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LINGUISTICS AND READING

by

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LINGUISTICS AND READING

I. INTRODUCTION

Over a quarter of a century ago Leonard Bloomfield designed a linguistic approach to teaching reading. His system was meant to improve upon what he felt to be un­scientific and ineffective methods used in the schools. At that time his system received no hearing in educational circles; he was consistently disappointed. Since that time many others have become enthusiastic about linguistic approaches to the teaching of reading in the elementary schools, and they have investigated Bloomfield's theory, accepted parts of it, revised other parts of it, until today we find many people involved in linguistics as applied to reading. Many controversies have arisen concerning this topic, and some weaknesses have been brought to our attention through these systematic studies. The linguistic approach possibly does not exist and probably never will. Linguists disagree about many basic points, and their materials vary in many significant respects.

Purpose

This paper has as its purpose to reveal the basic principles involved in the linguistic approach to teaching reading and to discuss both its advantages and disadvantages.
Some of the well-known writers such as Carl Lefevre, C. C. Fries, Clarence Barnhart, etc. will be discussed and their theories reviewed. Since linguists have much to say to the classroom teacher, this paper shall also include ideas to be utilized in the teaching situation which are directly related to the linguistic approach.

Definitions

According to Charles Fries, "linguistics means the body of knowledge and understanding concerning the nature and functioning of human language achieved by the scientific structure, the operation, and the history of a wide range of very diverse human languages."¹

A linguist as used in this paper is "one who is a specialist in this body of knowledge and understanding--one who, by profession teaches it and/or by research, contributes to its advancement."² Also, a linguist is one who knows about the structure, forms, and operation of a great many languages, although he may not have developed the special habits necessary to use any of those languages in conversation.

It is important to recall that linguists are primarily concerned with the scientific study of language;

¹Charles C. Fries, "Linguistic Approaches to First Grade Reading Programs," Perspectives in Reading, Newark, Delaware, 1965, p. 46
²Ibid.
therefore, they view the reading process from a somewhat
different point of view than do those whose advice has been
heeded in the past--psychologists, reading clinicians, and
classroom teachers of superior ability.¹ "Linguists are
not professional educators and few of them have struggled
with the typical classroom teacher's problems in teaching
large groups of children to read."²

According to Charles Fries, "Linguistic science
should be understood to be a body of knowledge and under-
standing concerning the nature and functioning of human
language, built up out of information about the structure,
the operation, and the history of a wide range of very di-
verse human language by means of those techniques and pro-
cedures that have proved most successful in establishing
verifiable generalizations concerning relationships among
linguistic phenomena."³

The words, "linguistic approach," will be mentioned
often, and it will be necessary for us to understand that a
"linguistic approach to reading" refers to materials designed
to teach reading, which are: (1) selected and arranged ac-
cording to principles indicated as the linguistic science,
and (2) taught using methods, procedures, and practices

¹Pose Lamb, Linguistics in Proper Perspective, Columbus, Ohio, Merrill Publishing Co., 1967, p. 28.
²Ibid.
³Fries, Perspectives in Reading, p. 46.
indicated by this body of knowledge.

Now that the guideposts for this paper have been indicated, the following chapter will give basic principles that most linguistics scholars have set forth. However, it should remain clear that linguists themselves do not all agree, so that all of these principles will not be accepted by every linguist.
II. PRINCIPLES OF THE LINGUISTIC APPROACH TO READING

"Learning to read is not learning to know something, it is learning to do something," states Charles Fries.¹ The process of learning to do reading is the process of learning to transfer the already achieved ability to get meanings from talk to a new ability to get the same meanings from printed symbols.

Carl Lefevre states his basic assumption, "Reading must be regarded as a language related process; reading and the teaching of reading must therefore be rigorously studied in relation to language."²

Linguists seem to be guided by similar basic principles in the teaching of reading in the elementary schools. All linguists do not subscribe to all of the following principles; however, some linguists will tend to adhere tightly to most of them while some will subscribe to a few of these principles and add others of their own. Nevertheless, this author has noted a prevalence in many reading materials of these similar basic principles.

