

# Third Graders Speak Another Tongue With Confidence

By GERALD S. SNYDER  
**United Press International**  
 Somerville, N.J.—In a third grade room in this North New Jersey residential town a group of eight-year-olds confidently raised their voices to the tune of an old Spanish song:

"El patiti (little duck) hace asi—cuac, cuac, cuac... el gatico (little cat) hace asi—miau, miau, miau..."

In another room of the same school, a group of fourth-grade children were listening to two of their class-

mates greet each other in French:

"Bonjour, Mademoiselle," said a husky, crew-cut boy of nine to a pretty blonde of the same age. "Comment allez-vous?"

In Somerville, population 14,000, boys and girls of all I.Q.'s learn French and Spanish by simple conversation (no grammar) in daily 15-minute sessions that begin in the third grade and pick up momentum in longer, more formal instruction later on.

Elementary school language

learning is not new in the United States. French has been taught to selected pupils throughout the grades in Cleveland since 1922. At least 30 communities teach Russian before the eighth grade and a few, long-established programs in Swedish, Chinese, Serbian and Greek can be found in some elementary school curriculums.

**Program Gains**

But the Somerville example of teaching a foreign language to all students—not

just the bright—and following this up with an effective program in the junior and senior high schools is only now beginning to come into its own.

"It is part of a current great excitement—almost a revolution—in language learning now taking place in the United States," says Donald D. Walsh, director of the Modern Language Association, a learned society of teachers with offices in New York.

Forteen years ago, when instruction of a foreign tongue was first introduced in Somerville, the local educators were out to prove a point.

"Since we were going to

teach a foreign language in the same manner the child had learned English—by practice in simple talk about everyday things—we believed it could be given to all the pupils," explained Dorothy Chamberlain, who helped start the program in 1949.

**All Talk Language**

"We knew that by the age of three, the baby had learned to use its own language—all the babies, the bright, the average, the dull," she said.

In the Somerville program, no formal grammar was taught until the seventh grade and no written work was given in the elementary grades. Learning by absorption, with almost no English, the young-

sters began to speak Spanish and French easily, naturally and well.

Students of low I.Q. learned as well as those of high I.Q.—sometimes better, said Miss Chamberlain, "because the most important piece of equipment a child needs is just a good ear."

The stutters didn't stutter in the new languages, she said, and soon Somerville's eighth-grade students knew more about a second tongue than most pupils who had completed the usual first-year high school course elsewhere.

**Princeton Watches**

Commented one Princeton University professor of the Somerville program: "If I

could get these, big hulking college students of mine to do the same things that you're doing here—play games, dance and sing while they're learning a foreign language—I could make it stick."

What is happening today, Miss Chamberlain said, is that the public schools are preparing students for college "so that the colleges will have to change their methods."

"To many college students learn to read but not to talk," she said.

Modern Language Association director Walsh supported Miss Chamberlain's view, and he proposed serious language instruction even earlier than the third grade.

"I'd like to see a set-up in kindergarten with three or four teachers each speaking a different language," he said.

"We're convinced the youngsters would take to it like a duck takes to water."

**Before Age of 12**

Extensive instruction should take place before the age of twelve or thirteen—"when hardening of the vocal organs sets in," he said.

"Five years ago, the public was ignorant about elementary school language programs. Now they are impatient. They want to know more."

In 1955, foreign language enrollment in the elementary

public schools in the United States was 271,600. Today, it is estimated more than four times that number, with one or more foreign tongues being taught in the lower grades of at least some communities in all 50 states.

But the number of school systems with effective follow-up languages courses in their junior and senior high schools is still a "drop in the bucket," Walsh said.



**PUPPETS AID STUDY**—Playing with puppets in French helps nine-year-old Mary at elementary school in New Jersey. (UPI) Catherine Johnson and Jay Peranoni in

### Far Away Places

## Counterpart Spending Accounts Arranged in Poetry by West

By DICK WEST  
 Washington—UPI—"Far away places and strange sounding names..." Remember that song? It keeps coming back like a haunting refrain every time I pick up a March 11 copy of the Congressional Record. This edition contains the first expense reports filed by our far-flung congressmen on their travels to near and distant lands during 1962.

