

Comments on our "Axioms"

At a recent meeting of an I.R.E.T. Committee it was decided to present the "Ten Axioms" (appearing in our February issue) to the Eleventh Annual Convention next October for discussion and ratification. The question then arose as to whether the present form and formulation of the Axioms are the most appropriate for such an occasion. The following suggestions were made.

(1) That the term "Axioms" (together with the equivalent Japanese term (kori) might well be replaced by a more generally comprehensible and popular term, such as "Facts."

(2) That undue stress should not be laid on the round number "ten," for it is conceivable that the same axioms or facts could so be condensed as to reduce their number, or, so expanded and supplemented that their number might be in excess of ten.

(3) That in view of the fact that some of the English terms used are difficult of direct translation into Japanese without resulting in misunderstanding, it would be advisable to recast the substance of the series in terms rather of Japanese thought. [For instance the terms primary and secondary, applied to skills, suggest in their present Japanese wording "of first importance," and "of second importance"—a connotation not apparent in the original.]

The matter was then left to a special drafting committee whose work will be to formulate the axioms in such a way that they will be most readily understood and their import the most easily realized.

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Mr. Thomas Beach, B. Comm, one of our correspondents, has contributed to Pitman's Journal of Commercial Education (London) a series of articles in which he taken our "axioms" one by one and comments on them. In the first article he starts:

We may forgive the thoughtful reader for asking whether we ought to speak at the present moment of axioms in connexion with the learning of languages. Can it be said that there exists one such self-evident proposition in the domain of language learning as that taken from the science of mathematics: the whole is greater than its part?

Yet I have just received from Japan a pamphlet in which ten propositions are put forward as commending themselves to universal acceptance as soon as they are stated. Indeed, the author of the booklet declares that not one of them is a mere expression of opinion, which may or may not fit facts; and I want to examine these so-called axioms with you to test whether they form a real basis upon which to build better methods—obviously no single perfect method can ever exist—of learning and teaching a foreign language.

The first axiom is: that a language consists essentially of units: linguistic symbols. Since by symbols not merely the words of a language are designated, but also those parts that are less than words (for example, inflexions, prefixes, and suffixes), those elements that are more than words (phrases), and those that are virtually construction-patterns, as well as the characteristic impressions that are made on the nervous system when the units are spoken aloud in our presence, I think we may assume that the statement is true and acceptable without proof.

But we must include under the heading of linguistic symbols the characteristic gestures accompanying speech and also the actual movements made by tongue, lips, the jaw, the vocal chords, and the breath in producing speech. For since language existed in such movements centuries before it was written with reed or quill,

to exclude such movements and gestures would be to deny that language really existed before the invention of the art of writing.

I am surprised that the author of the pamphlet—a scholar who has devoted his whole life to the elucidation of the problems of language learning—should not have mentioned these types of linguistic symbols in his list, more especially since he has specifically mentioned those symbols that are neither words, parts of words, nor combinations of words: wordless symbols as he calls them in one of his recent works, This Language-learning Business. Among these wordless symbols our author would place word-order. No one will deny that the words, "Brutus killed Caesar," convey a meaning in English entirely different from the words, "Caesar killed Brutus," although the words are in each sentence. A significant tone may alter the meaning of a sentence: the listener may gather, for example, that you are being sarcastic, and hence intend to convey the opposite from what you actually say. If a tone or a pause or a significant word-omission is worthy of mention as a linguistic symbol, why has not the author included gesture? Of course, a gesture has to be seen; but some of the results of movements of the tongue and breath can be heard.

Knowing the views of my correspondent on the teaching of languages so well, I can only assume that for the moment he did not wish to cloud the issue by asking those whose faith in "active" methods of teaching language—there can be no inactive methods of learning languages—is not firmly founded to stretch their imagination beyond the symbols that appear, or by omission fail to appear, upon the printed page. He is one of the most powerful pleaders for active, oral methods of learning and teaching, and the omission can only be accidental.

EDITORIAL

Examinations

This being the season when most of the teachers and students in Japan have been preoccupied with problems, hopes and dreads associated with examinations, the present issue of the Bulletin devotes many of its columns to this subject. Those who enter for examinations may be divided roughly into two classes, (a) those who look upon an examination as something affording a sporting chance, and so seat themselves on the lap of the gods hoping for the best, and (b) those who look upon an examination as a serious matter and, consequently, prepare themselves for what they realize is going to command their best efforts. It is this latter class who consider deeply the question: "What can I do in order to give myself a better chance of success when confronted by examiners?" And it is this latter class to whom we specially address our present issue.