¹Charles C. Fries, Merrill Linguistic Reader (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1966), p. 3.

The first principle is that learning to read begins with and builds upon the oral language control already achieved by the pupil. Pupils come to their first reading and spelling lessons with a high degree of adeptness.¹ The actual control of his native language by the five-year-old child is much more complete than most persons would assume. A reading program, then, should emphasize what the child understands as it is said to him, not just what he himself says. "His receptive language control is much greater than his productive language control."²

Not only does the linguist want to emphasize the child's aural perception, but he also tries to build the child's oral responses. Hildreth says we must build the child's oral language ahead of and along with reading lessons if a child is to learn to read well.³ Bloomfield stresses the ability to orally name the letters of the alphabet as a pre-reading step. However, Bloomfield does little to aid reading aloud with appropriate stress and pitch, and, according to one author, may actually be doing harm to the natural language the child brings to school with him.⁴

¹Morton Botel, "What Linguistics Says to This Teacher of Reading and Spelling," The Reading Teacher, XVIII (December, 1964), p. 188.
²Fries, Perspectives in Reading, p. 47.
⁴Lamb, Linguistics in Proper Perspective, p. 42.
Fries calls the initial stage of learning to read the transfer stage, and by this he means "the period during which the child is learning to transfer from the auditory signs of language, which he has already learned, to a set of visual signs."¹

Lefevre's method, which he calls a sentence method in contrast to the word methods of Bloomfield and Fries, places even more emphasis on oral reading.² According to Hildreth:

Large time allotments for improvement of oral language usage in the school curriculum are justified, not only because children need this instruction to improve oral expression, but because in learning to speak fluently the standard dialect is part of learning to read. It is doubtful whether a child can become a fluent reader, comprehending fully what he reads, without a good oral language foundation and continued attention to oral language improvement.³

The first basic principle is based on the oral control already achieved by the child before he reaches the teacher. It includes not only the child's command of the native language, but also his understanding of what is said to him. The linguists, then, put major emphasis on oral expression, but within themselves disagree as to how this is accomplished. Nevertheless, they would agree on this rule:

²Lefevre, Linguistics and the Teaching of Reading, p. 28.
³Hildreth, The Reading Teacher, p. 176.
never begin reading instruction without first taking into account the child's status in oral expression.\(^1\)

The vocabulary and the grammatical structures presented to the child in the reading materials must be within the oral experience of the child and must keep pace with the widening of that experience.

The child's oral experience is very important to the process of learning to read. A large proportion of reading disability comes from homes where language is used only for everyday, or not particularly intellectual, subjects or where a substandard dialect is used.\(^2\) "Children from cultivated homes where ideas, not just the weather or the menu, are discussed at the dinner table tend to be advanced in their general use of the language and, on the whole, have less trouble in learning to read, though there are exceptions, due to the effects of other complex factors."\(^3\)

In a study by Ladd, a relationship was definitely found between success in reading and the richness of the child's language background.\(^4\)

The linguists say, then, that the makeup of reading materials must be within the oral experience of the child and must keep pace with that growing experience. Brazziel's

\(^{1}\text{Ibid.}\)

\(^{2}\text{Ibid., p. 174.}\)

\(^{3}\text{Ibid., p. 173.}\)

\(^{4}\text{Ibid.}\)
study in 1962 of culturally deprived children gave conclusive proof of the close association between substandard language usage in young school children and reading deficiency. "These language impoverished children encounter great difficulties in the intermediate grades when the text moves too far ahead of their grasp of language meanings in everyday usage."\footnote{Ibid.}

A child will remember and recognize easier words which he often uses and with which he is familiar. These words are easier for him to recall in print. A boy nearing six who is of average intelligence and learning ability, without previous reading experience, and of normal language development, can be shown flash cards, each containing only one word. As each card is flashed he is told the pronunciation of the word. The results showed that the words more meaningful to him--pony, boy, orange, candy, mother--were the ones more quickly learned.

