary somewhat in order to avoid monotony for the students. However, each exercise should contain certain fixed elements:

(1) It should show the sound used in as many positions as it will be found in English--initial, medial, terminal.

(2) It should illustrate the various combinations of letters that represent the particular sound.

(3) Not only should the phoneme be demonstrated in initial, medial, and terminal positions, but it should be demonstrated how the sound is influenced when used in combination with other vowels and consonants.

Every phoneme in the English language must be made the subject of formal drill. A sample exercise might be as follows: ē was chosen because it presents special difficulties. The e, as the foreign student knows it, is a.

ē - ea, ee, ei

Initial	Medial	Terminal
easy - ēs'ī	creep - crēp	we - wē
eat - ēt	sweep - swēp	tea - tē
eager - ē'gēr	fleet - flēt	agree - ēgrē'
Easter - ēs'tēr	need - nēd	plea - plē
eel - ēl	neither - nē'θēr	flea - flē
Egypt - ē'jīpt	negro - nē'grō	flee - flē
either - ē'tēr	needle - nē'dēl	fee - fē
égo - ē'gō	seat - sēt	knee - nē
	season - sē'zēn	he - hē
	deep - dēp	the - thē
	deal - dēl	
	teeth - tēθ	
	feel - fēl	
	feed - fēd	
	idea - Idē'a	

please - plēz

thesis - thē'sīz

1. Please pass me the peas.  
Plēz pās mē tʰə pēz.
2. The peach is green and sweet.  
tʰə pēch ɪz grēn ænd swēt.
3. The neat green car breezes speedily by.  
tʰə nēt grēn kār brē'zəz spō'delī bī.
4. He eagerly sails his fleet ship over the sea.  
hē ē'gərli sālz hīz flēt shīp ō'vər tʰə sē.
5. Will she please meet me either now or at tea?  
wīl shē plēz mēt mē ē'tʰər nou ōr ət tē?
6. See that we keep the neat knees clean.  
sē tʰæt wē kēp tʰə nēt nēz klēn.
7. He eats the eels eagerly in season.  
hē ēts tʰə ēlz ē'gərli ɪn sē'zən.
8. Gleeefully she heats the tea for me.  
glē'fəlī shē hēts tʰə tē fōr mē.
9. He seizes the idea and agrees with me.  
hē sē'zəz tʰə ɪdē'ə ænd ɔgrēz' wɪtʰ mē.
10. The free sweet breeze blew lazily over the green lea.  
tʰə frē swēt brēz blōō lā'zəlī ō'vər tʰə grēn lē.

To this might be added some nonsense syllables which could be read through quickly for practice in speed recognition and production. The sentences could take the form of a

little fable, or have some connection at least. As the number of phonemes covered grows, little formal effort need be made to see that old sounds are re-used. At first it would be wise to see that the sounds already learned are used as much as possible in the new lessons. Later, probably only the previous lesson should be given decided attention.

Unless the school be well equipped with recording devices, this practice would be done orally. The teacher should be sure he has pronounced each word carefully for the class to repeat. After all of the words have been read through in unison by the class, the teacher can call upon members to give the pronunciation alone. The same can be done with the sentences.

One of the most effective systems for teaching pronunciation is that employed at the Colorado School of Mines. The cost of equipment used and the time element involved are prohibitive for the average course; however, as it might be used in part by some schools, an outline of the program is here presented.

At regular periods the members of the class meet in a room equipped with individual sound-proofed booths, each containing a wire recorder and loud speaker. Each student goes to his own booth, and with him he has his lesson sheets. The department has a machine for cutting records, and it has records of all the lessons in pronunciation for the course.

For most of the work, the student is able to follow the material by reading as well as hearing the pronunciation through his loud speaker.

The reader pronounces the word and the student repeats it once or twice into his wire recorder. The words all pertain to the lesson read that morning in class, so it is valuable for the students to go over them again. Later in the assignment the student plays back his recording. He can hear first the reader's voice and then his own. Many times students will be stubborn about believing they actually make the mistakes pointed out to them, but in this way--hearing first the reader and then themselves--they are forced into an awareness of their errors. About an hour and a half is spent in recording and playing back the reading exercises. Part of each recorded lesson contains words and sentences that the instructor reads but which do not appear on the printed exercises sheets. This procedure forces the students to rely on aural perception in order to understand the "stream of speech" and not just visual perception.

This period then is not solely for pronunciation. It offers practice also in listening and vocabulary building. Such recording equipment as a program of this type would call for would be, of course, extremely valuable for both the speech and English departments. However, even though the administration should be convinced of the value of the

equipment and could appropriate funds to purchase it, an hour and a half would be an impossible amount of time to spend out of each two-hour period for practice in pronunciation, listening, and vocabulary building. An hour a day once or twice a week would have to suffice, but even this would be a distinct advantage over the strictly nonmechanical method. At least, recordings should be made at the beginning and end of each semester to show progress. Every school would have facilities for this much work.

#### Basic Vocabulary

One need hardly insist that in learning a foreign language, vocabulary is the most basic of all basics. One can neither read, write, speak, nor understand any language except in terms of vocabulary. Reduced to its lowest terms, our problem in teaching English to foreign students is the problem of making available in English, in the shortest possible time, the vocabulary resources which the student already has in his own language. Our problem narrows itself down to two simple questions: "What words?" and "What method?"

Fortunately, "What words?" has been made the subject of serious study by experts, and some definite conclusions have already been reached. C. K. Ogden in The System of Basic

English has reduced the minimum essentials of the English vocabulary to a list of 850 words. This list is given in Woolley and Scott's Colloge Handbook of Composition, and each student should provide himself with a copy of this handbook. As in the case of one phoneme each day until the forty-four basic sounds in English have been mastered, so approximately twenty words each day should be assigned, until the 850-word vocabulary of Basic English is thoroughly familiar to the student.

The question of "what method?" has also been made the subject of special study by experts. Of the various methods--foreign-word, English-word; English-word, foreign-word; pictures; objects; associations; actions; learning in context--each has been favored, at one time or another, by various authorities. The course as outlined in this thesis is committed to no one method as superior to the others. Students themselves will vary as to the method which is the most practical in each individual case. The course as outlined here presupposes that the teacher will make as great a variety of impressions and associations as time will permit.

One thing which slows down the learning of vocabulary by our students in modern language is the practice always of learning a foreign word in terms of a native word. C. H. Handschin has observed studies made by others, and the conclusions arrived at were as follows: For adults, both native-word, foreign-word, and foreign-word, native-word learning

prove superior to teaching vocabulary by means of pictures in point of ease and surety of retention.<sup>1</sup>

Also, "The object-foreign word method of learning is superior to the foreign-word, native-word method, and this is superior to the native-word, foreign-word method in point of immediate as well as permanent retention."<sup>2</sup>

Whereas the modern language department has little choice but to teach vocabulary in terms of foreign-word, native-word methods, this course, by virtue of the fact the students are in the foreign environment, can reduce vocabulary learning by translation to a minimum. With this fact in mind, the instructor should urge the students to refrain as much as possible from jotting down their native-word translations as a means of remembering the meaning. Rather they should make a practice of writing a definition in English, or making a small drawing to jog their memories.

The learning by picture-association rather than by word-association for adults, which Netchaieff found to be less effective, may be considered a satisfactory method if used with discretion. These students are to be considered adults, and

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<sup>1</sup> Charles H. Handschin, Methods of Teaching Modern Languages, pp. 45-46. (From A. Netchaieff, "Psychologische Beobachtungen zur Frage über den Fremdlandischen Sprachunterricht," Pädagogische Psychologische Studien, Vol. 9.)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 46. (From Braunschauen's, "Les Methodes d'Enseignement des Langues Etrangères," Revue Psychologique, Vol. 3.)

in this phase as for the entire course it is an important thing to remember. Their intelligence, interest, and ability to learn should not be tried by using materials and methods of juvenile level. However, Bodmer points out that the ease with which we remember things depends on our being able to associate one thing with another.<sup>1</sup> This association may well be an action or simple drawing made by the instructor. As he will have in his class students of several native language backgrounds, this is the most practical method of explanation for complete classroom understanding.

The Colorado School of Mines found that the best method is to make as many impressions as possible: by object, picture, and verbal association. The instructor sketches a bucket, a cart, a light plug, a ladder, and many more easily recognized line drawings on the blackboard. He indicates actions by pushing the desk, pulling an imaginary rope, and turning the light off and on. These actions and drawings should be spontaneous, being used only as occasion demands. The class should always be at liberty to put forward questions concerning vocabulary in the lesson; and if no one is able to understand the word, it should be explained by one of the previous methods or by definition or synonym. In this way, all associations are by actual object or action, or by an explanation

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick Bodmer, The Loom of Language, p. 7.

in English, so there is no barrier of translation from native-word to foreign-word.

Another method of making an impression by association is by teaching word groups of synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, and what Fries calls "scale" words. As well as teaching hot and cold, for instance, point out the scales of warm and hot, cool and cold. Some words belong to two scales, and the instructor should watch for these as they will cause the students confusion and difficulty. Such double scales are

old-young	hard-soft	short-long	tall-short	low-tall
old-new	hard-easy	short-tall	tall-low	low-high <sup>1</sup>

There is another interesting point in the manner in which vocabulary is explained at the Colorado School of Mines. Every word under discussion is written on the board, and every acceptable definition is jotted down. This method eliminates the probability that many students may misspell and misunderstand the word or definition. At Golden the definitions advanced by the class are far from formal, and often it takes a stretch of the imagination to comprehend what the student has in mind. But these are written down, if correct at all, and then the instructor encourages more answers. The teachers found that when they insisted on exact definitions in the course, they met with very little success. The liberal definitions were, in the last analysis, the more satisfactory.

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<sup>1</sup> Fries, op. cit., pp. 53-54.

Learning words in context is, as any teacher of English will know, an easy and permanent way of building vocabulary. W. J. Grunstead estimates 30 percent more of the total number of new words learned will be remembered if they are learned in context than if they are not.<sup>1</sup> With rather careful planning, new vocabulary can be repeated at least four times, and, in each case, in context:

(1) The reading lessons should be made up of the vocabulary the instructor wishes to teach.

(2) Questions may be asked over the reading, using the same vocabulary.

(3) Grammar exercises should employ the new words as far as it is possible.

(4) The phonetic drill should draw upon the new words from the daily lesson or those just past.

The teaching of vocabulary, naturally, overlaps the reading to a great extent. Here, again, discretion should be used in the exact demands made upon the students. They will have, of course, no translating. The review for comprehension and retention will consist of telling what was in the article or answering questions concerning it. For the most part this does not require of the student a knowledge of every word in

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<sup>1</sup> Handschin, op. cit., pp. 35 ff. (From W. J. Grunstead, "An Experiment in the Learning of Foreign Words," Journal of Educational Psychology. 6:(1915), pp. 242-245.)

the text. He should learn from the beginning to read for content, and should not be made to feel he must look up or inquire about every word.