I.R.E.T. Ideals and the Teachers Licence Examination

"In the teaching of a foreign language it shall be the chief aim to cause the pupils to become able to understand and to use the English, German, French, or Chinese of normal common usage, and at the same time to make the teaching contribute to the promotion of knowledge and virtue.

In a foreign language, the following subjects shall be given: pronunciation, spelling, hearing, reading and paraphrasing into Japanese, speaking and composition, dictation, elements of grammar, and penmanship." Art. 10 of the Mombusho regulations for carrying out the Ordinance relating to Middle Schools.

For the last eleven years the I.R.E.T. ideals of English teaching have been discussed at its Conferences and set forth in many declarations, memorandums and reports. They have been reiterated and urged by those who direct our activities, with the cordial and enthusiastic approbation of many of the most prominent authorities and experts in the field of linguistic pedagogy.

What are these ideals?

One of them notably is that of "Plain English First."

The late Professor Yaichiro Isobe, at the time of our Second Conference in 1925, gave an address to the following effect:

"I wish to call your attention to the present system of Entrance Examinations to the Higher Schools. They are said to be not in accordance with what Middle School teachers understand to be the English course assigned by the Educational Authorities. The examiners may have their reasons for framing the peculiar questions that they do, but I am inclined to think that they would do well to take into consideration the fact that these questions are the object of grave criticism.

For what does English teaching in Middle Schools stand? In the official regulations it is clearly stated that it stands for the teaching of "Plain English," that sort of English which may be used by the students in the course of their daily life, and not for that sort of English knowledge which serves merely to enable them to solve the peculiar questions set for the Entrance Examinations."

Although the I.R.E.T. has never gone so far as to recommend that pupils of Middle-grade Schools should be trained in the art of carrying on ordinary conversations in English, it has always insisted on the use of the oral and direct methods during the earlier stages of the middle school programme, and a considerable use of these methods in the subsequent stages. It has always stressed the need for teachers to be able to use

these methods, hence the need for teachers not only to have a knowledge of English but also to be proficient in English-using skills, in regard to reading and writing English and in speaking it and understanding it when spoken.

As Dr. Joji Sakurai (now our Vice-President and Chairman of our Board of Administration) said on the occasion of our Second Conference:

"You must all know the guiding principles of language teaching, as given in the School Regulations of the Department of Education. What the Middle School Regulations say concerning the teaching of English essentially comes to this, that students should be enabled to acquire the capacity of understanding and using ordinary plain English. If the examiners test candidates on archaic, obsolete and other rare words and expressions, then assuredly they are making a gross abuse of examinations, and you should, therefore, rise and protest most strongly against their abuse. You need fear nothing, for you have the Mombusho Regulations backing you, and I am confident that Public Opinion will also back you."

We see therefore that there is, fortunately, no disagreement in principle between I.R.E.T. ideals and Mombusho regulations; it is for teachers to recognize the former and to obey the latter.

The annual examination has just been held for the Middle School Teachers Licence; the examination that tests present and coming teachers in their command of English and in the degree in which they possess English as speech. We are gratified to note that the examiners are inspired by the ideals as outlined above, and are making it clear, by word and act, that an ever-increasing standard of proficiency is required from those who would receive the teachers licence.

In recent years there has been more and more severity in the oral tests; there has been less stress on the deciphering of the works of "classical authors" and more and more stress on what is often termed "Practical English." Candidates who in training themselves for this examination neglect to prepare themselves adequately for the oral tests are experiencing disappointment.

Last year's examination showed a marked improvement in the semi-oral test; the answers to the dictation paper and the paper in which the candidates are required to report a speech gave excellent results. This year's examination was productive of even better results. It is clear that the candidates are becoming more and more proficient in hearing English. This is particularly the case for hearing English when spoken formally and deliberately. Doubtless the excellent practice of listening-in to the "Current Topics" broadcast daily from JOAK is to a great extent the cause of this improvement.

