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# Comparative evaluation of reading series with regard to their incorporation of linguistics

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A COMPARATIVE EVALUATION OF READING SERIES  
WITH REGARD TO THEIR INCORPORATION OF  
LINGUISTICS

by

Sister Barbara Jean Backs, C.P.P.S.

A RESEARCH PAPER  
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
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This research paper has been  
approved for the Graduate Committee  
of the Cardinal Stritch College by

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM

#### Introduction

Linguists have in recent years added much to the understanding of the English Language. They are relatively new to the field of reading, but their impact does not go unnoticed. The classroom teacher is being flooded with materials and advertisements of new reading programs which claim to be linguistic in nature.

There are some general principles with which all linguists agree, but as with any young study, they are not in agreement about the specifics of their field. Of course, for the classroom teacher, the critical act is the application of these principles to the teaching of reading. But theories as to how linguistic knowledge relates to reading programs varies from linguist to linguist.<sup>1</sup>

It behooves the classroom teacher of reading to reflect upon the writings of many linguistic authorities to

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<sup>1</sup>Robert L. Hellerich, "Linguistic Efforts in Reading: an Appraisal," Education Digest, XXXIV (December, 1968), pp. 43-6.

grasp fully the wide range of possibilities for relating linguistics to the improvement of reading.<sup>1</sup>

Lamb stresses the importance of this knowledge on the part of the reading teacher when she says:

Why not wait until the guidelines are clear, until the teacher is more certain of what he knows and doesn't know? Because . . . materials are being produced, in the field of beginning reading especially, at an increasingly rapid rate, and the elementary teacher must decide which materials to use, how much linguistic emphasis to incorporate into . . . their reading programs, and whose linguistic approaches seem most appropriate.<sup>2</sup>

#### Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this investigation was to present a review of the literature concerning the application of linguistic principles to reading. An effort was made toward the evaluation of materials and "linguistic" readers as an informative aid to classroom teachers in choosing materials and texts.

#### Limitations of the Investigation

This study was limited to the examination of linguistics as applied to beginning reading. The materials examined were those which claim to have a linguistic basis, or to be linguistically correct. Investigations of other beginning reading programs were not considered.

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<sup>1</sup>Lorene B. Hull, "New Readers for a Linguistic Approach to Beginning Reading," Elementary English, XLIII (December, 1965), pp. 883-8.

<sup>2</sup>Pose Lamb, Linguistics in Proper Perspective (Columbus, Ohio: Merrill Publishing Co., 1967), p. 2.



### Significance

It was hoped that the contents of this paper would provide the classroom teacher with some information about linguistics and its application to the reading situation. It was intended that the criteria for evaluation of materials would assist the primary teacher in her choice of materials and texts.

### Summary of Terminology<sup>1</sup>

<b>Linguistics:</b>	The scientific study of language, two principal divisions: 1) Comparative or historical linguistics, treats language change, especially through the study of data from other languages 2) Descriptive or structural linguistics, treats the classification and arrangement of the features of a language
<b>Phoneme:</b>	The smallest sound unit used in any language
<b>Grapheme:</b>	The written representation of a phoneme
<b>Morpheme:</b>	The basic meaning-bearing unit of language
<b>Intonation:</b>	The melody or rhythm of speech. It is achieved through the use of pitch, stress, junctures, and terminals

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<sup>1</sup>Therese M. Bluhm, "Summary of Linguistic Terminology as Related to Reading," Ginn and Company. (Mimeographed, no date).

<b>Pitch:</b>	The degree of height (acute-ness) or depth (gravity) of a tone or sound depending upon the relative rapidity of the vibrations by which it is produced
<b>Stress:</b>	Relative loudness resulting from special effort or emphasis in utterance
<b>Junctures: Terminals</b>	Interruptions in the flow of speech accompanied by various pitch levels. One juncture separates words or parts of words; the other three called "terminal junctures" bring to an end the rhythm of speech. Junctures may be graphically represented by the marks of punctuation
<b>The Utterance:</b>	Vocal expression which may include any number of words and may be analyzed in terms of intonation, rhythm, and stress
<b>Structure or Function Words:</b>	Words which contain little "dictionary meaning", but which have importance because they help to indicate the way the chief elements of sentences are related or function together. Their chief significance is that they make connections within a sentence. e. g. (the, of, from, and, than, if, or, let's, when, yes, no)
<b>Standard English:</b>	The English used by educated people, especially when speaking in public or writing to strangers. It is also the language found in the best literary works in English
<b>Levels of Discourse:</b>	The existence in a language of several strata of speech patterns, varying according to the economic and cultural positions occupied by different speakers

Literary Genre:	A particular form of discourse, (prose, drama, poetry, etc.) which provides the structure in which an author writes
The Rhetorical Organization:	The particular method by which an author structures his literary use of language, e.g. the inductive method, the deductive method, comparison and contrast, description, etc.
The Image System:	Choice by an author of the figures of speech which will best portray his intended thought
Musical Patterning:	The rhythm or movement or procedure in a literary work, characterized by the uniform recurrence of a beat, or accent, the meter of either prose or poetry. The basic rhythm of English speech is generally, but with many exceptions, iambic; an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable
The Reference:	A background of experience, varying in degrees of vividness which is called to mind when a symbol is read and understood
The Referent:	As distinguished from the reference; the real object existing in the world outside the mind
Phonetics:	The scientific study of speech sounds in language
Phonemics:	The study of the most <u>elemental</u> speech sounds in language
Phonics:	The study of the <u>representation</u> of sounds in the <u>written</u> language

Succeeding will present a short history of linguistic interest as an introduction to present day influence of linguists on the reading field. Opinions of reading authorities, though not an all-inclusive survey, are

included in an effort to give some idea of present attitudes and criticisms. Following this is an attempted evaluation of some reading series which claim to be linguistically based, or, as in the case of the last two, linguistically correct.

## CHAPTER II

### OVERVIEW OF THE FIELD

#### History of Linguistic Interest in Reading

Although linguistics, a study of language as an observable phenomenon, began as early as 1814,<sup>1</sup> linguistics and reading were probably first brought together in 1927 by O'Shea.<sup>2</sup> In his book O'Shea discussed "language unities in teaching reading" and "learning the function of literal symbols."

In 1942, linguistics and reading were brought together in a more significant and practical way by Bloomfield. In two articles that appeared in *Elementary English Review*,<sup>3</sup> Bloomfield contrasted picture-writing, or picture representations for ideas; word writing, in which characters are attached to words, not to ideas; and alphabet-writing in which each character represents a unit speech-sound, or phoneme.

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<sup>1</sup>Pose Lamb, Linguistics in Proper Perspective (Columbus, Ohio: Merrill Publishing Co., 1967), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>M. V. O'Shea, Linguistics in Education (New York: Macmillan Company, 1927) quoted in Nila Banton Smith, American Reading Instruction (International Reading Association, 1965), pp. 386-7.

<sup>3</sup>Leonard Bloomfield, "Linguistics and Reading," Elementary English Review, XIX (April, May, 1942), pp. 125-130, pp. 183-6.

In these articles Bloomfield discussed his phonemic theory of reading instruction. He points out that each word in any language consists of a fixed combination of phonemes.

The existence of phonemes and the identity of individual phoneme are by no means obvious; it took several generations of study before linguists became fully aware of this important feature of human speech.<sup>1</sup>

Bloomfield stressed oral reading for the small child. He felt that content was unimportant, that overemphasis on content upset the child, since it would necessitate presenting him with spelling irregularities, thus making beginning reading more complicated than would be necessary.

Bloomfield's articles affected the world of reading, at least in application, very little at the time. Indeed, no articles of import appeared from that time until 1961. That year the publication of Let's Read, A Linguistic Approach,<sup>2</sup> a combined effort of Bloomfield and Barnhart, stirred controversy in the reading field. In their introduction to this first pedagogical application of linguistic principles to reading, Bloomfield criticized existing story readers:

Aside from their silliness, the stories in a child's first reader are of little use, because the child is too busy with the mechanics of reading to get anything of the content . . . This does not mean that we must forego the use of sentences and connected stories, but it does that these are not essential to the first steps.

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<sup>1</sup>Bloomfield, "Linguistics and Reading," pp. 184.

<sup>2</sup>Leonard Bloomfield and Clarence L. Barnhart, Let's Read: A Linguistic Approach (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1961).

We need not fear to use disconnected words and even senseless syllables, and above all, we must not for the sake of a story, upset the child's scarcely formed habits by presenting him with irregularities of spelling for which he is not prepared. Purely formal exercises that would be irksome to an adult are not irksome to a child, provided he sees himself gaining in power.<sup>1</sup>

Thus Bloomfield and his contemporary were mainly concerned with word recognition. This was done through decoding of phoneme-grapheme relationships. They used the sound system of the English language (phonology) as their tool.. This necessitated using words with consistent and regular spelling patterns for beginners.

In the early sixties a flood of literature on linguistics in reading hit the market. Education journals and convention speakers found the topic popular and fascinating. This deluge had not in any way abated at the time of this writing.

Also early in the sixties two linguists made a deep impression in the reading field, Lefevre and Fries.

Lefevre, in contrast to Bloomfield, was more concerned with the comprehension element for beginners. He felt that children needed to develop a "sentence sense."

