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The Bureau of Indian Affairs has authorized a $44,000 contract with the Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, D.C., to examine the needs in English language teaching programs for American Indians.

In announcing the contract, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Robert L. Bennett said:

"There was a time, not so many years ago, when the Bureau's education programs were probably the most advanced, the most imaginative, and the most responsive to student needs of any in the Nation" But in recent years we have trailed behind the great nationwide effort to broaden the scope and depth of public education" The baby boom among Indian families left us short classrooms. This problem we have temporarily resolved. Now we must concentrate on bringing into these classrooms the quality of teaching and variety of curriculum that will guarantee every Indian baby and girl an equal competitive chance in the world beyond school."

Bennett added: “The study to be made by the Center for Applied Linguistics hopefully will set us quickly on the course to major advances in the teaching of English, basic to our Indian education program."

The contract calls for an examination and assessment of English language programs in selected Bureau elementary and secondary schools, particularly where children speak an Indian tongue in their homes. Administration of BIA boarding and day schools, performance of student and teachers, quality of instructional materials, and quality of teacher recruitment and training also will be measured. Adult education programs and public school programs also will be examined in relation to the Federal school operations.

Schools in the following localities will be the subjects of the study: the Navajo Reservation; Phoenix, Ariz.; Albuquerque, N, Mex.; and Aberdeen, S. Dak. A team of three linguistics specialists will be assigned to the task, and consulting specialists in such fields as testing and the psychology of language learning will be employed.

The study will commence this month. A report and recommendations are to be submitted to the Bureau of Indian Affairs within six months.