

Semantography Series No. 179 A sequel to No. 178.

A CHALLENGE TO EVERY LINGUIST

The greatest Step forward since Language and Writing were  
invented by Man

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Reprint from the July-September 1957 Issue of the journal

THE INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE REVIEW  
Denver, Colorado  
U.S.A.

The INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE REVIEW carried in its July-September 1957 issue two articles on my work: "The Failure of Language in the Field of Communication," containing extracts from two letters which I wrote to the editor Floyd Hardin, and "A Brief Biography of Charles K. Bliss with an explanation of Bliss Symbols" written by my friend Dr. Douglas N. Everingham, of Rockhampton, Queensland, Australia.

Unfortunately, both articles dealt with different aspects of my work and were so unrelated that their effects cancelled each other out. While I felt grateful to Floyd Hardin for having given space to my work, I complained bitterly to him and I reflected on the fate of new ideas which are not understood during the lifetime of their inventors. Most generously Mr. Hardin has allowed me this space, but he asked me to write without bitterness.

I have thought long about his advice. It seems very good. Yet, I believe that there is not enough bitterness in us. We need much more of it. Changes for the betterment of the human race have come only because bitterness has mounted up in many people. At last they could stand it no longer. They felt that life wasn't worth living but only worth losing in the fight for betterment. And so in their overwhelming bitterness they mounted the barricades, stormed the citadels and died that others may live in a better world. They fought not only for better rulers. They fought also for better judges, better priests, better teachers, better schools, and better ideas in every field of human endeavour.

Now I don't ask you to mount the barricades in the fight for better communication among members of the human race. I ask you only to ponder these questions:

Why does it take centuries until a new idea is accepted and carried out?

Why must the pioneers of new ideas be driven into debt, despair and death, only to be later (much too late) exhumed, extolled and exploited?

Why in particular are we today further away from a practised international language than we were 80 years ago? 80 years ago the idea with all its enthusiasm and hope swept mankind. Today we are fighting a losing, no, a lost battle. Except for some enthusiasts, students have not taken to Esperanto, Ido, Interlingua, -lingue, -lingui, etc. etc. Why?

What are the real obstacles which we must fight and overcome?

For the last 15 years I have tried to answer these questions. I have developed a new tool for humanity and some of the greatest scholars have testified to the greatness of this work. Librarians in all five continents have recognized the value of this work for future generations. They have given a standing order even for all my future writings. They collect everything written by me or by others about my work. I have distributed thousands of leaflets, pamphlets and brochures to innumerable universities and colleges. I have corresponded with

all Director Generals of UNESCO, with Directors of Education and Ministers of Education in various countries, with professors and teachers of various universities and schools. I have lectured and written about my work and others have done the same. Why then do I feel today further away from the fulfilment of my work than I felt 15 years ago? Why does everyone of us pioneers for an international medium of communication feel similarly frustrated? What are the real obstacles which we may have overlooked in our fight?

I believe I know the answer. As an illustration let us take a look at the Babel - the cumbersome and complicated, the idiotic and catastrophic Babel of weights and measures - not in the whole world - but only in the enlightened and most progressive British and American countries. 4 farthings make 1 penny, 12 pence make 1 shilling, 20 shilling make 1 pound. 27 grains make 1 dram, 16 drams make 1 ounce, 16 ounces make 1 pound, 14 pound make 1 stone, 2 stones make 1 quarter, 4 quarters make 1 hundredweight, 20 hundredweights make 1 ton. 12 inch make 1 foot, 3 feet make 1 yard, 22 yard make 1 chain, 80 chains make 1 mile. And so on, and so on with the pints, quarts and gallons, with the bushels and barrels (there are 6 different "barrels" in the U.S.A. alone) and with the many other idiotic weights and measures in the British and American countries - a veritable nightmare to every mathematically minded person. It is easy to prove that millions of working hours are wasted away every day in all these enlightened countries through these complex and cumbersome computations. Yet, the decimal system and the zero with its beautiful simplification of 1, 10, 100, 1000, was invented more than a thousand years ago. Why has this not been generally adopted? What are the real obstacles? Whom should we blame?