The basic fault in poor reading (viewed as a crippled language process) is poor sentence sense, demonstrated orally in word calling, or in reading various nonstructural fragments of language patterns as units; it is not likely that a word caller in oral reading will read silently by language structures.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bloomfield and Barnhart, Let's Read, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Carl A. Lefevre, Linguistics and the Teaching of Reading (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1962), p. 5.

Lefevre felt strongly that alphabet and word methods of primary reading instruction were a major cause of word and fragment reading. He was not unaware of the complex causation theory, but believed that:

. . . misapprehending the relationships between spoken and printed language patterns ; . . . to be the decisive element in reading failures.<sup>1</sup>

With this emphasis on sentence sense, Lefevre stressed "intonation", which consists of pitch, stress, and juncture. Since most native speakers of any language have a natural and unconscious control of these intonations in speech, he felt that this knowledge could be used to develop sentence sense in reading and writing, and serve as a basis for comprehension of meaning.

While Lefevre felt that intonation was the first and most important of the language devices that shape American speech, he cited three others: function order in sentence patterns, structure words, and word-form changes, all of which hold lesser roles in the basic understanding of language. For each of these devices Lefevre compiled a complicated set of abbreviations, an illustration of which follows:<sup>2</sup>

#### A. FOUR SENTENCE FUNCTIONS

N Noun function  
 V Verb function (Lv signifies linking-verb function)  
 A Adjective function  
 Ad Adverb function

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Lefevre, Linguistics and Teaching Reading, p. 207-213.



## B. FOUR IMPORTANT SENTENCE PATTERNS

1. N V  
N V A  
N V Ad
2. N V N
3. N V N N
4. N Lv N  
N Lv A  
N Lv Ad

## TWO IMPORTANT PATTERN TRANSFORMATIONS (passive constructions)

1. N vV (v signifies verb marker in the passive construction)
2. N vV by N (by N signifies agency in the passive construction)

## C. WORD-FORM CHANGES (inflections)

Noun	N	(base)
	N-s/es	(plural)
	N-'s/s'	(genitive)
Verb Parts	V	(base)
	V-s/es	(third person singular)
	V-ed	(past)
	V-ing	(present participle)
	V-ed/en	(past participle)
Adjective and	A/Ad	(base)
	A/Ad-er	(comparative)
Adverb	A/Ad-est	(superlative)

(Some adjectives and some adverbs take the above inflections. The suffix -ly commonly marks an adverb derived from an adjective, but -ly also marks common adjectives: lovely, manly. A large number of derivational prefixes and suffixes mark both adjectives and adverbs.)

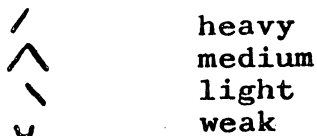
## D. NON-SEGMENTAL PHONEMES

Pitch:	Four significant levels (or ranges)
l	low
n	normal
h	high
hh	extra high

**Pitch contour:**

A pitch contour is a broken-line graph representing significant pitch changes in an utterance.

**Stress:** Four significant degrees



heavy  
medium  
light  
weak

**Juncture:** Four significant ways of interrupting or terminating the voice stream.

+ open juncture: separates some words and syllables.

→ level terminal: terminates some syntactical elements within utterances.

↗ fade-rise terminal: terminates some syntactical elements within utterances; also terminates some questions.

↘ fade-fall terminal: terminates statements and commands; it is the characteristic termination of many questions; generally signifies finality, the termination of an utterance.

**Simple vowels (short vowels)**

/æ/	the vowel phoneme in pat
/e/	the vowel phoneme in pet
/i/	the vowel phoneme in pit
/a/	the vowel phoneme in pot
/ʌ/	the vowel phoneme in but (schwa sound)
/u/	the vowel phoneme in put
/ɔ/	the vowel phoneme in taught
/ɚ/	the vowel phoneme in below
/o/	the initial vowel phoneme in the complex vowel nucleus /ow/ as in go; rarely uttered as a simple vowel by itself in American English.

### The three semivowels

/h/	the initial phoneme in hem
/w/	the initial phoneme in wet
/y/	the initial phoneme in yet.

When semivowels occur initially as in the examples above, they are frequently represented in writing and print by letters corresponding to their respective phonemic symbols. Otherwise, except as the second sound in the diphthongs spelled ou, ow, and oi, oy (/aw/ and /oy/ or /ɔy/); semivowel phonemes are not clearly represented by letters in the English graphic system.

### Complex vowel nuclei (long vowels and diphthongs)

A complex vowel nucleus is a rapid sequence of vowel phonemes--a simple vowel followed by a semi-vowel---in which it is virtually impossible for the ear to note where the simple vowel ends and the semivowel begins. Native speakers tend to hear each complex vowel nucleus as a single significant sound.

/ey/	the vowel sequence in pate (long a)
/iy/	the vowel sequence in Pete (long e)
/ay/	the vowel sequence in pike (long i)
/ow/	the vowel sequence in pole (long o)
/uw/	the vowel sequence in pool, rule (long u)
/aw/	the vowel sequence in pound (diphthong)
/oy/ or /ɔy/	the vowel sequence in point (diphthong)

Certain of the above vowel sequences, or complex vowel nuclei, are the long vowels which are frequently spelled with single letters; although they are also frequently spelled as digraphs, or two letter graphemes, the vowel sounds have not been traditionally regarded as diphthongs.

Below is a table showing some of these common spellings of the long vowels.

Phonemic symbols	Single-letter spellings	Digraphs, or two-letter graphemes
/ey/	a	ai, ay, ey
/iy/	e	ea, ee, ei, ie
/ay/	i, y	ei, ie, uy
/ow/	o	oa, oo, ow
/uw/	u	oo, ou, ue

Consonants (arranged in voiced and voiceless pairs)

/b/	(voiced)	the initial phoneme in bat
/p/	(voiceless)	the initial phoneme in pat
/d/	(voiced)	the initial phoneme in dad
/t/	(voiceless)	the initial phoneme in tap
/g/	(voiced)	the initial phoneme in gap
/k/	(voiceless)	the initial phoneme in cap
/v/	(voiced)	the initial phoneme in vat
/f/	(voiceless)	the initial phoneme in fat
/z/	(voiced)	the initial phoneme in zip
/s/	(voiceless)	the initial phoneme in sip
/j/	(voiced)	the initial phoneme in jab
/ç/	(voiceless)	the initial phoneme in chap
/ð/	(voiced)	the initial phoneme in this
/θ/	(voiceless)	the initial phoneme in thin
/ʒ/	(voiced)	the medial consonant phoneme in vision (/z/) does not occur initially in English except in the exotic names Gigi and Zha Zha.
/ʃ/	(voiceless)	the initial phoneme in ship

Nasal continuant consonants (also nasal resonants)

/m/	the initial phoneme in map
/n/	the initial phoneme in nap
/ŋ/	the terminal phoneme in bang (/ŋ/ does not initially in English)

Liquid consonants (also lateral resonants)

/l/	the initial phoneme in lap
/r/	the initial phoneme in rap

Much as such a complicated system may intimidate the neophyte, Lefevre is convinced that much of it is our natural heritage, and that whatever attention to word analysis and spelling may be needed in reading instruction, isolated words should always be brought into the larger patterns and structures that function linguistically and carry meaning.

Summarily, then, Lefevre's definition of the essence of reading is "bridging the gap between language and graphics."<sup>1</sup>

While words and phoneme-grapheme correspondences were not important in Lefevre's work (he made the sentence the focal point and put great stress in intonation and syntax), Fries' approach was essentially that of Bloomfield. Word recognition and decoding were the tools of reading; the teaching of meaning was nonessential to the beginner. He disagreed with the broader concept of reading as "a complex organization of higher mental processes" including "thinking, evaluating, judging, imagining, reasoning and problem-solving."<sup>2</sup> He held that it confused the issue to hold that all of these constituted the reading process, since all these abilities could be developed by persons unable to read a word.<sup>3</sup>

Fries marked three stages in the development of reading ability.<sup>4</sup> These were the first or "transfer" stage, the second or stage of productive reading, and third, the stage of "vivid imaginative realization".

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<sup>1</sup>Lefevre, Linguistics and Teaching Reading, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Arthur I. Gates, "The Nature of the Reading Process," Reading in the Elementary School. Forty-eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949, pp. 3 and 4.

<sup>3</sup>Charles C. Fries, Linguistics and Reading (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963), pp. 117 and 118.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 188.

The first or transfer was one of learning to shift or transfer from auditory signs of language which he had already learned to visual signs.<sup>1</sup>

The second or productive stage goes beyond the habit forming acts of the first. By this time habits have become more mechanical and there begins to be a response to meaning. Finally, the comprehension process becomes cumulative and he can supply where written words are lacking or incomplete.<sup>2</sup>

The third stage, that of vivid imaginative realization, is the fulfillment of the reading act. It is the stage necessary for true literary appreciation.<sup>3</sup>

Fries' emphasis on word recognition and decoding left him somewhat frustrated with English irregularities, but, neo-Bloomfieldian as he was, he proceeded to ignore the irregularities for the beginner and used only those words with regular spelling patterns. The first and most significant of these was the (consonant)-vowel-consonant pattern, or CVC. Hundreds of words fell into this category since the consonant referred to was a consonant phoneme, or even a cluster of consonant phonemes. Thus such words as an, hit, and cap fell into the same spelling pattern as strands and twelfths.