A similar proficiency in the skills of understanding elementary conversational English and of speaking simple English intelligibly is now to be required of candidates. Not that they will be subjected to the test of carrying on a conversation in the manner of those to whom English is the mother tongue; for to expect such a performance in present conditions might be considered unreasonable, but one who fails to understand and respond to remarks about the weather, or to be able to give some intelligible account of himself, his studies and work is unable to comply with the Mombusho regulation dealing with the teaching of conversation.

From his teacher alone can the average pupil in schools of middle grade learn pronunciation, and if the teacher himself can neither hear nor make any distinction between the l-sound and the r-sound, between the vowels of call and coal, between the vowels of star and stir, or between such pairs of words as seas and seeds or major and measure, he is unable to comply with the Mombusho regulation dealing with the teaching of pronunciation.

Elsewhere in this issue will be found a description of the performances at this last examination of an imaginary candidate

who might have combined all the weakest points of all the candidates, and so have obtained no points at all in the oral test for proficiency in using English.

One of the many functions of the I.R.E.T. is to help prospective candidates for this examination by advising them and directing their studies. By so doing we are making a further contribution to the raising of the standard of English teaching in this country. It is our earnest hope that the material contained in the present issue relating to examinations will afford such help in a large measure, and that future candidates will be able to profit by it.

Another Problem for Examiners

In connection with the New-Type Examination we raised the problem last year: "Which is to be penalized more heavily: an incorrect answer or no answer at all?" and showed the reasons why each of the two alternatives should be more heavily penalized. Whereas an incorrect answer is positive evidence of ignorance, the absence of any answer provides no such evidence. On the other hand, when the examinee is ignorant, it is more praiseworthy on his part to acknowledge his ignorance by saying, "I don't know the answer" (or that is by refraining from answering) than to give a random or guess-work answer in the hope that it may prove a lucky shot.

A similar problem now arises in another connection. Candidate A, in his composition, dictation or some other test, makes the same mistake two or more times. Five times he spells the word grammar "grammer:" on five different occasions he pronounces the word cold as "called." Candidate B, in his tests, spells the word grammar correctly four times out of five, and pronounces cold correctly four times out of five. Which is to be more heavily penalized: Candidate A, who proves that he is at present totally ignorant or unskilful on a given point? Or Candidate B, who proves that he is not ignorant on this point, but merely careless?

Some will say that ignorance should be more heavily penalized than carelessness, and that Candidate B may be excused a mere slip of the pen or the tongue. Others will claim that ignorance is easily remedied, that Candidate A's ignorance or lack of skill of to-day may be converted into knowledge or skill to-morrow. "It is by making mistakes that we learn not to make them." They will claim on the other hand that carelessness is something unlikely to be remedied in the future, that carelessness is a permanent defect, while ignorance on a given point is only temporary one.

We invite our readers to give their opinion as to whether it is Candidate A or B who should be penalized the more heavily.

Why You Failed to Pass the Skills Test

The following article is addressed to those candidates for the Mombusho Middle School Teachers' Licence Examination who failed to pass the tests for various skills involved in using English. It is intended to show them the reasons why they failed, and so to indicate to them, and other aspirants, the methods of study they should adopt in future in order to satisfy their examiners in this respect. For the sake of clearness and conciseness I shall assume that I am addressing a composite imaginary candidate who failed to score a single point. Needless to say, no candidate actually so failed in every respect.

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As you came up to the examiners and presented your papers, you were asked, "What is your name?" Instead of answering promptly and distinctly, you hesitated, or said, "Please repeat your question," or gave your name so memblingly that at least one of your examiners could not hear what you said.

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Then you were asked to the effect: "You have been studying pretty hard, I suppose, for this examination, haven't you?" Instead of answering in such terms as, "Yes, I have been studying pretty hard," or "Yes, that's quite true," you remained silent, or you gave the abrupt and discourteous answer, "Yes." Or you said, "Please repeat your question." Or (entirely misunderstanding the question), "Yes, the examination is hard." In a few cases you answered honestly but injudiciously, "No, I have not been studying hard; I don't much mind whether I pass or not?" or "No, I have been too busy in other matters."

Then you were asked to the effect: "What books have you read, and otherwise what methods have you followed, or what procedures have you adopted to help you to pass this examination, or to make you skilful in using English?"