Should we blame the milkmen or the garbage men? Should we blame the midwives or the mother-in-laws? Or should we blame the men who are paid our money, the people's money, to make sure that mathematics is a help, not a hindrance to humanity? I mean the teachers and professors of mathematics. It is their duty and theirs alone to stand up and explain, to demand and fight for simple mathematics in the intercommunication of the human race. Why don't they do it?

Now let us take a look at our particular concern: language. Let us take the most simplified language: English. Who has simplified it? The teachers and professors of English language? "No", said Otto Jespersen, "the children and the simple people simplified it. They refused to adopt the intricacies, irregularities, and idiocies which are so faithfully preserved and defended by the keepers of our language." "Goose" and "geese", said the child. "No, geese", said the teacher. "Cow and cows", said the child. "No, kine", said the teacher. "I will, you will, he will, I go, you go he go", said the child. "No, goes" said the teacher. In the end the simpler word and simpler rule wins, but it takes decades and centuries of fight against the teachers.

Take a look at the idiotic spelling of the English language. Who writes thru instead of through? The teachers? No, - some simple ticket writer or child. In the end thru will win through, but it may take centuries. Take a look at the idiotic pronunciation Babel for the letters of the alphabet in the English language, and realize who has cheated George Bernard Shaw in his grave. The milkmen or the garbage men? Or the competent professors of Great Britain who gave their competent opinion that G.B. Shaw's endeavours to simplify the English alphabet were just nonsense. And their opinion made a British judge annul the will of Shaw. One million dollars were spirited away to be used for other orthodox purposes, not for a simplification of human intercommunication.

But realize how simple the matter is. Suppose Shaw's money would have been used in part to insert in every typewriter and linotype machine the letter t with a diacritic mark thus t to stand for th. Imagine that th which stands for one sound only, is used millions upon millions of time every day in millions of letters and newspapers. Suddenly only half the space and half the effort would be needed in all countries using the English language. Suddenly mankind would realize that language is mankind's most important tool and must be constantly simplified. Suddenly mankind would realize that the competent linguists are in fact mankind's enemies and the worst obstacle towards a simplification of human intercommunication. Suddenly mankind would realize that the most sensible thing to do is to kick the keepers of our language, and kick then hard, in fact, kick them out.

A simplification of British spelling, said Shaw, will come only through a civil war. But not a civil war in which the men in the street fight each other. No, the men in the streets must fight the men in the chairs, the rulers of the irregular rules of language. The decimal system in weights and measures was the good outcome of the French revolution.

Now let us take a look at our most cherished dream - an international language. To-morrow it could be introduced in all schools of the world. By whom? By the midwives and mothers-in-law? Of course not. What is needed is that the men who direct education in the world should get together and decide on the most simple rules and words. A primer could be introduced into all schools almost immediately. But the linguists of mankind frown and scoff at an international language. They are the real obstacles. They must be fought.

I have sent out thousands of letter and pamphlets to thousands of teachers and professors in thousands of schools and colleges and universities. Not once, not once did a linguist reply. Teachers of other faculties took an interest, but not the linguists. They don't want to hear of any change, of any improvement in language. They and they only are the real obstacles.

I have sent out 1500 pamphlets of the Semantography Series (Issue No. 157) to all American universities and colleges as well as to a number of linguists and interlinguists, some of them fervent adherents of an international language. This pamphlet contains a small paragraph - a paragraph which could shake the world. It reads:

What Semantography is not

It is not a new Esperanto. It is not a picture language. Esperanto needs translation like any other language. Semantography is readable in any mother tongue. You can write in Esperanto, or in other languages "The Democratic People's Republic of Communist China." But if you write this in Semantography, it becomes as nonsensical as  $3 = 1$ .

Why could the truth of this paragraph "shake the human world"? If I can prove that my simple Semantography can be used to demask and debunk the lofty words of demagogues and dictators, if I can prove that it can do this in all languages of mankind, if I can prove that it is so simple that school children could be made immune to totalitarian doctrines and falsehoods - then I have found a defense weapon for mankind greater and more effective than all the bombs and bombers.

The paragraph above contains "A Challenge to every Linguist!" If true, it would mean "the greatest step forward since language and writing was invented by man" as I said in the title of this article. And I expected letters to arrive from linguists and logicians with the simple request "Please Mr. Bliss, write that down about the "Democratic People's Republic of Communist China" in your Bliss symbols. Let me see how it works out like  $3 = 1$  ?"