The second set of spelling-patterns used the final e to differentiate them from the above. This, of course, also

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<sup>1</sup>Fries, Linguistics and Reading, p. 188.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 208.

included those that had initial consonant clusters, thus rode and stripe were in the same spelling-pattern.

This writer has not included the patterns of a more limited application since the above two were sufficient to illustrate the system. It is the contrast of one spelling-pattern to another that signals the connection of the graphemes with the phonemes; it is not the single grapheme, the single letter, that can be matched in any absolute terms with the individual phonemes.

Nonsense sentences were not a major concern to Fries as long as the spelling-patterns being taught were used exclusively until the habit was formed. Once the first pattern habit was formed, the teacher's main job was to point out the contrastive features between the patterns.<sup>1</sup>

Still another linguist, Donald Lloyd, suggests that the ability to relate the melody of speech to the written page is the key to good reading. He felt that the structural linguists (Bloomfield and Fries) were indeed logical, but that it was a logic "incompatible with the logic of teaching."<sup>2</sup> Lloyd would agree with Lefevre, that "individual words do not have the importance commonly attributed to them in reading instruction."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Fries, Linguistics and Reading, pp. 171-180.

<sup>2</sup>Donald Lloyd, "Intonation and Reading," Education, LXXXIV, (May, 1964), p. 538.

<sup>3</sup>Lefevre, Linguistics and Teaching Reading, p. 8.

According to Lloyd's theory, the one aspect of language more useful in teaching reading than all others was "tune" or intonation. He described it as:

". . . the rythmical harmonics of the stream of speech that makes English sound like English, French like French, and either sound like the devil if imported from one into the other."<sup>1</sup>

Speaking easily and naturally, the teacher made "phonological phrases," or phrases in which one syllable bore the loudest stress. Each dialect, sub-dialect, or idelect (personal, individual way of speaking) has its own tune, and each tune effects words and phrases in a way that cannot be dealt with by phonics or word structure. Thus Lloyd felt that damage occurred when efforts were made to match the fully spelled, regularly spaced line of print to speech, thus causing distortion of tune.<sup>2</sup>

This emphasis on intonation appears consistently in Lloyd's writings, but this writer was unable to find any specific proposals for the actual teaching of reading.

The same year that Lloyd published his ideas, Goodman<sup>3</sup> contended that early linguistic approaches to reading by Bloomfield and Fries drew only on phonemics and were not complete by linguistic or pedagogic standards. He called for integration of linguistic knowledge with existing

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<sup>1</sup>Lloyd, "Intonation and Reading," p. 538.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 538-541.

<sup>3</sup>Kenneth S. Goodman, "The Linguistics of Reading," Elementary School Journal, LXIV (April, 1964), pp. 355-361.



psychological, sociological, physiological, and educational knowledge to produce a new synthesis. The educator, he stated, must play the central role in this process.

In 1965 Goodman made a study that backed his previous statement. He analyzed the miscues, or unexpected responses of readers. He found that first, second, and third grade children could read a high percent of words in story contexts that they could not read in lists, thus indicating the need for meaning in beginning reading.<sup>1</sup>

More recent articles on the subject of linguistics in reading have tended either to be supportive or rejective of the pedagogical systems already presented. Those that are supportive range from total acceptance to "possible implications." In any case, it hardly seems that linguistics can be defined as a progressivist fad that will leave no permanent impression. Whether it will have its popular and unpopular periods, such as has been the case with phonic systems, is something only the future can reveal.

#### Attitudes of Authorities in the Reading Field

Since Bloomfield's articles were published in 1942,<sup>2</sup> many books and articles have been written about linguistics and its application to reading. Many of these were simple explanations. Some were opinionaires. Some authors were apparently sincere. In the writings of others the Hawthorne effect was evident.

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<sup>1</sup>Kenneth S. Goodman, "A Linguistics Study of Cues and Miscues in Reading," Elementary English, XLII (October, 1965), pp. 639-643.

<sup>2</sup>Bloomfield, "Linguistics and Reading."

When confusion so clouds an issue one turns hopefully to those considered authorities in their field. If one discovers specific points in which there is universal agreement or disagreement, these serve as a guide in aiding the novice to form an opinion of his own.

There are many factors that might explain why there has been an increase in interest in linguistics as a possible source of help in teaching children to read. Durkin gives three: (1) There has been an increase in activity of more and more linguists; (2) Current acceptance of phonics naturally led to interest in linguistics which has always studied the sound features of language; and (3) There has been, in general, on the part of educators, an interest in other "disciplines" as possible contributors to their field.<sup>1</sup>

Durkin further notes that this popularity prevents the questioning and critical thinking that should take place when new proposals are presented in education. Classroom implementation of the proposals have neither been thorough nor longitudinal and have frequently lacked the controls required by dependable research.<sup>2</sup>

Most readers will soon claim to be linguistically sound, according to Lamb, and most publishers will secure the

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<sup>1</sup>Dolores Durkin, "Linguistics and Teachers of Reading," Education, LXXXVI (November, 1965), p. 155.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 156.

services of a linguist as an author or consultant. She feels it is "no longer a matter of linguistics or not, but whose linguistics, and how much of it to include in a given reading program."<sup>1</sup>

Heilman notes that linguists are "justifiably sensitive about non-linguists attempting to summarize or popularize linguistic discoveries."<sup>2</sup> On the other hand he expresses the opinion that linguists as scientists are not responsible for the application of their findings to the school curriculum. He feels that those who have made the attempt so far have been less concerned with how children actually learn to read than how they ought to learn to read.

Groups of linguists differ much from one another in the terminology they use to describe the findings of linguistics and in their interpretations of those findings.<sup>3</sup> There is an even greater diversity between the linguists' concept of reading and that of classroom teachers or reading supervisors. Strickland distinguishes this clearly when she states:

The linguist's concept of reading is not the concept commonly held by the classroom teacher and the reading specialist --- that reading is getting meaning from the printed page. The linguist conceives the reading act as that of turning the stimulus of the graphic shapes

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<sup>1</sup> Lamb, Linguistics in Perspective, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur W. Heilman Principles and Practices of Teaching Reading (Columbus, Ohio: Merrill Publishing Co., 1967), p. 252.

<sup>3</sup> Paul McKee, Reading: A Program of Instruction for the Elementary School (Boston, Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1966), p. 10.

on a surface back into speech. The shape represents speech; meaning is not found in the marks but in the speech which the marks represent. In the eyes of the linguist the child can read when he can recognize symbol-sound correspondence to the point that he can respond to the marks with appropriate speech. The linguist recognizes that the school cannot stop here. The rest of what the school calls teaching reading is actually teaching thinking with and in response to what is found on the page.<sup>1</sup>

Terminology is not the only aspect causing confusion. The interpretation of the significance of the contribution of linguistic science to the teaching of reading is, according to Spache, made more complex because there are diverse schools of opinion within that science. One group, the phonologists, find the current teaching of phonics unnatural. They would prefer to have phonemes represent the basic sounds of our language. The structural linguists urge that knowledge of sentence structure (their branch of the field) must be taught or children will lack comprehension. A third group studies the structure of morphemes (combinations of sounds), and yet another group, the semanticists, emphasizes the importance of shades of meaning in words and their relation to the experiential background of the reader. As a result much of the material written by the linguists for application

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<sup>1</sup>Ruth G. Strickland, The Contribution of Structural Linguistics to the Teaching of Reading, Writing, and Grammar in the Elementary School, Bulletin of the School of Education, Vol XL, (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1964), p. 10.

to reading seems confusing and even contradictory to members of non-linguistic disciplines.<sup>1</sup>

Betts feels that linguists are contributing much to the teaching of reading, but has a few criticisms. He feels that most linguists are unprepared pedagogically and psychologically for the preparation of beginning reading materials. He says they are stymied by their failure to understand the psychology of word perception, their lack of knowledge and experience in the actual teaching of beginning reading, and their failure to "evaluate word perception in relation to the intonation of efficient reading."<sup>2</sup>

This issue has been elaborated by Betts:

. . . very few linguists are aware of crucial factors in perception, such as need, grouping of letters, and sounds, feedback between a stimulus and previous learning, closure of likely whole words, referential as well as structural meaning, and so on. Hence, they are unaware of the need not only to teach a new skill but to insure its retention by application.<sup>3</sup>

As was noted earlier, Heilman tends to concur with Betts in this opinion when he urges that linguists as

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<sup>1</sup>George D. Spache, "Contributions of Allied Fields to the Teaching of Reading," Innovations and Change in Reading Education. Sixty-seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968.

<sup>2</sup>Emmett A. Betts, "Linguistics and Reading," Education, LXXXVI (April, 1966), pp. 454-8.