Of course, the learning of vocabulary is not going to be limited to that which is acquired in class. The students must be made to realize that they should try to improve their knowledge of English at all times. This means they should make an effort to engage only in English conversation outside of class. To make it more necessary that they make the proper effort, time should be set aside out of each class period--probably ten or fifteen minutes would be sufficient--during which the students would have the opportunity to ask about words they have heard or read and do not understand. Each student should keep a notebook in which he jots down words that bother him. Each day he should hand to the instructor a list of those words he has encountered. Ten words each day should not be too many for the students. These lists would serve not only to see that the students are working, but also would provide material for the instructor. By accumulating and tabulating these words he would have a rather exact check on the types of words with which the students need help.

The book, Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection for the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language, published in 1936 by P. S. King and Son, Ltd., London, gives an idea of the frequency with which a word is used, and how up-to-date

it is in its several uses. This study is incomplete as the war interfered with the work, and also it is out of publication, but if a copy could be obtained, it would be quite helpful.

Fries has many fine suggestions for the selection of vocabulary. Chapter IV, "The Words: Mastering Vocabulary Content," Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language, pp. 38-56, is devoted to his study of the situation. A detailed resume of this chapter would be too long to be included in the present thesis, as Fries has made a scientific study of the types of words, the four stages of the learner's progress in the mastery of English, as well as how these words may be most efficiently taught. Since any person planning to establish a course of this sort should have Fries' book, only an outline of the chapter will be given.

I. Four most important kinds or levels of meaning

- A. Lexical meaning
- B. Syntactical meaning
- C. Morphological meaning
- D. Meaning as carried by the pitch contours with which words are spoken

II. Four classifications of words

- A. Function words
- B. "Substitute" words
- C. Words with negative or affirmative distribution
- D. Content words
  - 1. Words for "things"
  - 2. Words for "actions"
  - 3. Words for "qualities"

### III. Stages of progress in the mastery of English vocabulary

- A. Vocabulary drawn primarily from first three classes of words, with only such "content" words necessary to operate structures being practiced and to represent chief features of sound system
- B. Vocabulary necessary to cover chief areas of living--house, time, food, parts of body, clothing: chief criterion for selection--usefulness
- C. Vocabulary extended more completely over general areas of experience covered in B: chief criterion for selection--frequency
- D. Vocabulary drawn from nomenclature of special fields

### IV. Methods of teaching vocabulary

- A. Always taught in context
- B. Use of "substitute frames"<sup>1</sup>

In general, the students will need first a very basic vocabulary such as the 850 words of Ogden and Richards. Then they will need an informal environmental vocabulary for daily use in their several activities. Help will come from the students themselves in this area by way of the words they

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<sup>1</sup> The "substitute frame" is a sentence which offers a variety of choice for noun or verb; or, the opposite of the "substitute frame," a series of sentences using a word in its several meanings.

Throw me the \_\_\_\_\_; ball, paper, book, coat, etc.  
 He \_\_\_\_\_ through the town; rode, ran, walked, drove.

He threw the ball.  
 The tree threw a shadow over the yard.  
 He threw a warning glance at the girl.  
 He threw a switch, plunging the room into darkness.  
 The horse threw the rider into the ditch.  
 They threw the man into prison.

bring to class each day.<sup>1</sup>

Other schools were asked if they had printed vocabularies available for distribution. None of them did. It was hoped, perhaps, that basic word lists for the physical, biological, and applied science fields could be obtained. It seems as though a special list, perhaps just as such, composed of the basic scientific words of his field, could be provided for each student. The only school to have any list of this sort was the Colorado School of Mines. Their course, which is an English Course for Engineers, uses an extensive engineering vocabulary in the reading exercises. However, this is not in such form that it can be supplied for the other schools. In casual conversations with members of the different fields at Kansas State College, during which this possibility was discussed, considerable interest was shown. Some even offered to try to make lists covering their fields because they were interested in seeing just what the lists might consist of, as well as seeing how such lists might help the students. With such cooperation, probably very satisfactory vocabularies might be compiled.

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Irving Lorge has recently completed a word-count survey at Teacher's College, Columbia University. This has been printed in a very limited edition which is to be distributed at about the rate of one copy to each of the states. If it has been sent out, probably the library at the state university would be the logical place to find it. As it was written for the purpose of deciding just what vocabulary is necessary or practical for a foreigner to learn, it would be an extremely valuable source for words to be used in writing the reading exercises for class work.

There is one dissention which might arise. If the instructors in the other fields felt their course work was being infringed upon or interfered with, they might object rather strongly. It would seem they would feel it a distinct advantage to themselves and the students to have a working knowledge of the language of the field, and should whole-heartedly concur in the plan, but it should be carefully explained so that the purpose is clearly understood before the plan is inaugurated.

#### Basic Sentence Patterns

In conjunction with the teaching of basic grammar, this course would include what Fries calls the basic sentence patterns. This does not mean to imply that the teaching of the sentence patterns falls outside of the field of grammar. Indeed, it is a very large and important aspect of the study of grammar, especially in our language, which has lost so many of its meaningful inflectional forms. This is merely set aside as a special phase of grammar which should be learned as a habit, acquired before a more technical explanation is advanced.

Fries, in Chapter III, "The Structure: Making Automatic the Use of the Devices of Arrangement and Form," makes clear the advisability and practicality of the use of the basic sentence pattern as an approach.

These sentence patterns will begin in the first lesson. The first patterns should include those for statements, questions, requests, and directives.<sup>1</sup> The simplest explanations should accompany the introduction of these forms. The students should understand that, because of the loss of inflectional forms, word order in English is the primary device for carrying the meaning of a sentence.

For a simple declarative sentence, the most common word order is substantive plus verb:

I am the teacher.  
 My name is Mary.  
 My address is 306 Clay Street.  
 He is here.  
 We are ready.

There are two ways to make a simple question. If the verb is a form of the verb to be, a reversal of the word order is necessary. When the verb precedes the substantive:

Are we ready?  
 Is he here?

If the verb is not a form of the verb to be, and just a simple word, the proper form of do is used, which serves to indicate both interrogative form and tense: it eliminates the need to reverse the regular word order of the simple statement. The proper form of do precedes the substantive.

Did the man run?  
 Does the man run?  
 Did the children sing?  
 Do the children sing?

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<sup>1</sup> Fries, op. cit., p. 35.

To make a directive statement, or command, the simple form of the verb, without substantives, is sufficient.

Run!  
Sing.  
Go away!  
Stay here.

After these patterns have been learned, the students should become acquainted with the orders for expressions of time, of place, and of manner. One pattern of word order for phrases and clauses should be learned rather than a complicated explanation of the various positions in which phrases and clauses stand.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to learning these basic sentence patterns, Fries stresses what he calls "function" words.<sup>2</sup> These are the words which give meaning to a sentence or take the place of inflection. The form of the genitive, for instance, is usually replaced by the function word of when qualities of possession are attributed to inanimate objects. The is is used with animate objects.

The capital of the state  
The length of the river  
The quality of the material  
Everyone had a good time at Dick's birthday party

These function words, which include prepositions and auxiliaries, are used with verbs as well as substantives and must be

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<sup>1</sup> Fries, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Supra, p. 50.

mastered by the student if this method of teaching is to operate successfully.

Within the framework set up by the stress upon the important matters of word order, there are included those function words that are essential to the situations covered, and the forms necessary to operate the selected patterns. Volume I of the Intensive Course, for example, includes the function words do for questions and negative statements; be plus the -ing form for present time; going to for future; and in, on, at, beside, from, to, of, with substantives, for expressions of place, direction, and time. This volume includes only those inflectional forms that continue to live as vigorous patterns in present-day English--the singular and plural forms of nouns, and the present and preterit tense forms of verbs.<sup>1</sup>

#### Basic Grammar

The unit on basic grammar will, in part, be a continuation of the basic sentence-pattern formula of Fries. It comes under the title of "basic grammar", as it employs more explanation, and is not merely learning as habit unexplained patterns.

As in the teaching of vocabulary, it is of utmost importance in the teaching of grammar to present as much material as possible in contextual form. The method of teaching by the excessive use of paradigms is not a satisfactory one. People often state they can recall the exact place on the right or left hand page where the box containing a conjugation or

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<sup>1</sup> Fries, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

declension was. But were they asked to use a form of one of these conjugations or declensions, they would have to stop and figure it out. Instead of having a sentence pattern using this form, they have only a scrap of the sentence around which they must build the rest. A course of this sort should try to avoid, as far as it is possible, the necessity of a student's running through I am, you are, he is, mentally before being able to say, "We are going down town." To make this automatic, as little explanation as possible should be given with as many sentences as seem reasonable which demonstrate the conjugation.

Probably most of the students will have had some formalized English. Whether they can actually use it, somewhere before arriving in this country they learned parts of speech, verb tenses, and other grammatical constructions. For many who enter the course, many things will be familiar once they have been reviewed. At Denver University the instructors have found this to be true. Further, they find that punctuation, except for those of Arabic and Iraqi background, is average. The latter have trouble with periods, commas, and question marks. Generally, the students have difficulty with word usage, word order, American idiomatic construction, articles, prepositions (especially those of time), spelling, and the peculiarities of singular and plural formations.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A Handbook on the Orientation and English Language Instruction Program for Students from Abroad. The orientation staff of the University of Denver, 1949, p. 27.

Even with the assurance that the majority of the students will have had a preliminary training of sorts in English grammar, these backgrounds will vary widely, and it is safer to presume on lesser rather than greater abilities in this area. Therefore, a course of this sort should be planned to include the most basic grammar; and those few who are proficient in this, as their general ability was not sufficient to allow their entering freshman English, will do well to review the grammar thoroughly, or bend their efforts more toward those areas of communications in which they are deficient.

Nouns. For the teaching of nouns, the difference between concrete and abstract nouns should be explained, as well as case, number, and gender.

Gender will be easily grasped, as English employs natural gender in most cases, and these exceptions need not be given much thought as they are few in number and not strictly observed. Living things are either masculine or feminine, according to natural gender, and inanimate things are neuter. The few inanimate things which have acquired gender, such as ships, could be explained if the occasion arose.

Case in nouns will primarily be taken care of by the sentence pattern using the function word of, as the genitive is the only case that alters the form of the noun. Once this pattern has been mastered and the students have acquired a proficiency in handling it, the genitive form with the 's could be

explained. This will make possible a slightly more natural usage in many instances.

The vagaries in the singulars and plurals of nouns should be given little explanation. In the study of vocabulary, such words as man and child should be learned simultaneously in the singular and plural forms. The many rules which apply to irregular plurals would only confuse the students. For the unusual forms, simply teach both forms as part of the vocabulary lesson.

