LINGUISTICS AND THE TEACHING OF READING

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

"Man has been talking for upwards of a million years, but he learned to write language only, at most, six or seven thousand years ago." This statement suggests two ideas. First, the primacy of language; that is, "Language can exist without writing but writing cannot exist without language." Second, it suggests that if language is recorded in graphic form, there is a way to decipher it and to understand the original meaning of the author. This process of deciphering graphic symbols is called reading.

In our present day society, the ability to read is an indispensable asset: labels, street signs, instructions, advertisements, newspapers, magazines, and books are abundant. Nevertheless, nonreaders "are legion in American life." Nonreaders exist despite the fact that during the twentieth century, most American children were afforded opportunity to attend schools where reading was taught. Nonreaders exist even among those who have attended or do attend schools.

1 Jack E. Richardson, Jr., et al, Teachers Plan Book for the Preprimer, p. 5.
3 Carl A. LeFevre, Linguistics and the Teaching of Reading, p. 17.
It has been estimated recently that one-fourth or more of the junior and senior high school students in America are disabled readers. Nonreaders exist even though "...inability to read...is an obstacle to...attaining full maturity as citizens or as private persons." The question presented is "Why do we have nonreaders or disabled readers?" One obvious answer is that there is something lacking in our present methods of reading instruction. In 1942, Leonard Bloomfield, a language scientist, devised a method of teaching reading which was based on linguistic principles. He stated,

...if we choose our material in accordance with the nature of English writing...the children will learn to read in a much shorter time, and they will read more accurately, more smoothly and with better understanding of the content.  

Since that time, linguists and educators alike have given consideration to the value of a linguistic approach to the teaching of reading. Charles Fries and Carl LeFevre, linguists, have developed different linguistic approaches to teaching reading.

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4 Ibid.
5 Ibid, p. 5.
Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to compare the Bloomfield, Fries and LeFevre approaches to beginning reading instruction, to review the professional literature pertaining to these methods, and to evaluate these linguistic methods of teaching reading.

Definition of Terms

1. Linguistics is the scientific study of language. A linguist is one who studies language scientifically.

2. Reading is a process of interpreting written or printed symbols for language.

3. A phoneme is a basic sound unit. A grapheme is a written symbol which represents a phoneme. For example, "p i n" consists of three letters or graphemes, each of which represents a single phoneme or sound unit.

4. A morpheme is the smallest unit of expression that has meaning. For example, "toy" or "girl" conveys meaning; "t" or "g" do not.

5. /mæn/ /mɛn/ /mɪn/ are the phonetic representations of "man," "mane," and "mean" respectively.

Organization of Paper

The Second Chapter will contain a summary of the three linguistic approaches, a review of the professional literature pertaining to these approaches, and a report on pertinent
research. The Third Chapter will be a comparison and an evaluation of the three linguistic approaches to the teaching of reading. Chapter Four will be a summary of the preceding chapters and will contain the conclusions of this writer.
CHAPTER II

THREE LINGUISTIC APPROACHES

Bloomfield

Early in 1942, Bloomfield suggested a linguistic approach to the teaching of reading. The English system of writing is alphabetic and all words in the English language can be represented by a combination of the twenty-six letters of the alphabet. Reading, according to Bloomfield, "is merely the act of responding vocally to the printed word." Bloomfield pointed out that the writing system is not perfectly alphabetic, i.e., each letter or grapheme does not represent one phoneme or sound, the sound unit "c" in "cat" and "c" in "city" are not the same. In order to avoid confusion in the beginning stages of reading, Bloomfield distinguishes between "regular" and "irregular" spellings. Irregular spellings depart from the alphabetic principle.

We must train the child to respond vocally to the sight of letters, and this can be by presenting regular spellings; we must train him also to make exceptional vocal responses to irregular spellings, and this can be done by presenting systematically the various types of irregular spellings.


3 Bloomfield, op. cit., p. 128.

There are four stages in learning to read according to Bloomfield's plan. The first consists of learning the letter names of the alphabet (A = aye; B = bee; etc.) and learning left to right sequence. Sound values are assigned to each letter and the reading material consists of three letter words such as "get," "got," "gun," but not "gem." The vowels are introduced in these beginning lessons. Nonsense syllables like "nin" are used in these lessons to "give pleasure to the child who finds himself able to read...whereas at the same stage a word of irregular spelling...will discourage the child and delay the sureness of his actions." Sentences such as "Nat had a fat cat." are suggested. This stage is comprised of 36 lessons.