<sup>3</sup>Emmett A. Betts, "A New Area: Reading and Linguistics," in Reading Instruction: Dimensions and Issues, ed. by William Durr (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1967), pp. 282-6.

scientists should not be applicators of their findings to the reading curriculum. He points out that there exists a communication barrier between linguists and teachers of reading, and each must make an effort to understand the other.<sup>1</sup>

The only statement by Clymer referring to linguistics in reading this writer was able to locate was brief and succinct in its treatment. He preferred to ignore details and stated simply that, since to the linguist reading is "talk written down," the major job of reading is the decoding of symbols. Thus the main job of the reading teacher is to teach decoding skills, the implication being that meaning need not be taught.<sup>2</sup>

McKee is critical of linguists on several points. He feels that some linguists recommend or at least infer that first and second grade children, in order to read well, must be taught "nouns, noun groups, verb, verb groups, adverbs, adjectives, prepositional phrases, sentence patterns, and the application of linguistic formulae to sentences read."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Heilman, Principles and Practices, p. 235.

<sup>2</sup>Theodore Clymer, "What is Reading? Some Current Concepts," Innovation and Change in Reading Education, Sixty-seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968.

<sup>3</sup>McKee, Reading: Program of Instruction, p. 185.

McKee contends that such "nonsense" contributes little, if anything to reading comprehension, for he does not feel that meaning and structure are one.

There is a very real danger, says McKee, in the application of linguistics to the teaching of beginning reading:

It is the danger of engaging in practices which can encourage the first-grade or second-grade pupil to center his attention, as he reads, on forms and structure rather than on meaning and content and can lead him to conclude that reading is much more analytical and difficult and much less satisfying than it is or should be.<sup>1</sup>

The linguistic approach of Fries and Bloomfield, that is, those emphasizing word structure or code, were definitely considered by Chall to be superior to those with meaning emphasis. However, she did not endorse any one particular code-emphasis method over any other.<sup>2</sup> She cited phonic and linguistic approaches as varying in their emphasis on the code. They could be put on a continuum with "pure code" emphasis on one end and "code plus meaning" emphasis at the other. The Bloomfield system, says Chall, is the closest to a pure code emphasis. Fries she placed in the "decoding plus meaning" category, though it was still considered as a code emphasis program.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>McKee, Reading: Program of Instruction, p. 193.

<sup>2</sup>Jeanne S. Chall, Learning to Read: the Great Debate (New York: McGraw-Hill Co., 1967), p. 307.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 342.

Heilman, too, discussed Bloomfield's and Fries' phonological approach and observed that, though their "linguistic scholarship was immensely broad; . . . the segment of linguistic knowledge they choose to utilize in their approach to reading instruction is extremely narrow."<sup>1</sup> He cited the fact that this approach was unconcerned with meaning, and that this could have a considerable influence on the pupils' perception of reading. "The habits, attitudes, (and "set" as to what is involved in reading), which a child acquires during this period can have a significant impact on all future reading behavior."<sup>2</sup>

Betts calls attention to the fact that, although Bloomfield recommended the use of consistent spelling patterns in beginning reading, he was also aware of the pitfalls of writing materials that use only closed syllables, ignoring intonation and stress. His suggestion was to either postpone irregular spelling until the habit was fixed or to introduce them earlier with some planned method. Betts feels that zealots of the word-pattern idea prefer to ignore the second part of Bloomfield's statement.<sup>3</sup>

There seems to be fewer criticisms of Lefevre's "intonation pattern" approach. Perhaps it is because, as

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<sup>1</sup>Heilman, Principles and Practices, p. 250.

<sup>2</sup>Heilman, Principles and Practices, p. 252.

<sup>3</sup> Betts, "Linguists and Reading," p. 457.



Heilman says, Lefevre attempted to bridge the communication gap between the structural linguist and the reading teacher.<sup>1</sup>

It is Durkin's opinion that the most important contribution the linguist can make is not pedagogical. Rather he can contribute to teacher education by the development of "newer and better kinds of language study." This would include history of our language, factors affecting its development, and changes in meanings and pronunciation over the years.<sup>2</sup>

Hildreth has several recommendations for beginning reading which have linguistic implications: (1) Never begin reading instruction without taking into account the child's status in oral expression. Possibly language deficiencies are the major handicap for slow learners. (2) Relate the language arts of oral usage, reading, and written expression in school instruction. (3) Reading should be taught from the beginning as a process of inferring meaning from sentences rather than merely form words. Teacher questions on material read provide the child experiences with larger units of language expression. (A point of departure from some linguists). (4) Reading materials for beginners should make use of current experiences couched in the every-

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<sup>1</sup>Heilman, Principles and Practices, p. 248.

<sup>2</sup>Durkin, "Linguistics and Teachers" p. 147.

day spoken language the children know and use as a bridge to the less familiar written language (Again, a point of departure from some).<sup>1</sup>

The only knowledge a child needs to read well, according to McKee, (who earlier referred to much of linguistic application as "nonsense"), is (1) that word order in reading is the same as word order in speaking, (2) that he must think of words as groups as he reads, not one by one, and (3) that certain words act as clues and tell him to think of the words following as a group.<sup>2</sup>

What are the implications? As McCullough notes,<sup>3</sup> the present stage of development in reading instruction is one of transition. Perhaps it will always be as long as the language lives. It is incumbent upon educators to find the most natural conditions for effective learning, and to put together in a mutually beneficial relationship some of the ideas which have divided them.

This chapter discussed the historical aspects of linguistics in reading instruction and quoted viewpoints of

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<sup>1</sup>Gertrude Hildreth, "Linguistic Factors in Early Reading Instruction," The Reading Teacher, XVIII (December, 1964), p. 176.

<sup>2</sup>McKee, Reading: Program of Instruction, p. 185.

<sup>3</sup>Constance M. McCullough, "Vital Principles in Need of Application," A Decade of Innovations: Approaches to Beginning Reading. Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Convention of the International Reading Association, Part III. ed. by Elaine Vilscek, (Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1968), p. 191.

the following reading authorities: Gates, Lloyd, Goodman, Durkin, McKee, Strickland, Spache, Betts, Heilman, Clymer, Chall, Hildreth, and McCullough.

## CHAPTER III

### APPRAISAL OF LINGUISTIC MATERIALS IN BEGINNING READING

#### Linguistic Implications for Reading Programs

Advertisements from companies which sell readers often take advantage of the popularity of a topic. Thus readers are advertised as having a "linguistic approach", or as reflecting "the most modern advances in linguistics." Actually, a "linguistic approach to reading" can mean many things. There can be no official linguistic approach to reading instruction because the science of linguistics is not concerned with teaching children to read. One of the common errors in reading instruction today is to consider linguistics as an approach or method. Rather, it is the science of the study of language.

The insights gained from linguists have provided educators with new concepts about language and how it can be taught. This is of particular interest in the field of reading because of its concern with the written symbols which are the representations of the oral language.

Any linguist is free to theorize in the area of reading instruction. Many of the theories on the part of linguists have led them to express their ideas pedagogically --- thus, the "many approaches." For example, in the Bloomfield articles<sup>1</sup> referred to earlier, the "linguistic approach" is spelling patterns of selected patterns of monosyllabic words through which the children learn sounds or decoding by deduction.

Lefevre moves in quite another direction. He maintains that teachers should attend to larger groupings of words, and that, from these larger units, children would be expected to develop generalizations of spelling-sound relationships.

Anastasiow and Hansen point out that:

. . . although linguistic based programs vary among themselves and fail at times to clearly establish relationships between their programs and linguistic facts or theories, there are relevant criteria that clearly differentiate the "linguistic approaches" from the more traditional reading approaches."<sup>2</sup>

The above authors propose distinguishing characteristics of the linguistic approach. The children are taught a systematic decoding system at the beginning of their reading experience rather than after the acquisition of a sight vocabulary. The introduction and patterning of consonant and

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<sup>1</sup>Bloomfield, "Linguistics and Reading."

<sup>2</sup>Nicholas J. Anastasiow and Duncan Hansen, "Criteria for Linguistic Reading Programs," Elementary English, LXIV (March, 1967), p. 231.

vowel combinations are systematically controlled. Letters, letter names, and corresponding sounds are introduced early. The major part of the learning activities are focused on decoding behaviors. Morphological rules and syntactical concepts are explicitly introduced. And picture and content clues are not considered part of the decoding system, although some linguistic approaches introduce them as separate skills.

Goldberg and Rasmussen<sup>1</sup> have summarized some of the basic findings of linguistics and their application for teaching reading as follows: Because teachers have very frequent recourse to naming the letters as they teach the sounds which correspond to them, they find it necessary to teach the alphabet before attempting to teach a child to read. It is not necessary to have a perfect knowledge of the entire alphabet. The reading materials of a linguistic approach would be based upon the very careful analysis of the consistency in patterns of symbol-sound relationships. In general, words with regular correspondences of symbol and sound, i.e., words belonging to patterns, would be separated in presentation from irregularly spelled words. Learning to read words which belong to consistent patterns of symbol-sound relations can be based upon a full appreciation of the alphabetic nature of language. One must learn to read

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<sup>1</sup>Lynn Goldberg and Donald Rasmussen, "Linguistics and Reading," Explorations in Reading, Lehigh University Conference Proceedings, Vol. II (June, 1962), pp. 22-27, quoted in John R. Pescosolide et al, Reading Approaches and Rituals (Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown and Co., Inc., 1967), pp. 84-5.

irregularly spelled words differently depending on the parts of the word which may belong to a pattern. A fact elementary to linguists is that written symbols (which are what is read) are the representations of the ideas or of realities. Languages were spoken before they were represented by written symbols. The main task in learning to read appears then to be able to produce the sounds of a language when one sees the written marks which conventionally represent these sounds. This does not obviate the fact that the aim of all reading is to derive meaning or understanding from written symbols. A separation of the skill of associating sound with symbol from the aim of deriving meaning is important for the reason that the presentation of the subject of reading to the very beginning reader is much less complicated by concentrating on the skill rather than on the promotion of understanding. The problem of deriving meaning is, of course, practically eliminated by restricting the words in reading materials to those that children commonly use in oral expression or to the language he knows.