Little explanation need be made concerning common and proper nouns. In one of the grammar lessons it would be wise to differentiate between the two for purposes of explaining some special rules of capitalization. Rather than expect the students to grasp the matter thoroughly from such an explanation, however, it would be much more to their advantage to have explained specific situations when such arise in the lesson materials. It should be pointed out that person's names are capitalized, and names of cities, months, days, and so on.

The differences between abstract and concrete nouns should be made clear. The students will have to realize that a thing may be only a concept or idea, and even though it has no tangible form it still may function as a substantive. These nouns will be more difficult to understand, and the students will need a more extensive vocabulary before they can grasp the definitions. For this reason, the abstract nouns should come in the

latter part of the course. The less abstract words, especially infinitives and gerunds, which clearly show the verbal derivation, would be ones with which to start. Others which should be more readily understood would be nouns formed from adjectives using the -ness endings.

Pronouns. The forms of the pronoun--personal, relative, possessive, interrogative, demonstrative, and indefinite--should be approached mainly through the medium of the sentence pattern. Many of the explanations involved are highly technical; the understanding of them depends on a much more thorough knowledge of sentence structure than these students have.

Personal Pronouns: The personal pronouns should be given attention early in the course. Unnecessary repetition of nouns will make the students' speech terribly stilted and difficult. This will, of course, involve an explanation of case. Only a very simple explanation should be attempted; the real emphasis should be placed on repeated sentence pattern exercises, so that correct usage on the part of the student rests on habit, not on a carefully memorized list of rules. For instance:

Jack likes <u>Mary</u> .	Jack likes <u>her</u> .
<u>He</u> likes <u>Mary</u> .	<u>He</u> likes <u>her</u> .

The possessive form of the pronoun will, of course, be explained. Again, any detailed explanations of the uses as adjective or substantive should be avoided. Patterns using the pronouns in adjectival and substantive forms should be adequate.

Our house is on the corner.  
 That is our house.  
 Their car is new.  
 That green car is theirs.

The use of it as an indefinite pronoun also should be introduced in the sentence patterns. The several usages need be given no explanation. Especially those expressions concerning the weather and time can be treated as basic patterns, almost as idioms.

How is the weather? It is cold today. It is raining.  
 What time is it? It is time to go. It is 9:15.  
 What is the date? It is Friday, the 11th of August.

Relative Pronouns: The relative pronouns who, which, that, and what are necessary for basic grammar. Probably the most important thing to explain in connection with these is that who is used when the antecedent is a person; which when the antecedent is anything but a person; that when the antecedent is either a person or a thing.

She is one whom we admire.  
 They asked who would be elected president.  
 The cat which we found was a Persian.  
 The cat that we found was a Persian.  
 The answer which he gave was wrong.  
 The person that was elected president was happy.

Interrogative Pronouns: The interrogative pronouns who (whose), which, what, need not be distinguished from the relatives in point of grammar. More patterns using the pronouns in the different cases should be given.

Who is to be president?  
Whom have we elected?  
Whose coat is that?  
What do you want?  
Which cat did you find and which did you have already?

With these, an explanation of the question mark should be given.

Demonstrative Pronouns: The demonstrative aspect of the pronouns this and that (these and those) should be brought out with the use of definite gestures. These will be valuable to the student when he is in a store or restaurant, and can be introduced early in the course before some of the field excursions are made. In their simplest forms these may be used as one-word answers to questions:

What do you want? (point to menu or cafeteria tray)

This. That.

Which is your book? That (point) is my book.

Indefinite Pronouns: Many of the indefinite pronouns can be given merely as vocabulary words. Any, another, both, either, and words of this sort need no explanation for usage. The indefinite one should be delayed until the second semester as far as explanation is concerned.

Case, Number, Gender, Person: The problems concerning number, gender, person, and especially case, are numerous and technical. The agreement of number and gender is complicated by the indefinite pronouns. For this reason, any extensive use of these forms should be avoided until the second semester. The teaching of person and agreement in pronouns exposes the temptation of giving a list of paradigms to be memorized. And case, of course, involves the technicalities of phrase and clause structure which poses tremendous obstacles for the English speaking students. Therefore, intensive use of sentence patterns covering the most commonly used expressions--those

necessary to everyday conversation--should be the method of procedure in presenting these. The students should learn as habit, not by rule, that one says, "Whom do you wish?" and "Who is going?"; "Everyone brought his books," "It is I," and other patterns of this sort.

Verbs. Verbs have five properties: voice, person, number, mood, and tense. For the purposes of this course, just as many as possible of the difficulties encountered in the formation of these properties will be eliminated and still leave the student with an adequate range in verb form.

Voice: There are two voices in English, active and passive. With few exceptions, statements which an English speaking person would cast in the passive voice can as well be expressed in the active voice. It seems unnecessary, then, to confuse the student with the passive, and it should be avoided in the first part of the course. If in the second semester's work it should appear desirable to introduce the passive, and there is ample time to do so, this might be explained.

Mood: Of the three moods--indicative, subjunctive, and imperative--only the indicative and imperative need be introduced to the students; and of these two, of course, the indicative is the more important. That the imperative is the mood which expresses a request or a command should be explained to the students. That it usually is expressed with the subject you understood will be evident from the sentence patterns used to illustrate this mood.

The subjunctive mood is, fortunately, less used and more easily avoided than in some languages such as Spanish. There are a few expressions such as, "If I were you," which are a part of common English usage; as sentence patterns these may be given to the students as necessity requires. They may be treated rather as idiomatic, if the students call for an explanation. Otherwise this mood may be ignored.

**Person and Number:** Person and number should give the student little trouble. With the exception of the verbs be, have, do, and the auxiliaries, there are few forms that indicate person and number in the present indicative.

The main difficulties to be encountered will be the agreement of subject and predicate in sentences using compound subjects, indefinite pronouns used as subjects, and expressions such as together with, not only, and in addition. Much of this may be avoided by simplicity of sentence structure, but such things as the singularity of either-or; neither-nor, and the plurality of a subject compounded with and should be explained and made a habit fixed by frequent repetition.

**Tense:** The University of Michigan Intensive Course includes only the present and preterit tense forms of verbs as inflectional forms that still live.<sup>1</sup> This course would teach only the present and past, and the progressive forms of these. These, plus the "going-to" future and function words indicating time

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<sup>1</sup> Fries, op. cit., p. 34.

should suffice for the students.

The "going-to" future, or the use of the present tense of the verb be plus the participle going plus an infinitive is adequate for expressing futurity. This avoids the complications involved in the use of shall and will.

They are going to leave on Tuesday.  
I am going to write a letter.  
Are we going to the movies tonight?

When this pattern has become fixed, it will be a simple matter to vary this form by using the past tense of the verb to be. This pattern indicates thwarted intention, and usually is followed by a clause preceded by the conjunction but.

We were going on a picnic, but it rained.  
They were going to leave Tuesday, but were unable to.  
I was going to write a letter, but I could not find my pen.

The problems posed by the irregular verbs will, of course, have to be met simply by having the students memorize the infinitive and preterit forms. It would be wise to use irregular verbs sparingly during the first semester. Some common irregular verbs will have to be used, however, and these should be given frequent repetition in reading, conversation, and exercise until they become automatic.

Transitive and Intransitive Verbs: Transitive and intransitive verbs will have to be explained when such verbs as the six trouble-makers lie, lay; raise, rise; sit, set are learned. Unfortunately these are common verbs and cannot easily be avoided. However, as most languages have a more marked use

of case forms, it should not be difficult for the students to grasp the need of the transitive verbs to take an object.

Adjectives. For students of the Romance languages and German, the use of adjectives will prove easier in English than in the native language. In their languages, adjectives are inflected to show case, number, and gender; whereas in English, only this, that, and much are inflected, and these only to indicate number: these, those, and many are the plural forms. This then, is a considerable simplification in usage, and should be made clear from the first.

Position: The second thing which will be different for the student will be the position of adjectives. In many languages, the adjective often follows the noun rather than, as in English, precedes it. So, whereas we would say the white house, the Spanish would say la casa blanca, and the French la maison blanche. This variation must be drilled into the students of a Romance language. They should be given many sentence patterns, including scrambled sentences which have to be arranged properly.

large  
a  
house  
white

The woman bought \_\_\_\_\_.

college  
the  
president  
new

\_\_\_\_\_ received a warm welcome.

As proficiency in the language increases, and the students begin to use more complex sentence patterns, it may be explained that, whereas single word modifiers precede the substantive modified, phrases follow it.

That pretty young girl with the blond hair, who is sitting on your left, was the homecoming queen.

Another peculiarity which the students of Romance languages will discover in English is our common habit of using a noun to modify another noun. Although in English a phrase using of or for may be used, as is done in the Romance language, common usage favors the noun used as an adjective.

The United States flag.

These examples are such a part of our speech, however, one does not think of them as adjective and noun, but almost as one word, which, indeed, in German they are.

fire hose	police station
grocery store	ball bat
Christmas tree	tennis court

**Numerals:** The cardinal and ordinal numerals may give a little difficulty. Some languages use cardinal numerals when we use ordinals, and vice versa. Therefore, it should be explained that in English, cardinals answer the question, "How many?" and ordinals answer the question, "Which one?" or "In what order?"

**Articles:** The articles, of course, will need to be explained early in the course. The definite article the names a particular object of a class. The indefinite articles a and an designate

an object merely as one of many of the same class. The sentence, "I bought the dress I liked," means I found one dress I liked so I purchased it. In the sentence, "I bought a dress I liked," presumably I found several dresses which suited my taste, but perhaps budget restrictions and so forth limited my choice to one of them. As for the use of a and an before vowels and consonants, perhaps simple explanations, sentence patterns, and oral correction of speech should prove sufficient to train the students.

Comparison: The three degrees of comparison--positive, comparative, and superlative--will have to be mastered. Many sentences offering a choice, especially between the comparative and superlative, should be given.

Bill is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the two.  
taller, tallest

Mary has the \_\_\_\_\_ hat in the room.  
larger, largest

The irregular comparisons can only be memorized, and should be given much practice in the sentence patterns.

The difficulties met in using adjectives with link verbs or as objective complements should not be given much explanation. Rather, the common expressions such as, I feel bad about it; He looks unhappy; Tie the rope tight, can be learned with a minimum of grammatical explanation. If the student becomes dependent on rules for expressions of this sort, he will be severely hampered in fluent and idiomatic expression.

While studying adjectives, the instructor should take advantage of the opportunity to present countless vocabulary groups using not only the comparative forms but also contrasts of the words. This has already been explained in the section on vocabulary.<sup>1</sup>

Adverbs. Very little explanation should be given the students concerning rules about what adverbs of time, place, manner, and degree modify, or that there are interrogative, additive, correlative, independent, and transitional adverbs. In all languages, adverbs serve the same purpose. They modify the effect of a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. This is sufficient definition.

The methods of comparison--using more and most, -er and -est, might be explained. The irregular comparisons, such as little, well, much, and far will have to be memorized.

