

研究生英语系列教材

研究生英语阅读教程

(下册)

主编：王湘云



研究生英语系列教材


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下 册

An English Reading Course Book For Postgraduates

Book II

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《聚焦英语》总顾问:

薄冰 翟象俊

薄冰

北京外国语大学英语系教授,从事英语教学工作 50 余年,尤其专长英语语法的教学与研究,对英汉翻译亦有较深的造诣。现主持《英语世界》、《英语沙龙》和《大学英语》等刊物的咨询专栏,其主要论著如《英语语法手册》、《英语时态详解》、《高级英语语法》、《薄冰英语语法(袖珍本)》等,几十年来,一直是广大英语学习者首选的优质工具书。

翟象俊

1960 年复旦大学外文系本科毕业,1966 年研究生毕业。曾任复旦大学英语部主任兼外文系副主任、教授、硕士生导师,享受国务院特殊津贴。上海市翻译家协会副会长,曾参与《英汉大词典》、《英汉双解英语短语动词词典》的编写。主编《大学英语》(精读)及“九五”国家重点教材《21 世纪大学英语》(共 16 册);译著有《乱世佳人》、《钱商》和《阿马罗神父的罪恶》及英、美作家海明威、霍桑、贝克等的作品。

前言

《研究生英语阅读教程》是《研究生英语系列教材》的重要组成部分,全书分上下两册,每册 10 个单元,每个单元一般需要 5~6 学时,教师和学生可根据课文的长度和难度适当调整学时。

本教程旨在提高研究生的英语阅读能力,使其在这方面有一个质的飞跃,为今后的工作和学习打下坚实的英语阅读基础。

与其他类型教材相比,本教材具有以下显著特点:

一、经典名篇与时代旋律有机结合。作为未来的研究工作者,研究生在英语方面既应当具备深厚的文化功底,又应当掌握最新的文化科学知识。所以在遴选文章方面,本教材克服了其他一些教材编写过程中根据主编好恶选择文章的主观性。我们既选择了 O. Henry 的“The Gift of the Magi”, Edgar Allan Poe 的“Hop-Frog”, Max Shulman 的“Love Is a Fallacy”, Mark Twain 的“The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County”和 Martin Luther King Jr. 的“The Negro Is Your Brother”等名家经典,同时也收录了“Euthanasia”, “Human Gene Therapy”, “The Role of Science in Sustainable Development”, “My Race Problem—and Ours”等一些关注现代热点问题的文章。

二、语言类文章为主,兼顾各种题材。一部英语语言教材既应引导学生把握英语语言的实质和应用规律,也应当让学生领略和理解英语语言的瑰丽多姿及文体的多种多样。因此,本教材收录了“Language and Thought”和“Why Good English is Good for You”等语言类文章,以帮助读者了解英语之奥妙和实质;还收录了“Why Catholics Like Einstein”, “The Sinews of Peace”, “The Galileo Affair”和“A Free Man's Worship”等政论经典,可让读者欣赏英语语言节奏之铿锵,选词之研究,说理之透彻;也收录了“On the Tendency of Varieties to Depart Indefinitely from the Original Type”和“Struggle for Existence”等一些生命科学方面的名篇,以让读者领略它们表达之明晰,逻辑之严密。“Niagara Falls”带你遨游雄伟的尼亚加拉大瀑布,“The Beauty of England”让你领略英格兰迷人的景色,“Waiting for Godot”帮你品味“荒诞派戏剧”的独特神韵,体会 Samuel Beckett 对人类执著的关注。

三、以语言为基础,以学生为中心。一本教材成败关键在于能否将学生的被动接收转化为主动学习,因此,在编写过程中,我们始终坚持让学生在比较愉悦、轻松的氛围中学习英语,掌握学习英语的技巧,想方设法将枯燥的语言学习变得兴趣盎然。我们在选材时,不仅注意选择能够激起学生兴奋点的文章,而且在每篇文章前撰写了简明扼要的 Introduction,使学生在开篇就能对文章有一个大致的了解,为理解通篇文章打下坚实的基础。在对课文生词注解时,我们严格按照教学大纲,将大学英语四级以上的词汇作了注释。为了培养学生良好的用英语思考、用英语学习的习惯,我们对生词进行了英语注释。同时针对文章出现的影响学生理解的典故,我们在 Cultural Notes 中进行了较详尽的注解。