Instead of answering, "To attain proficiency in pronunciation, I have drilled myself daily in exercises based on So-and-so's book; for the technique of question-answering I have studied this and that book; for intonation I have made a study of so-and-so and so-and-so; for proficiency in conversation I have done this and that; I have practised both extensive and intensive reading, putting myself in the place of my prospective pupils;" you remained silent, or you said, "Please repeat your question." Or you rattled off, hesitatingly or glibly, "the Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft, Lamb's Essays, The Sketch Book, Tess," as if you had been coached for this or some similar question, or as if you imagined that a knowledge of the names of such classics were sufficient to qualify you to teach the elements of English to pupils of schools of middle grade.

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Then you were asked, "Have you made any use of gramophone records for the purpose of becoming more proficient in spoken English?" Instead of answering that you had done so, or of expressing regrets that circumstances had prevented you from doing so, you remained silent, or you said that you did not understand the word "gramophone," or you said, "Yes, I have studied Grammar," or you said that you had not imagined that gramophone records had any value for the purpose of learning the elements of English pronunciation or conversation.

You were then asked what you found most difficult in your study of English, and what steps you took to overcome the difficulty. Instead of answering promptly and intelligibly, you remained silent, or answered, "Please repeat your question," or answered vaguely, "Conversation," "Pronunciation" or "Grammar," without giving any indication of what steps you have been taking to overcome that particular difficulty. Some of you vaguely mentioned the names of books on Advanced English Syntax, but mentioned no names of works on Elementary English syntax—the sort of English Syntax needed by your prospective pupils.

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In times gone by, when Baron Kanda, of regretted memory, insisted on a high degree of proficiency in the skills associated with Spoken English, the candidates were required to express themselves in English without the help of leading questions. In more recent years there has been greater leniency in this respect, and candidates have been helped, in that their powers of expression are prompted by questions put by their examiners. In this particular examination the utmost facility was afforded—but without the results obtained by Baron Kanda. To the remaining questions in the "Free Conversation" part of the Oral Test you gave no reactions.

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Then you were required to show that you can hear and make some difference between the vowels of "called" and "cold," that you could distinguish between l and r; that "sees" is not pronounced in the same way as "seeds"; that there is a difference between, e.g. "fast" and "first"; and between "dark" and "duck." You failed to hear and make any such distinctions; and thereby you showed that you would be unable to teach the hundreds or thousands of the students who would rely on you for such a knowledge of English sounds as to enable them to make such elementary distinctions.

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One of your examiners pronounced in a clear and distinct voice five simple English sentences, and asked you to repeat them after him. You were unable to do so. Thereby you lost five precious points.

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You were asked to read aloud five sentences—or pairs of sentences. You failed to read them intelligibly, and thereby you lost five more precious points.

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For the last ten years there have been published in Japan, for benefit particularly of pupils of the lower grades of middle schools, a series of books exemplifying the technique of question-answering. A knowledge of, and a skill in using, this technique is indispensable for every teacher and every pupil in schools of middle grade. You were tested on your acquaintance with this technique, and your responses revealed that you are less acquainted with this technique than are many first-year middle-school pupils.

You failed to realize the need to show that you are acquainted with this procedure. And next year you will again fail to obtain the needed five points in this respect—unless you make it your business to spend an hour or two in acquiring this technique.

You were judged, too, on the general impression that you gave to your examiners as to your skill in using English. Your slowness, your silences, your hesitations, your lack of initiative, and general slackness lost you another five points, so that on the whole whereas you might have scored 30 points you scored no points at all.

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Moreover your poor performances in the Composition and Dictation tests lost you many more points. You committed gross errors in elementary grammar: errors in elementary grammar: errors that would not be permitted in the case of a pupil of the first year middle school grade. You were unable to spell such words as Saturday or Thursday. You were unable to write, in the 45 minutes allowed, 300 words of simple English composition, and wrote only 100 words.

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Some of you confessed that you cannot read English in the manner in which you read Japanese—but only decipher it (by a slow process of mental translation).

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For these separate and cumulative reasons you failed to satisfy those who were examining you in your skill in using English, in spite of the fact that our earnest wish was to pass you.