Other than these fundamental properties, the use of the adverb will largely come under the learning of vocabulary, and the use of the sentence patterns illustrating their meanings.

Prepositions. Prepositions present many difficulties to students of English, and these troublesome words will be hard for foreign students. One problem both English speaking and foreign students face is that of case. Because English is not a highly inflected language, the students are not accustomed

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<sup>1</sup> Supra, p. 47.

to watching for objective case constructions. They are, therefore, careless about the forms of pronouns used as objects of prepositions. Case must, then, be explained to the foreign students. Whereas English speaking students rely almost entirely on "What sounds right," the others will not have even this advantage. Sentence patterns will be only of partial help in this respect. For written work, when one has opportunity to decide upon the correct form, some knowledge of rules will be of decided advantage to the students.

A few constructions which bothor English speaking students need not puzzle the foreign ones. These are the rather colloquial statements the students acquire from hearing others, and the erroneous expressions should not be explained to foreigners at all, but rather sentence patterns emphasizing correct usage should be given until these are a matter of habit. In this way error should be avoided. Typical expressions are as follows:

This is different from yours. (Not: This is different than yours.)

He never makes plans without changing them. (Not: He never makes plans without he changes them.)

These are small points. Usage is governed largely by idiom, so no explanation is required. The prepositions should be given as phrases, and not as a formal study in connection with the nouns. About the only satisfactory way to teach them is through repeated patterns.

Conjunctions. The treatment of conjunctions should be

similar to that of the prepositions. For the most part, they should be introduced merely as vocabulary in sentence patterns. The danger here will be the temptation to make too difficult the problem of subordinate and independent clauses. In order to keep clear of these situations, the instructor should keep the sentences as simple as necessary to avoid confusing explanations. It is more important that the students form habits of correct speech which are easy for them than that they try to master more difficult but nonessential sentence patterns.

Interjections. The only explanation which need accompany interjections is the use of the exclamation mark. This is undoubtedly a part of speech the student will soon acquire as he converses with English speaking students.

Punctuation. Punctuation is best taught, not as a unit in itself, but in conjunction with sentence elements which require special marks. Needless to say, this should be kept as elementary as possible. Question marks, periods, quotation marks, and exclamation marks, of course, are necessary. Once the student has mastered his simple means of address and is advanced to the regular freshman course, his means of expression will be broadened. This will be soon enough for him to learn the uses of colons and semicolons in sentence constructions. Naturally where study of time, for instance, is made, or where formal salutations in letters are introduced, the necessary uses of colons will be a part of the explanation, as illustrated in the sentence patterns.

The comma will, probably, give the greatest difficulty. Common and set uses, such as between city and state, or in dates, will be easily mastered. The more complex rules, subject to exceptions of one sort and another, will be less readily understood. Here, rather than having the student learn to recognize apositional phrases, adjectival and adverbial phrases, and the host of other complexities met in this problem, the instructor should depend upon the sentence patterns for the major part of the explanation. It would be better that the students use too few commas than too many.

Sentence. Fries would maintain that little or no explanation of the grammatical construction of a sentence should be attempted. If enough sentence patterns become habit, a student, by substituting the words necessary to express his own thoughts, may converse correctly with no idea of syntax. This, however, would tend to restrict the student quite severely to the set forms, and limit his ability to proceed by himself. It would give him more confidence if he were to understand a few of the "why's" involved in his sentence patterns.

At the Colorado School of Mines, the foreign students are taught quite early in the course to recognize phrases and dependent and independent clauses. This phase of the course was included because of the absolute necessity for the student's understanding it for work in the freshman English

course. Instructors in schools which do not have formal rhetoric as an element of the freshman course perhaps would not feel the necessity of emphasizing this aspect of grammar. However, the ultimate aim of this course and the freshman course which follows is to teach correct English usage, and the best way to teach the difficult clausal constructions is by teaching the function each clause performs in a sentence. Again, if the sentence patterns are kept relatively simple, syntactical explanation will also be simple. If a student is able to recognize the simple subject and the simple predicate of the sentence patterns he has learned, and then the modifiers of these, the transition from one word subjects and predicates to clauses that have the same function should not be too difficult. This, of course, should not be required of the student too early in the course, but should be withheld until he has sentence habits so firmly fixed that further explanation will not confuse him.

This completes the units we have called the Basics. For the most part, the work of the first semester will be comprised of material emphasizing these fundamentals. The other elements of the course--work in speaking, reading, and listening, and the cultural orientation materials--will, of course, be a part of the first semester also. The student must read his lessons, recite in class, and understand what the instructor and the other members of the class are saying. In addition, the

material for the lessons will be drawn from the cultural orientation unit. However, lessons in the second group of units will stress the four fundamental areas of communication as an end, not just as a means. With the course arranged in this fashion, it will be easier to divide the students according to ability so that those who have a certain degree of proficiency when they come may be able to enroll immediately in the second semester work. It would seem logical to suppose that the majority of the students who have passing knowledge of English will have it in the more technical aspects of the language and not in the ability to use the language orally and understand readily the spoken word, or stream of speech.

#### CULTURAL ORIENTATION

As was said in the introduction, this course would go beyond the mere teaching of English. One must recognize the fact that these students have need, in making proper adjustments to this new environment, for a knowledge of more than the language. In a school where no special provision is made for teaching them what they need to know concerning the mores or conventions demanded by our society, they have little source of reference other than students of their own background who have been in this country long enough to gain some degree of familiarity with these problems. This is detrimental to the

student in several ways. At a time when his concentration must be bent toward his studies, he is having the added difficulty of adjustment. His source of information may well be unreliable, as the students whom he goes to for help have probably received their information second hand, at best. And too, one of our important objectives is to break down the language cliques by keeping these students from relying too much on each other for companionship and help. Naturally they use their own languages, and this destroys in large part the confidence and knowledge they have received from using the foreign language in class. This unit is not introduced into this course, however, solely because it is not given elsewhere in the school. There is a logical place for it by virtue of the fact the material used in compiling the lessons must be drawn from some source, and it can just as easily be from the cultural life surrounding the student as it can be from any other.

At the Colorado School of Mines the source of material is the field of engineering. In any specialized school, where all training is in one field of study, this is feasible. Most schools, however, will find students in a class of this sort preparing for as many different curricula as the school offers. The only interest these students will have in common is that of knowing about the new environment around them. In spite of the fact, however, that the specialized type of school at Golden makes possible an approach of this sort, it does not

seem to be the best general solution to the problem. Even schools which can do something of this sort would be wise to use some of the elements of the cultural orientation program. The students will get what they need in the way of specialized information from the courses they will take later in their respective fields. If only from the standpoint of the vocabulary learned, the use of a single field as a source of material is much too narrow.

One of the primary objectives of this unit, then, is to create a common understanding of the cultural pattern of the United States. This can increase in difficulty as the course progresses. Specifically, the unit divides itself logically, first into factors concerning the college, local community, and social customs, and later into the political, religious, economic, aesthetic, social, and intellectual patterns.

The material for the earliest lessons of the first semester's work will be drawn from the local environment. This may consist of such things as simple explanations of our monetary system, state and federal taxes; sports and recreation; proper wearing apparel for all occasions; local points of historic interest; riding the public transportation system; ordering from a menu, paying for the meal, and leaving a tip; acceptable procedures in introducing people, and asking a girl for a date. Also, at the beginning of each week a list of the week's activities--lectures, concerts, and other programs

of all sorts--might be given each student. These activities can be used as the basis for conversations or reports to the class. Perhaps this sounds a bit elementary, but Fisher of the Colorado School of Mines, for instance, said he often received students who had not eaten a meal from the time they landed in this country until they arrived at Golden--simply because they could not order from the menu.

One may readily see that this partial list of subjects could serve as material for numerous lessons or class tours. The tours themselves and extra-curricular activities would provide much subject matter for class conversation and speaking exercises. It would be impossible to compile a complete list of all of the things the students will find strange and difficult to understand. Those things that an instructor can anticipate with some assurance should be woven into the course work. But always time should be allowed for questions the students may have concerning these things, for each individual will have problems peculiar to him; and one would be quite incapable, even after some years of experience, of anticipating just what these problems might be.

Always the instructor should bear in mind that this elementary cultural orientation is a reciprocal process. Not only is he interested in teaching about our culture factors, he also wishes to learn about those of other countries. This comparison or contrast of cultures will come about quite automati-

cally in much of the class work. If a discussion is hold, for instance, on the political factors of our country, students will be called upon to explain differences or similarities between these and their own countries. It would be wise, however, to extend this interchange of ideas beyond the language classroom. A real effort to get these students into the life of the college must be made, and this is a logical way of starting. First, on the rather simple level of culture patterns of the first semester, the students even with fairly limited means of expression can participato. Dancing is something common to all students. It would be quite easy to arrange a time when certain students might demonstrate the dances peculiar to their own countries. This sort of thing would not attract an entire student body, of course. Indeed, if it did, much of the effectiveness of the program would be lost. A small, interested group of American students would enjoy an exhibition, and probably would like to learn some of the basic steps of a dance, wore the foreign students to offer instruction.

This is only one way in which the foreign students could be worked into the local life for purposes of exchanging ideas and national cultures. The students are not called upon as frequently as they might be for talks with college, church, and other civic groups. Occasionally an organization asks a student to give a talk about his own country; but, on the whole,

the college as well as the town is unaware of the many different countries represented in our colleges. In particular, the primary and secondary schools do not make use of the opportunities they have for presenting their students with first hand information on countries being studied in native dances, handicrafts and foods, as well as history, geography, literature, and art. The instructor could take the initiative in furnishing the schools with the names of students who would be willing to make simple lectures to school groups. It seems that the great majority of the students bring with them numerous articles of clothing and craft work which would be of interest to primary and secondary school children. Youngsters would not be likely to ply the speakers with questions on intricate social and political problems and would not tax a person with only a beginning knowledge of English beyond his abilities. Again, it is easy to see the many advantages in work of this sort, both to the student speaker and to his audience. Whereas we are interested in the main in the student's furthering his knowledge of English and our North American customs, a program like this should have far-reaching effects in breaking down the barriers of disinterest and ignorance which arise in this country because of the seeming remoteness of other countries.

A program patterned after the Big Sister-Little Sister plan used by many of the smaller schools might well prove

valuable in orienting the student to the college environment. This is generally sponsored by the Y. W. C. A. It is a system wherein each entering girl is given an older student who is supposed to acquaint her with the school. It meets with varying degrees of success, depending upon the interest behind the program and the students involved. If the Y. W. C. A. and the Y. M. C. A. would agree to take a special interest in the foreign students, and assign them friends who would take particular responsibility for them, a plan of this sort might be most beneficial. In the case of the Latin-American students especially, the Y's might enlist the aid and interest of the Modern Language Department and get students studying Spanish to help with the program. This would give the student from abroad someone personally interested in him to show him about, introduce him, and help him with his adjustments.