To make sure that my pamphlet with this paragraph would not be dismissed as nonsense I placed a picture of Bertrand Russell on the first page with his words that spending money on publications of my work means "performing an important service to mankind." The incredible result was that not one such request was received. Not one competent linguist wrote and showed any interest, not one. But why did amateur interlinguists also take no interest? Why did the two articles in the International Language Review result in utter failure? Not one letter of interest came my way. Why?

Here the second obstacle to new ideas becomes apparent. A new idea seems odd at first. And just because of this, new ideas are not properly understood during the lifetime of their originators. Bertrand Russell praised highly one aspect of my work - its logic. Julian Huxley liked another aspect - its application for communication. Prof. Reiser, Prof. Dodd and others hold in high regard other aspects of my work. And my friend Dr. D.N. Everingham loves one particular aspect - that some of my symbols are pictorial - and he wrote his article in the International Language Review from this point of view. And one glance by linguists and interlinguists made them know what it is all about - a picture language! How childish! How silly?

And indeed how silly to think that you can use a picture language for modern mankind. How can you picture with a pictorial symbol the meaning of "hypocrisy" or how can you picture the meaning of "America" or "Communism?" In fact, you can't. How can you write in a picture language "American hypocrisy" or "Communist hypocrisy"? You can write it in English (as I did just now). You can write it in all other languages. You can write it in Esperanto, in Ido, in Interlingua-lingue etc. But if you write it down in the simple (not pictorial) symbols of Semantography it becomes as nonsensical as  $3 = 1$ . And even school children can see the u

falsehood. But competent linguists are not interested. How many centuries must my bones rot to dust before they will take an interest?

Consider the meanings of good and evil. There is a word for them in all languages, including all international languages, as well as in all sign languages including Safo and Picto. It's just as simple as that: good is good and evil is evil. But it's revolutionary in the symbols of Semantography. In Semantography it becomes obvious why one man can term something good and another man can say it's evil. And in fact, what Christians consider good, Mohamedans consider evil, and what Christians of one denomination consider good, other Christian denominations consider evil. And the results throughout the centuries have been murders and massacres on an appalling scale.

I could not have been satisfied with just inventing a sign for good and one for evil. I searched the writings of old, the Chinese, the Babylonians, the Egyptians and further down into the dawn of mankind until I made an archeological discovery more important than all archeological and anthropological discoveries made before. That discovery could shake mankind if only laymen and learned men would take an interest in it. Floyd Hardin published excerpts of my letters to him about this, but they were only excerpts without the proofs in Semantography. And Everingham's article about the pictorial symbols of Semantography squashed any belief that Semantography is anything more than just a picture language. "It is more", I cry, "it is more"! It is a challenge to every linguist. It is the greatest step forward since language and writing was invented by man.

I thank every reader who has followed me so far and I invite him to read the advertisement below.

#### T O T H E R E A D E R S

who have read the foregoing article

"A Challenge to every Linguist"

Having read the article, you may be interested to see for yourself how those challenging meanings which are falsehoods in fact "The Democratic People's Republic of Communist China", "American Hypocrisy", etc., etc. are demasked and debunked in the simple symbols of Semantography. You may be interested in the revolutionary treatment of the meanings of "good" and "evil" in Semantography and how this leads to a most far-reaching important archeological and anthropological discovery of great consequences to mankind.

Throughout the last 15 years the inventor has distributed leaflets and pamphlets gratis. He can't do it any more. For \$ 2 or the equivalent, you will receive postpaid a number of issues of the Semantography Series, including a treatise on Bliss symbols, written by Professor Oliver L. Reiser of the University of Pittsburgh, as well as an article on Bliss' anthropological discovery, which is supported by Harvard anthropologist, Prof. Clyde Kluckhohn, who commissioned the article. Write to

'B L I S S' I N S T I T U T E

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The incredible result: Not one inquiry came my way. This may be due to the small readership of the International Language Review. I suspect that there are perhaps less than one hundred only, and all of them fervent adherent of one language system or another. They may not want to be bothered with a symbol writing, or they may simply not believe my claims.

The ultimate result: A new idea does not gain ground easily, least of all among the men working in the same field but believing in other solutions.