

## APPLIED PHONETICS.

(Synopsis of Address (with discussion) before Ontario Modern Language Association, at Toronto, 3d Jan. 1889, by V. H. VanderSmissen, M. A., Librarian and Lect. on German, Univ. Toronto.)

A main application is to PRONUNCIATION of any modern language. That given here is more especially applicable to German. For Orthoepy the pupil's ear is not sufficient. The teacher should know how a sound is made and should be able to impart this without undue technicality. Vowels are the most important. In them most delicate shades of difference exist; and it is most necessary to teach pupils where and how they are produced. You may say "Look after vowels, and consonants will look after themselves." If we mispronounce consonants, we are still understood, go where we will; not so with vowels. Most attention should be given to *a*, of comparative rarity in English, common in German. Avoid mistaking *a* for *o* or *ö*. It requires constant attention to keep pupils from this mistake. It should never be allowed to pass uncorrected. Let them learn to note and compare sounds produced in same part of mouth. For final *a*, as in *end', gab',* avoid *end', gab i*, etc., as also *end'a, gab'a*, etc. The proper sound is brief *a* at end of *Cuba, Louisia*, etc.; that is, *end'a, gab'a*, etc. Practically, it is *a*. Watch how *ö* is given, as it is most troublesome: it is *e*, in which lips are most protruded, more than in *i*, which is *e*: (as given by Mr V., the prime, *e*, was not very clear, the mouth-resonant largely dominating the fundamental; the same with *ö* for *ö*). If sounds are not given properly, it is from inattention and laziness on pupil's part. Don't allow inaccuracy to pass unnoticed. An excellent plan is reading texts aloud at home. Never name any letter except by its proper sound—not an affair of little importance. Follow same principles with consonants. After *a*, *ch* is hardest. As a rule, refer sounds to similar ones in pupil's own language by key-words.

## WHAT IS THE STANDARD?

Now, a standard must be more or less artificial; that is, it is not spoken except as acquired by an individual. It is not spoken as *ritu* in any district of country. With this explanation, it may be said that the stage is a recognized standard for German. Similar principles come into play as to English—no particular district, as Yorkshire, Devon or London, can be cited as model. All such reflect local peculiarities—always to be considered a taint. The same is true of other tongues still—not of French, fortunate in having a standard. Dubois Reymond was quoted to show that a German savant or nobleman thought nothing of speaking dialect as his flunkey or coachman; yet would be horrified, insulted almost, if told that his French was not Parisian, and that of a French peasant.

Thus, no standard was acknowledged for German. Many consider the stage established as such. Remember that till 1870 there was no central pivot for Germany—no politically united Germany.

Why do we tolerate here a speech not tolerated in England or in Boston and other places in U. S.? Canadian speech was said to be "flat"—more so than that of U. S. We have many bad peculiarities of speech. It is our duty to correct these and whatever else is wrong in a pupil's speech as we meet them. Correction of mispronunciations should be made. They were frequent, often outrageous: as *burl* for *barrel*, and speaking of an old Roman poet as "Hers." Particular attention to the phonetics of our own tongue is the first duty of every school of any grade.

Mr SHAW thought that the University of Toronto was not doing its duty in this respect. The phenomena of speech were part of general physiology—a systematic course of vocal physiology was not only desirable but a crying want for Modern Language students. (Mr Shaw: "Of what good is it?") Of what use is anything? (Lafter.)

Messrs Sykes, Chamberlain, Shaw, Connor, Tamblin, Huston, and two others continued discussion on what is standard speech and certain faults and peculiarities of pronunciation. To the statement that "short" *i* in German approximated *e* more or less, instead of being as well differentiated as our *i* from *e*, (compare *pill* with *peal*, *bit* with *peat*, etc.) Mr. Connor said that in his locality (Berlin, Ont.) where German was the dominant, he found *i* and *e* quite separate, about as widely as in English. The only word with *i* not well given was *business*, always *bes'n'es* instead of *bi'z'nes*.

Dr HAMILTON had given some attention to questions of standard speech. He had concluded to recommend, even to urge, adoption of what he could not better name than

## FUSION ENGLISH

by which was meant that current in which fused or mingled Northern with Southern English. Who has not heard London proclaimed as seat of standard speech? Who has not heard that of Dublin urged? If asked to locate it, quite as difficult as in German and for the same reason, he would give "the Midland Counties," approximately the same as educated Dublin, North of Ireland and America. The advent of the Railway Age, to say nothing of Immigration of teeming millions, was producing this. Before advent of railways, fusion of Northern and Southern English was going on for generations.

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