This is a rather difficult program to inaugurate and keep alive, because if spontaneity and interest wane, the effectiveness is lost. If the participating organizations and individuals do not feel like carrying the responsibility, it would be better to disregard this plan.

The University of Wisconsin employs a program of this sort, but uses foreign students already acquainted with the campus. This system would be better than none at all; but if it be feasible, the effectiveness of the program would be vastly greater were native students used, because of necessity

the students would converse in English.

The material used in the second semester's work for Cultural Orientation would be less simple than that of the first semester. By this time it may be assumed the students are adequately acquainted with the campus and town, and the customs surrounding the local community. Also, the students should have enough of a mastery of English to permit the reading and discussion of the elements of culture that are more than surface. To this point there should be no question as to the justifiability of the unit. At Kansas State College in a survey conducted among the foreign students, the primary thing they asked for was a course of some sort that would acquaint them with these matters. There should be no question beyond this point, but should a complaint arise, there are at least two grounds for justifying the program. First, the students are being trained, in part, at the expense of state or private funds. Their fees represent only a small part of the total cost of their education. It would therefore seem just that an institution might require of them participation in some course which presented fairly a picture of the culture of the United States. Secondly, there is an educational value in detecting culture lags in the United States and abroad. We should be aware when one of the elements of the culture pattern is out of step in a country, and no attempt should be made to conceal or minimize lags in our own country, such as our negro problem.

The culture pattern of any country may be broken down into six elements: political, social, economic, intellectual, aesthetic, and religious. Some time should be spent in comparing these elements of the culture of the United States, past and present, with those of the countries represented in the class. Our object is to attain a common understanding of and a respect for these various patterns.

An outline has been made in which what might be considered to be the factors which make up each of the six components of culture here in the United States have been included. It includes the elements which comprise each of the aspects, important figures and documents of these, and problems which democracy or the United States faces in these areas. Where they are applicable, the dominant characteristics and the history and evolution of these aspects have been included. It is only a suggested list. In some respects it includes more figures, for instance, than probably can be covered in the time allowed. It is indicative of what we feel should be considered for this unit. There will be differences of opinion in the details, naturally, but not in fundamental principles.<sup>1</sup>

From this outline, or a similar one made up by the individual schools, materials should be drawn for the work of the second semester. Having covered the basics in the first semester, the work of the second semester will stress reading,

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix B.

writing, speaking, and listening as ends, and not just as secondary to the primary purpose of acquiring basic vocabulary, grammar, sentence patterns, or phonetics.

### Culture Pattern of the United States

#### I. Political

- A. Chief elements that comprise political system
  - 1. Local government
  - 2. State government
  - 3. National government
- B. Branches of government
  - 1. Executive
  - 2. Legislative
  - 3. Judicial
- C. History of evolution of government
  - 1. Political parties
  - 2. Freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly
- D. Important documents
  - 1. Declaration of Independence
  - 2. Federalist Papers
  - 3. Constitution
  - 4. Washington's Farewell Address
  - 5. Gettysburg Address
  - 6. Lincoln's Inaugural Address
- E. Important figures
  - 1. Washington
  - 2. Franklin
  - 3. Lincoln
  - 4. Wilson
  - 5. Roosevelt
- F. Problems facing democracy
  - 1. Disinterest of public, especially at local level
  - 2. Conditions which discourage competent men from aspiring to public office
  - 3. Corruption in government
  - 4. Political inefficiencies
  - 5. Propaganda
  - 6. Slow moving

- G. Dominant traits or characteristics
  - 1. Practicality
  - 2. Can be suspended in times of emergency
- H. International aspects
  - 1. Hague Tribunal
  - 2. United Nations

## II. Social

- A. Chief elements
  - 1. The family
  - 2. Schools
  - 3. Position of church in society
  - 4. Crime and delinquency
  - 5. Penal system
  - 6. Position of women
  - 7. Recreation
  - 8. Charitable organizations
    - a. Red Cross
    - b. Salvation Army
    - c. Community Chest
  - 9. Non-profit organizations
    - a. Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A.
    - b. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts
    - c. Dinner clubs
    - d. Fraternal and benevolent orders
    - e. Parent-Teacher's Association
- B. Documents
  - 1. Amendment giving women right to vote
  - 2. Property rights of women
  - 3. Divorce laws
- C. Important figures
  - 1. Susan B. Anthony
  - 2. Horace Mann
  - 3. Jane Addams
- D. Problems
  - 1. Minority groups
    - a. Negro
    - b. Jew
    - c. Catholic
    - d. Foreign elements
  - 2. Rise of crime and delinquency
    - a. Decline of the family
    - b. Lessening of the influence of the church

## III. Economic

## A. Chief elements

1. Labor
  - a. Unions
  - b. Wages
  - c. Compensation
  - d. History
2. Management
  - a. Wall Street
  - b. Small private enterprise and the profit motive
  - c. Mercantile association

## B. Documents

1. Sherman Anti-Trust Act
2. Union laws
3. Social Security
4. Old-age pension

## C. Taxes

1. Income tax
2. Corporation tax
3. Inheritance tax

## D. Important figures

1. J. P. Morgan
2. Vanderbilt
3. Carnegie
4. Baruch
5. Ford
6. Mitchell
7. Gompers
8. Green
9. Lewis
10. Murray
11. Veblen
12. Nearing
13. Upton Sinclair
14. Jack London
15. John Steinbeck

## E. Problems

1. Meeting of labor and management
2. Fair employment practices
3. Minimum wage
4. Right of collective bargaining
5. Picketing

## IV. Intellectual

- A. Chief elements
  - 1. Philosophy
  - 2. Logic
  - 3. Metaphysics
- B. Dominant traits
  - 1. Abstract thought one of weakest points in our culture pattern
  - 2. Pragmatism
- C. Important figures
 

1. Emerson	4. Hutchins	7. Adler
2. James	5. Conant	8. Bass
3. Dewey	6. McKeon	
- D. Documents or letters<sup>4</sup>
  - 1. Emerson--"Nature," "Self-Reliance"
  - 2. James--"A Moral Substitute for War"
- E. Strong points
  - 1. Applied sciences
  - 2. Research foundations
  - 3. Learned societies
  - 4. Experiment stations
  - 5. U.N.E.S.C.O.
- F. Outlines
  - 1. Durant
  - 2. Russell
- G. Asylum for ex-patriated scholars
  - 1. Fermi
  - 2. Einstein
  - 3. Borghesi

## V. Aesthetic

- A. Chief elements
  - 1. Music
    - a. Negro spirituals
    - b. Ballads
    - c. Work gang songs
    - d. Jazz and its offshoots
    - e. Cowboy songs
  - 2. Architecture
    - a. Skyscrapers
    - b. New building materials

3. Literature
    - a. Prose
    - b. Poetry
    - c. Drama
  4. Dance
    - a. Modern
    - b. Classic
- B. Dominant Characteristics
1. Becoming more and more original and individual--  
breaking away from classic forms, tradition
  2. In part dominated by the practical
- C. Important figures
1. Music
    - a. Nathaniel Dett
    - b. Rosamond Johnson
    - c. John and Alan Lomax
    - d. Carl Sandburg
    - e. George Gershwin
    - f. Edward MacDowell
    - g. John Alden Carpenter
    - h. Aaron Copeland
  2. Architecture
    - a. Louis Sullivan
    - b. Frank Lloyd Wright
  3. Art
    - a. George Bellows
    - b. Grant Wood
    - c. John Singer Sargent
    - d. Gilbert Stuart
    - e. Carl Milles
    - f. Malvina Hoffman
    - g. Gutzon Borglum
  4. Literature
    - a. Emerson
    - b. Whitman
    - c. Sidney Lanier
    - d. Emily Dickinson
    - e. Poe
    - f. Eugene O'Neill
    - g. Sherwood Anderson
    - h. Hemingway
    - i. Faulkner
    - j. Sinclair Lewis
  5. Dance
    - a. Rosella Hightower
    - b. Martha Graham
    - c. Isadora Duncan
    - d. Ruth St. Denis
    - e. Ted Shawn
    - f. Ruth Page

- D. Strong points
  - 1. Aesthetics of industry
    - a. Domestic architecture
    - b. Automobiles, ships, planes
  - 2. Growing originality

## VI. Religious

- A. Problems
  - 1. Prejudices
  - 2. General lack of respect for religion and religious training
- B. Important figures
  - 1. Newell Dwight Hilles
  - 2. H. Parks Cadman
  - 3. Harry Emerson Fosdick
  - 4. Henry VanDyke
  - 5. Vincent Sheehan

## SECOND SEMESTER--THE FOUR AREAS OF COMMUNICATION

### Reading

In the four units--reading, writing, speaking, listening--it is important to remember that the instructor's imagination and ingenuity will be largely responsible for the success or failure of this part of the course. He must recognize the value of all devices which will make effective aural or visual impressions on the students, and put these devices to efficient use. What these devices will be will depend in part on the budget allowance for the course, on materials and machines already available to the instructor, and on what he finds, as he learns to know his students, to be of help to individual pupils or individual classes. Whatever the devices

are--flash cards, posters, bulletin boards, charts, songs, menus, picture cards, actions, skits, mail-order catalogues, anything at all--if they are produced and used with spontaneity and interest at the appropriate time, they will help to make more and lasting impressions.

Vocabulary is, of course, the primary factor in reading. The methods of teaching vocabulary have already been discussed rather extensively,<sup>1</sup> and suggestions made in the unit on Basic Vocabulary are extremely pertinent here. However, by the second semester the student should have acquired enough of a mastery of the basic vocabulary to be able to do out-of-class reading. The problem in the second semester's work will be to guide his reading into different types and styles of literature, and to increase his speed in word-recognition and general understanding in reading.

At the University of Indiana the reading clinic for foreign students is given under the supervision of the speech department. There the student is given tutorial aid in acquiring the vocabulary of his particular field. His reading, then, is guided largely into material in the area of his specialization.

The element in this plan which provides aid for the student's acquisition of the vocabulary necessary for understanding the reading matter and lectures in his field is excellent.

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<sup>1</sup> Supra, pp. 43-53.

It has already been suggested that technical vocabularies compiled by members of the various fields of study would be most beneficial.<sup>1</sup>

Institutions wishing to organize their programs of English for foreign students on the discrete-block method may find it desirable and advantageous to place the responsibility for teaching the unit on reading with the speech department. For those who wish to use the cumulative method, this, of course, would not prove satisfactory. As much of the class instruction will be conducted on a laboratory basis of individual help, the students should derive the same benefits from a class conducted on the cumulative basis as one conducted in a discrete-block plan.