四、结合课文,边学边练。学习之要诀在于理论与实践相结合,所以,我们结合《大纲》就课文配备了相当数量的练习。在 After-text Practice 中,我们主要采用 Multiple Choice 和 True or False Statement 两种题型来考查学生对课文主要内容的理解和掌握。采用 Translation,包括英译汉和汉译英两种形式,来检测学生对文中知识点的理解与对重点难点词汇的理解和应用能力。另外,为了

考查学生们对难点单词的掌握,也为了帮助学生扩大词汇量,我们设计了 Vocabulary 10 000,让学生在最短的时间内掌握最多的单词。

五、专项训练,提高阅读能力。学习之目的在于获取实际应用能力和归纳推理能力,因此,我们在 Reading for Ability 中设计了多种形式来培养学生各方面的阅读能力。Reading Comprehension 重在培养学生捕捉重要信息以及归纳文章主题的能力,Short Answer Questions 旨在培养学生归纳和表达的能力,Cloze 则有助于培养学生对篇章的理解和表达能力。

六、世纪经典结合西方风俗,拓展知识面。素质教育的关键在于深厚的知识功底与广博的知识面相结合,因此,在 Reading for Ornament 中,我们设计了 Learning from Masters (下册为 Learning from Vip's)和 A Glimpse of the West 两种形式的阅读课文。在 Learning from Masters 中,我们收录了 Thomas Jefferson 起草的“The Declaration of Independence”,Henry Patrick 的“Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death”,Francis Bacon 的“Of Truth”和 Bertrand Russell 的“What I Have Lived For”等铿锵名篇。在这里,学生不仅能够欣赏到 Charles Dickens 在“A Tale of Two Cities”中的琅琅俳句,Jane Austen 在“Pride and Prejudice”中流露的细腻诙谐。而且可以领略到 J. B. Priestley 的“The Beauty of England”,Frank Trippet 的“A Season for Hymning and Hawing”以及 James J. Kilpatrick 的“Spring”中千姿百态的不列颠风光。在本书中,我们收录了历届美国总统的就职演说,这些经过千锤百炼字字珠玑的世纪经典将使学生更好领会英语语言的无穷奥妙和神奇魅力。而 A Glimpse of the West 能帮助读者了解西方的政治、经济、文化、教育和科学,以丰富自己的知识。

七、轻松英语,培养学习兴趣。为了使英语学习不再像以往那样枯燥无味,使学生能够真正从“要我学”转变为“我要学”,使他们知道“英语原来这么有趣”,我们在 Reading for Delight 中安排了一个个诙谐幽默的故事和一些匠心独具、慧眼独具的连珠妙语。

本教材阅读文章均出自英文原版图书和杂志。需要指出的是,我们对其中一些现代英语视为不规范的语法和拼写予以了保留,以忠实于原著,保持原著的风格特色。

本书作者均是在全日制高等学校从教多年的资深教师。本书既是作者多年教学经验和研究成果的总结,也是这些教学经验和研究成果的升华。本书编写的具体分工如下:

王湘云提供了本册全部十个单元的 Text, Learning from VIP's, A Glimpse of the West, Reading for Delight,并撰写了全部十个单元的 Reading for Ability 部分。

王克友撰写了第一、四、五、八单元的 New Words, Phrases and Expressions, Cultural Notes 和 After-text Practice。

郑九海撰写了第六、九、十单元的 New Words, Phrases and Expressions, Cultural Notes 和 After-text Practice。

孙笑峰撰写了第七单元的 New Words, Phrases and Expressions, Cultural Notes 和 After-text Practice。

史成周撰写了第二、三单元的 New Words, Phrases and Expressions, Cultural Notes 和 After-text Practice。

全书由王湘云策划、统筹、主编、补充和定稿。王克友、郑九海、孙笑峰和史成周也参加了部分稿件的校对工作。

由于编者水平所限,错误之处在所难免,欢迎专家、读者批评指正,以便再版时修订充实。

编者
2002 年 1 月

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Unit One

Why Good English Is Good for You

The present essay is not just a wry and incisive look at the way American English is being abused. It is a strong argument in favor of using good English—an effort that improves not only communication but memory and thinking as well.