Heilman,<sup>1</sup> too, has a list of concepts of linguistics which he considers important in relation to reading. They are: Despite irregularities in English spelling, important phonemegrapheme patterns do exist, and possibly these should be exploited to a larger degree in reading instruction.

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur W. Heilman, Principles and Practices of Teaching Reading (Columbus, Ohio; Merrill Publishing Co., 1967), p. 252.

Reading instruction can overemphasize dealing with words as units. Graphic symbols must be read to parallel normal sentence tunes. The reader must "put together meaning-bearing patterns." The written page represents language which is oral. The child beginning to read knows the melody (i.e. grammar or syntax) of oral language. However, the printed pages do not contain all the language clues found in speech. The "graphic representation of language does not indicate various levels of pitch and stress. Punctuation (which indicates junctures) is the only "graphic intonational help" that is provided, and it, too, is somewhat imperfect. Intonation-juncture, stress and pitch are part of the language, not "optional additives." The purpose and function of structure words need to be better understood for the mastery of the reading process. These approximately 300 words, sometimes referred to as "glue words" or "service words," have little or no meaning in and of themselves; but they provide significant clues as to the type of patterns they introduce (questions, noun markers, verb markers, parallel constructions).

Wilson<sup>1</sup> emphasizes that any approach to reading that claims to be "linguistic" must have a strong written and oral language program. The oral language program is to be especially

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<sup>1</sup>Rosemary G. Wilson, "Specific Aspects of Linguistics Related to Reading," Recent Developments in Reading, ed. by H. Alan Robinson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), pp. 122-33.



emphasized during the pre-reading and beginning reading stages, but continued throughout the program.

Lamb<sup>1</sup> also lists implications for reading programs. She points out that language is speech. Therefore sentence sense is important. It is necessary for decoding purposes (but not interesting) to use common spelling patterns. Linguists oppose isolating sounds. Stress is placed on oral reading. Most linguists advocate knowing the alphabet principle - that one letter may stand for one sound or several sounds. In beginning reading materials the CVC pattern should be learned first. Linguists recommend the use of varied and interesting sentence patterns which lend themselves to a variety of intonation patterns. (Since this is a contradiction to the preceding sentence, a choice must be made, so linguists generally choose regularity of spelling first, hoping that other goals will be achieved later.) There is little emphasis on meaning at the beginning due to spelling regularity. Illustrations are of minimal importance.

According to Pescosolido et al,<sup>2</sup> the ultimate question concerning linguistic programs evolves around the type of knowledge and materials necessary if a teacher wishes to use a linguistic approach. The manuals are of extreme necessity. They not only contain the basic philosophy of the system, but

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<sup>1</sup>Lamb, Linguistics in Proper Perspective, pp. 48-56.

<sup>2</sup>John R. Pescosolido et al, Reading Approaches and Rituals (Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown and Co., Inc., 1967), p. 91.

clearly demonstrate teaching methods to be used. Actually, this point is important. Many teachers fear the approach because of a meager background in linguistic science.

Linguistic series currently available include children's texts, workbooks, teacher's manuals, and teaching aids. Following are descriptions of series which claim to have a "linguistic approach."

These are preceded by Table I, which shows comparisons of specific points included in the preceding lists. These points of comparison were the result of replies to a questionnaire sent to each of the companies. The questions were answered by eight of the companies. No replies were received from Barnhart, Inc., Harper and Row, Merrill or McGraw-Hill. Thus the table represents only the opinion of this writer concerning the readers in those four series.

Note that this writer has been concerned in this study only with beginning reading. Thus, if it is observed that punctuation is not taught in a specific series, for instance, this does not mean that it is not taught at a later time, only that it receives little emphasis at the beginning stages.

TABLE I  
COMPARISON OF READING SERIES

Series	Points for Comparison								
	Reading prerequisites			Uses regular spelling patterns at first	Introduces irregular spelling patterns from the beginning	Stress on		Emphasis on	
	Alphabet recognition	Left-to-right sequence	Others			Meaning	Decoding	Oral Reading	Silent Reading
Let's Read Series (Barnhart) 1963	X	X		X		X	X		
Linguistic Science Readers (Harper and Row) 1963	X	X		X		X	X	X	
Programmed Reading (McGraw-Hill) 1963	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Miami Linguistic Readers (Heath) 1964	X	X		X		X	X	X	
The Basic Reading Series (SRA) 1965	X	X		X			X	X	
Merrill Linguistic Readers (Merrill) 1966	X	X		X			X	X	
Sounds of Language Readers (Holt, Rinehart, and Winston) 1966			X		X	X		X	
READ Series (American Book Co.) 1968	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Palo Alto Reading Program (Harcourt, Brace, and World) 1968	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Reading 360 (Ginn and Co.) 1969	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Basic Reading Series (Scott, Foresman, and Co.) 1969	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	

TABLE I -- Continued

		Points for Comparison							
Linguistic principles based on	Employs		Instruction on						
	Picture clues	Content clues	Word origins	Oral vocabulary expansion	Word structure	Uses linguistic terminology with children	Teaches punctuation early		
Bloomfield Fries <sup>or</sup>				X				X	
Lefevre	X			X	X		X		
Others		X	X						
	X	X		X	X		X		
	X	X	X	X	X		X		
	X							X	
		X							
		X	X	X	X		X		
		X	X						
		X							
		X	X				X		
		X							

Let's Read Series<sup>1</sup>

Barnhart

Basic Philosophy. -- Assuming the child already knows how to talk and already understands a fair amount of spoken English, and recognizing that written English is only a conventional code, the child must be taught by the simplest, least confusing method to break this code.

Approach. -- This first attempt to apply linguistic principles to the teaching of reading strongly emphasizes regularity of spelling patterns. Bloomfield felt that once a child had mastered the basic patterns, the reading vocabulary would naturally expand, and meaning would follow without effort if the child's vocabulary was used in the reading material.

Physical Appearance. -- These books were written for the pragmatic purpose of teaching a code, thus there is no attempt at aesthetic value. The print is large and easily readable.

Plan of Daily Instruction. -- It would be impossible to outline a set procedure pattern since the plan varies from day to day. However, the first three lessons from the teacher's manual will give an idea of the notion of "expanding" vocabulary:

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<sup>1</sup> Leonard Bloomfield and Clarence Barnhart, Let's Read (Bronxville, New York: C. L. Barnhart, Inc., 1963).

## I. Lesson I

## A. Procedure

1. Pupils (together or individually) spell the word, cat, with teacher pointing to letters
2. Teacher reads the word, cat.
3. Pupils (together or individually) read the word, cat.
4. Pupils (individually) spell and read the word, cat.
5. Be sure that each pupil can spell and read the word without the slightest hesitation.

## B. Drill

1. Write the word cat on the blackboard or a piece of card-board.
2. Have the pupils spell and read the word.
3. Have each pupil select from a set of plastic letters the letters c-a-t, and place them in proper order on his desk.

## C. Have each pupil draw a picture of a cat and color it.

Asking pupils to draw their own pictures will deepen their imagination more than looking at the usual reader pictures.

## D. Review of the letters

1. Have each pupil arrange the capital letters in alphabetical order and say them.
2. Have each pupil arrange the small letters just below the capital letters and say them.
3. If your pupils are uncertain about any of the letters, give them further drill on the alphabet before you go on.

## E. Exercises for review of left-to-right order

1. Place several objects on the table. Have pupils name the objects in order from left-to-right.
2. Have several pupils stand in a row. Choose one pupil to tell the name of each person in the row, proceeding from left to right.
3. Have several pupils draw lines on the blackboard. See that the lines are made from left to right.
4. Have ABC flash cards on the chalk ledge in any sequence. Have pupils name them in order from left to right.

## II. Lesson II

- A. Objective: To learn the new words fat and rat, and the review word, cat, so that they may be spelled and read without hesitation. This is done here and throughout the book by pairing words alike except for one contrasting letter and sound. Do not isolate sounds or speak of a single sound or have the pupils make it. We are not teaching phonetics. Do not talk about

individual sounds. All we do is present paired words together; let the resemblance of sound and spelling do its work without any explanation from us.