At Michigan State College the instructors have acquired all of the books available in Basic English, and have put them in an assigned reading room in the library, from which books may be checked out on three-day reservations. This would be extremely valuable for schools whose budgets could finance such an expenditure for books and whose libraries had adequate facilities to allow a seminar room for the course. If neither budget nor library space permit such an arrangement, such books as could be purchased might be kept in the classroom, or put on the regular closed-reserved shelves of the

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<sup>1</sup> Supra, p. 52.

library. In this way outside reading could easily be required.

Michigan State College, which has organized its course on the discrete-block method, also used in its reading unit a tachistoscope. This is a slide projector with a camera-like shutter that has speeds from .5 of a second to .01 of a second. It is used to speed up recognition of words and idioms and to widen the student's eye span. It flashes on groups of words and phrases such as "is going", "will see", "all alone", "right away", "up-to-date", "has been seen." The tachistoscope forces rapid concentration and breaks the habit of word-by-word reading.

In addition, Michigan State College used the Harvard Reading Films and the exercises and tests that go with them. In administering these tests and exercises, the instructors have learned that the students did better work when they were forced to read the exercises and tests against time than when they were allowed to have all of the time necessary.

The Colorado School of Mines does not require outside reading of its students. All of the reading assignments are incorporated in the daily lesson sheets. These reading exercises demonstrating many different styles, include test definitions, popular matter such as is found in the trade journals, semi-popular matter as illustrated by Time, textbook matter, and--the most difficult--the style used in handbooks.

Reading materials used at Denver University include plays such as Our Town, Abe Lincoln in Illinois, Three Men on a Horse, and State of the Union; and movie scripts such as Mr. Smith Goes to Washington, Stagecoach, and All That Money Can Buy are utilized from time to time. This dramatic literature, written at various levels of vocabulary, and employing daily vernacular, informal vocabulary, and idiom, represents various levels of our social structure and pictures the ideas and mores of the time. For this reason, the using of literature of this sort fits nicely into the cultural orientation program, as well as broadens the student's vocabularies.

The University of Florida uses the Atlantic Monthly for regular class work. It also uses a list of words often confused by Latin American students. This word list would be an extremely useful source for schools which wish to compose many or most of their reading assignments.<sup>1</sup>

No particular objection would be made to the use of the Atlantic Monthly if students were of a more advanced nature; but considering the fact they are foreign students, with but little knowledge of English, the Atlantic is probably too difficult for the majority, and certainly other magazines of less advanced character could be substituted.

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<sup>1</sup> Available in Margaret N. de Besosa's book, English Composition for Spanish-Speaking Students. This book also has a list of English idioms.

The methods and materials used by the various language institutes represent about as wide a range of approach as is possible. No one system need be followed; but, as each has its merits, a program which is a composite of all of the more practical elements could be used. It might be suggested that a magazine such as Time, Life, or the United States News would be more satisfactory than the Atlantic Monthly from the standpoint of ease of comprehension. Each includes all areas of the culture of the United States as well as all foreign news of importance. Each student could be required to inform himself on the news from his own country and report on it to the class. He could also make reports on news pertaining to his field of specialization and thus integrate his work in English with that of his other classes.

### Writing

Practice in writing will, of necessity, be carried throughout the course, especially in conjunction with Basic Grammar, and Basic Sentence Patterns. In the second semester's work, much of the student's writing will be correlated with reading and listening.

In view of the fact the students will be having increasing numbers of lecture courses as they progress through school, they should be given practice in note-taking and

dictation. At the Colorado School of Mines dictation passages are read through by the class before being given for dictation. This is good practice for early work, but as the students progress in their ability to use the language, dictation should consist of short original passages; note-taking should be extended, as it is at the University of Florida, to include guest lecturers for the students. These lecturers could give brief and simple talks on various aspects of our culture, and should speak on topics from their fields of specialization. A plan of this sort would relieve the instructor of part of the responsibility of familiarizing himself thoroughly with all of the phases of the culture pattern, would provide an excellent source for the cultural orientation of the students, would accustom them to a variety of voices, and would give them practice in taking adequate notes from a lecture. The University of Florida follows the plan of giving a short and relatively simple test to the students after each one of these lectures to test the student's ability to understand spoken English, his ability to take notes, his retention, and his ability to write an understandable test.

The students must also be able to take adequate notes from reading material. To give practice in this phase of language, the students might alternately give oral reports from outside reading and submit written precis of articles, essays, stories, or of whatever the reading assignment might consist.

The Federal Security Agency suggests that the student be asked to rewrite newspaper headlines into complete sentences. There are several meritorious elements in a plan of this sort. It provides practice in grammar, vocabulary, and the use of idiomatic English; furthermore, it might well stimulate the student to read the articles under the headlines.

Of course, the students should be required to write short themes frequently. At the beginning, the standard of grading these themes would, of necessity, vary considerably from that used in grading papers from English-speaking students. Clarity and organization should be taken into account, as well as an adequate grasp of the basic vocabulary, grammar, and syntax as taught in the first semester's work. Considerable time should be spent in helping each individual student to learn to recognize his own mistakes. An extremely valuable device for this part of the course, as well as for many other parts, is an opaque projector. With one of these devices, themes could be thrown on the board for class criticism and correction.

### Speaking

Practice and drill in speaking will begin with the first day of class when the instructor asks the student what his name is, what his telephone number is, what courses he is

enrolled in, how long he has been in the country, and other simple questions. Thereafter, just what program should be followed is a matter of some controversy, as there are several methods of approach. In the reproduction of individual phonemes, should appeal be made primarily to the eye, the ear, or to kinesthetic imitation? Should early stress be primarily on individual word pronunciation or what Fries calls the "covering pattern" of rhythm and pitch?

In the problem of teaching individual phonemes, it has already been suggested<sup>1</sup> that visual, aural, and kinesthetic imitation will all be effective, each student finding one appeal easier to understand and remember than the others. The remaining problem, then is whether students should be taught to pronounce single words correctly or establish sentence rhythms first.

Fries says, " [The] ease of pronunciation or difficulty of pronunciation and ease or difficulty of discrimination in hearing are matters primarily of the 'patterning' of sounds per se."<sup>2</sup> In other words, he feels that in teaching a person to speak a foreign language, the first step lies in establishing the patterns of intonation and rhythm, and the second in stressing individual word pronunciation. Following this

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<sup>1</sup> Supra, pp. 27, 35, 36.

<sup>2</sup> Fries, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

theory, one must suppose that, though individual words are mispronounced, understanding will be possible because of stressed syllables, and the rise and fall of the voice.

This theory certainly is a tenable one. Most people have heard a baby parrot its parents, uttering unintelligible sounds but following the rhythm and inflection of the phrase or sentence. The only question is--the pardonable pride of the parents in their off-spring's first words notwithstanding--would they be able to identify the sentence half an hour later?

Admittedly then, study of pitch and rhythm are important in the learning of a foreign language. But, that this study should precede work in word pronunciation is questionable. It would seem that even though a student's rhythm and pitch were incorrect, he still would be understood if he could pronounce the words with even only fair accuracy. If he spent no time in learning to pronounce the words, and could handle the matters of pitch and rhythm with only fair accuracy, he would find it hard to make himself understood. Therefore, it is suggested that the first semester's work in speaking be built around the study of phonetics.

In the second semester, after the student has been drilled in phonetics and in pronunciation, the practice each day in speaking should stress not only single-word pronunciation but also the "covering patterns" or patterns of intonation and

rhythm. For those students who seem to respond more quickly to aural rather than visual appeal, mimicry will be the better tool for teaching. Sentence patterns of rhythm and intonation for simple statements, questions, and exclamations will probably be all the student needs. Other students, those who do not seem to hear voice inflections accurately, will require some visual appeal to establish the "covering patterns." There are several ways of establishing the visual appeal. The following mechanical methods of indicating stress may be useful:

The LAWyer is a STudent  
 The lawyer is a student  
 The lawyer is a student  
 The lawyer is a student.<sup>1</sup>

The last method of indicating stress is the one also used by Fries. It is certainly the most accurate, for it allows the indication of four voice levels, as well as for the glide in some words such as come, in the following sentence:

When will he come?

When drilling the entire class, it is suggested by the Federal Security Agency Bulletin, that the instructor will find it beneficial to tap with a pencil, accenting the

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<sup>1</sup> Orientation and English Instruction for Students from Other Lands, Federal Security Agency, p. 15.

stressed syllables with a harder tap.<sup>1</sup>

Each student certainly should make as many tape recordings as time allows. Probably, if recording facilities are few, students who are having the most difficulty should have the most frequent opportunity.

One of the primary objectives of the Speaking unit is to build confidence in the student that what he is saying is being understood. He must learn to speak out, even though what he is saying sounds peculiar to him. To break down the first reserve, group reading and reciting will be helpful. The next step would be to have individuals repeat sentences, and then instead of repeating after the instructor, the student should respond to the statement or question with an original contribution.

A device used at Michigan State College which would stimulate interest and pride in the student for the improvement in his work is certainly worth attention. He may make records to send home to his parents, showing his improvement in the ability to use the language.

Another device for establishing rhythm and for cultural orientation would be to introduce simple American poems and songs for the class to learn. These devices would add vocabulary training and, especially if the poems are free verse,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

would cement certain sentence patterns in the student's mind; they would also test the student's comprehension, for admittedly poetry is one of the most difficult literary forms to grasp in a foreign language. For this reason, practice of this sort should be withheld until the second semester.

### Listening

"Most educated people find that oral recognition of ordinary conversation is the last stage in mastering a language...."<sup>1</sup> This certainly is true, but the foreign students will be at an advantage when learning this area of communication by virtue of the fact that they constantly will be surrounded by English speaking persons.<sup>2</sup> Each class period will offer--whether special emphasis is placed upon it or not--practice in listening to the stream of speech. The problem then, is to study devices and methods which will be of special help to the students in training them in the mastery of the sound systems and the comprehension of the distinctive sound features.<sup>3</sup>

Several devices and teaching methods introduced previously as instruments in presentation of the other areas of

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<sup>1</sup> Bodmer, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix C.

<sup>3</sup> Fries, op. cit., p. 5.

communication will also be a part of the training in listening. It was suggested for training in writing that guest speakers be invited to talk on various areas of the culture pattern.<sup>1</sup> It would be of benefit, as is suggested by Professor J. S. Wilson of the University of Florida, to have as many different persons as possible, each with his individual accent, for these speakers. The students will gradually become accustomed to the instructor's voice and method of pronunciation, and hearing other voices will place upon them a greater test of their understanding of spoken English. Dictation, also, will afford drill not only in writing but also in listening. And the use of songs and poems would be effective listening as well as speaking devices.

In the earlier stages of training in listening, appeal should be visual as well as aural. In other words, the students should be able to read the words as they hear them spoken. If this is not possible, the instructor should read the passage slowly first, stopping to explain unfamiliar words, phrases, and idioms, and write them on the board. He might read it again slowly, and then read it through in a normal voice and at the usual tempo.<sup>2</sup>

At Denver University, radio scripts are read to the class. As these were written to be heard only, special attention has

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<sup>1</sup> Supra., p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> Federal Security Bulletin, p. 7.

been paid to sound and ear appeal. Many of these scripts are short enough to be used practicably in the regular class period.