The second step involves the teaching of regularly spelled words with double consonants or diagraphs in consistent use. Included in this group would be words such as "well," "thin," "road," and "spoon."

The third stage includes what Bloomfield called "semi-irregular" spellings, such as "bone" and "stone" and "line" and "shine;" two syllable words whose spelling are consistent with other materials; and common irregular words, pronouns and verbs, as "be," "have," and "go."

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5 Ibid., p. 185. 7 Ibid., p. 185.
6 Ibid., p. 184. 8 Ibid., p. 186.
The last stage involves irregularly spelled words such as "rough," "night," and "though." According to Bloomfield, "It is only here that the question of vocabulary need be considered...in the first three stages...all that is needed is the habit of connecting letters with sounds." 

Fries

Charles C. Fries stated:

Learning to read is learning to "do" something. Progress and achievement in learning to read must, therefore, be evaluated "not" in terms of knowledge "about" something, but in terms of the completeness and the efficiency of performance. Only the amount and kind of practice that develops firm habits can lead to the skills of efficient performance. A major part of learning to read, therefore, must consist of habit-forming practice...whenever learning to read begins, it must start with and build upon whatever habits of language responses exist for the learner at that time.

Fries' approach to reading "centers upon developing the habits of high speed recognition responses to English spelling patterns, that constitute the process of reading." Fries recognizes three stages in beginning reading instruction. The first, or "transfer" stage, involves a shift "from auditory signs for language signals, which the child has already learned, to visual or graphic signs for the same signals."

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9 Ibid., p. 186.
11 Ibid., p. 189.
12 Ibid., p. 188.
More specifically, it involves habit responses to "spelling patterns consisting of sequences of the present-day English alphabet." The first step in learning to read is to develop responses to the letters of the alphabet. The letter shapes, according to Fries, should be limited to "unadorned capitals," i.e., "A B C D E F G etc."

Fries further recommends that the letters of the alphabet be taught in terms of contrast, i.e., "The important question is always 'Are the two letters or the sets of two or more letters, alike or different?'"

Practice on these should continue until responses become easy and rapid. In addition to the contrast of "alike" or "different," the contrasts of order or sequence of the letters in groups is taught, i.e., the difference between I T and T I is sequence. According to Fries,

Pupils must not only develop high-speed recognition responses to the contrasts of shape and position that identify patterns of the individual letters, they must have similar high-speed recognition responses to the sequences in which these letter patterns appear.  

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13 Ibid., p. 189.  
14 Ibid., pp. 190-191  
15 Ibid., pp. 192-193.  
16 Ibid., p. 194.
In these practices, however, Fries emphasizes that "there must be no attempt to connect the letters themselves with sounds." It is not necessary for the pupil to learn the letter names at this time, but if this occurs there will be no cause for worry.

The second step in the "transfer" stage of beginning to read involves developing high-speed recognition of major spelling patterns of English.

The major spelling-patterns consist of consonant frames which contain one or more of the five vowel letters. The consonant letters of the frames have a rather simple and regular correspondence with consonant phonemes, and the vowel letters within these frames occur in special arrangements that identify them as representing one of the eleven vowel phonemes or three phonemic diphthongs.18

The practice exercises should include words from the pupil's own vocabulary which he has learned to understand when talking. Fries states that during the early transfer stage, "...seeking an extraneous interest in a story...is more likely to hinder than help the efforts put forth by the pupil himself."

Instead of matching sound unit to letter, "we must develop the automatic habits of responding to the contrastive

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17 Ibid., p. 194. 19 Ibid., p. 199.
18 Ibid., p. 198.
features of spelling patterns as identifying the word patterns they represent." For instance, the spelling pattern "man"
is contrasted to that of "mane" or "mean."

These three words have the same number of phonemes,
\[ /mæn/ /men/ /mɪn/ \]
but the spelling patterns are different, and therefore, call for different responses.