John Simon ^[1]

[1] What's good English to you that... you should grieve for it? What good is correct speech and writing, you may ask, in an age in which hardly anyone seems to know, and no one seems to care? Why shouldn't you just fling bloopers, riotously with the throng, and not stick out from the rest like a sore thumb by using the language correctly? Isn't grammar really a thing of the past, and isn't the new idea to communicate in *any* way as long as you can make yourself understood?

[2] The usual, basic defense of good English (and here, again, let us not worry about nomenclature—for all I care, you may call it “Standard English,” “correct American,” or anything else) is that it helps communication, that it is perhaps even a *sine qua non* of mutual understanding. Although this is a crude truth of sorts, it strikes me as, in some ways, both more and less than the truth. Suppose you say, “Everyone in their right mind would cross on the green light” or “Hopefully, it won't rain tomorrow,” chances are very good that the person you say this to will understand you, even though you are committing obvious solecisms or creating needless ambiguities. Similarly, if you write in a letter, “The baby has finally ceased it's howling” (spelling *its* as *it's*), the recipient will be able to figure out what was meant. But “figuring out” is precisely what a listener or reader should not have to do. There is, of course, the fundamental matter of courtesy to the other person, but it goes beyond that: why waste time on unscrambling simple meaning when there are more complex questions that should receive our undivided attention? If the many cooks had to worry first about which out of a large number of pots had no leak in it, the broth, whether spoiled or not, would take forever to be ready.

[3] It is, I repeat, only initially a matter of clarity. It is also a matter of concision. Space today is as limited as time. If you have only a thousand words in which to convey an important message it helps to know that “overcomplicated” is correct and “overly complicated” is incorrect. Never mind the grammatical explanations; the two extra characters and one space between words are reason enough. But what about the more advanced forms of word-mongering that hold sway nowadays? Take redundancy, like the “hopes and aspirations” of Jimmy Carter^[2], quoted by Edwin Newman as having “a deeply profound religious experience;” or elaborate jargon, as when Charles G. Walcutt, a graduate professor of English at CUNY^[3], writes (again as quoted by Newman): “The colleges, trying to remediate in-

creasing numbers of...illiterates up to college levels, are being highschoolized;" or just obfuscatory verbiage of the pretentious sort, such as this fragment from a letter I received: "It is my impression that effective *inter* personal verbal communication depends on prior effective *intra*-personal verbal communication." What this means is that if you think clearly, you can speak and write clearly—except if you are a "certified speech and language pathologist," like the writer of the letter I quote. (By the way, she adds the letters Ph.D. after her name, though she is not even from Germany, where *Herr* and *Frau Doktor*⁽⁴⁾ are in common, not to say vulgar, use.)

[4] But except for her ghastly verbiage, our certified language pathologist (whatever that means) is perfectly right; there is a close connection between the ability to think and the ability to use English correctly. After all, we think in words, we conceptualize in words, we work out our problems inwardly with words, and using them correctly is comparable to a craftsman's treating his tools with care, keeping his materials in good shape. Would you trust a weaver who hangs her wet laundry on her loom, or lets her cats bed down in her yarn? The person who does not respect words and their proper relationships cannot have much respect for ideas—very possibly cannot have ideas at all. My quarrel is not so much with minor errors that we all fall into from time to time even if we know better as it is with basic sloppiness or ignorance or defiance of good English.

