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# AMERICAN

THE NEW  
PAN-AMERICAN  
LANGUAGE

CHARLES LEO O'CONNOR



Class PM8077

Book -03

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## INTRODUCTION

THE following pages contain an attempt much more modest than a world language. American, so far as it is intended to be a means of communication between people of a given territory now speaking diverse tongues and who would be benefited by a common speech, is designed for use among only those persons living in North and South America, Hawaii and the Philippine Islands. So much of Latin is contained in Spanish, English, French and Portuguese, and all these languages have borrowed so extensively from Teutonic and Celtic sources, it has been possible to select words so closely resembling others with the same or similar meaning in each, that, at a glance, they may be understood by the ordinary person who reads any one of said languages. All the verbs in the vocabulary (except about a dozen), nearly all the adverbs of manner and more than seven eighths of the nouns have been selected in that way. Thus the similarity of French, English, Spanish and Portuguese has rendered the author's task easier than if he were making a language for use throughout the world. All pronouns and the most frequently employed adverbs are formed by a plan which can be learned by reading it carefully once. Nearly all adjectives are formed by that plan from adverbs of manner. The whole number of words, not selected as described, or coined according to said plan, could be learned in one hour. For the foregoing reasons, and also because of the regularity and simplicity of American, no other language can be so easily and quickly acquired by the people of any part of America.

But the advantage of a common tongue for all America was not the only cause which impelled the author to undertake this work. He was actuated by the patriotic desire to see a language and literature distinctively American. He has, therefore, studied to secure brevity, strength, euphony, accuracy and elasticity; and he believes that American furnishes a language combining all those advantages to a greater degree than any of the other artificial languages, or than English, Spanish, French or Portuguese. Of these four tongues, English perhaps holds the first place for brevity, but its advantages over the others in this respect are not nearly so great as that of American over English. It sometimes happens, of course, that a thought expressed in American will produce a longer sentence than the same thought put into English or even into one of the three other languages; but, on the whole, the measures taken to secure freedom of arrangement of words in sentences have operated, also, to make the sentence usually shorter. The nouns and adjectives most commonly used in English are those monosyllabic and bisyllabic words of Saxon and Norman-French origin generally ending in a consonant or consonantal sound; and, as the noun (except in forming the possessive case or plural) and the adjective, always, are uninflected, making necessary a certain arrangement of the words in sentences to render them intelligible (and which even then detracts from its accuracy), English is inelastic. The brevity of English is almost entirely due to these two causes, so, English has secured its brevity at the expense of euphony, accuracy and elasticity, while its method of

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forming the tenses of verbs has made verbal expression longer than in any of the other three languages, partially overcoming the advantage gained by the much used short uninflected nouns and adjectives. A glance at the conjugation of the American verb on page 14 will show the reader the immense advantage of the American verb over the English in brevity as well as in accuracy and variety of expression. The writer's first intention was to preserve these nouns and adjectives, making an uninflected and less elastic language, but one with greater brevity, by introducing merely a new conjugation of verbs which, on account of similarity in the roots of nearly all French, Spanish and Portuguese verbs and the agreement therewith of so many English verbs, seemed advisable. But such a language would have all the inexactness of speech of the four now in use, and be as inelastic. English has a directness of expression and consequent strength from certain words of Saxon origin. These words and this manner of expression will be found in American. Euphony in a language is so much a matter of opinion, and that opinion so largely the result of education, that the writer will content himself by giving his own opinion, that no artificial language can, in its infancy, attain the stately beauty of the Spanish, the flowery wealth of the Portuguese, the music of abounding open, rich vowels and soft lispings and liquid consonants peculiar to both of them, or the smooth elegance of the French; but he believes, also, that the American, by retaining only the most common vowel sounds of the four languages, giving greater prominence to the richer of them, and selecting for inflectional word-endings those consonants the frequent recurrence of which is so largely responsible for what is most beautiful in the sound of Spanish, French, Portuguese and English, together with the adoption of the mechanical rules of construction which, with some thought and effort his poor abilities have devised to secure the greater freedom of arrangement of words in sentences, would enable the skillful writer of prose and poetry to select for American composition, words, and so arrange them in sentences that, in time, the literary productions in American would not only compare favorably with those in any modern language but even excel them. The author has tried to avoid an unnatural flow of the words which, in at least one of the tongues recently prepared for world use, shows to a great degree, and in avoiding which the author of Esperanto has been so successful. If a language is designed for anything more than commercial use—if it is hoped that an elegant literature may some day grow out of it—there should be as few limitations as possible to its power of expression either as to variety of agreeable sounds or the freedom of the writer or speaker to arrange the words so as most clearly and beautifully to express his thoughts. To secure this facility of expression, this freedom in the arrangement of words in sentences, required a departure from that modern construction which distinguishes the almost uninflected tongues now in use on this continent, from Greek and Latin; and the advisability of such departure was the question which the author debated with himself more than any other that has arisen during the progress of his work. He is now satisfied that the good accomplished by the departure far outweighs any temporary advantage in the shape of apparent simplicity which might be gained by adhering to the present rules for constructing sentences.