A boy of twelve, attending sixth grade in a New York City public school, has a Stanford-Binet I.Q. of 89, with higher ratings on tests not requiring the use of language. The boy shows superior in mechanical skill, perhaps a practical-minded youngster. On Saturdays he works along with his father who is an electrician. His ambition is to become a baseball player. The boy's school record shows that he was a reading failure in the first grade. At the beginning
of the sixth grade his reading level was at second reading level. After thirty reading sessions through the year his reading score came up to 3.5. The family's concern is that the boy must reach a reading score of 5.0 in order to enter a vocational junior high school. The boy's spelling is also retarded, and he speaks slowly using a limited vocabulary. Records show that he spent the first three years of his life in an orphanage, where he may not have had the many language learning experiences of children in the usual family situation.\footnote{Ibid., p. 174.}

By keeping the reading materials at the child's level of oral experience and growth, it would seem that another advantage might be that the child would not become frustrated. Being faced with words which were too far beyond him, the child would become frustrated and eventually uninterested and unmotivated toward learning to read. This would mean that the materials must be within the child's grasp or within his instructional level.

The linguistic approach bases its theory on another basic principle called the spelling-pattern approach. This principle is basically the idea that all languages, including our English language, have a set of patterns which guide the spelling of the words within the languages. These patterns, therefore, guide our language into certain regularities, and by knowing these patterns and how they are produced, the
child learns many more words than possible before. Naturally, there are certain irregular forms which some linguists introduce gradually, while other linguists believe these irregular words should be introduced only after the regular words have been introduced. Of course, such words as "a," "an," and "the" must be introduced near the beginning and are called structural or function words.

Bloomfield, in applying the above principle, allows the children to make up nonsense words. Fries, however, does not think children should be led to produce nonsense words. Examples of the spelling-pattern principle would include the following:\(^1\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>at</th>
<th>can</th>
<th>pad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hat</td>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>sad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mat</td>
<td>fan</td>
<td>dad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fat</td>
<td>man</td>
<td>lad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cat</td>
<td>pan</td>
<td>mad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pat</td>
<td>ran</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sat</td>
<td>tan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Charles Fries, "The spelling-pattern approach is not, however, any of the phonic methods commonly discussed, nor is it any of the so-called phonetic approaches. It does give attention to whole words rather than to isolated sounds but it is not any of the word methods or word family approaches."\(^2\)

One major special characteristic of this spelling-

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\(^1\)Fries, *Linguistics and Reading*, p. 121.

\(^2\)Fries, *Perspectives in Reading*, p. 50.
pattern approach is the fact that the attention is not centered upon the learning of individual words, nor is success measured by the number of words the child has learned to recognize. In the spelling-pattern approach it is the pattern itself that is repeated frequently, using a variety of different words and matrixes.¹

Putting emphasis on a minimum contrast in words is another basic principle by which the linguistic approach is guided. This step requires (1) a likeness among words introduced, and (2) a small difference which is also noticeable to the child. In preparing reading materials the words must be developed in a carefully ordered succession. Linguists propose beginning reading vocabularies which follow a basic pattern--consonant-vowel-consonant, with the medial vowel always short.²

Instant recognition and discrimination of the letters of the alphabet in any sequence is a vital principle to the linguistic approach. Here, the linguists pull away from each other. Bloomfield has suggested that the child must not only recognize and discriminate among the letters of the alphabet, but the child must be able to repeat the alphabet orally. Charles Fries, in speaking of recognition of the graphic symbols, says:

¹Ibid.

