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[Review of the book L'Elaboration du Francais fondamental: étude sur l'établissement d'un vocabulaire et d'une grammaire de base, by Georges Gougenheim, P. Rivenc, and R. Michéat (Paris: Didier, 1964)]

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little work, and unique in that it is the first of the Clearway series to appear in branching form. The author justifies the branching format in the Preface: "The aim of this venture into branching programming is not so much to teach the facts of history as to induce a special kind of understanding from it. The person who is studying history normally does so with an implicit hindsight . . . and this may lend to historical events an illusory air of inevitability.

"One way of showing this up is to take one's stand at a point in the past and try to see the choices and alternatives offered in a particular chain of events as it developes (sic); and because in war the alternatives are limited and simplified, a military campaign serves the purpose well, and the branching type of programming lends itself effectively to this treatment." The programme makes the student take decisions that had to be taken by commanders in the field in 1815 and these are the bases of the multiple choice answers to the various frames. This little book should be in the hands of every matriculation history student and is the answer to those who maintain that programmed learning can only be applied to factual material.

James Hartley's *Logarithms* is a more ambitious book, consisting of more than 800 frames in horizontal format. One wonders why the previous titles are in vertical format. Have the authors any statistical evidence for preferring one to the other, or is it a matter of individual preference? *Logarithms* has been designed to "teach the simpler parts of the theory of logarithms and the use of logarithm tables to solve complex problems" and is designed for students "down to the age of twelve, of average intelligence (I.Q. 100)." It is a comprehensive treatment of the topic. Mr. Hartley gives a more detailed account of the way in which the programme was tested and validated than do the previous authors. Publishers with the reputation and standing of Methuen should insist that, in programmes intended for general consumption, such as the Clearway series, a complete and comprehensive account of validation procedures and target population be given.

One wonders what part programmes presented in visual form can play in language learning. Are they restricted to reading and writing skills? Are spoken skills not in fact the province of the language laboratory (which should involve the principles of programmed learning)? Mastery of a language implies mastery of the sound system and the ability to reproduce that sound system, as well as mastery of the printed work. Mr. Tyrer in his introduction to his *Programmed German Grammar* states that this course is intended for "all who wish to obtain mastery of the German language for which a correct knowledge of the grammar is the prime essential". However much mastery of the techniques of programming Mr. Tyrer shows in this work (and as such, it is a good example of "easily assimilated fragments carefully arranged in sequence" and of precisely stated terminal behaviour) the author has ignored two cardinal principles in language learning: that talking about the language is not synonymous with talking the language, and that mastery of the language implies automatic manipulation of the spoken as well as the written structures of the language as a result of conditioning in a realistic or simulated stimulus-response situation, such as can be provided in the language laboratory for closed-ended situations. The author of this book, let us be quite frank, has attempted the impossible. He sets about the task of describing in six pages of print German pronunciation and spelling. (Incidentally some of this description is linguistically unsound: his assertion that "kam" is like the English "calm" and "kommen" is like the English "common" ignores allophonic differences.) He then expects the student to transfer this Palmerian "studial" knowledge to the printed symbols in the frames of the text. Fourteen frames, for example, are deemed to be sufficient to condition the student to differentiate between "sein" and "haben" verbs in the perfect tense. The ratio between the amount of German used and the amount of English used is heavily in favour of English. Contrast this with (unprogrammed) course books such as Pamela Symonds' "Let's Speak French" and de Paredes' "Audio-Spanish Course" where the use of English is reduced to an absolute minimum — in fact in Miss Symonds' book the only English to be found is in the vocabulary and the summary of grammar at the end of the book. Still, it is a good thing that editor Patrick Thornhill has allowed this unsuccessful attempt to be made — to this reviewer it provides the answer to the questions raised at the beginning of this notice. The most charitable verdict on this book can only be "Old wine in new bottles."

L'Elaboration Du Français Fondamental
by Gougenheim, Rivenc, Michea and Sauvageot
(Didier, Paris)

THE year 1956 saw the appearance of L' Elaboration du Français Elémentaire written by these four authors. The present volume is an augmented and revised edition of this epoch-making study of vocabulary frequency and selection in French.