As the spelling patterns are introduced, the teacher pronounces the complete word, and sounds are not given to separate letters. The pupil develops recognition responses connecting the consonant letters with individual phonemes, but with these phonemes as phonetically realized in their various positions. But for the vowel letters, the pupils should develop responses connecting the whole distinctive spelling pattern with one of the eleven vowel phonemes as phonetically realized in its particular position, rather than connect single vowel letters with single vowel phonemes. 22

Fries stresses the importance of having the beginning materials systematic "leading by the easiest sets of contrasts through all the major spelling patterns and some of the minor patterns."

He states that meaning need not be neglected in these beginning materials, as for example, the "spontaneous social-cultural responses of realizing the near absurdity or humor of a situation with 'a cat at bat'" may be discussed.

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20 Ibid., pp. 200-201.
22 Ibid., p. 204.
21 Ibid., pp. 203-204.
23 Ibid., p. 204.
The second stage in beginning reading instruction, Fries calls the "productive" stage. It is here that the "significant identifying features of the graphic shapes themselves sink below the threshold of conscious attention." It is during this stage after responses to graphic shapes have become automatic, that the patterns of intonation and stress which impart meaning receive fuller attention. This stage is complete when the pupil reads meaning or when

the cumulative understanding of this body of meaning enables the reader to supply, to produce, for materials read, "at sight" those portions of the language signals, the appropriate patterns of intonation and stress that are not represented or only partially represented in the graphic materials given for the eye.

The third stage, or the stage of "vivid imaginative realization," occurs when the reader is able to use reading ability to obtain vicarious experience through literature. It is the "vivid imaginative realization of actions, of emotions, of values."

LeFevre

Carl A. LeFevre's approach to the teaching of reading places primary emphasis on sentence structure. "The single word in English is by no means a principle language unit..."
In a sense, each word discovers its meaning in every sentence where it occurs." The child beginning school has an understanding of the English language and a vocabulary of more than five thousand words. According to LeFevre:

It is probable that given a mastery of basic sentence structure, vocabulary would largely take care of itself, because basic sentence patterns of American English can be filled with an almost unlimited number of words. But no number of individual words can of themselves combine into a single structural and meaning-bearing language pattern.

The heart of the LeFevre approach then is to move from larger structural, meaning-bearing patterns to smaller ones as needed. Reading, according to LeFevre, is not a direct interpretation of graphic symbols. It is rather a process of going "first from writing to sound, and then from sound to message." Even rapid reading "involves both steps in virtually simultaneous succession."

The first reading lesson "is that each sentence begins with a capital letter and usually ends with a period." LeFevre identifies four major language features - intonation, sentence patterns, structure words, and word-form changes. "Intonation is the first and most important of the four main language devices that signal and shape the larger patterns of American English..." Intonation may be defined as the "tunes and rhythms of speech." The goal of reading instruction is to teach the child to read his language as he naturally speaks it. In beginning reading instruction, "probably the best method is practice in speaking and oral reading of familiar patterns, with emphasis upon the native intonations."

American English intonations consists of relative pitch, relative stress, and related junctures and terminals; these combine into melodies and rhythms of statements, questions and requests or commands... Primarily, English utterances are understood as sentences because they end with one of the end-signaling patterns, not because of their word order or the particular words within larger patterns.

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33 Ibid.
34 LeFevre, Linguistics, p. 8.
35 Ibid., p. 44.
36 Ibid., p. 43.
37 Ibid., p. 52.
The significance of intonation may be illustrated briefly by the following sentences. Meaning is conveyed by intonation, not by single words.

He is a lighthousekeeper. /\ /

(Man who tends lighthouse).

She is a light housekeeper. /\ /

(Woman who keeps house in a light housekeeping flat).

She is a light housekeeper. /\ /

(Blond, light-complexioned, or thin woman who keeps house). 38

In the above examples, the "/" indicates heavy stress and the "/\ /" indicates the "fade-fall" terminal which characterizes the end of many speech utterances.

The beginning reader as well as the rapid reader, must be aware of the large intonation patterns represented by graphic symbols because, according to LeFevre, "His grasp of overall meaning is integral with his grasp of the whole language structure, because the language structure embodies the meaning designed by the writer." 39

38 Ibid., p. 71.

39 Ibid., p. 73.
The second main language feature is sentence patterns or word order. Children should be taught to read "rhythmically" by word groups and structure patterns. LeFevre suggests beginning with the language patterns the child already knows "...'corrected', only in so far as necessary to bring them in line with the common patterns of sentence functions and word order as they have been described by linguists."