²Lamb, Linguistics in Proper Perspective, p. 45.
Our approach centers upon developing the habits of high speed recognition responses to English spelling patterns that constitute the process of reading. The letters must be identified as contrasting shapes with 100% accuracy. The use of capitals is desirable; however, it is not necessary for the child to learn to identify all of the capital letters at the beginning and before he starts actual reading. The significant or identifying features of the particular shape of each of the letters are always features in contrast. The contrasts will consist of the contrasts of the order sequence of the individual letters in groups. Habit-forming practices to develop all these high-speed recognition responses do not necessarily require that the pupils know the names of the letters of the alphabet. There must be no attempt to connect the letters themselves with sounds.\(^1\)

Fries is as adamant as Bloomfield regarding the importance of learning the letters of the alphabet, although he restricts the shapes children should learn to capital letters. Unlike Bloomfield, Fries does not advocate learning the names of the letters—this is an additional advantage.

Actually, Bloomfield's linguistic approach to teaching reading "is based on the facts that the English writing is alphabetic and that reading is merely the act of responding vocally to the printed letter. In other words, the letters of the alphabet represent speech sounds to be spoken and one 'reads' by making the appropriate sounds for each pattern of letters."\(^2\)

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\(^1\)Fries, Linguistics and Reading, p. 194.

Another basic principle of the linguistic approach is the introduction of a limited number of sight words or words that do not conform to the spelling patterns. Bloomfield would have the children learn only regular patterns first, and only after complete mastery of these regular patterns would he introduce irregular patterns. This differs from other linguists who would allow some irregular words to be introduced along with the regular patterned words.

The final basic principle of the linguistic approach to reading is to exclude pictures in all readers. The linguists base this principle on the idea that any pictures which would be included in the text would be a detracting element to the child who is learning to read. It has been mentioned, too, that sometimes pictures are included in readers to attract and influence adults, and not for the sake of the child's learning to read. Another point the linguists use for excluding pictures is that oftentimes the pictures in the readers give the child clues as to events in the story. When this situation exists the child will guess at words instead of reading them. Pictures also tend to stifle creativity with which young children are indeed endowed. Stories without pictures would give the child a chance to imagine what the characters look like, what their home is like, the color of their skin, the economic status, and many other ideas which might interest them. The lack of pictures could be a good starting point for creative illustration by the children.
There have been discussed in this first unit the basic principles which are prevalent in the linguistic approach to the teaching of beginning reading. They are summarized as follows:

1. Learning to read builds upon the oral language control already achieved by the pupil.

2. The vocabulary and the grammatical structure presented in the reading materials must be within the oral experience of the child and must keep pace with the widening of that experience.

3. There is a regularity in the spelling of our English language which results in patterns. This is the spelling-pattern approach.

4. There is emphasis on minimum contrast in words which are introduced.

5. The child must be able to recognize and distinguish the letters of the alphabet instantly.

6. Sight words are introduced at different times.

7. Pictures are excluded from the text of the reading material.

These are the basic principles utilized in most of the linguistic approaches to reading; however, they are found in different degrees depending on the linguist involved.

There are other areas deserving of mention, and one of these is the idea that some of the linguists have concerning the basic thought patterns. Some linguists believe that "reading should be taught from the beginning as a process of inferring meaning from sentences, rather than merely from words."¹

¹Hildreth, The Reading Teacher, XVIII, p. 177.
Hildreth has expressed this idea when she said, "Comprehending the meanings of phrases or sentences is the central problem for the reader. The ability to comprehend such meanings is developed by the child's experience primarily and mainly with the oral language."¹

Hildreth, then, relates this ability to comprehend meanings from sentences to the oral language experience. Too seldom children realize that reading is not just the pronouncing of words singly, but is the comprehending of meaning in phrases and sentences.

Intonation is another area deserving of mention in the linguistic approach to teaching reading, for much emphasis is put on the natural rhythm in our language. Meanings of sentences are easily changed by the simple tone of voice or emphasis on different words. The foreigner quickly stands out, for he can speak and understand our language but fails to speak with the same rhythm and intonation of a native-born person. The linguist proposes that the young reader, too, must become familiar with intonation through oral experiences such as reading aloud.