As the students gain in ability to understand the spoken language, there might be short practice periods when the instructor purposely asks questions of the class in even faster than normal tempo. This would benefit the students because so much of what is addressed to them in this particular course will be rather unconsciously slowed down.

The three best devices for teaching listening, all of which are available for any school and for the students, are the radio, films, and records.

If the department owns films, or procures them for certain occasions, these will be most helpful. At Golden, a short film on some aspect of engineering is shown every day. The Federal Security Agency suggests that films, preferably of about ten minutes duration, be shown two or three times in continuous succession, and might be discussed during the rewinding. The students are prepared for the showing by a brief description of the film before seeing and hearing it.<sup>1</sup> The regular movies, too, are an excellent educational device, and the students should be encouraged to attend them occasionally. These would be a good source for idiom, daily conversational speech, vocabulary, and perhaps occasionally, entertainment.

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<sup>1</sup> Federal Security Agency Bulletin, p. 17.

Probably most of the students would have access to radios, so they might be asked to listen, for instance, to weather reports, newscasts, question and answer programs, and to make reports on them in class. If important speeches are to be made, ones which the students could find printed in full or summarized in newspapers later, they could listen to these, and each could check his own aural comprehension against his reading comprehension.<sup>1</sup>

Every department of English will have some records available plus a phonograph of some sort. These will be invaluable in a course of this type. Albums of poetry, songs, ballads, and dramatic readings such as Olivier's Hamlet all may be used effectively. If the departmental budget permits, special albums for the course might be procured. There are available albums for the purpose of teaching language, the Linguaphone Language Courses being representative of this type of album. This particular set contains recordings of short monologues or conversations employing basic vocabulary and idiom for different everyday situations such as the family, the home, going to the station, the dress shop, or the tobacco store. There is an accompanying text for each in English and in several other languages. In the first records the pronunciation is slow and deliberate. In later ones, the rate of conversation is speeded up to the regular rate, and in one an argument

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

occurs when the tempo is quite fast. Another desirable feature of this set of records is that persons with quite different accents are used, giving a representation of the major accents of the United States.

Another set of records, of which a school may purchase such representative ones as it wishes, is that of the Office of Education. These are dramatic presentations of the contribution of culture groups to America. Originally, they were part of a radio series, so are well suited for recording. Because of the nature of the material used for the dramatic skits, they would serve as part of the Cultural Orientation unit as well as for practice in listening. Printed texts come with the records so that the students may read the script before, during, and after hearing the recording.

#### FINDINGS

The three methods of handling foreign students used by the universities which employ special means for the training of foreign students in English are as follows:

(1) Foreign students are enrolled in regular college English courses and are tutored in their particular difficulties with the use of English.

(2) All foreign students meet in classes of English designed especially for them.

(3) Foreign students are divided according to language background and are placed in classes which teach an English course especially designed not just for foreign students, but for foreign students with particular language backgrounds.

Of these three options, the second seemed most suited for the small colleges of limited endowments. The factors which influenced this choice were the number of foreign students these small institutions might expect and existing facilities.

#### Mechanics of Administration

It is to be understood that this course is not a substitute for the regular courses required of English speaking students. It is to be considered merely a preparation for freshman work.

Credits. Some schools offer no credit at all for the course, considering it merely a college-entrance requirement in which the student shows a deficiency. Michigan State College considers the course to be of college caliber and allows the student credit for work in a foreign language; this seems a reasonable and logical solution of the problem.

Hours. The class would meet two hours a day, five days a week for the first semester; and one hour a day, five days a week for the second. Five hours of credit would be allowed for the first semester's work and three for the second, making a total maximum of eight hours as elective in foreign

language.

Diagnostics. At Kansas State College all foreign students take the regular diagnostic tests given to all students. If the foreign student passed the tests, he would go directly into the course in Communications I or II. If he should fail these requirements, then he should take the following tests:

- (1) The diagnostic tests of Princeton or Michigan;
- (2) The autobiographic sketch showing his ability to handle the mechanics of writing;
- (3) The interview with an instructor to demonstrate his ability to speak and to understand the spoken word.

#### Fundamentals of the Course

Ends and Means. It is not our purpose to present a fixed set of daily lesson plans. Rather it is the purpose (1) to break down into their component elements the ends to be achieved, and (2) to make available the wealth of material for the achievement of these ends, depending upon the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the individual teacher to use such means indicated as occasion demands.

Ends. Fortunately, the fundamentals of communication--reading, writing, speaking, listening--are the same in any language. Our problem is to make available in English the competence which the student has achieved in his own language--

whatever it may be. The second desired end of the course is to provide for the student such knowledge of his new environment--local and national--as will help him adjust to and understand the customs and mores of the United States. The value of this thesis will depend upon our success in pointing out specifically how these much-to-be-desired ends may best be achieved. The means for achieving these ends are here outlined.

#### Organization of the Course

Direct or Indirect Method. There is some dissention, of course, concerning whether a language should be taught by what is called the direct method or by the indirect--that is, by using the native language and translating it into the foreign language. This problem is solved automatically if the class is made up of students from many countries, and if the instructor is not proficient in all of the languages. This second situation would almost of a certainty be the case.

Discrete-Block or Cumulative Method. There are two methods of organizing a course of this sort--the discrete-block and the cumulative. Schools such as Michigan State College, which exemplify the discrete-block method, teach each of the four areas of communication--reading, writing, speaking, listening--as a separate unit. Schools such as the Colorado

School of Mines, which exemplify the cumulative method, use some part of each class period in drill on each of the areas of communication. Although for convenience of presentation of material in this thesis we have used the discrete-block method, for purposes of instruction we prefer the cumulative. The factors which influenced this choice are as follows:

(1) The four areas of communication are not mutually exclusive, but are so interdependent it is virtually impossible to teach one to the exclusion of the others.

(2) It is not a natural way to learn a language.

(3) Probably no student, if he can not pass the entrance examination, will be particularly proficient in any one area.

(4) As the students will be taking regular college courses for which, it is hoped, a course of this type will equip him in as short a time as possible, they will need training in all of the areas from the start in order to do his other work with maximum ease and efficiency.

#### First Semester's Work--The Basics

The first semester of the course as here outlined is concerned with basic phonetics, basic vocabulary, basic sentence pattern, and basic grammar, taught cumulatively.

Basic Phonetics. The means for the achievement of this end--the vocal sounds in English--may be the International

Phonetic Alphabet, which is used by the Colorado School of Mines; a modification of the International Phonetic Alphabet, as is exemplified by the University of Michigan program; or the diacritical method. We prefer the diacritical method, using the system employed by the American Colloge Dictionary for two reasons:

(1) The students must learn to use a dictionary anyway, and to use the diacritical system would eliminate having to learn it and a phonetic alphabet.

(2) It would be easier to prepare class lesson materials, as the diacritical marks are simpler to cut on a stencil than are phonetic symbols.

One sound should be drilled upon each recitation period until the forty sounds have been completed.

Basic Vocabulary. The vocabulary of Basic English of Ogdon would serve as a basis for the first semester's work. Approximately twenty words a day should be added to the students' vocabularies until the 850 are completed. In teaching these words, which should always be given in context, the object--foreign word method is preferable to the native word--foreign word method. Sketches and actions which demonstrate the words also will aid the instructor in defining the words.

Basic Sentence Pattern. By using Fries' method of the sentence pattern, much of the technical explanation of grammar may be avoided, at least in the first semester. Patterns for

relatively simple interrogative, exclamatory, declarative, and imperative sentences should be established as habit, not by rule.

Basic Grammar. The basic rule in the teaching of grammar is to avoid paradigms. Special drill should be given the irregular be, have, and do; the possessive (of and 's); irregular plurals; the position of adjectives; relative pronouns; the indefinite it; the six trouble-makers, lie, lay, rise, raise, sit, set. The present, past, and "going-to" future should constitute the tenses taught in the first semester. Words such as any, another, both, either, neither, and, should be learned as vocabulary, and not by the grammatical functions they fill.

Local Orientation. The college, the community, and the subjects on which the student asks for special help such as might be indicated by a check list similar to the Denver list<sup>1</sup> will probably constitute the first semester's orientation.

#### Second Semester--The Four Areas of Communication

The second semester's work will stress reading, writing, speaking, and listening as ends, and not just as secondary to the primary purpose of acquiring basic vocabulary, grammar,

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix B.

sentence patterns, or phonetics. This does not mean to imply, however, that the work of the second semester will differ in kind from that of the first semester. The difference will be one of degree.

Reading. The problem in this unit will be to guide the student's reading into different types and styles of literature, from the popular trade journal style to that of the handbook; to increase his speed in word recognition and general understanding in reading; to aid him in acquiring a broader general vocabulary, and the technical vocabulary of his particular field. To achieve these ends, the students would be required to read plays, poetry, newspapers, and articles from magazines concerning their fields of specialization, various aspects of the culture pattern, and news of their own countries. To check comprehension and retention, they would give oral or written reports.

Writing. Writing will, of course, be a necessary part of the work of the entire year. In the second semester it will be extended to include explanations of some of the rules of grammar which cover material learned previously as habit; sentence patterns will be extended to include complex sentences using substantive, adjectival, and adverbial clauses. Practice in dictation and note-taking from reading and lectures should be a part of the second semester. Short themes should be given frequently; and as the students progress in ability,

these themes should be graded more and more by the same standards used in grading themes of English-speaking students.

Speaking. The first semester's work in speaking will be built around the study of phonetics. In the second semester, after the student has been drilled in phonetics and in pronunciation, the practice each day in speaking should stress not only single word pronunciation but also the "covering patterns" or patterns of intonation and rhythm. To achieve this, mimicry and visual appeal should be employed. This visual approach should be that used by Michigan University, which indicates four levels of pitch, and the glide which occurs in certain words.

The lawyer is a student.

When will he come?

Students should make tape recordings as often as possible, to indicate to them their own errors of pronunciation, and to show improvement.

Listening. The problem in this unit is to study devices and methods which will be of special help to the students in training them in the mastery of the sound systems and the comprehension of the distinctive sound features. Guest lecturers who have been invited to talk about various aspects of the culture pattern will be serving a dual purpose. Whenever possible, those persons chosen should be from different

parts of the country so that their accents will vary, thus accustoming the students to hearing other manners of speaking than that of the instructor. The three best devices for teaching listening, all of which are available for any school and for the students, are the radio, films, and records. Radio scripts, because they were written to be heard only, might be read to the class occasionally.

