

World-Speech

NO. 11

MARIETTA, OHIO, U. S. A.

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Believes in Progress

170 Genesee St., Auburn, N. Y.
Dear Mr. Foster:

Thanks for the two numbers of *WORLD-SPEECH*, which I am examining with interest. I realize now how the Esperanto principles have sunk into my mind. Still I hope I am not entirely prejudiced by that.

It seems to me that you have followed more the Volapük than the Esperanto philosophy, tho I do not intend to accuse you of "following" anyone. Perhaps those two philosophies are the only available ones for the basis of a new language. At any rate I find myself inclining to the Esperanto group of principles, not necessarily the language itself, for I like Ido very much.

So much for general theory. I am wondering if it is a good plan to have short syllable words all through a language. The word "potato" may be hard for a child, but it does not seem to bother adults very much. Again, longer words have more rhythm, perhaps beauty.

The rigid plan of alphabetical sequence of related words may be most helpful, yet I feel that in some respects suffixes are also a useful device. I once taught an Esperanto class and found that the table of conjunctions proved very difficult. I think Ido is better in that respect. Since I believe in progress I do not feel that Esperanto is by any means the last word. So you have a free field and I wish you all success.

The problem presents so many sides that I hesitate to touch upon it in a necessarily brief note. However the solution is of great importance, since an accepted international language is much to be desired.

The Esperanto plan of using Latin and German roots has seemed to me a wise one. Yet even if one believed in having a body of roots as a basis, he need not be tied down to Latin roots. I believe Dutch roots were once tried, but there might be other resources in that direction. Again the plan of nouns ending in *o*, verbs in *s*, and adjectives in *a* appeals to me as helpful in distinguishing words,

tho of course one need not be confined to those particular endings.

I like the plan of pronunciation you have adopted.

You deserve much credit for entering upon such a worthy cause, and I feel you have made a splendid contribution. May you have adequate support, and win the prize.

Cordially,

H. M. Allen.

The word "potato" may not seem difficult to an adult who has used it all his lifetime. Neither is the word "kartoffel" or the word "pomme de terre." The German thinks "Lebensversicherungsgesellschaft" is as easy as breathing. But one trouble is that by the time we have become accustomed to such words we have to move on, and the next generation has to begin anew and learn them all over again.

We are glad to have correspondents state their objections and problems as frankly and as clearly as Mr. Allen does. When we all shake our ideas together, it gives the best and the fittest a chance to survive.

PROGRESS

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INTERLINGUA

A card from Prof. Peano, President of the Academia de Interlingua says:

Honorato Consocio:

Si vos vol fac 6 socios ad Academia, secundo nostro conventionone, es necesse que vos nuntia Academia, et publicationes et donos in WORLD-SPEECH.

Perhaps the misunderstanding is on the side of WORLD-SPEECH, but when Prof. Peano several months ago wrote us the letter that we published in the April number of WORLD-SPEECH, he did not add any condition requiring advertising of the Academia, but stated simply that if we would send WORLD-SPEECH to the members, he would give us the right to make 6 members of the Academia. We wrote him that we accepted the conditions and forwarded two names to him for membership. We have been sending WORLD-SPEECH for 1913 to the list of members, and supposed that there was no other requirement made of us than that stated, and that the names sent would be placed on the list of members. It now seems that we were mistaken. There are about 100 members of the Academia. As they are nearly all outside of the United States we must put postage stamps on the

copies sent to them. One cent for each of the 100 members would amount to \$1. a month in postage, or \$12. a year. Six memberships at 10 francs or \$2. each would amount to \$12, just what we would be required to spend for postage. That is, we would be donating the copies of *WORLD-SPEECH*. If the Academia increased to 200 members we should be losing \$12. in postage and donating *WORLD-SPEECH* beside.

We took the chances of that for the sake of helping the Academia and the cause it represents. Now comes the additional requirement of advertising the Academia, after we have been sending *WORLD-SPEECH* for nearly a year to the members. Neither are we told how much advertising will be required. We want to help the Academia, and the cause of international language. But we desire also a clear understanding as to the matter. If we are mistaken in it, will Prof. Peano kindly set us right?

The Logic of Pronunciation

It is hard for the person to whom English is his native tongue to realize what a struggle the foreigner has to understand some of the peculiarities of our spelling and pronunciation. One foreigner gives the following description of his first lesson in an English class:

We have been given a book to learn the letters. I arrive at the class, having learned them perfectly.

Soon, in the course of the lesson, we have word l-o-w. "Love," I pronounce it thinking the w has the sound v.

"No; it is pronounced 'lo,'" says the teacher.

"Then why is the w there?" I inquire, mystified.

"It is there because that is the way the word is spelled," responds the teacher; "but it is silent. Never mind why; it is sufficient to know that it is there."

Before long we come to n-o-w.

"Pronounce it," says the teacher.

"No," I reply.

"Why will you not?" she asks me.

It is some time before she understands that I am trying to pronounce the word when I say "No." Then she declares that although l-o-w is lo, n-o-w is now.

"If you want to make it no," she explains, kindly, "you put k before it."

You may believe I am bewildered. However, I memorize that n-o-w is now. The next word is s-n-o-w. I pronounce it like now with an s before it. The teacher laughs. The w is again become silent, apparently for no reason, and the word is called sno.

But that is not all. Later, I find that if you drop the n from snow, you can pronounce it whichever way you like!—*Youth's Companion*.