B. Procedure

1. New words are always listed by themselves in the first or left-hand column.
2. Present the first new word. Follow the procedure used in Lesson I.
  - a) Pupils spell the word fat with teacher pointing to the letters.
  - b) Teacher reads the word fat.
  - c) Pupils (together) read the word fat. The class should read as a group so that slow learners may learn with and keep up with the group.
  - d) Be sure that each pupil can spell and read the word fat without the slightest hesitation.
3. Pair the words cat and fat
  - a) In the first column, have the pupils spell cat and read it.
  - b) Now have the pupils spell fat and read it.
  - c) Point to the words fat and cat in the third column and have the pupils read them. If any pupils hesitate, spell and read the words until they can read these two words without hesitation.
  - d) For slow learners
    - (1) If a pupil reads some word other than the word being taught, print on the blackboard the word he has read.
    - (2) Ask the pupil to spell it and read it.
    - (3) Then print the word he should have read.
    - (4) Ask the pupil to spell it and read it.
    - (5) Ask the pupil to point to the letter in each word that is not in the other word and name it.
4. Present the second new word, rat.
5. Show the two new words together and have the pupil read the right word when the teacher points to it.
6. When the teacher says one of the words shown, have the pupils point to it.
7. Have the pupil spell the words fat and rat back to you when you say fat and rat as well as say these words when you spell them for him.
8. Have the pupil read the first four rows from left to right. He should be able to do this without hesitation.
9. Noting contrasts
  - a) The first two rows present the new word fat and contrast fat with cat. These two

rows should be read from left to right and the three columns from top to bottom without hesitation. If the pupil has mastered step 2b, he can do so.

- b) The next two rows present the new word rat and contrast the two new words, rat and fat. These two rows should be read from left to right and the three columns from top to bottom without hesitation.
  - c) The third set of two rows contrasts cat and rat. If all these words have been mastered, the rows and columns should be read with no difficulty whatever. If they cannot be read, review by spelling and reading the word or words causing trouble until they have been mastered.
10. The fourth group of two rows consists of the phrases "a cat" and "a rat" which the pupil should be able to read quickly and with sureness. In these phrases note that we have introduced the word a. In ordinary speech the word a as spoken with low stress does not unduly clash with the stressed vowel of hat, cat, or man. Hence, without comment, teach the pupils in early lessons to read such phrases as they are spoken in natural speech.

#### C. The "Word Bank"

1. Ask the pupils how many words they have learned.
2. Have the pupils tell the teacher the words, which she writes on the blackboard in a column as a start for a "word bank" to be added to day by day. The word bank is most important as it enables the pupil to see the resemblances and differences in groups of words. Later on, as soon as the pupils can quickly spot resemblances and differences in several words, we shall be able to present more new words in each lesson.
3. With their alphabet letters have the pupils match the words listed on the board.

### III. Lesson III

Reading: This is a reading lesson. This and similar lessons hereafter provide material for drill in connected reading, which is the normal pattern. The purpose of this reading is to give the pupils practice in instantly recognizing and reading in a normal reading situation the words he has learned. We are not as yet concerned with the reading of stories, which would require the introduction of regular words, and delay the



pupils' acquisition of the skill of readily associating the sound with the letter.

We make no direct attempt to teach marks of punctuation; our sole objective now being to teach the association of sound and letter. If a pupil asks about the marks, tell him that the letters tell him what to say, but the marks of punctuation tell us how to say it. The period tells us that the group of words to be read as a unit is ended.<sup>1</sup>

Extended materials. --

Letter sets

Linguistic Blocks Series<sup>2</sup>

Scott, Foresman, and Company

Though not a reading series, the linguistic blocks could be described as a tool to aid in teaching the following aspects of linguistics: the alphabetic principle, major spelling patterns and basic sentence patterns. The plastic blocks are arranged in a series of five sets, including three "Rolling Readers," one set for consonants, and one for vowels.

The Linguistic Readers<sup>3</sup>

Harper and Row

Basic Philosophy. -- Though a basic philosophy is not

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<sup>1</sup>Source for this philosophy and plan for daily instruction is the teacher's manuals for the Let's Read series.

<sup>2</sup>Buelah H. Stolpen, Linguistic Blocks Series (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1963).

<sup>3</sup>Jack E. Richardson, Jr., Henry Lee Smith, Jr., and Bernard J. Weiss, The Linguistic Readers (New York: Harper and Row, 1963).

stated specifically as such in the teacher's manuals, fundamental perspectives are expressed in which a philosophy is implicitly included, and may be stated as follows:

It is essential for the beginning reader to grasp, at his own speed and with his own language ability, the phonemic principle. If initial reading materials are inconsistent and unpatterned the child may find it impossible to understand the essential nature of the reading process.

Approach. -- Though the name would imply that the approach presented here is strictly linguistic there are some aspects borrowed from other disciplines. Word analysis skills are clothed with a new name, "linguistic skills," and context skills are used extensively.

There is evidence of a linguistic approach in the vocabulary. Unpatterned speech units that are presented are carefully controlled and utilized only when essential to the story. Monotonous repetition, common to many linguistic programs, is avoided and an effort to make the material interesting and practical is evident. The program does have a greater vocabulary load than most basals. For instance, Ginn's Faith and Freedom Readers (1960 edition) had a vocabulary load of 62 words in the pre-primers. Scott-Foresman's (60's edition) carries 72 words. This program presents 82 new words.

The reading material in this program is geared to the bright child with a wide experiential background.

Physical Appearance. -- These are attractive books with high quality illustrations. The pictures do help explain the story and give it meaning, especially at the pre-primer level.

Plan of Daily Instruction. -- The following outline closely resembles those used by most basal readers:

- I. Vocabulary presentation
  - A. Relating new words to words presented and mastered before
  - B. Oral usage of vocabulary in spoken form prior to book application
- II. Directed reading
  - A. Discussion of content
    1. Silent reading with a purpose
    2. Verifying, by oral reading, the answers to questions set forth for silent reading
    3. Interpretation and inference
  - B. Rereading the story orally
    1. Oral word-attack practice
    2. Identifying language (oral) as represented in print; therefore, making "reading aloud" as near to natural intonation as possible.
- III. Building skills
  - A. Providing activities for developing abilities in
    1. Comprehension
    2. Auditory and visual discrimination
    3. Manipulation of words and letters
    4. Recognition of recurring spoken-written patterns

Extended Materials. --

Workbook with follow-up exercises for each lesson

Word cards for each first grade level

Word-Go-Round, a device designed for teaching word analysis<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Sources for this description of philosophy, approach, physical appearance, and plan are the teacher's manuals for first grade and the child's reader.

Programmed Reading<sup>1</sup>

McGraw-Hill Co.

Basic Philosophy. -- Programmed Reading is a child-centered rather than demonstration-centered text. It relies chiefly on the child's own inter-action with the program. The basic technique upon which the program depends is the child's ability to generalize.

Approach. -- The program is designed so that there is no way for the child to read words without attaching meaning to them. Each sentence is accompanied by a picture to which it is directly related. The picture represents a clearly defined problem, and the accompanying sentence represents a concept which resolves the problem. In order to make the required response, the child must understand the picture, its relationship to the sentence, and the meaning of the sentence.

Once the child begins Book 1 (following pre-reading and primer), he works at his own pace. Frequent tests in the body of the reader permit the teacher to test the child's progress. From the beginning of the course the children work with words of more than one syllable, with punctuation, and with plural and possessive forms.

Physical Appearance. -- Besides being a programmed type series in which the answers are easily accessible to the child, the pictures also supplement the implications of even

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<sup>1</sup>Cynthia Dee Buchanan, Programmed Reading (McGraw-Hill Co., 1963).

the simplest sentences. Both the content and the style of the pictures are integral parts of the program.

Plan of Daily Instruction. -- With some exceptions the daily plan frequently follows this outline:

- I. Sound-symbol preparation: Introduces new sounds and punctuation
- II. New words: These are introduced to the children on the board (in isolation). The children read the words and give the meaning for each.
- III. Sound-symbol review
- IV. Word discrimination: Illustrates contrasts
- V. Word formation: Words are placed on the board with specific letters omitted. The children complete the spelling of the word as the teacher dictates it.
- VI. Dictation: Students write sentences dictated by the teacher.
- VII. Reading aloud: Children read aloud and discuss the story.

Extended Materials. --

Sound-symbol cards<sup>1</sup>

Miami Linguistic Readers<sup>2</sup>

D. C. Heath and Co.

Basic Philosophy. -- The focus of beginning reading materials should be on the process of reading rather than on the uses of reading. The child must learn to read by structures if he is to master the skills involved in the act of reading.

Approach. -- As the title suggests, the content of these readers is linguistically oriented. The series has been

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<sup>1</sup>Sources for this description of philosophy, approach, physical appearance, plan, and materials are the teacher's manuals for Book 1 and Book 2.

<sup>2</sup>Ralph F. Robinette, Miami Linguistic Readers (Indianapolis: D. C. Heath and Co., 1964).

developed around ten major premises that relate to the child's experiential background, his language patterns, interests, and need for success in reading. There is much emphasis on the alphabetic principle, and consistent spelling patterns are employed at the beginning. Oral vocabulary and word structure are emphasized and grammatical structures are controlled, again with greater emphasis than most series, since it is written specifically for non-English-speaking children, and children who speak a non-standard dialect of American English.

Physical Appearance. -- Black and white illustrations, though not uninteresting, tend to make these paper-back books less attractive to children. The print resembles first graders' manuscript rather than the usual standard print.