[5] Training yourself to speak and write correctly—and I say "training yourself" because nowadays, unfortunately, you cannot depend on other people or on institutions to give you the proper training, for reasons I shall discuss later—training yourself, then, in language, means developing at the very least two extremely useful faculties: your sense of discipline and your memory. Discipline because language is with us always, as nothing else is: it follows us much as, in the old morality play⁽⁵⁾, Good Deeds followed Everyman, all the way to the grave; and, if the language is written, even beyond. Let me explain: if you can keep an orderly apartment, if you can see to it that your correspondence and bill-paying are attended to regularly, if your diet and wardrobe are maintained with the necessary care—good enough; you are a disciplined person.

[6] But the preliminary discipline underlying all others is nevertheless your speech: the words that come out of you almost as frequently and—if you are tidy—as regularly as your breath. I would go so far as to say that, immediately after your bodily functions, language is first, unless you happen to be an ascetic, an anchorite, or a stylite; but unless you are a *stylite*, you had better be a *stylist*.

[7] Most of us—almost all—must take in and give out language as we do breath, and we had better consider the seriousness of language pollution as second only to air pollution. For the linguistically disciplined, to misuse or mispronounce a word is an unnecessary and unhealthy contribution to the surrounding smog. To have taught ourselves not to do this, or—being human⁽⁶⁾ and thus also imperfect—to do it as little as possible, means deriving from every speaking moment the satisfaction we get from a cap that snaps on to a container perfectly, an elevator that stops flush with the landing, a roulette ball that comes to rest exactly on the number on which we have placed our bet. It gives us the pleasure of hearing or seeing our words—because they are abiding by the rules—snapping, sliding, falling precisely into place, expressing with perfect lucidity and symmetry just what we wanted them to express. This is comparable to the satisfaction of the athlete or ballet dancer or pianist finding his body or legs or

fingers doing his bidding with unimpeachable accuracy.

[8] And if someone now says that “in George Eliot’s lesser novels, she is not completely in command” is perfectly comprehensible even if it is ungrammatical, the “she” having no antecedent in the nominative (*Eliot’s* is a genitive), I say, “Comprehensible, perhaps, but lopsided,” for the civilized and orderly mind does not feel comfortable with that “she”—does not hear that desired and satisfying click of correctness—unless the sentence is restructured as “George Eliot, in her lesser novels, is not…” or in some similar way. In fact, the fully literate ear can be thrown by this error in syntax; it may look for the antecedent of that “she” elsewhere than in the preceding possessive case. Be that as it may, playing without rules and winning—in this instance, managing to communicate without using good English—is no more satisfactory than winning in a sport or game by accident or by disregarding the rules: which is really cheating.

[9] The second faculty good speech develops is, as I have mentioned before, our memory. Grammar and syntax are partly logical—and to that extent they are also good exercisers and developers of our logical faculty—but they are also partly arbitrary, conventional, irrational. For example, the correct “compared to” and “contrasted with” could, from the logical point of view, just as well be “contrasted to” and “compared with” (“compared with,” of course, is correct, but in a different sense from the one that concerns us here, namely, the antithesis of “contrasted with”). And, apropos *different*, logic would have to strain desperately to explain the exclusive correctness of “different from,” given the exclusive correctness of “other than,” which would seem to justify “different than,” jarring though that is to the cultivated ear.

[10] But there it is: some things are so because tradition, usage, the best speakers and writers, the grammar books and dictionaries have made them so. There may even exist some hidden historical explanation: something, perhaps, in the Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, or other origins of a word or construction that you and I may very easily never know. We can, however, memorize; and memorization can be a wonderfully useful thing—surely the Greeks were right to consider *Mnemosyne* (memory) the mother of the Muses^[7], for without her there would be no art and no science. And what better place to practice one’s mnemonic skills than in the study of one’s language?