LeFevre identifies four main sentence patterns which may be expanded or varied in order to make "a variety of sentences with a variety of meanings." The first and basic sentence pattern in English is the "N V" for Noun-Verb.

EXAMPLE:  
N  V  
Bob plays.  /  /  

N  V  
Ann runs.  /  /  

The pattern may be expanded by the addition of "N V Ad" for Noun-Verb-Adverb or "N V A" for Noun-Verb-Adjective.

EXAMPLE:  
N  V  Ad  
Bob plays well.  /  /  

N  V  A  
The door slammed shut.  /  /  

Ibid., p. 79.  
Ibid., p. 80.  
Ibid., p. 83.  
Ibid., p. 84.  
Ibid., p. 85.
The second sentence pattern described by LeFevre is "N V N" or Noun-Verb-Noun.

**EXAMPLE:**

Bob plays ball.

The third pattern is "N V NN" or Noun-Verb-Noun-Noun.

**EXAMPLE:**

Bob gives Spot milk.

The fourth pattern involves the use of a linking verb or "L V!"

**EXAMPLE:**

Spot is a dog.

ann is pretty.

Bob is here.

These sentence patterns are not to be memorized and recited by the beginning reader; instead, "he should...learn to use simple formulas for them, because he already employs these abstract patterns 'unconsciously' in his everyday use of language..." Further, the four sentence patterns discussed can be expanded or altered to include questions, requests or commands in an unlimited number of sentences.

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46 Ibid., p. 88. 48 Ibid., pp. 84-85.
The third main language feature identified by LeFevre is structure words or "empty" words (words which have no meaning in themselves) of American English. "Structure words... should never be taught in isolation, but always as they function in the language..." LeFevre identifies five sets of structure words of "MARKERS of structural sentence elements."

1. Noun Markers - a, the, some, any...
2. Verb Markers - am, are, is, was...
3. Phrase Markers - up, down, in, out...
4. Clause Markers - if, because, that, now...
5. Questions Markers - who, why, how, what...

The fourth and final language device is word-form changes. Simply, the word-form changes involve the addition of inflections, prefixes, and suffixes.

The most important part of word analysis, especially in basic reading instruction, is correct identification of word classes and their characteristic word form changes, because mastery of language patterns at the sentence level is made easier by such identification.

Throughout his book, Linguistics and the Teaching of Reading, LeFevre emphasizes his belief that,

A language can only be understood as a structural system capable of generating meaning-bearing patterns; a language cannot be understood as a "vocabulary", a word list, or even as a whole dictionary. Reading is a language-related

\[\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 119.} \quad \text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 146.}\]
\[\text{Ibid.} \quad \text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 146.}\]
process that requires taking in, all at once, patterns of structure and meaning well above the level of the word. 53

Opinions of Other Educators

During the twenty-three years since Bloomfield first proposed a linguistic approach to the teaching of reading, educators have written profusely regarding the possible value of such an approach. Following will be some of the opinions and criticisms voiced by educators regarding linguistics and reading.

Kenneth Goodman, of Wayne State University, stated:

Reading is language, and the teaching of reading must be based on the best available knowledge of language. Linguists can provide this knowledge... and it is primarily the educator who must accomplish this assimilation of linguistic knowledge to the end of producing better teaching of reading. 54

Goodman further realized the importance of structural language devices such as LeFevre suggests, when he stated "Careful consideration must be given to the devices 'within' the language by which meaning is conveyed." 55

Emmett Albert Betts believes that if linguistics is to make a significant contribution to reading instruction

53 Ibid., p. 161.
educators must evaluate and view linguistics with perspective. Betts sums up what he believes linguistics can offer reading instruction in the following seven points:

1. A phonemic basis of word perception and recognition.
2. An understanding of incorrect spellings which reflect correct pronunciations, as 'use to' for 'used to'...
3. An understanding of incorrect pronunciations which reflect interpretation of spellings, as saying 'Wednesday' in three syllables...
4. A phonemic basis for the consistent use of pronunciation symbols in dictionary spellings.
5. A structural, or differential, dimension to 'meaning'.
6. An intonational, especially pitch and juncture, basis for understanding the use of punctuation and the structure of sentences.
7. A grammatical basis for teaching comprehension of higher level structures, especially the sentence.