Plan of Daily Instruction. -- Inspection of these books does not really produce a definite outline upon which daily instruction is based, with the exception of three main headings which appear consistently:

- I. Skills emphasis
  - A. Drawing conclusions through observation of details
  - B. Recalling events
  - C. Identifying feelings and emotional reactions
  - D. Anticipating events
  - E. Identifying cause-effect relationships
  - F. Identifying feelings and emotional reactions
  - G. Identifying personal traits
- II. Reading emphasis
  - A. Word attack skills
  - B. Word meanings
- III. Writing emphasis: This is done in the seatword book and usually involves printing the same words the children have just used in the reading lesson.

Extended Materials. --

My Seatwork Booklet

Charts for language practice<sup>1</sup>The Basic Reading Series<sup>2</sup>

Science Research Associates

Basic Philosophy. -- The assumption behind this reading program is that the necessary first step in reading is decoding, that is, mastering the more or less mechanical skill of turning symbols into known words and becoming automatic at it, so that a pattern of letters on a page is immediately perceived by the child as a word he can correctly speak. During this initial phase of reading, the reading matter must have meaning and interest for the child so that decoding the words doesn't become a sterile exercise for him. At the same time the meaning must be so clear and simple that it will be quickly grasped and will not require any discussion, explanation, or formal attention.

Approach. -- Though the title does not use the word, this series is one of the more consistently linguistic approaches. The principles used are largely Bloomfieldian, though there is a digression from Bloomfield at various points, such as the sequence to be followed in introducing

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<sup>1</sup>Source of this description of philosophy and approach is an advertising brochure. Other information was derived from the teacher's manuals and children's readers.

<sup>2</sup>Science Research Associates, The Basic Reading Series (Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1965).

various patterns, the role of meaning (this is considered more important than Bloomfield would have it, but still second to decoding in initial reading), and certain details of pedagogical procedure. Greater emphasis is placed upon oral reading than silent, and picture and content clues are not utilized.

Physical Appearance. -- Art and color are used to make the books more attractive, but as was noted above, picture clues are contrary to the program's method in the early decoding stages. The Level A reader, in fact, uses non-representational art so that guessing at words on the basis of pictures is impossible. Illustrative art is used in the remainder of the program, but teachers are cautioned not to use the pictures for clues to decoding.

Plan of Daily Instruction. -- The teaching plan for each section consists of the following parts:

- I. Review: Each section begins with a review of the preceding section's skills to strengthen past achievements and renew the child's confidence before he begins to learn new skills.
- II. Word list introduction: Every new word list is first introduced with the chalkboard so the teacher can direct and control the child's encounter with new words.
- III. Word list reading: After the child has been introduced to the list on the chalkboard, he spends a short time putting his new skill to practical use by reading the printed word list.
- IV. Stories and poems: These are accompanied with comments by the teacher. The purpose of these is to provide enthusiastic rapport between child and teacher, to encourage wonder and suspense, and to reinforce comprehension where words are used in special or unfamiliar senses. Lengthy discussions are not encouraged.
- V. Drills and games: These are optional. They are devices for reviewing skills and can be used at any time.



- VI. Spelling suggestions: Spelling instruction is coordinated with reading instruction.
- VII. Correlation of workbooks and related materials

Extended Materials.--

Alphabet spirit masters: These can be used simultaneously with the readiness program. Alphabet wall chart, flash cards, and writing pad, all to be used to supplement the readiness program.

Reading/Writing Pads and spirit masters: These are for use along with the reading program. They use the child's ability to read as the basis for teaching them the skill of handwriting.

Word charts: Wall charts are provided for drills and exercises.

"Satellites": This set of 190 supplementary reading selections provides material with which children who discover sound-spelling patterns quickly can exercise their newly acquired skills. For children who discover more slowly, the Satellites provide additional practice and opportunities to develop their skills.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Source for this description of philosophy and approach is the reply to questions directed to the company by this writer. Sources for physical appearance, plan and extended materials were the child's reader and the teacher's manual for this series.

Merrill Linguistic Readers<sup>1</sup>

Charles E. Merrill Co.

Basic Philosophy. -- A child is able to read only (1) when he can respond rapidly and accurately in varying contexts to the written representation of the oral language signals that he already knows, and (2) when he can automatically supply for sequences of such written signals the suitable "expression" -- the intonations, stresses, and pauses that are proof of genuine comprehension. These two minimum abilities provide him with the basis for confident, independent reading and for the development of specific study skills.

Approach. -- The linguistic approach presented in this series is strongly similar to that of Bloomfield. There is an emphasis on minimum contrasts in words and regularity of spelling patterns, often to the destruction of meaningfulness to the child. For example, these sentences are from the child's reader:

Pat fat Nat on the mat.

He bats and tags the bags.

Pictures are not used since these are viewed as distracting elements which only cause guessing of words. One wonders if the second basic ability expressed in the philosophy is not negated by the text itself.

Once the alphabet is mastered, there is a systematic

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<sup>1</sup>Charles C. Fries, Rosemary G. Wilson, and Mildred K. Rudolf, Merrill Linguistic Readers (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Co., 1966).

presentation of the three major spelling patterns in English. Broken into units, the words are first presented in lists and then are practiced in story content.

Plan of Daily Instruction. --

- I. Chalkboard presentation of sets of words in minimum contrast that exemplify particular spelling patterns, and then of given sight words.
- II. Presentation of the same words in printed form in the reader.
- III. Reading of stories that use the words in sentences having normal grammatical structure and "cumulative meaning."

Extended Materials. --

My Alphabet Book

The Skills Book<sup>1</sup>

Sounds of Language Readers<sup>2</sup>

Holt, Rinehart, and Winston

Basic Philosophy. -- Reading is a total linguistic experience in which children analyze oral and printed language, verbalize their understanding of how it works, and organize and extend their comprehension of what is read.

Approach. -- The linguistic principles of Lefevre and Goodman as well as the author are the basis of the linguistic approach used in this series. Oral reading takes precedence over silent reading, but meaning is emphasized more than decoding, and picture and content clues are taught as part of

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<sup>1</sup>Sources of this description are the teacher's guide and the children's readers of this series.

<sup>2</sup>Bill Martin, Jr., Sounds of Language Readers (Chicago: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1966).

the decoding system. The program contains detailed directions for presenting and developing techniques of sentence analysis, transformation, expansion and reduction of sentences.

Physical Appearance. -- Bright, colorful illustrations dominate the pages of this series. It is well to note that this is not just a story series, but other disciplines, such as mathematics and science concepts, are taught incidentally through the reading.

Plan of Daily Instruction. -- Several learning sequences are used depending on the nature of the material read:

- I. First sequence
  - A. Picture reading
  - B. Listening
  - C. Reading aloud
  - D. Exploring and organizing meanings
  - E. Language study
- II. Second sequence
  - A. Listening
  - B. Silent reading
  - C. Reading aloud
  - D. Language study
- III. Third sequence
  - A. Picture reading
  - B. Exploring meanings
  - C. Speculating
  - D. Story telling
- IV. Fourth sequence
  - A. Listening and responding to patterns of language
  - B. Reading aloud
  - C. Choral reading
  - D. Language study
- V. Sequence for poems
  - A. Listening
  - B. Choral speaking
  - C. Reading aloud
  - D. Language study

There are slight variations, but these five plans are basic.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Source for this description of philosophy is an advertising brochure. Sources for other aspects are the teacher's guide and readers of the series.

READ Series<sup>1</sup>

American Book Co.

Basic Philosophy. -- Visual language symbols serve to record the oral language which one uses to express his ideas, his feelings, and his needs. These visual symbols are not conceived as individual entities, but as part of an overall linguistic pattern. They convey meaning only as they are interpreted as the visual counterparts of what might have been said.

Approach. -- This series is advertised as linguistically based when considering linguistics as "total language development", placing stress on a wide range of language learnings. It uses and develops the structural elements in words, word functions in sentences, sentence patterns in reading, intonation, and conventions of written English. These aspects are based on the child's experience with language.

Physical Appearance. -- Illustrations are in evidence on every page. They are attractive and colorful, but not extremely elaborate. Stories are punctuated by skill pages within the text. The pictures are used to illustrate the story and at times are strategically placed to present a definite clue for decoding. However, they are not a substitute for the reading process.

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<sup>1</sup>Marjorie S. Johnson, et al. The READ Series (New York: American Book Company, 1968).

Plan for Daily Instruction. -- The teacher is guided in presenting the lessons with three main ideas of development: language clues and comprehension, vocabulary, and reading experience.:

- I. Language clues
  - A. Specific language clues of particular importance to the understanding of the material are presented. These incorporate linguistic factors appropriate to the lesson.
  - B. Oral language activities provide the students with a readiness in terms of language and thinking by evaluating and developing the linguistic-conceptual foundation.
- II. Vocabulary and word recognition
  - A. The pupil is guided from identifying a specific phonemegrapheme relationship in a series of similar words to identifying other specific relationships which fall into the same overall pattern.
  - B. These form patterns to aid the student in using his analytic skills from known to unknown elements, and then synthesizing the results of his analysis to master new words. The ability to generalize is the important skill here.
  - C. Words are introduced in a meaningful setting in which the child's experience and oral language background can guarantee his success in recognizing word form and getting meaning.
- III. Reading-language experience
  - A. There is a very definite awareness of the association between the oral language and the written symbols.
  - B. The sentence pattern is the natural flow of the child's language. The use of contractions, idiomatic expressions, and elliptical sentences, in which a few words carry a complete thought enhances this natural style.
  - C. Meaning and intonation are implied through pitch, stress, and juncture, which are taught and understood through the use of punctuation marks, boldface type, size, and words in capitals.