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The Institute for Research in English Teaching is ready to help you in your efforts to pass this examination, and will help you, if you ask us for such help. This we can tell you: if you neglect the oral side of the examination for the Middle School Teachers' Licence, you will surely fail. Remember that, according to the regulations of the Department of Education, pupils of the middle school grade are to be trained in the skills of pronunciation and conversation, and that it is the function and duty of their teachers to train them in such skills. If you have the notion that mere "book-learning" will give you your licence, you are mistaken. Your chances of success in future examinations will depend on the degree in which you possess "English as Speech"—which means your capacity to use English.

The Composition Test

In the course of the Middle School Teachers' Licence examination, the following talk was given by the examiner, and the candidates were required to give a 300-word report of it. Although the results were judged with more than usual severity, a large number of candidates obtained relatively high points.

Two Ways of Looking at Language Teaching

There are at least two ways of looking at language-teaching. One of them is teaching pupils to come to know something; the other is teaching them to come to do something. So there are, roughly speaking, two sorts of language teachers; those who are spending most of their time in imparting knowledge, and those who are spending most of their time in causing their pupils to become proficient in skills.

Let us consider these two things: knowledge of a language and skill in using that language. Japanese children have very little knowledge of the Japanese language but are very skilful in using it. Similarly English children know very little about English but can use it with great skill. You to whom I am speaking know much more about English than the average Englishman; you could tell the average Englishman many things about English that he doesn't know. But you will excuse me if I suggest that the average Englishman can use English with far greater skill than the average Japanese teacher can use it.

I am not saying that giving knowledge is the wrong way and that training pupils in skills is the right way: I am just pointing out the existence of these two ways, and that some teachers and learners prefer one of these ways and that other teachers and learners prefer the other of these ways.

Take the average English teacher who is teaching French in an English school. You will find that he is spending all or nearly all of the lesson period in causing his pupils to know a lot of things about the French language. Take the average French governess who is teaching French to the children in an English family. You will find that she is giving them little or no information about French—she is not giving them knowledge but she is making them use French—chiefly by speaking it.

De Saussure, a famous Swiss professor, was the first to call general attention to this difference: the difference between a language as something to be known and as something to be used. He pointed out that a language may be looked upon either as a collection of all the rules and instructions that can be given about it or as a branch of human behaviour. This is what is meant by a language considered as a "code" and a language considered as "speech." (Don't pay too much attention to those two words code and speech but think rather of the two things that these words represent. Code has not here the ordinary meaning as in a code of laws or a cable code, and speech has not here the ordinary meaning of speaking. They mean here, respectively a language looked upon as the sum of all the things in it and a language looked upon as a series of skills to be acquired.)

If you can understand English when spoken or written or can speak it or write it correctly without thinking of the words and the way sentences are built up, you possess the language more or less as speech. If you understand spoken and written English and can speak and write it only by thinking of its words and rules, and by mental translation you possess the language more or less as code.

You are all English teachers or expect to be English teachers. Remember, then, that you may teach English in these two ways: by giving information and by making your pupils skilful in using it.

At this Teachers Licence Examination you are being tested on these two points. You are being tested on your knowledge of English as code and on the degree of your skill in using English. The translation, grammar, phonetic-theory tests will show your examiners what knowledge you have of English as code; This composition test, the dictation test, and the tests in which you will have to speak English read it; and understand it when spoken will show your examiners what proficiency you have in using English.

Towards "Simplified English"

The Director has been instructed by the Dept. of Education to accept an invitation to attend a conference to be held at New York from Oct. 15th to 20th, and left Yokohama on Sept. 28th by the Empress of Japan.

This conference is being held under the auspices of the Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundations of New York, and has been convened by Dr. Michael West of the Ontario College of Education; its object is to discuss in general "The Use of English as a World Language," and, in particular, problems of Vocabulary Limitation and Text Simplification.

Among those who have been invited are: Dr. Lawrence Faucett (Linguistic Adviser to the Turkish Dept. of Education), Professor R. H. Fife (Columbia University), Mr. C. K. Ogden (the compiler of "Basic English") Dr. E. Sapir (authority on linguistic symbolism, and Dr. J. Aiken (representing the Institute of International Affairs).

