

"It may be asked how they can make a sufficient number of roots and affixes to carry on the business of a language with so small a number of sounds. This is done by a very ingenious device, similar to one employed in Finnish. Each sound has two forms, a short and a long. In this way the number of sounds is doubled. In learning the language that is the only thing that must be watched. If a double 'T' occurs it must be pronounced double, and not jammed together, as we frequently do in English.

"One of the most interesting things about this study has been the discovery that girls are taught a different pronunciation from that of boys. There is a distinct 'feminine' method of speech, which is softer and more lisping than the 'masculine' pronunciation. Where the two White Indian boys, Olo, and Sippu, use Ch, Margarita, the girl, uses Ts. For the masculine Sh she substitutes S, and she uses Y and L where they use the harsher K and R. It is somewhat reminiscent of the 'polite accent' that was taught to little girls in English and American 'genteel' society in the last century. Sometimes this 'feminine' pronunciation quite distorts a word. The word for 'chief', for example, is 'sakla'; Margarita calls it 'sayla'. This peculiar 'feminine lisp' makes it possible for one to tell the sex of a speaker even in the dark.

"A similar thing is to be noticed in the speech of animals told of in their folk tales. Each animal has its own 'lisp'. It is not necessary to add, as in English, that 'Bre'r Wolf said'; the listening youngster knows from the 'lisp' that it is a wolf speaking, or a turtle, or a fox. This makes the story more realistic.

"The language is very descriptive. Instead of seeking new stems for names of animals, they call many of them by descriptive terms. For instance the manatee or sea-cow is called 'ti moli', which means 'water cow'. The sea lion is 'ti achu', or 'water tiger'.

"The children are very eager to tell what they know. They will keep at the game so long and as late as there is any one to listen. They are at the same time very insistent that the words be learned correctly. If a word is mispronounced they will go back and say it over and over until they 'get it across'."

Dr. Harrington learns the language from the children by playing with them. He gets down on the floor, with toys, games and pictures; and the three children point out the various parts and objects and give the names, which he notes down. Many words for the dictionary of the Indian speech which Dr. Harrington is compiling were learned on a trip to the zoological garden, where the three children recognized and named all the animals native to their home. Dr. Harrington is continuing the study of the children's language, with frequent visits, and expects to build up a fairly complete vocabulary before they return to the tropics.

QUICK AUTO STOPPING NOT DEPENDENT ON SEX, RACE OR EDUCATION

When it comes to stopping an automobile quickly, race, sex, color or education do not count. But scientific tests for chauffeurs devised by H. H. Allen, automotive expert of the National Bureau of Standards, and Prof. Fred A. Moss, psychologist of the Public Personnel Administration of the Institute for Government Research in Washington, show that experience and natural quickness do affect the amount of time, required for the automobile driver to get his feet into action upon the brakes.

They have devised an apparatus that allows the accurate measurements of the time elapsing between the signal to stop and the application of the brakes.

The mechanism is very simple. An automobile of the standard gear shift type has been equipped with a tachometer, an instrument much more accurate than a speedometer because it records every revolution of the wheels. Two pistols, muzzle downward, are fastened to the running board of the car. The bullet in the cartridge has been removed and red litharge inserted so that when the pistol is fired a red mark is left on the pavement.

When the tachometer registers a certain speed the examiner fires the first pistol. At this signal the person being tested, immediately removes his foot from the accelerator to the brake automatically discharging the second pistol. The distance between the red marks on the pavement is measured. This distance divided by the speed of driving will show to a thousandth of a second the time required for the response of the driver.

Prof. Moss and Mr. Allen have tried the experiment with a group of men and women students from George Washington University, a group from Howard University, and a number of taxi drivers.

In the group from George Washington there was very little difference in the reaction of the men and the women, each showing an average reaction of about one half of a second. The individuals in the group varied very widely, one individual having a reaction time less than three times as short as other members of the group tested.

In the group chosen from Howard University the reaction compared favorably with the ones from George Washington showing that there was no difference in the races so far as this reaction is concerned.

The reaction of the taxi drivers was more prompt than that of the non-professional drivers, indicating either that drivers can be trained to respond more quickly or that those with a quick reaction seek and are selected for such positions as taxi drivers. One of the men, who had been driving for fifteen years without an accident showed a reaction of one third of a second.

These tests were carried on in four speeds: 10, 15, 20, and 30 miles an hour. At a speed of 20 miles an hour with a reaction of one half second the car would go only fifteen feet before it began to stop. With the reaction one and one half seconds the car would be run 45 feet before it began to stop. The rate of speed does not affect the response in any way.

To eliminate drivers with a very slow reaction is the object of these tests. It is expected that they will be used in hiring drivers for the government service, and in the cities requiring a driving test for a license. This is one of a number of tests which are being prepared for selecting chauffeurs.

The highest forms of animal life during the geological period when most of our coal was formed were amphibian, creatures related to modern frogs and salamanders.