The acronym CREDIF is now a by-word amongst language teachers. The scientific research and presentation of language material for non-

French-speaking learners of French is a milestone in the history of language teaching. This book is an exhaustive and well-documented study of how the authors arrived at a list of 1,400 vocabulary items based on range and frequency which would serve as a basis for a beginning French course. The authors, who give a comprehensive survey of various vocabulary counts for French, insist that Le Français Fondamental is not the French equivalent of Ogden and Richards' Basic English but a first stage in the learning of French and one that is complete in itself.

A total of 301 informants, representing a wide variety in terms of profession, rank, and geography, provided 163 tape recordings of conversations. These were transcribed verbatim, producing a total of 312,000 words which were then analysed and provided 8,000 separate words. This list of 8,000 was arranged in order of decreasing frequency with the verb *être* coming first with a frequency of 14,083 down to words occurring only once, of which there were some 2,700. All words with a frequency lower than 20 were eliminated. The next task was to determine the distribution. An examination of the frequency list showed that by the 38th word 50 per cent of the total frequencies had been covered, and these were grammatical words and certain auxiliary verbs. The first noun appeared at number 82 with a frequency of 545 and a distribution of 117. Very few concrete nouns appeared in the list as they have a low frequency and irregular distribution. Yet these words are essential in a beginning course, especially those that can be demonstrated or acted out in the classroom.

So the next stage of the inquiry was undertaken. To provide the concrete nouns that the first part of the enquiry failed to provide surveys were carried out amongst school children in different parts of France. Some 903 children were asked to write down what they considered to be the nouns most useful in connection with 16 different "*centres d'intérêt*": clothing, parts of the body, the home, furniture, food and drink, objects used at table, the kitchen, school, heating and lighting, the town, the country, transport, agriculture, animals, games and trades. These lists were again analysed in terms of frequency and distribution, and the final list of 1,400 basic words arrived at.

Of this important piece of linguistic research, Halliday, McIntosh and Strevens have this to say in their "*The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching*": "'Le Français Fondamental' and the research work that led up to it, are great pioneering efforts which have helped to bring about and accelerate modern developments in the application of linguistics to language teaching". No greater recommendation of this book could be given.

A Linguistic Theory of Translation *by J. C. Catford.*

Papers in Language and Language Teaching *by P. D. Strevens.*

Studies in Phonetics and Linguistics *by D. Abercrombie.*

Five Inaugural Lectures — *Ed. Strevens.*

Oxford University Press have performed another valuable service to teachers of English as well as to students of linguistics by the publication of four further titles in their "Language and Language Learning" series. For those readers like this reviewer who had not the good fortune to have been disciplined in their university days by linguistics (the subject being not quite the thing, especially at Oxbridge), these works in the tradition of the British school of linguists inaugurated by Firth and maintained and strengthened by academics such as Strevens, Catford, Abercrombie, Halliday and McIntosh are of immense importance.

Mr. Catford's book is a highly technical treatment of a highly technical subject — translation (and as such should be read by all modern language teachers, including Mr. Tyrer). It is concerned with "the analysis of what translation *is*. It proposes general categories to which we can assign our observations of particular instances of translation, and it shows how these categories relate to one another". The author has some important things to say about the part played by translation in language teaching, an activity which is far more complicated than is generally realised.

Professor Abercrombie's book is a collection of broadcasts and contributions to various learned journals covering a span of 28 years and devoted mainly to phonetic studies. The chapter on conversation and spoken prose, in which Professor Abercrombie suggests three categories — reading aloud, monologue and conversation — and that on R.P. and local accent should be of interest to all English teachers, especially in South Africa, who at some time or other in their career are plagued by the question "What English shall we teach?" Professor Abercrombie explores some interesting by-ways — paths along which even the professional linguistician hardly ever ventures: a phonetician's view of verse structure, and some forgotten phoneticians, for example.

But it is to Professor Streven's book that most language teachers will turn. Here again the work is composed of various articles and papers from Professor Strevens' outstanding career (which incidentally, as the author himself admits, shows "the kind of development and change that is undergone both by the individual writer and by his chosen discipline"). The main thesis of these papers is the part that linguistics can play in