#### Reference Material

As no two classes of foreign students will ever be exactly alike, no syllabus of daily lesson plans is incorporated in this thesis; but it is expected that the teacher will have immediately available sufficient reference material for every phase of the work which he proposes to present to the class. Specifically, the college should supply each teacher of the course the following reference works:

##### General

Crain, Harry M. An Intensive Course in English for Foreign Engineering Students. Volumes I-III.

Emmons, Margaret. Orientation and English Instruction for Students from Other Lands.

Fries, C. C. Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language.

##### Phonology

Allen and Wright. Phonetic Drills for Latin American Students.

French, N. R., C. W. Carter, and Walter Koenig.  
"The Words and Sounds of Telephone Conversations."  
Bell Telephone System Technical Journal.

Heffner, R-M. S. General Phonetics.

Vocabulary

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"The Words and Sounds of Telephone Conversations."

Ogden, C. K. The System of Basic English. Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection for the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language.

Basic Grammar

Chandler, R. E., and Aldon R. Hefler. A Handbook of Comparative Grammar for Students of Foreign Languages.

Pence, R. W. A Grammar of Present-Day English.

Orientation

Emmons, Margaret. Orientation and English Instruction for Students from Other Lands.

Reading

Time magazine.

Writing

de Besosa, Margarat N. English Composition for Spanish-Speaking Students.

Listening

The Linguaphone Language Course

It is estimated that the total cost of this reference material--exclusive of the records--will be approximately thirty dollars. It would be well for the teacher to follow the course as outlined by the Foreign Language Institute of the Colorado School of Mines as a check list. As soon as he determines the areas in which his students show the greatest deficiencies, he should select from the outlines of the course

prepared by Michigan and the Federal agencies those exercises that will remedy the deficiency in the shortest possible time. Any exercises thus selected should be mimeographed with such modification as the teacher deems advisable and given to the students as a part of the daily lesson plan. To defray the expenses of this phase of the work and the mimeographed material furnished, a laboratory fee of \$5.00 per student should be charged.

By utilizing the suggested course as here outlined, it is hoped a school might evolve a program for teaching English to foreign students which would satisfy the three criteria upon which we evaluated the courses of other schools:

(1) A course which offers sufficient training in basic phonology, vocabulary, sentence pattern, grammar, and the basic communication skills--reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

(2) A course which uses teaching methods, devices, and techniques of such a character as to enable the foreign student to enter regular college classes in the shortest possible time and with the least possible language handicap.

(3) A course which gives appropriate emphasis to the development of the general and cultural orientation to the student's new environment.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author is indebted, because of the nature of the research, to the many professors who took the time to answer the numerous inquiries sent out concerning their programs for English for foreign students. Miss Catherine Ludy of Denver University and, especially, Mr. Edward G. Fisher of the Colorado School of Mines were helpful in supplying information and material requested and in allowing the author to observe the classroom activities. Mr. Fisher was most generous of his time during an intensely active period at the Language Institute.

Most particularly, the author is indebted to Professors Charles W. Matthews and H. W. Davis of Kansas State College. Professor Matthews spent countless hours in helping her to evaluate and organize the materials gathered. Professor Davis made possible the years of study which culminated in the writing of the present thesis.

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## APPENDICES

## Appendix A

Although the following suggestion is not actually a part of English for Foreign Students, it is suggested special care be taken in enrolling foreign students for at least the first semester's work. Many of the classes that beginning freshmen ordinarily take are lecture courses or courses requiring a great deal of outside reading. These are unnecessarily difficult for foreign students, and usually can be substituted with other required courses which demand less knowledge of English. What these courses might be would vary with each school and with each curriculum. In order to see just how practicable special enrollment might be, we talked with four Deans at Kansas State College to see what their reactions would be and to see what courses might be suggested. All of them concurred in the plan and suggested the following courses:

## Agriculture

- Elements of Dairying
- Elements of Animal Husbandry
- Elements of Horticulture
- Farm Poultry

## Arts and Sciences

- General Psychology
- Mathematics in Human Affairs
- Drawing
- Geography
- General Botany
- General Zoology
- Music

**Engineering**

Engineering Drawing  
Algebra  
Trigonometry  
Chemistry  
Welding

**Home Economics**

Elementary Design I  
Costume Design I  
Clothing  
Foods I  
Applied Nutrition  
Family Finance

Some of the courses are those beginning freshmen would ordinarily take, and others are courses which usually are not assigned before the second semester but can satisfactorily be taken by beginning students.

## Appendix B

At the University of Denver, in order to ascertain what in particular the students would like to know about the college and the United States by way of orientation, a check list is given them on which they may record those things about which they would like information. The list given them is as follows:

## SUBJECTS SUGGESTED FOR THE CLASS

Information about the University of Denver

<u>University technical terms</u>	<u>Classroom procedure and customs</u>
<u>Required courses and curriculum</u>	_____
<u>Divisions of the University</u>	_____
<u>University regulations</u>	_____

University Clubs and Activities

<u>Recreation department</u>	<u>Journalism</u>
<u>Music activities</u>	<u>Science clubs</u>
<u>Religious programs</u>	<u>International Relations Club</u>
<u>Pep clubs</u>	<u>Dramatics</u>
<u>Photography Club</u>	<u>Language clubs</u>
<u>Sports (list them)</u>	<u>Spanish</u>
_____	<u>French</u>
_____	<u>German</u>
<u>Ballroom dancing</u>	<u>Fraternities and sororities</u>
<u>Square dancing</u>	_____
<u>Art</u>	_____

Services of the University for the Student

<u>Counselling and advising</u>	<u>Library</u>
<u>Health services</u>	_____
<u>Financial assistance</u>	_____

U. S. Customs and Habits

- How to understand an American \_\_\_\_\_  
 Do's and Don'ts for people from abroad \_\_\_\_\_  
 American customs in the home \_\_\_\_\_  
 American mealtime manners \_\_\_\_\_  
 Social activities in the U. S.  
 Traveling in the U. S.  
 U. S. customs in personal relations  
 Boy-Girl relations in the U. S.  
 Necessity for personal cleanliness

Other Information about the United States

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Schools    | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art        | <input type="checkbox"/> Government    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Music      | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal systems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> History       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Religions  | _____                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sports     | _____                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business   | _____                                  |

Other Subjects You Would like to Know About

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

One of the chief factors which retard the foreign students in their learning of English is that they invariably consort with other students of the same nationality. They not only eat together and engage in outside activities together, but also room together. This is perfectly understandable, but it is decidedly detrimental to them. Fisher, of the Colorado School of Mines, said that his students definitely regressed after their work in the Institute because they lived with members of their own language groups. It is not within the power of any college authority to require that the students seek English speaking students for companionship, but it is suggested that instructors of English for foreign students strongly recommend to the students that they make an effort to do this. Each student should be made to realize that every time he lapses into his native language he not only is retarding his learning of English but is actually regressing.

A COURSE OF COLLEGE ENGLISH FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS

by

CAROLINE FRANCES PEINE

B. A., Carleton College, 1947

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AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of English

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE  
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1951

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this thesis is twofold:

(1) To survey and evaluate the steps which the outstanding colleges, universities, language institutes, and federal agencies have taken to evolve an effective English course for foreign students.

(2) To suggest, on the basis of the survey and evaluation, elements of these courses that might effectively be used by the small institutions of limited endowments in formulating such a course of their own.

## METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

To obtain material for study, language institutes, federal-government agencies, and universities having special courses for foreign students were asked how this problem was handled by the various institutions or agencies involved. The universities of Florida, Indiana, Michigan, Oklahoma, North Carolina, Wisconsin, Washington, Illinois, California, and Denver, the Colorado School of Mines, Columbia University, and Michigan State College furnished the information requested from universities and colleges. The Division of International Educational Relations of the Office of Education and the Orientation Center of the Federal Security Agency represent the federal agencies.

In addition, as it is difficult to do such work as this completely by correspondence, a trip was made to the Colorado School of Mines Summer Institute and the Denver University Institute. At these schools, consultations with those in charge of the foreign-student instruction and classroom observations yielded more material.

#### FINDINGS

The three methods of handling foreign students used by the universities which employ special means for the training of foreign students in English are as follows:

(1) Foreign students are enrolled in regular college English courses and are tutored in their particular difficulties with the use of English.

(2) All foreign students meet in classes of English designed especially for them.

(3) Foreign students are divided according to language background and are placed in classes which teach an English course especially designed not just for foreign students, but for foreign students with particular language backgrounds.

Of these three options, the second seemed most suited for the small colleges of limited endowments. The factors which influenced this choice were the number of foreign students these small institutions might expect and existing facilities.

### Mechanics of Administration

It is to be understood that this course is not a substitute for the regular courses required of English speaking students. It is to be considered merely a preparation for freshman work.

Credits. Some schools offer no credit at all for the course, considering it merely a college-entrance requirement in which the student shows a deficiency. Michigan State College considers the course to be of college caliber and allows the student credit for work in a foreign language; this seems a reasonable and logical solution of the problem.

Hours. The class would meet two hours a day, five days a week for the first semester; and one hour a day, five days a week for the second. Five hours of credit would be allowed for the first semester's work and three for the second, making a total maximum of eight hours as elective in foreign language.

Diagnostics. At Kansas State College all foreign students take the regular diagnostic tests given to all students. If the foreign student passed the tests, he would go directly into the course in Communications I or II. If he should fail these requirements, then he should take the following tests:

- (1) The diagnostic tests of Princeton or Michigan;
- (2) The autobiographic sketch showing his ability to handle the mechanics of writing;

(3) The interview with an instructor to demonstrate his ability to speak and to understand the spoken word.

#### Fundamentals of the Course

Ends and Means. It is not our purpose to present a fixed set of daily lesson plans. Rather it is the purpose (1) to break down into their component elements the ends to be achieved, and (2) to make available the wealth of material for the achievement of these ends, depending upon the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the individual teacher to use such means indicated as occasion demands.

Ends. Fortunately, the fundamentals of communication--reading, writing, speaking, listening--are the same in any language. Our problem is to make available in English the competence which the student has achieved in his own language--whatever it may be. The second desired end of the course is to provide for the student such knowledge of his new environment--local and national--as will help him adjust to and understand the customs and mores of the United States. The value of this thesis will depend upon our success in pointing out specifically how these much-to-be-desired ends may best be achieved. The means for achieving these ends are here outlined.

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### Orientation

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### Reading

Time magazine.

### Writing

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### Listening

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It is estimated that the total cost of this reference material--exclusive of the records--will be approximately thirty dollars. It would be well for the teacher to follow the course as outlined by the Foreign Language Institute of the Colorado School of Mines as a check list. As soon as he determines the areas in which his students show the greatest deficiencies, he should select from the outlines of the course prepared by Michigan and the Federal agencies those exercises that will remedy the deficiency in the shortest possible time. Any exercises thus selected should be mimeographed with such modification as the teacher deems advisable and given to the students as a part of the daily lesson plan. To defray the expenses of this phase of the work and the mimeographed material furnished, a laboratory fee of \$5.00 per student should be charged.

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