

GRAMMAR AS A SCIENCE

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Grammar as a Science by B. F. Sisk

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B. F. SISK

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BY

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PREFACE.

English Grammar is a science and should be dealt with in a scientific manner. The method of procedure should not differ essentially from that in other sciences; the subject-matter only is different. The subject-matter of English Grammar is the English sentence. The learner should be furnished with a variety of sentences which he may study in very much the same way as he would study a variety of plants in Botany or a collection of rocks in Geology. Perhaps the most noticeable thing about a sentence is, that it is made up of words. An investigation of the words will reveal the fact that they are expressions of ideas. Now the mere juggling with empty words is profitless. Hence to make a really scientific classification of words, some knowledge of ideas is needed. The aim of the Introduction and Chapter I. is to furnish this knowledge. Ideas properly related form a thought. Words properly arranged form a sentence—the expression of a thought. *The form of the thought determines the form of the sentence.* No sentence whose meaning is not clear can be intelligently analyzed. The purpose of Chapters XII. and XIII. is to show that the classification of the sentence is determined by, and based upon, the classification of the thought. The main purpose of this book is to lead the student to look through the sentence to the thought, and thereby make sentence analysis truly thought analysis.

Grammar should be studied for at least three reasons:
(1) It disciplines the mind. In regard to this phase

of the subject, Dr. Hinsdale says, "Like the other sciences, grammar has a disciplinary value. The study involves a peculiar exercise of the powers of observation—the forms of words, idioms, and sentences, and of the realities that are behind them, distinctions, meanings, and relations. These forms and relations develop a kind of sense or perception that external objects do not develop. Secondly, the study involves also a vigorous exercise of the logical powers—analysis, abstraction, comparison, inference. Grammar is the application of logic to a large and important class of facts. The powers of thought are developed by studying the relations of objects, external and internal. The first rank far below the second in educational value. It is only when we can employ thought upon general relations, which are always abstract, that we begin to *unsense* or *dematerialize* the mind, and so introduce it to the sphere of scientific thinking." (2) It furnishes the key that unlocks the treasures of literature, and gives us the measure by which we may distinguish good literature from poor literature. It enables us to correct our own language, and gives us the power to express our thoughts in a way that our meaning will not be mistaken. (3) It lays a good foundation for the study of other languages.

The author is indebted for helpful suggestions to Mr. T. G. Harris, Principal of Southwest Texas Normal School, and to Mr. W. S. Sutton, Professor of the Science and the Art of Education, University of Texas.

B. F. SISK.

Austin, Texas, June, 1903.

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FIRST PART.

ETYMOLOGY.

The distinctions between the various parts of speech, between the cases of nouns, the modes and tenses of verbs, the functions of participles, are distinctions in thought, not merely in words.—John Stuart Mill.

INTRODUCTION.

1. The universe is made up of **objects, attributes, and relations**. There is nothing that can not be put into one of these three classes. The "outer world" embraces everything external to one's own mind. The "inner world" includes all that is within one's mind.

2. These **objects, attributes, and relations** furnish the mind with the "raw materials" with which to build up the "inner world," or the world of mind. The mind has access to the outer world by means of the special senses—*sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and resistance*. The first knowledge that the mind obtains of the outer world comes through one or more of these gateways. This inner world serves as a guide in the conduct of life. In order that it may keep one in perfect harmony with his environment, it must correspond to the outer world.

3. The mind does its work by **observing, comparing, classifying, and stating the results**. These are the fundamental steps in all science-making.

4. The last and most important step could not be taken without some medium to *express* what in the mind had been *impressed*. The simplest notion that the mind forms corresponding to a thing as a whole is an **idea**. The mental product formed by the mind when it asserts the relation between two ideas is a **thought**. So language had its origin in the desire to express ideas and thoughts. Primarily there is no other use for language.

5. The ideas and thoughts of all people are very much alike. The Frenchman calls an object "gargon"; the Spaniard calls the same object "muchacho"; the Englishman calls the same object "boy"; but the *idea* is the same in all their minds. The different nations use different words to symbolize their ideas, and they arrange the words differently in sentences to express their