Ruth G. Strickland, Professor of Education at Indiana University, agrees with LeFevre that an understanding of language patterns will aid the reader. Strickland further stated that an understanding of the basic intonation features

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would "help children turn what they read into the flowing, meaningful patterns of normal speech and...to gain the full component of meaning."\textsuperscript{59} She concluded that linguists should provide "clear statements of sound and spelling patterns to be taught and the sequence for teaching based on regularity of pattern, frequency of occurrence, and general utility in reading."\textsuperscript{60}

Evelyn Mae White stated, "The linguists will bring about new materials and new criteria for choosing suitable words for beginning children to read."\textsuperscript{61} Bernice Cooper expressed the opinion that the most valuable contribution of linguistics is "for teachers to become acquainted with the field..." and not in the area of "specific methodology of teaching reading 'per se'".\textsuperscript{62}

William H. Burton and Joseph Ilika agree with linguists that "Children should not meet in early books incomprehensible pronunciation irregularities. They cannot build up a rational phonemic skill if there is too much of this."\textsuperscript{63}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Ibid.}
\end{flushleft}
Gertrude Hildreth supports LeFevre's policy of teaching larger meaning segments. "Comprehending the meanings of phrases or sentences is the central problem of the reader." The teacher, according to Hildreth, should "increase the child's store of word meanings in sentence contexts."

Pose Lamb of Purdue University stated that LeFevre has made an important contribution to the teaching of reading:

He has helped to focus our attention on the importance of using a child's own language for teaching him to read, and on helping him to see the essential indivisibility of the language arts.

Barbara Bateman and Janis Wetherell offer the following criticisms of the Bloomfield approach to teaching reading:

1. It depends on 'automatic' not 'reasoned' association between letter and sound.
2. The exclusive use of the letter name rather than the letter sound...
3. Too rigid exclusion of irregularly spelled words...
4. Inadequate attention to instructional problems...


65 Ibid., p. 177.


Fries' method received criticism from Bjorn Karlsen:

He (Fries) advocates teaching the capital letters first'...the capitals, if made with the simplest strokes, have the fewest significant contrastive features, and make a much easier first step for the child who wants to learn to read.' There is abundant evidence that exactly the opposite is true.68

LeFevre criticises both Bloomfield and Fries. He states:

If the Bloomfield method is a spelling approach at the level of single letters and phonemes--and it is--the Fries method is a spelling approach at the level of one syllable words...It is the misfortune of both methods to present, among 'the very first lessons in reading,' tongue twisters and jawbreakers far removed from the language of children.69

Research Findings

Since the advent of the linguistic proposals as applied to beginning reading instruction is relatively recent, little laboratory research has been done. Following are reports of four research studies involving linguistic approaches to teaching reading.


The Miquon School, Miquon, Pennsylvania, has used a 70 phonemic-word approach to the teaching of reading. The 71 approach was used with 100 children of varying abilities. The relationships of phonemes to graphemes was taught..."we 72 teach symbol-sound correspondence within words." The materials used in the experiment were prepared by the investiga­ gators - nonsense words were not employed. After three years, the investigators concluded:

Our aim is to teach children to be more independent and accurate in their reading than they are commonly trained to be. We think we observe the accomplish­ ment of this aim in the large majority of our children. We think this success is in a large measure a result of our attempt to base our materials upon the findings of linguists--who are scientists investigating language.73

The Journal of Educational Research reports the findings of an experiment with 810 fourth grade parochial school children in Detroit and Dubuque. The children in the study were matched in regard to mental age, chronological age and socio-economic level.

The control group in Dubuque was on a composite basal reading program. The experimental group was taught by a

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71 Ibid., p. 247.

72 Ibid., p. 242.

73 Ibid., p. 254.
modified linguistic method in addition to the basal reading program."

The findings of the study were:

1. The experimental group recognized words in isolation more readily, used context with greater facility, had fewer orientation problems, possessed greater ability to analyze words visually, and had greater phonetic knowledge than the control group.

2. The experimental boys and girls read faster and more accurately, had larger vocabularies, comprehended better, and were more able to retain factual information than the control boys and girls.