American grammar is simple because of its regularity. The plural of words is formed by adding the letter *s*, because it is the almost universal method of forming the plural of nouns in all the official languages of the

American republics. There is but one conjugation of verbs, one form for the declension of nouns, pronouns, adjectives and participles, and one rule for the comparison of adjectives and adverbs. A great difficulty which confronts the student of most Aryan and Semitic languages is the gender of nouns. To avoid this difficulty the authors of artificial languages have used what has been called "natural gender", with which English-speaking people are familiar, inasmuch as English enjoys the distinction of practically not giving to nouns the so-called "grammatical gender" based upon the imaginary sex or absence of sex in the word rather than the thing for which it stands. American can be taught to English-speaking persons by applying the English rules for gender. It, however, has five kinds (generos) of nouns; but there is only one rule governing the classification and it can be learned in five minutes. Lastly, there is no exception in American to any rule of either orthography or etymology and every word is pronounced as spelled. The work is divided into three parts. The first sets forth in English the American grammar; the second contains in American and English a short dialogue and some translations of familiar patriotic prose and verse into the language; and the third is a brief vocabulary of English words with their meanings in American.

## PART ONE—GRAMMAR

## I. ORTHOGRAPHY

American orthography is very simple. Words are spelled as pronounced. No letter has more than one sound; and there is no sound (vowel or consonantal) in the language without a letter to represent it. American has no diphthongs or triphthongs. W and h are never used to indicate a vowel sound, and y is always a vowel. No letter used to indicate a vowel sound is ever used as a consonant. Vowels need not be distinguished as long and short, nor consonants as hard and soft. Where a vowel follows immediately upon another, both must be distinctly pronounced. The repetition of consonants, as in the case of double letters, is avoided as much as possible, but where it occurs the two consonants must each be distinctly sounded. The American alphabet has thirty-six letters of which thirteen are vowels and twenty-three are consonants. The name of each vowel is that of the sound it represents. English has all the vowel sounds of American, but has not adequate alphabetical equivalents therefor.

The American vowels are pronounced as follows:

|   |   |                  |   |                              |
|---|---|------------------|---|------------------------------|
| A | a | is pronounced as | a | in father.                   |
| Á | á | "                | " | " a " pawn.                  |
| Ä | ä | "                | " | " a " bat.                   |
| E | e | "                | " | " a " fate.                  |
| È | è | "                | " | " e " bet.                   |
| I | i | "                | " | " i " fill.                  |
| Í | i | "                | " | " ee " feel.                 |
| O | o | "                | " | " o " only.                  |
| Ó | ô | "                | " | " o " son.                   |
| Ø | ø | "                | " | " oi " oil or oy in boy.     |
| U | u | "                | " | " oo " soon.                 |
| Ü | ü | "                | " | " ou " loud, or ow in cow.   |
| Y | y | "                | " | " i " lion or y in by or my. |

The consonants are: B b, C c, Č č, D d, F f, G g, Ĝ ĝ, H h, L l, M m, N n, Ñ ñ, P p, R r, S s, Š š, T t, Ć ć, V v, W w, X x, Z z, Ž ž.