[11] There is something particularly useful about speaking correctly and precisely because language is always there as a foundation—or, if you prefer a more fluid image, an undercurrent—beneath what is going on. Now, it seems to me that the great difficulty of life lies in the fact that we must almost always do two things at a time. If, for example, we are walking and conversing, we must keep our mouths as well as feet from stumbling. If we are driving while listening to music, we must not allow the siren^[8] song of the cassette to prevent us from watching the road and the speedometer (otherwise the less endearing siren of the police car or the ambulance will follow apace). Well, it is just this sort of bifurcation of attention that care for precise, clear expression fosters in us. By learning early in life to pay attention both to what we are saying and to how we are saying it, we develop the much-needed life skill of doing two things simultaneously.

[12] Put another way, we foster our awareness of, and ability to deal with, form and content. If there is any verity that modern criticism has fought for, it is the recognition of the indissolubility of content

and form. Criticism won the battle, won it so resoundingly that this oneness has become a contemporary commonplace. And shall the fact that form is content be a platitude in all the arts but go unrecognized in the art of self-expression, whether in conversation or correspondence, or whatever form of spoken or written utterance a human being resorts to? Accordingly, you are going to be judged, whether you like it or not, by the correctness of your English as much as by the correctness of your thinking; there are some people to whose ear bad English is as offensive as gibberish, or as your picking your nose in public would be to their eyes and stomachs. The fact that people of linguistic sensibilities may be a dying breed does not mean that they are wholly extinct, and it is best not to take any unnecessary chances.

[13] To be sure, if you are a member of a currently favored minority, many of your linguistic failings may be forgiven you—whether rightly or wrongly is not my concern here. But if you cannot change your sex or color to the one that is getting preferential treatment—Bakke case or no Bakke case—you might as well learn good English and profit by it in your career, your social relations, perhaps even in your basic self-confidence. That, if you will, is the ultimate practical application of good English; but now let me tell you about the ultimate impractical one, which strikes me as being possibly even more important.

[14] Somewhere in the prose writings of Charles Péguy⁽⁹⁾, who was a very fine poet and prose writer—and, what is perhaps even more remarkable, as good a human being as he was an artist—somewhere in those writings is a passage about the decline of pride in workmanship among French artisans, which, as you can deduce, set in even before World War I, wherein Péguy was killed. In the passage I refer to, Péguy bemoans the fact that cabinet-makers no longer finish the backs of furniture—the sides that go against the wall—in the same way as they do the exposed sides. What is not seen was just as important to the old artisans as what is seen—it was a moral issue with them. And so, I think, it ought to be with language. Even if no one else notices the niceties, the precision, the impeccable sense of grammar and syntax you deploy in your utterances, you yourself should be aware of them and take pride in them as in pieces of work well done.

[15] Now, I realize that there are two possible reactions among you to what I have said up to this point. Some of you will say to yourselves: what utter nonsense! Language is a flexible, changing, living organism that belongs to the people who speak it. It has always been changed according to the ways in which people chose to speak it, and the dictionaries and books on grammar had to, and will have to, adjust themselves to the people and not the other way around. For isn't it the glory of language that it keeps throwing up new inventions as surf tosses out differently polished pebbles and bits of bottle glass onto the shore, and that in this inexhaustible variety, in this refusal to kowtow to dry-as-dust scholars, lies its vitality, its beauty?

[16] Others among you, perhaps fewer in number, will say to yourselves: quite so, there is such a thing as Standard English, or purity of speech, or correctness of expression—something worth safeguarding and fostering; but how the devil is one to accomplish that under the prevailing conditions: in a democratic society full of minorities that have their own dialects or linguistic preferences, and in a world in which television, advertising, and other mass media manage daily to corrupt the language a little fur-

ther? Let me try to answer the first group first, and then come back to the questions of the second.