A first grade reading study was begun in September, 1964, by Syracuse University. Three sets of beginning reading materials were used:


The subjects of the study were 469 first grade pupils in twenty-one central New York classrooms. Seven classes used each set of materials. Tests were administered to all students.

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75 Ibid.

children both before and after the 140 day instructional period. An analysis of the tests, revealed that no significant differences between the treatment groups were found.

J. Wesley Schneyer of the University of Pennsylvania reports a study conducted among 674 first grade pupils who were taught by a linguistic approach or a basal reader approach. The linguistic approach was based on Charles C. Fries' principles and employed a series written by Fries and three associates. The basal reader materials were the "New Basic Readers (1962-63 Edition) published by Scott, Foresman and Company." Tests were administered before and after a 140 day instructional period. Schneyer stated,

An unqualified conclusion cannot be drawn that one method was clearly superior to the other... Although there were significant differences between the treatment groups on ten of the fourteen criterion measures, the linguistic group was superior on four and the basal reader group on the other six.

This investigation continues; the same children are being followed into second and third grade.
CHAPTER III
COMPARISON AND EVALUATION OF APPROACHES

The preceding chapter presented major points in the linguistic approaches to the teaching of reading developed by Bloomfield, Fries and LeFevre. There are similarities as well as differences among the three approaches. All three men are agreed that speech is the primary language communicator and writing, or the graphic representation of speech sounds, is secondary. Each assumes that the beginning reader has developed oral language sufficient to begin reading instruction.

Bloomfield defined reading as "the act of responding vocally to the printed word." Fries considered reading to be "developing the habits of high-speed recognition responses to English spelling-patterns." LeFevre saw reading as a process of going "first from writing to sound, and then from sound to message." In short, Bloomfield centered his approach on the relationship between grapheme and phoneme; Fries' approach is based upon regularly occurring English-spelling


2 Charles C. Fries, Linguistics and Reading, p. 11.

patterns; and LeFevre concentrated on the sentence as the primary meaning-bearing English structure.

Both Bloomfield and Fries depend upon the development of "automatic" or "habit" responses to the graphic units. Both begin reading instruction with the teaching of the alphabet and left to right sequence in reading. Bloomfield assigns a sound value to each letter and consistently eliminates any deviant sound values from the materials until the reader becomes mature or sure in his "automatic" responses. With the use of nonsense syllables, Bloomfield assures that the reader is responding to the grapheme-sound symbols. Gradually, he introduces more complicated words until in his fourth stage, the "irregularly" spelled words are included. Bloomfield is not concerned with vocabulary until the last stage of beginning to read.

It is the inclusion of nonsense syllables in beginning reading materials that the writer cannot reconcile. As a student, and student teacher, the writer has found that meaningful ideas were more easily learned and communicated than were those not so meaningful to the learner. It would seem that the same principle would hold true for the beginning reader.

As previously stated, Fries begins reading instruction by developing responses to the letters of the alphabet - in the form of capitals. Unlike Bloomfield, however, Fries does
not assign sound values to them; rather he teaches them in terms of contrast. He desires visual discrimination on the part of the reader (i.e., "E," "F," are different, and "E," "E," are alike.) The reader who has acquired high-speed recognition of the letters is ready to begin recognizing English spelling patterns from his own vocabulary that he has learned from talking. In agreement with Bloomfield, Fries believes that "extraneous interest in a story...is more likely to hinder than help the efforts put forth by the pupil himself."  

Nonsense syllables have no place in Fries' approach.

LeFevre begins reading instruction with the sentence and moves to smaller language units as needed. Individual letters of the alphabet, as Bloomfield stresses, and spelling-patterns as Fries emphasizes, are a less important consideration for LeFevre because standing alone, they have little or no meaning..."sentences are the basic building blocks of meaning, and are far more important than letters or words." 5 LeFevre teaches left to right sequence in reading, as do Bloomfield and Fries, but he stresses reading by word groups and phrases, not line by line.

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4 Fries, op. cit., p. 199.
To LeFevre, meaning is the foremost consideration and is conveyed by intonation, sentence patterns, structure words, and word-form changes. To Bloomfield and Fries, meaning is a secondary consideration to be discussed only after the "automatic" or "habit" responses to letters or spelling patterns are developed. Reading to LeFevre is "a language related process that requires taking in, all at once, patterns of structure and meaning well above the level of the word." Like Fries, who uses words in the child's vocabulary to develop spelling patterns, LeFevre begins with the language patterns the child already knows.