¹Ibid., p. 172.
III. THREE LINGUISTIC AUTHORS

Leonard Bloomfield
Charles Fries
Carl Lefevre

All linguistic reading programs are not alike. The three linguists whose programs will be most carefully examined by this author disagree somewhat on the extent of the use of the alphabet, in beginning reading, the role of isolated word drill, and the importance of oral reading. These differences result in programs of a slightly different nature.

Bloomfield, one of the early pioneers in the field, places much stress on reading as a process of correlating a sound image with its corresponding visual image or spelling.¹ Fries takes a similar position. Learning to read is not a process of learning new language signals, but receiving these signals through the eye instead of the ear.

The process of learning to read in one's native language is the process of transfer from the auditory signs for language signals which the child has already learned, to the new visual signs for the same signals.²

Lefevre, like Fries and Bloomfield, places a great

¹Lamb, Linguistics in Proper Perspective, p. 30.
²Fries, Linguistics and Reading, p. 120.
deal of emphasis on helping the child establish automatic sound-printed symbol relationships. Lefevre writes;

While aware of complex causations, I believe mis-apprehending the relationships between spoken and printed language patterns—a problem that can be illuminated by linguistic insights—to be the most decisive element in reading failures.¹

What's new in reading instruction? A look at two lessons might leave the reader with the same question. The first is a lesson from McGuffey's Eclectic Reader (copyright 1879), and the second is a lesson from Bloomfield's Let's Read (copyright 1961).

Lesson II—McGuffey's First Reader²

Is the cat on the mat?  
The cat is on the mat.

Lesson II—Let's Read³

Can Pat fan Dan?  
Pat can fan Dan.  
Nan can pat a cat.  
A fat rat ran.

Linguistic methods of teaching reading place much emphasis on beginning with the alphabet. Bloomfield insists that the first step is the recognition of the letters, which is indicated by an oral response, conventionally the naming of the letters.

¹Lefevre, Linguistics and the Teaching of Reading, p. 4-6.
²Lamb, Linguistics in Proper Perspective, p. 33.
³Ibid.
Fries is also adamant that the child learn the letters of the alphabet; however, he restricts the shapes children should know to capital letters. Unlike Bloomfield, Fries does not advocate learning the names of the letters, only the shapes.¹

Lefevre places less emphasis on the learning of the alphabet. He suggests that this will be a natural outgrowth of interest in language on the part of the child.

In Lefevre's book, Linguistics and the Teaching of Reading,² three levels of language analysis were discussed. They were: (1) phonemes, the basic sound units of language, (2) morphemes, the basic meaning-bearing units of language, and (3) syntax, which includes large clusters of morphemes in phrases, clauses, and sentences. He also went on to discuss sentences which he patterns into four categories: (1) noun-verb, (2) noun-verb-noun, (3) noun-verb-noun-noun, and (4) linking verb patterns. Sentences use signaling systems in American English, and the four he mentions are: intonation, sentence function, structure words, and word-form changes. It is apparent, then, that Lefevre agrees that the sentence is the meaning-bearing structure in our language, and oral work is highly necessary in order to discover intonation especially. He states:

Information about phonemes is helpful in teaching

¹Fries, Linguistics and Reading, p. 124.
phonetic word analysis, phonics, and spelling. Information about morphemes is helpful in teaching structural word analysis and in vocabulary development. Knowledge of syntax is helpful in teaching sentence sense. Reading teachers know that sentence sense is fundamental to reading comprehension.¹

This brief discussion of a few points on which these linguists base their theories was meant to show that all linguists do not agree wholly, yet they think along similar lines. Linguists are scientists of language, and because reading is based upon language and is a language related process, the linguist can contribute to the store of knowledge concerning the teaching of beginning reading to children.

On the whole, linguists have produced very few materials for an actual series of reading texts from which to teach beginning reading.² The more widely used texts are listed below.


²Fries, Perspectives in Reading, p. 45.