[17] Of course language is, and must be, a living organism to the extent that new inventions, discoveries, ideas enter the scene and clamor rightfully for designations. Political, social, and psychological changes may also affect our mode of expression, and new words or phrases may have to be found to reflect what we might call historical changes. It is also quite natural for slang terms to be invented, become popular, and, in some cases, remain permanently in the language. It is perhaps equally inevitable (though here we are on more speculative ground) for certain words to become obsolescent and obsolete, and drop out of the language. But does that mean that grammar and syntax have to keep changing, that pronunciations and meanings of words must shift, that more complex or elegant forms are obliged to yield to simpler or cruder ones that often are not fully synonymous with them and not capable of expressing certain fine distinctions? Should, for instance, "terrestrial" disappear entirely in favor of "earthly," or are there shades of meaning involved that need to remain available to us? Must we sacrifice "notwithstanding" because we have "in spite of" or "despite?" Need we forfeit "jettison" just because we have "throw overboard?" And what about "disinterested," which is becoming a synonym for "uninterested," even though that means something else, and though we have no other word for "disinterested?"

[18] "Language has always changed," say these people, and they might with equal justice say that there has always been war or sickness or insanity. But the truth is that some sicknesses that formerly killed millions have been eliminated, that some so-called insanity can today be treated, and that just because there have always been wars does not mean that someday a cure cannot be found even for that scourge. And if it cannot, it is only by striving to put an absolute end to war, by pretending that it can be licked, that we can at least partly control it. Without such assumptions and efforts, the evil would be so widespread that, given our current weaponry, we would no longer be here to worry about the future of language.

[19] But we are here, and having evolved linguistically this far, and having the means—books of grammar, dictionaries, education for all—to arrest unnecessary change, why not endeavor with might and mind to arrest it? Certain cataclysms cannot be prevented: earthquakes and droughts, for example, can scarcely, if at all, be controlled; but we can prevent floods, for which purpose we have invented dams. And dams are precisely what we can construct to prevent floods of ignorance from eroding our language, and, beyond that, to provide irrigation for areas that would otherwise remain linguistically arid.

[20] For consider that what some people are pleased to call linguistic evolution was almost always a matter of ignorance prevailing over knowledge. There is no valid reason, for example, for the word *nice* to have changed its meanings so many times—except ignorance of its exact definition. Had the change never occurred, or had it been stopped at any intermediate stage, we would have had just as good a word as we have now and saved some people a heap of confusion along the way. But if *nice* means what it does today—and it has two principal meanings, one of them, as in "nice distinction," alas, obsolescent—let us, for heaven's sake, keep it where it is, now that we have the means with which to hold it there.

[21] If, for instance, we lose the accusative case *whom*—and we are in great danger of losing it—our language will be the poorer for it. Obviously, “The man, whom I had never known, was a thief” means something other than “The man who I had never known was a thief.” Now, you can object that it would be just as easy in the first instance to use some other construction; but what happens if *this* one is used incorrectly? Ambiguity and confusion. And why should we lose this useful distinction? Just because a million or ten million or a billion people less educated than we are cannot master the difference? Surely it behooves us to try to educate the ignorant up to our level rather than to stultify ourselves down to theirs. Yes, you say, but suppose they refuse to or are unable to learn? In that case, I say, there is a doubly good reason for not going along with them. Ah, you reply, but they are the majority, and we must accept their way or, if the revolution is merely linguistic, lose our “credibility” (as the current parlance, rather confusingly, has it) or, if the revolution is political, lose our heads. Well, I consider a sufficient number of people to be educable enough to be capable of using *who* and *whom* correctly, and to derive satisfaction from this capability—a sufficient number, I mean, to enable us to preserve *whom*, and not to have to ask “for who the bell tolls^[10].”

[22] The main problem with education, actually, is not those who need it and cannot get it, but those who should impart it and, for various reasons, do not. In short, the enemies of education are the educators themselves: miseducated, underpaid, overburdened, and intimidated teachers (frightened because, though the pen is supposed to be mightier than the sword, the switchblade is surely more powerful than the ferule), and professors who—because they are structural linguists^[11], democratic respecters of alleged minority rights, or otherwise misguided folk—believe in the sacrosanct privilege of any culturally underprivileged minority or majority to dictate its ignorance to the rest of the world. For, I submit, an English improvised by slaves and other strangers to the culture—to whom my heart goes out in every human way—under dreadfully deprived conditions can nowise equal an English that the best literary and linguistic talents have, over the centuries, perceptively and painstakingly brought to a high level of excellence.