The agenda is as follows:

1. Is it considered desirable that a limited English vocabulary be agreed upon as a common starting point of English study, in order to facilitate mutual intelligibility among those who have learnt only a little English?
2. Should this agreed vocabulary (in the first instance at any rate) be considered merely as an instrument for educational efficiency and coordination, or should it be intended as a contribution to the problem of providing an international form of the English language?
3. Should the vocabulary be merely a defining vocabulary, with such names only as are necessary for definition, or should it attempt to supply exact names in all commonly discussed fields? Are abnormal compounds to be allowed in order to economize the burden of specific names (e.g. Pocket-linen-handkerchief), or by what means are specific names to be selected and economized?
4. Should such a vocabulary profess to deal with all fields of discourse (other than those of a definitely technical nature), or should it specifically exclude words connected with matters which are unlikely to form subjects of international discussion (e.g. details of domestic life, story and adventure words, details of dress, etc.)?
5. Should the list reflect a definitely European and American?—or should it be neutral and allow adaptation to any environment by means of supplementary lists?
6. What should the policy of the vocabulary be in regard to divergences of British and American speech?—Should the list be definitely British? or eclectic? or permit alternatives?
7. (a) Is it essentially necessary that the vocabulary should be adequate to produce an entirely normal form of English speech, or may certain abnormalities be countenanced in order to effect greater economy?
(b) (In the latter event)—Are such abnormalities to be of general structure or in the use of individual words only?
8. Does the Conference desire to frame any detailed criteria of word-selection, e.g. ambiguous words and homonyms to be excluded, etc.?
9. By what means should control be exercised over idioms, collocations and compounds which can be formed within the vocabulary?
10. Should any limitation of constructions (sentence forms) be attempted?
11. By what means shall the first draft be prepared? What arrangement shall be made for discussion, criticism and approval of the draft?

12. What permanent organization is necessary to bring the vocabulary into general use? to safeguard it against unauthorized modifications? to revise or improve it authoritatively in the light of experience?

13. Procedures in teaching English as a second language to Far-Eastern races.

14. Possible simplification of grammatical forms.

15. Problems in the training of teachers.

EDITORIAL

Keeping up the Direct Method

In European countries where the languages being taught are cognate to the mother tongue, the difficulties of, and consequently the resistances to, the employment of direct method procedures are not very great, once the initial stages have been passed. The average European teacher who is not an enthusiastic direct methodist will say: "We must use the mother tongue at the beginning when the pupils do not know a single word; otherwise we waste a great deal of time. But after the first two years or so there is no reason why the lesson should not be conducted almost entirely in the language being learned, for the pupils have a sufficient vocabulary to make simple explanations intelligible and contexts will always help a lot, many of the new words and expressions being reminiscent of the mother tongue."

The problem of the direct methodist, then, in such countries is one of starting the direct method. The problem in Japan, as we have known for some time, and as was brought out again by the findings of the sectional committees at the recent Convention, is one of keeping it up. In almost all Japanese middle schools direct method procedures are employed well-nigh exclusively in the English lessons of the first two years. After that, in the average school, they are less and less employed, until in the fifth year the casual visitor to the English class-room might be hard put to it to discern that the lesson was an English one at all, and certainly he would hear much more Japanese than English in the course of the hour.

Now a rational consideration of the problem here revealed must begin with the assumption that the amount of fundamental resistance to direct method procedures on the part of pupils and, particularly, of teachers is approximately the same in Japan as in Western countries. It must then take into account the interesting contrast pointed out above, for it is in the light of some explanation of the causes of this contrast that adequate measures can be taken to secure the desired results in Japan. Direct method in the early stages must be largely ostensive, whether employed in Japan for English or in the occident for another occidental language. It is symbolized by the historic figure of fun or fame, the teacher brandishing a book and saying: "This is a book. Is this a book?" etc. Now the European teacher feels that he can get over this stage by translation of the necessary words, and by explanations in the mother tongue of the slight changes in word order etc. to be encountered in the new language, with a probable economy in time and a certain economy in (his) effort. The point is that use of the mother tongue is encouraged by the facts that not a great deal of explanation is necessary, that it can be swiftly given and as swiftly, in most cases, apprehended. The Japanese teacher facing the same problem with regard to English knows that an explanation of the changes of word order, elementary usage, etc. as between Japanese and English, would if attempted, develop into an abstruse dissertation taking time and not necessarily ensuring comprehension. He therefore turns gladly to the ostensive direct method in the same way as a mother teaching her child readily turns to it. This is not of course to suggest that objectively the Japanese middle school student is nearer the child than his occidental fellow, but merely to point out that relation of his linguistic experience in the mother tongue to that of the new experience with the language to be learned is such a cumbersome procedure at the outset, by reason of the fundamental differences of the languages, as not to be likely to be attended with success, while the same attempt on the part of the occidental is a fairly simple process likely enough to be attended with success. Hence the contrast in the initial stages.