The consonants are sounded as in English, with the following exceptions: Č has the sound of ch, as in chin, cheese, church or chalk. C is always hard. It has the sound of k. Ĝ has the soft sound only of g, as in George or gin. G is always hard, as in gay or give. Š has the sound of the English sh in shown, short, wish and shape. Ž has the sound of the French j or g. It is like English g in mirage and garage and English z in azure. It might as appropriately be represented in English by zh, as é is by ch, š by sh and ć by th. Ć has the sound of th in thing, thought, through or theatre. This sound is one of the most common in both English and Spanish, but has no letter to represent it in either. It is produced by c or z in Spanish and by placing h after t in English. Ñ has the sound of the English ng in sing, long, rung or bang. H has no use in Spanish and French, except to show the derivation of the word, it being always silent in those languages. In Portuguese, h, following certain other letters, produces the sound of i in the English word senior or y in yes. The Portuguese nh is the

Spanish ñ, and Portuguese lh the Spanish ll. Thus Portuguese h is an auxiliary letter. When not used in that way it is silent. H is silent in English when it occurs at the end of the syllable, and sometimes, though rarely, when it is the first letter of a word; but h at the commencement of a syllable is so nearly universally sounded that the language abounds in its lightly aspiratal sound; and in certain monosyllabic words which occur with the greatest frequency, such as why, what, when, where and which, h, in conjunction with w, exchanges sounds with the latter, producing what seems a much more forcible aspirate. It will be noticed that the English sound of h approaches to the German *ch* immediately after i or e, as in *licht* or *recht*, except when following w in the monosyllabic words referred to where w is given the sound of h and the latter takes the sound of w, in which cases w has a sound almost as strongly aspiratal as the German *ch* following a as in *mach*. Spanish, while disregarding h, has employed other letters to produce its sound, using oftenest j, but frequently g or x. Therefore, American has dispensed with h so far as possible; but, where it appears, it must be sounded, even at the end of a syllable, making the final sound thereof gently aspiratal. It is never silent. American x has the sound of the English w in where, what and when, more strongly aspiratal than h. It frequently takes the places of g and j in some American words taken from the Spanish. American has no silent letters, and no American letter changes its sound by its position in the syllable. For that reason, h and x are sounded though placed elsewhere than at the beginning of a syllable. The names of those nine consonants are: Č, chay; c, k; ĝ, j; g, gay; ž, ezh; š, esh; ć, thay; ñ, eng; h, eh, giving the final h the same aspiratal sound as the initial letter of have, home, he, him or her; and x, ah, pronouncing the final letter with a stronger aspiratal sound than in the name of h. The remaining consonants, except w, have the English names of those letters. W is named way.

The following is the complete American alphabet with the English sound of each letter.

## AMERICAN ALPHABET

| Letter | English Sound |                                                  |
|--------|---------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| A      | a             | The sound of a in father.                        |
| Á      | á             | The sound of a in shawl.                         |
| Ä      | ä             | The sound of a in bat.                           |
| B      | b             | The sound of b.                                  |
| C      | c             | The sound of k or hard sound of c in cat.        |
| Č      | č             | The sound of ch in chair, chin or cheese.        |
| D      | d             | The sound of d.                                  |
| E      | e             | The sound of a in mate.                          |
| È      | è             | The sound of e in bet.                           |
| F      | f             | The sound of f.                                  |
| G      | g             | The hard sound of g, as in gay, girl or good.    |
| Ĝ      | ğ             | The sound of j or soft sound of g, as in George. |
| H      | h             | The sound of h.                                  |
| I      | i             | The sound of i in it, bit, sit and fit.          |
| Í      | i             | The sound of e in mete and ee in meet.           |
| L      | l             | The sound of l.                                  |
| M      | m             | The sound of m.                                  |