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CHAPTER IV
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The purpose of this paper was to compare the Bloomfield, Fries, and LeFevre approaches to beginning reading instruction, to review the professional literature pertaining to linguistics and reading, and to evaluate these linguistic approaches to the teaching of reading.

Bloomfield suggested the first of these linguistic approaches to the teaching of reading. He identified four stages in learning to read. The first stage comprised of 36 lessons includes learning the letter names of the alphabet and left to right sequence. After assigning sound values to the letters, the reading material consists of three letter words such as "get," "gun." The second stage involves teaching regularly spelled words with double consonants or diagraphs. The third stage develops "semi-irregularly" spelled words such as "bone" and "stone." It is the fourth stage where the "irregularly" spelled words are introduced, i. e., "night" and "through." It is here also that meaning is considered.

Fries' approach is based upon habit responses to spelling patterns in the English language. The first stage or "transfer" stage involves the recognition of the letters of the alphabet as "alike" or "different." Then the major English
spelling patterns are introduced and learned by the beginning reader.

The second or "productive" stage occurs when the reader is able to read at "sight" materials, obtaining and expressing meaning. The "vivid imaginative realization" stage occurs much later when the reader is able to realize vicarious experience through literature.

LeFevre's approach centers on the sentence as the basic meaning-bearing structure of the English language. Intonation or the "rhythm and tune" of speech is the most important language signal. It conveys meaning. LeFevre recommends practice in speaking familiar patterns as in native speech. Sentence patterns convey meaning also. The four main sentence patterns from which an unlimited number of sentences may be constructed are (1) noun-verb; (2) noun-verb-noun; (3) noun-verb-noun-noun; and (4) noun-linking verb-(adjective, adverb, or noun). LeFevre recommends that the child becomes familiar with these basic patterns which can be expanded or altered to include questions, requests or commands.

The third language feature recognized by LeFevre is structure words, such as "the," "am," "up," "if," and "who." These words have no meaning standing alone but "mark" or indicate nouns, verbs, phrases, clauses, or questions, respectively.
The last language device LeFevre identifies is word-form changes, or those classes of words which can take inflections, prefixes, and suffixes.

Much has been written about linguistic approaches to the teaching of reading. In Chapter II, the opinions of several educators were developed. In general, educators believe that linguistics may make a contribution to beginning reading instruction. Goodman realized that certain devices "within" the language convey meaning. Strickland agreed that the better a child understands the patterning of his language, the better his comprehension will be. Cooper suggested that teachers of reading become better acquainted with linguistic principles. And others expressed specific criticisms of Bloomfield and Fries. Two research studies cited in this chapter tended to support a linguistic method of beginning reading instruction and two found no significant difference between the linguistic and other methods. Chapter III pointed out some of the similarities and differences among the three methods.

Conclusions

On the basis of the information presented in this paper, this writer has arrived at the following conclusions:

1. The linguistic approaches of Bloomfield, Fries, and LeFevre are not in or of themselves THE answer to the
reading problem in America. That is not to say that the linguistic proposals have no value. This writer agrees that the sound-symbol relationships which Bloomfield stresses are important; the spelling patterns which Fries has pointed out are noteworthy; and LeFevre's insistence upon the sentence as the meaning-bearing unit deserves much consideration. It is the opinion of the writer, however, that no one proposed method is the panacea for the problem of beginning reading instruction.

2. Linguistics as the science of language study can contribute to the educator's understanding of the reading process and may, in time, lead to a more widely successful method of reading instruction than those now employed.

3. If linguistics is to make an important contribution towards the improvement of beginning reading instruction, educators, and more specifically, those directly involved with the teaching of reading, must become more familiar with linguistic proposals and principles. In turn, the linguists must become better acquainted with educational psychology and the physical, mental and emotional characteristics of those whom they would teach.

4. More research must be conducted to determine the specific areas in beginning reading instruction in which linguistics may be most valuable.
This writer awaits the time when educators and linguists will work together synthesizing their knowledge about children, educational processes and principles, and language structure. This writer believes that if or when that time comes, the result will be a method of beginning reading instruction which is far superior to those which are presently in use.
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