

This results in a proselytizing effort which is distasteful to many and looks hopeless to many more. Interlingua attempts to speak in such a way that the most diverse forms of "linguistic sophistication"—as imparted by the most diverse educational systems now in operation—supply an adequate basis for its comprehension. It functions without requiring that its beneficiaries have studied it or can speak and write it.

Reed quotes, disapprovingly, Pei's "quotation" that Interlingua is "the product of the world's greatest linguistic minds over a period of nearly thirty years." She does not claim that I made that statement. She merely says that Pei "imputes" it to me, and goes on to interpret that whoever made it must have meant to refer to Stillman, Martinet, and Gode. Something is a little off here. Actually, no one was referred to, and no one made that statement. Pei dramatized his idea that a world congress should adopt a universal language, outlining in some detail how such a congress might work. For this purpose, he invented some partisan speeches which are amusing to read because they reflect the fun their author had concocting them. It is in one of these that Pei has the spokesman for Interlingua (under my name) claim flamboyantly the endorsement of the world's greatest linguistic minds. There is also some soapbox oratory in support of Esperanto. It never occurred to me, nor, I am sure, to Pei, that anyone could ever try to base a serious argument on these delightful bits of tongue-in-cheek fiction.

ALEXANDER GODE

Science Service, New York

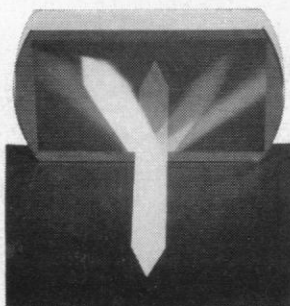
Acknowledgments in Scientific Papers

It seems worth while to bring up a few of the ethical problems which arise in the widely followed practice of making acknowledgments to various persons in scientific papers.

There can, of course, be no quarrel with the specific mention of the source of a culture, of a specimen of known compound, of an intermediate for a synthesis, or of specific analytical data on these preparations, cultures, and so on. Such acknowledgments are essential to the ability of the reader to evaluate the paper, or seek an equivalent starting material, or attempt to repeat and extend the work.

The problem arises chiefly with respect to the general type of acknowledgment of the style, "The authors wish to thank Professor —, Dr. —, and Professor — for their helpful criticisms, interesting comments, fruitful discussions . . ." and the like.

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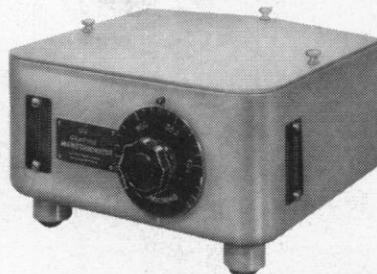
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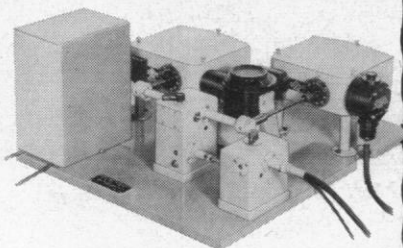
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In my opinion, it not infrequently happens that the individual to whom such thanks are made would prefer not to have his name mentioned in the paper. Frequently his advice was not followed; many times he may object to the conclusions or may not be happy with the data. Often his comments were made casually in discussion, without reference to a specific paper, and he may have no recollection of them. He opens his mail one day to find the latest issue of the journal with the paper in print and with himself as the recipient of the unwanted and unsolicited thanks. He had not been asked or he might well have refused.

Within the past month I requested two individuals who were good enough to send me their manuscripts to delete my name from among such thanks at the end of the manuscripts. In one case my advice, based on about 20 hours of studying the paper and discussing it with the author, was not followed, and I do not believe that the data presented established the validity of the proposed method. In the other case, my contribution was negligible, and the manuscript was sent to me privately for my opinion with a thank-you note already included at the end of the paper. Both manuscripts had been sent to the journal prior to my having seen them. Other persons,

however, have not given me the opportunity of not being thanked!

There is little doubt that the judicious use of such acknowledgments to well-known workers in the field consciously or subconsciously influences referees in the evaluation of the paper. In one instance of which I have firsthand knowledge, a paper refereed was rejected by one journal. The author submitted it to another journal but inserted an acknowledgment to a very prominent worker in the field. After the paper appeared, the person who had refereed it for the second journal asked me for my opinion and, on learning that I did not feel the paper was worth publishing, said that he had refereed it. Really, he said, he didn't know much about the field, but after all, if Professor ——— was given an acknowledgment, the paper must be all right, so naturally he had accepted it. It so happened that Professor ——— had not seen the paper, had not been asked about having his name mentioned, and told me that "he would not have published the paper" on the basis of the data.

Is it too much to expect editors of journals to request that manuscripts containing such acknowledgments be accompanied by a letter from the individual thanked indicating that he has read the paper and has no objection?

ELVIN A. KABAT

Columbia University, New York

Electroconvection

The paper of Dobry and Finn (1) describes a method for the electrophoretic separation of ionic mixtures which has some similarities to that of Philpot (2). It should be a valuable addition to the present list of protein separation methods.

However, the comments of Dobry and Finn on the method of electroconvection are apparently based on a misunderstanding of this method. The fact is that thermal convection currents have no significant effect in the method of electroconvection, since the density gradients established by electrophoretic migration are far greater than those resulting from thermal differences.

The electroconvection apparatus of improved design described by Raymond (3) can in fact be operated at room temperature with no particular necessity for controlling temperature differences within the solution or within the buffer compartments. The heat produced in this apparatus has also been discussed (4). It is true that only one component at a time can be separated by electroconvection, but the actual working time for any given separation is very small. On the other hand, experience with apparatus whose operation depends on a constant and continuous flow of solution


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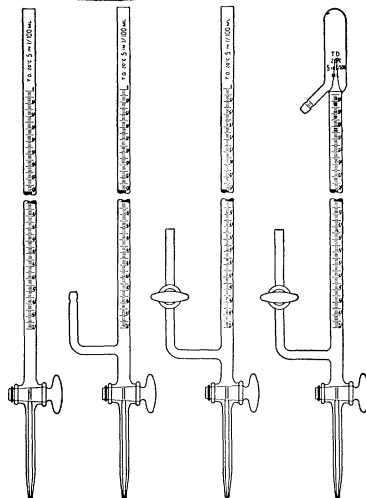
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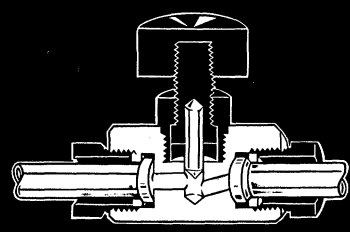
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