It gives a body wanderlust just to look at neat columns, so round and firm and fully packed with figures.

What the senators and representatives and their aides reported in the Record was the amount of counterpart funds that they spent while taking care of congressional business overseas.

**Counterpart funds, as you may know, are foreign currencies owned by the U. S. government. They have been made available to itinerant congressmen more or less for the asking.**

In 1962, as far as I could tell, our footloose lawmakers left no counterpart unturned. If you arrange their expense accounts in a certain order, they make a sort of poem:

"Pesos in the Philippines;  
 "In Austria, the schilling;  
 "In France the franc was ready cash,  
 "And believe me they were willing.

"In ancient Greece, the drachma;  
 "Pesetas rain in Spain;  
 "In Panama, the balboa  
 "Flows mainly down the drain.

"Cambodia supplies riels;  
 "Indonesia mints the rupee;  
 "In Portugal, the escudo  
 "Is used for making whoopee.  
 "Russia rubles; Swedish kroners;  
 "In Italy, the lira  
 "Baht is spent in Thailand;  
 "Too bad it isn't nearer.  
 "Yet in Japan, sol in Peru;  
 "Plasters from the

Vietnamese;  
 "Sucre's sweet in Ecuador.  
 "But in Brazil, cruzeiro please.  
 "The Deutschmark in Germany;  
 "From Yugoslavia, the dinar;  
 "In Guatemala, it's quetzal,  
 "Than which there's nothing finer.  
 "Gulden in The Netherlands;  
 "Colon in Costa Rica;  
 "No wonder that our congressmen  
 "Were heard to cry 'eureka!'"

### Firing on Soviet Trawler Denied

Washington—UPI—The State Department says Russia's charge that U. S. Navy ships fired on a Russian trawler was "without foundation."

No "surface vessel" was within 12 miles of a U.S. destroyer engaged in gunnery practice as the Russians said, and a State Department spokesman added that the ship was firing ammunition with only a seven-mile maximum range.

Spokesman Lincoln White said investigation of the alleged incident 70 miles east of Norfolk on March 8 when the Russians said two missile cruisers and a destroyer fired dummy rounds at the Soviet fishing boat revealed:

The site of the alleged incident is located within "an established and recognized U.S. Navy operations area," and on the day in question, "U.S. naval vessels, none of which were cruisers, were in the area."

"Six U.S. Navy destroyers fired gunnery exercises in this area on March 8.

"The ship nearest the location of the alleged incident fired an anti-aircraft practice at a towed sleeve target. At the time of the firing this ship was 10 miles from the position which the Soviet Union reports was the location of the incident.

"The ship fired in an easterly and westerly direction with ammunition which has a seven-mile maximum range. No surface vessel was within 12 miles of the firing ship."

### Leased Telegraph Rate Hike Postponed

Washington—UPI—The Federal Communications Commission indefinitely postponed Wednesday its order to increase rates on May 1 on telegraph lines leased by the press and others.

The FCC said the stay was granted pending study of petitions to reconsider the order submitted by United Press International, the American Newspaper Publishers Association and the American Telephone & Telegraph Co.

The rate increases were granted on Jan. 29 to AT&T and Western Union. The increases would have boosted costs for the press and other users of such private leased telegraph lines by \$4,102,000 a year.

### Klamath Falls Man Enters Guilty Plea

Joseph James Bettles Jr., Klamath Falls, pleaded guilty to charges of obtaining property by false pretenses and execution of sentence was suspended for 12 months when he appeared in Jackson county district court this week.

The charge involved a check.

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### Asian Flu Virus Believed Discovered

Washington—UPI—The National Institute of Health believes it has discovered a new type of influenza virus which may have caused this winter's Asian flu epidemic.

The NIH Wednesday said the new virus was discovered too late for drug manufacturers to change the flu vaccine that was used this winter. However, officials said they have developed an experimental vaccine which can be used in protective shots given next year.

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