LANGUAGE MONOGRAPHS

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LINGUISTIC SOCIETY OF AMERICA

EDITED BY

GEORGE MELVILLE BOLLING
Ohio State University

AURELIO M. ESPINOSA
Stanford University

EDWARD SAPIR
University of Chicago

NUMBER I NOVEMBER, 1925

A TECHNIQUE FOR THE EXPERIMENTAL INVESTIGATION OF ASSOCIATIVE INTERFERENCE IN ARTIFICIAL LINGUISTIC MATERIAL

BY

ERWIN ALLEN ESPER
Assistant Professor of Psychology, University of Illinois.

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FOREWORD

The experiments here reported, which were carried out in the Psychological Laboratory of the Ohio State University during the academic year 1921-1922, represent a further attempt in the development of a technique for the experimental investigation of the sensorimotor conditions involved in the process of analogic change in language. My interest in this problem dates from 1917, at which time I first became acquainted with the pioneer work of Thumb and Marbe in this field. The experiment which I reported in the *Psychological Review* in November 1918 was a repetition of the work of Thumb and Marbe; the method employed in the present investigation was suggested by Thumb in 1907. The conception of linguistic change as an experimental problem is one for which Thumb deserves the gratitude of all students of language.

I wish to express my deep sense of obligation to my teachers, George Melville Bolling and Albert P. Weiss. To the former, I owe my interest in language problems ; to the latter, my training in psychological methods as well as guidance and advice throughout this investigation. I am indebted also to Professor Leonard Bloomfield for valuable suggestions in the early stages of this work.

E. A. E.

Ohio State University
January 1925

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