[23] So my answer to the scoffers in this or any audience is, in simplest terms, the following: contrary to popular misconception, language does not belong to the people, or at least not in the sense in which *belong* is usually construed. For things can rightfully belong only to those who invent or earn them. But we do not know who invented language: is it the people who first made up the words for *father* and *mother*, for *I* and *thou*, for *hand* and *foot*; or is it the people who evolved the subtler shadings of language, its poetic variety and suggestiveness, but also its unambiguousness, its accurate and telling details? Those are two very different groups of people and two very different languages, and I, as you must have guessed by now, consider the latter group at least as important as the former. As for *earning* language, it has surely been earned by those who have striven to learn it properly, and here even economic and social circumstances are but an imperfect excuse for bad usage; history is full of examples of people rising from humble origins to learn, against all kinds of odds, to speak and write correctly—even brilliantly.

[24] *Belong*, then, should be construed in the sense that parks, national forests, monuments, and public utilities are said to belong to the people: available for properly respectful use but not for defacement

and destruction. And all that we propose to teach is how to use and enjoy the gardens of language to their utmost aesthetic and salubrious potential. Still, I must now address myself to the group that, while agreeing with my aims, despairs of finding practical methods for their implementation.

25 True enough, after a certain age speakers not aware of Standard English or not exceptionally gifted will find it hard or impossible to change their ways. Nevertheless, if there were available funds for advanced methods in teaching; if teachers themselves were better trained and paid, and had smaller classes and more assistants; if, furthermore, college entrance requirements were heightened and the motivation of students accordingly strengthened; if there were no structural linguists and National Councils of Teachers of English filling instructors' heads with notions about "Students' Rights to Their Own Language" (they have every right to it as a *second* language, but none as a *first*); if teachers in all disciplines, including the sciences and social sciences, graded on English usage as well as on specific proficiencies; if aptitude tests for various jobs stressed good English more than they do; and, above all, if parents were better educated and more aware of the need to set a good example to their children, and to encourage them to learn correct usage, the situation could improve enormously.

26 Clearly, to expect all this to come to pass is utopian; some of it, however, is well within the realm of possibility. For example, even if parents do not speak very good English, many of them at least can manage an English that is good enough to correct a very young child's mistakes; in other words, most adults can speak a good enough four-year-old's idiom. They would thus start kids out on the right path; the rest could be done by the schools.

27 But the problem is what to do in the most underprivileged homes: those of blacks, Hispanics, immigrants from various Asian and European countries. This is where day-care centers could come in. If the fathers and mothers could be gainfully employed, their small children would be looked after by day-care centers where—is this asking too much?—good English could be inculcated in them. The difficulty, of course, is what to do about the discrepancy the little ones would note between the speech of the day-care people and that of their parents. Now, it seems to me that small children have a far greater ability to learn things, including languages, than some people give them credit for. Much of it is indeed rote learning, but, where languages are concerned, that is one of the basic learning methods even for adults. There is no reason for not teaching kids another language, to wit. Standard English, and turning this, if desirable, into a game: "At home you speak one way; here we have another language," at which point the instructor can make up names and explanations for Standard English that would appeal to pupils of that particular place, time, and background.

28 At this stage of the game, as well as later on in school, care should be exercised to avoid insulting the language spoken in the youngsters' homes. There must be ways to convey that both home and school languages have their validity and uses and that knowing both enables one to accomplish more in life. This would be hard to achieve if the children's parents were, say, militant blacks of the Geneva Smitherman⁽¹²⁾ sort, who execrate Standard English as a weapon of capitalist oppression against the poor of all races, colors, and religions. But, happily, there is evidence that most black, Hispanic, and other non-Standard English-speaking parents want their children to learn correct English so as to get ahead in the world.