Extended Materials. --

Skills Book

Mastery tests on comprehension and phonology for each selection

Achievement tests for each level<sup>1</sup>

Sequential Steps in Reading<sup>2</sup>  
(The Palo Alto Reading Program)  
Harcourt, Brace, and World

Basic Philosophy. -- Reading is a process of obtaining from graphic symbols a set of meanings. The decoding of words is the central skill in learning to read, but reading takes place only when the reader deals with words in sentences, or meaning-bearing units. The aim of Sequential Steps in Reading is to build skills so that the child's meaningful response to reading will not be uncertain and confused.

Approach. -- The point of view in this series is in some measure an eclectic one. For example, throughout the series some words which do not lend themselves to decoding at the time they are introduced are taught as configuration, or sight words. Also, context clues are used as a technique of word recognition. At the same time, there is heavy reliance on what contemporary linguists have learned about language. There is a strong program for building decoding skills and the vocabulary is somewhat larger than in more conventional programs. The program is ungraded and is, in that sense, individualized.

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<sup>1</sup>Source for this description of philosophy and materials is an advertising brochure. Sources for approach, appearance, and plan are the teacher's guide and readers of the series.

<sup>2</sup>Theodore Glim, Sequential Steps in Reading (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968).

Physical Appearance. -- Digressing from the traditional readiness, pre-primer, primer, first-reader sequence, the Palo Alto materials consist of twenty paperbound books for the first three grades. Illustrations are in black and white with a wash of one color.

Plan of Daily Instruction. --

- I. Teach: Each new skill is introduced orally in individual or group instruction, with the aid of the varied teaching-learning materials.
- II. Apply: Children apply the new skills on the Workpad pages.
- III. Practice: Based upon the oral and written development, the "Practice Pages" in the books provide varied reading exercises for each new skill.
- IV. Use: Following the "practice page" work, children come to story reading. Here the concern is broadened to include direct and continuing attention to the general reading comprehension and organization skills. Children may then return to Workpad pages to apply these skills.
- V. Evaluate: Children's understanding of (and mastery of) reading skills is tested on certain Workpad pages.

Extended Materials. --

Workpad

Letter cards with spelling pockets

Word cards

Picture cards (demonstrate configuration)

Function word cards

Sentence cards (basic sentence patterns)

Wall charts<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Sources for this description were the teacher's guide and readers for the series, and advertising brochures.



Reading 360<sup>1</sup>

Ginn and Company

Basic Philosophy. -- Children need the decoding approach as well as the sight word approach. Both are necessary in learning to read the English language. It is impossible to decode a word without reaching its meaning. If you do not get the meaning you have not decoded the word.

Approach. -- Just as other basal reading series of more recent publication claim to be "linguistically sound," this series makes the same claim. It is constructed on the premise that today's child can learn more, earlier, and with greater profit. On this basis three types of words are introduced from the beginning: basic, decodable, and enrichment.

A word is considered basic if it is of high utility and if the child has not been taught the skills to decode the word independently. A decodable word contains sound-symbol correspondence and conforms to spelling patterns which have been taught. An enrichment word is one which is helpful and sometimes necessary to a particular selection, but of low utility to the rest of the program.

Linguistic elements taught in this program include the alphabetic and phonemic principles of language, phoneme-grapheme correspondences and analysis, and structural analysis, the latter emphasizing graphemic bases, root words, inflected

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<sup>1</sup>Theodore Clymer, et al. Reading 360 (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1969).

endings, compound words, and syllabication.

Physical Appearance. -- Illustrations are an essential part of this series' attraction. The typography is actually surrounded by illustrations of high-quality and many styles. Color runs behind type on some pages, and in order to enhance the mood of particular stories, hand-lettering is used. Double page spreads are used extensively. Artistic attractiveness seems to be of prime importance.

Plan of Daily Instruction. -- The daily lesson plans are organized around three major headings: teaching the selection, developing reading skills, and adjusting to individual needs.

- I. Teaching the selection
  - A. Story summary and background for the teacher
  - B. Specific objectives for teaching the selection
  - C. Special materials: These are selected either the teacher more effective or for pupils activities.
  - D. Preparation for reading: At this point new vocabulary is introduced and suggestions are given for motivation.
  - E. Reading the story: Includes purposes for reading, discussion of these purposes, and related language activity.
- II. Developing reading skills: Decoding activities as well as exercises for language development are included.
- III. Adjusting to individual needs: This frequently includes exercises for comprehension as well as added decoding practice.

Extended Materials. --

Skills Handbook

Self-help Activities (paper pads and duplicating masters).

Achievement tests for each level

Picture, letter, and word card sets<sup>1</sup>

New Basic Reading Series<sup>2</sup>

Scott, Foresman, and Company

Basic Philosophy. -- The Scott, Foresman program revolves around the premise that "genuine interest in a good story provides the motivation for learning to read, and that interpreting printed language, not just decoding it, is the goal of reading instruction."<sup>3</sup>

Approach. -- Essentially the type of approach to reading instruction in this series is eclectic, though there is some evidence of a linguistic point of view. From the beginning there is contained in the program lessons on language structure, phoneme-grapheme relationships, contrasting features of language, word order significance, the signals of language (stress, pitch, and juncture), and word functions. However, while there is evidence of linguistic integrity, it is not the only point of view.

Physical Appearance. -- The physical aspect of these books bears out the philosophy behind them. Every effort is

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<sup>1</sup>Source for this description of the philosophy is a reply to questions sent to the company by this writer. Sources for the remainder of the description are the teacher's guide and readers of the series and advertising brochures.

<sup>2</sup>Helen M. Robinson, et al. New Basic Reading Series (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman, and Company, 1969).

<sup>3</sup>W. Cabell Greet, "Linguistics and Reading in the Primary Grades," Scott, Foresman, and Company, 1968. (Mimeographed).

made to draw the child's attention; attractive pictures and stories that are as interesting as they can be with a limited vocabulary. Thus, if motivation is enhanced by physical appearance it is certainly aided by this program.

Plan of Daily Instruction. -- Lesson plans follow a common (though not unvaried) plan. Mainly, they consist of the following:

- I. Overview: This consists of story preparation, skills to be developed, and vocabulary information.
- II. Establishing background: Essentially, this is an aid for teachers to motivate the pupils' reading of the story.
- III. Guided interpretation: Purposes for reading are suggested as well as questions offered to be discussed at intervals as the silent reading progresses.
- IV. Oral interpretation: The children either think back over what they have read, or the story is read aloud with cadence and rhythm of natural speech.
- V. Extending competence: Exercises are provided for the teacher for developing and reinforcing skills in word perception and interpretation. At this point certain pages in the reading workbook are recommended.
- VI. Extending interests: Usually poems or stories are recommended for reading aloud by the teacher, and personal reading of library books is encouraged.

Extended Materials. --

Think-and-Do Book with follow-up exercises for each lesson

Word and letter cards

Duplicating masters and transparencies with skill-building lessons

Tests: Basic Reading Achievement tests for each book level

Inventory-Survey tests (two forms) which check a range of skills from pre-reading to fourth grade level.

Dictionaries in which words are classified by meanings rather than alphabetical sequence<sup>1</sup>

Addenda

This writer has also inspected materials from Lippincott (Basic Reading)<sup>2</sup> and Reardon-Baer (The Christian Child Reading Series),<sup>3</sup> since they use the word "linguistic" in their advertisements. They have been excluded from this paper because, in this writer's opinion, they use the terms "linguistic" and "phonetic" synonymously.

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<sup>1</sup>Sources for this description, except the philosophy, are the teachers' guide and readers for the series and advertising brochures. Source for philosophy is on pg. 61, footnote # 3.

<sup>2</sup>Glenn McCracken and Charles Walcutt, Basic Reading (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1969).

<sup>3</sup>Clarence Elwell, The Christian Child Reading Series (Cleveland: The Reardon-Baer Company, 1959).

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY

This paper has been concerned with the impact of the science of linguistics on reading, a phenomenon that is still on the increase at this writing, even affecting the basal reader.

After a history of linguistic interest from the time of Bloomfield's first linguistic reader to the present pedagogical application, there followed a brief survey of the attitudes of some authorities in the reading field. The attitudes expressed were varied, some favorable and some abstaining from expressing their opinions conclusively until all the evidence is compiled.

Four lists of criteria for judging linguistic materials were quoted from Anastasiow and Hansen, Goldberg and Rasmussen, Heilman, and Lamb. These were followed by a table showing comparisons of specific points included in the several criteria. The table compared eleven series of readers, all of which claim to be linguistically based or linguistically correct. A short evaluation of each of these series followed the table.

It was hoped that the evaluation of materials would serve as an informative aid for teachers who must choose among many "linguistic approaches."

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