The contrast later on has fundamentally the same cause. Direct method as it advances must become obviously less ostensive and more contextual. Of course, these classifications are not absolute—contextual procedures can be employed ostensively, and very often are—but by and large, there must clearly be an end of the phase: "This is a book." with accompanying gestures, and a move towards "to prevariate means to avoid (keep away from) speaking the truth" etc. In this latter phase, the occidental teacher and pupil are quite happy. More often than not, the new word is a semi-familiar one, for it is an easily observable phenomenon that the more "advanced" cognate languages become, as far as vocabulary is concerned, the more they seem to converge. Exactly the contrary is the case for non-cognate languages. The Japanese teacher, for example, finds it difficult to ensure understanding through the adoption of contextual procedure. He finds identification becoming increasingly vague and hence fusion increasingly imperfect or unsatisfactory. So he resorts to translation in order to ensure that at least something is clearly identified.

Now it serves no purpose for the ardent direct methodist to ignore the inevitable nature of this reaction of the Japanese teacher. Precise identification is clearly desirable, and in a large number of cases the Japanese teacher of English can only be sure of such precision by translation, while the teacher in the occident can be fairly sure of such precision without translation. Thus, when the High Schools' sectional committee assert the value of the mother tongue as a guarantee and a test of accurate identification, they are asserting an incontestable truth in the particular circumstances attending the learning of English by Japanese students. But fusion is not helped by translation anywhere, and as the bulk of the time in any language course should be devoted to fusion, this is a supreme argument in favour of keeping up the direct method at least as far as possible.

How is this to be done? Some useful suggestions were made by the sectional committees. There should be more texts for extensive reading within suitable vocabulary radii for the third, fourth, and fifth years of the Middle School. As far as the fifth year is concerned, the simplified English series should more or less meet the case. But the number of volumes at present available is clearly inadequate and must, as it will, be increased. For the third year, the stories written in a thousand word vocabulary should suffice, but again there are not enough of them. As to the fourth year, at present there would seem to be no provision at all, and attempts will be made during next year to put out suitably graded tests for such extensive reading.

But even if ample material for extensive reading is provided, this will not be enough to keep up the direct method in the later years. The greater part of the work has to be intensive and therefore we have to discover ways for doing such work by direct method. If we assume that we cannot get much help from purely contextual exercises, as the occidental teacher does, we have to provide purely ostensive and or ostensive-contextual exercises of a kind suitable for the fairly advanced stage reached. For the fifth year the English as Speech series will serve the purpose, but as all these texts are written in a 3,000 word vocabulary, they will be found probably too difficult for the fourth year and certainly too difficult for the third year. However, the series provides the necessary technique, so all we have to do is to adapt it to texts based on a lower vocabulary radius.

We could, of course, provide special texts, but these could probably only be used for occasional work, as it is usually considered desirable to base the main work on a reader. There remain then only two things to do; either to encourage the in-

dividual teacher to improvise his own ostensive-contextual procedures, based on the reader he is using, or to prepare companion volumes to, say, the Standard Readers with all the procedures worked out in detail. The first is obviously better because (1) we cannot be sure what readers any given teacher will want to use and (2) because improvisation adds to the spontaneity and hence to the interest of the lesson.

But this improvisation is not easy for any teacher, foreigner or Japanese. Those who have come from Higher Normal Schools have had some training in it, but such teachers are far from being in the majority. The average teacher has never done anything of the kind, a fact which argues for giving him special training along these lines, as was recommended by the Foreign Teachers' sectional committee. There is nothing very much that the Institute can do about this, except insist on the necessity for such training and endeavour to extend the scope of its present courses therein. This we shall, of course, do.

On the other hand, we shall be glad, to work out the procedures, both in separate texts and in connection with the Standard or Abridged Readers. But, while doing so, we would emphasise that the only way to be sure of keeping up the direct method in the later years of the Middle School is for the teachers themselves to be able to improvise their own procedures. Anything that we can do can only serve as a guide. The real task of keeping up the direct method must rest with the teacher who is prepared to keep up his own mastery of the necessary technique.