5. Ralph F. Robinette, Pauline Rojas, and Staff. *Miami Linguistic Readers*, Ford Foundation Project, Dade County Public Schools Board of Public Instruction, Miami, Florida, 1964. (Designed to help teach beginning reading to pupils whose preschool language was other than English.)


IV. CRITICISMS OF THE LINGUISTIC APPROACH
AS APPLIED TO THE TEACHING OF READING

Reading has been an area of much discussion, research, and thinking. Many approaches have been suggested concerning the teaching of reading. A few of these approaches are: individualized reading, phonic approach, new alphabetic approaches, language experience approach, and the early letter emphasis approach. This paper has been concerned with even another approach, and that is the linguistic approach. The approach may never be found, but as long as we strive for perfection, there is advancement.

The linguistic approach, similarly to the other approaches, has been criticized for its approach to reading also. First of all, the linguists have been reproached for being concerned with reading at all. Betts points out some of the relationships he perceives between reading and linguistics and criticizes linguists for dabbling in reading and for adopting a rather naive approach to the psychological and pedagogical problems in reading.¹ Reading materials in the past have followed closely the principles and theories of psychologists, reading specialists, and outstanding teachers. Therefore, the idea that linguists have

a place in the selecting of materials or even in research concerning reading is a new idea to some. However, the linguist, being a student of language, should certainly be involved in reading if reading is a language based area.

Concerning the reading materials involved, the linguists are not consistent in some areas. For example, the linguists stress intonation and reading with expression. This is a good idea, but then one looks at the materials put out by them. It is apparent that the sentences in some of the readers do not encourage expression or even interest on the part of the child involved. Another question which comes to mind is: are these sentences similar to sentences actually spoken by children? The linguists stress oral speaking and the understanding of oral language, yet their reading materials are not consistent with this theory. The linguists do, however, improve on this problem in the upper grades. At this point the material is of a more literary value, and this is an improvement.

Linguistics, for example, offers very little, if any, help on either understanding individual differences or how to provide for them. Neither does this discipline shed light on the crucial problem of motivation.¹

This criticism comes from Betts, and does present some interesting ideas. How does the linguist intend to motivate the child to read material which is difficult to

¹Emmett A. Betts, "In Perspective: Reading and Linguistics," The Reading Teacher, XVIII (December, 1964), p. 221.
read interestingly? What about the slow learner? The exceptionally bright?

The linguists, specifically Bloomfield and Fries, are also criticized. Bateman states, "The Bloomfield System appears to suffer from a lack of specific teaching methods. The major fault of the Bloomfield System lies in the methodology and application rather than content." Also, according to Wardhaugh, both Fries and Bloomfield oversimplify the process of reading. "Learning to read means more than acquiring high-speed recognition responses to various letter patterns as Fries would have it." 2 "The linguistic principle—that the printed letter represents a speech sound to be spoken—is one that may well be applied in any reading program, but the methods of application should be considered." 3

Wardhaugh, in his article, "Linguistics—reading dialogue," states another criticism:

Books and articles relating linguistics to reading have favored the data rather than the fact approach. For this reason they find it very difficult to demonstrate an insightful and economical relationship between sound and symbol. Similarly, statements that writing is speech put down on paper are not as adequate as they should be. Speech performance is

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1 Bateman and Wetherell, The Reading Teacher, XVIII, p. 103.

2 Wardhaugh, The Reading Teacher, XXI, p. 433.

approach is perfect, yet we are constantly looking for better methods to teach children to read.
V. LINGUISTIC IMPLICATIONS FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS

Theories can be written on paper, but the actual test comes inside the classroom with children. The classroom teacher, then, is in the ideal position—and a very important position it is—to apply these theories. The linguistic approach must be tested in the classroom by students and teachers. If the linguist is to be able to improve his theories, he must know how children react to the materials and the experience of learning to read using a linguistic approach.

Many writers have suggested various and numerous ways to use the linguistic approach and its principles in the classroom. The following ideas are meant for the classroom teacher who desires to employ a linguistic approach to the teaching of reading:

1. Reading materials for beginners should make use of current experiences couched in the everyday spoken language the children know and use as a bridge to the less familiar written language and situations of the reading books.¹

2. Right from the beginning, and in all reading activity, major emphasis should be placed on reading aloud the whole sentence.²

¹Hildreth, The Reading Teacher, XVIII, p. 177.
²Botel, The Reading Teacher, XVIII, p. 189.
3. Make use of oral narrative, conversation, and dramatization for readiness in the early reading experiences.¹

4. Relate the language arts of oral usage, reading, and written expression in school instruction; that is, not only develop oral language as a background for reading lessons, but develop writing as an adjunct of reading.²

5. Prose passages that have flow and pattern ought to be of value, and should be used as models.³

6. Every effort should be made to introduce the whole flow of rhythm into all classroom activities. Rhythm, after all, is controlled power. During six years of testing, observation, and research, it has become apparent that the development of rhythm is intimately related to the acquisition of reading, writing, and spelling skills. A failure to develop rhythm usually predicts a failure in symbolic functions.⁴

7. According to Botel, pupils will not lose sight of the fact that writing is but a record of the oral language if you use practices such as the following:

(a) Provide a good speech environment which pupils can emulate so that their written-down speech becomes increasingly a record of clear, complete sentences.

(b) Record pupil speech; for instance, on experience charts, tape recorders.

(c) Provide frequent choral reading opportunities.

(d) Encourage dramatizations.

¹Hildreth, The Reading Teacher, XVIII, p. 177.
²Ibid.
(e) Make certain that pupils are fluent in oral reading and that silent reading precedes oral reading.

(f) Provide practice in the oral manipulation of sentences in which students test changing of meaning that comes from shifting stress to different parts of the sentence.

(g) Teach pupils to write compositions as part of beginning reading instruction.

8. Some practices which will foster the understanding that letters represent sounds are:

(a) Present an orderly development of regularly spelled words from the beginning.

(b) Read words without exaggeration and in a normal tone. The separate sounds in the words should not be pronounced in isolation.

(c) After the first two words in each pattern have been pronounced for the pupils and attempts have been made to teach them as sight words, pupils should have the opportunity to talk about what they see and hear in the pattern and to find additional words which belong to the pattern by substitution of individual vowels and consonants.

9. To help cultivate a "feel" for sentences, we can:

(a) Present simple examples of the four basic sentence patterns in scrambled order.

(b) Present the basic sentence patterns and read them aloud. Pull words out of the sentences and substitute for them.

(c) Ask pupils to find other sentences with the same pattern as an example.

(d) Leave blanks in a sentence; write in only structure words and endings.

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1Botel, The Reading Teacher, XVIII, p. 192.

2Ibid., p. 190-191.
These are a few practical ideas which the classroom teacher could utilize and which relate to the linguistic approach as related to the teaching of reading.
VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Over a quarter of a century ago Bloomfield prepared a linguistic approach to the teaching of reading which has been the basis for the linguistic approach of today. Since Bloomfield's system was developed, there have come into existence other branches of this approach. As would be expected, the approaches are similar, having come from the linguistic discipline, yet they differ in the amount of adherence to the linguistic theories.

Linguists emphasize these principles:

1. Learning to read builds upon the oral language control already achieved by the child.
2. The vocabulary must be within the child's oral experience and grow with it.
3. The spelling-pattern approach.
4. Emphasis on minimum contrasts in words.
5. Instant recognition of the alphabet.
6. Sight words, or irregular words.
7. Exclusion of pictures from the text of the reading materials.

Other areas of agreement by linguists include the sentence being the unit of thought, and intonation being necessary for communication and good reading.

Three outstanding linguists who have influenced reading materials are Leonard Bloomfield, Charles Fries, and Carl
have found it difficult to learn to do reading."

No method of teaching reading is universally the best. We must keep seeking methods which give the best results possible. Research indicates that it is the teacher who makes the difference in whether a child learns to read, or not, no matter what method is used.
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