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ABSTRACT

The extent to which language differences might be responsible for the difficulties faced by Negro children in newly desegregated schools was investigated. The sample was a group of 46 fourth graders from one school in a Creole-speaking bilingual area of Louisiana. Goals of the study were (1) to determine the degree of correlation between the Oral Language Proficiency Test and reading achievement and verbal ability, (2) to determine the relation of these variables with success in school, and (3) to test the efficacy of the Oral Language Proficiency Test with a new population, since it was relatively new and had not been widely tested. Results of this study were compared with a previous study with fourth graders in San Antonio, Texas. Conclusions were that significant correlations do exist between oral language proficiency and reading and verbal abilities and that the Oral Language Proficiency Test is a valid instrument for investigations of this sort. Tables and a bibliography are included. (MS)

Language Research Project

A Study of The Relation of Oral Language Proficiency and Reading in a Group of Fourth Grade Negro Children of a French Linguistic Background

by

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A STUDY OF THE RELATION OF ORAL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND READING IN A GROUP OF FOURTH GRADE NEGRO CHILDREN OF A FRENCH LINGUISTIC BACKGROUND

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by

NOLA RUTH BRADLEY, B.A.

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

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for the Degree of

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P R E F A C E

This study completed by Miss Ruth Bradley is concerned with one aspect of the problems faced by the Negro child of Lafayette Parish, Louisiana, the "Evangeline Country" settled by the Acadians after their expulsion from Nova Scotia in 1755. Current desegregation, with the mingling of white and black students and teachers, surfaced a central problem, language. Using oral language test instruments refined in San Antonio, Texas, Language Research Project, she has identified language characteristics of the bilingual, with a difference that here the inherited language is Acadian French rather than Mexican Spanish. In the process of the research, the nature and the degree of bilingualism of a sample of these people's children have been illuminated. As a full time staff member in the school system during her research, she was able to apply her insights to facilitate the difficult process of integration. Her study again adds force to the conviction that communication is critical, that language may help or hinder the communication process through which mutual understanding is reached.

Mark W. Seng
The University of Texas at Austin
June, 1970

A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

The author wishes to express her sincere appreciation to Dr. Mark Seng, supervisor of this study, and to Dr. John Bordie, graduate advisor, for their guidance, encouragement, patience and time.

To Mr. W. R. Devine, President of Language Arts, Inc., for his time and generosity in lending the Gloria and David materials and some of the mechanical devices used in the study, the author extends her appreciation.

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Finally, to her friends in Lafayette, Virginia and Joan, for their understanding and encouragement, the author expresses her appreciation and gratitude.

N. R. B.

The University of Texas at Austin
June 15, 1970

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

National attention has spotlighted Negro education in the South for the past fifteen years. As schools have moved toward desegregation, the nation has become increasingly aware of the problems Negro educators have faced for 100 years. The Negro child achieves a lower level, he meets with academic failure more often and sometimes faces being considered mentally retarded in comparison with his white peers. One educational survey, conducted at the request of the United States Congress, and published in 1966 under the title of Equality of Educational Opportunity,[1] places in relief the low academic achievement of the southern Negro child. As a part of this survey, pupils were tested in reading and verbal ability by ethnic group and geographic area. The scores of the top group (white pupils in the metropolitan Northeast) were used as a norm, and the other groups of pupils were measured against this group.

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[1]James S. Coleman and others, Equality of Educational Opportunity (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Office of Education, 1966).

In reading comprehension, white pupils in the nonmetropolitan South lagged 0.5 grade levels behind the national norm at grade six, while their Negro counterparts in the rural South scored 2.7 grade levels behind. At grade nine the gap increased to 0.8 grade levels below the norm for the white child, and 3.7 for the Negro child. By grade twelve scores showed the white pupil 1.0 grade levels behind the white metropolitan Northeast, while the gap had widened for the Negro child to 4.9 grade levels. The survey pointed out a similar disparity in verbal ability between black and white children in the rural South. At grade twelve scores showed white pupils 1.5 grade levels behind the white metropolitan Northeast, while Negro pupils were 5.2 grade levels below the national norm.

The problems resulting from this educational gap have become matters of concern in Southwest Louisiana and in other areas of the South that have continued to operate separate schools for Negroes and whites serving the same geographic area. In October, 1969, Federal Courts ordered that this dual system be replaced at once by a unitary school system, thus accomplishing complete desegregation of administration, faculty, and student bodies.

When a Negro child in the South enters school, he finds the classroom dominated by a culture unfamiliar

to him. The language of, and pictures in his textbooks do not relate to his previous experience in his home environment. In Southwest Louisiana the Negro child has an additional problem. The language of his home is usually French, and he speaks either French or a dialect of English strongly influenced by French which was, for so many years, the first language of the area. The cultural gap will increase as the child moves into an integrated classroom and contacts white teachers and classmates, some of whom have immigrated from other states.

This study is concerned with the language problems of the Negro child in Lafayette Parish, Louisiana, and with the relation of the child's oral language to his achievement level in reading and verbal ability.

Background of Bilingualism in Lafayette Parish

Lafayette Parish is a part of what was originally the Attakapas County-Parish. This is "Evangline Country," the area of Louisiana settled by the Acadians after their expulsion from Nova Scotia, then Acadia, in 1755. The story of their exile and the hardships they endured were immortalized by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in his poem, Evangline.

Figure 1

THE STATE OF LOUISIANA, SHOWING THE LOCATION OF
THE ATTAKAPAS COUNTY-PARISH AND
THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

When the first Acadians arrived in Louisiana in 1764, they were sent into the Attakapas and Opelousas regions where they were given land grants and assistance to begin raising cattle. The Acadians were monolingual speakers of French and staunch Roman Catholics. Their culture was a simple rural one which required little formal education. Only the priest, usually a missionary from Europe, and a few important members of the community could read and write. The education of the Acadian consisted of learning the catechism and a few basic prayers by rote, and being taught the domestic and agricultural skills necessary for survival.

The formal education that existed in the early days of the parish was private and in French. Catholic schools, in which the language of instruction was French, were organized for whites in 1846. Prior to the Civil War, public education was almost nonexistent in the parish. After the war, the carpetbag constitution of 1868 provided for a school in the parish, but it was short-lived and attended only by a few Negroes. In 1879, a parish school board was appointed and the poll taxes were marked for the support of the public schools. However, it was in 1898 that the state provided additional revenue that

permitted the expansion of the system and made possible rapid growth of the public schools.[2]

The language of instruction in the public schools has always been English, and pupils were forced to use that language exclusively at school, in classes and during recreation periods. In fact, many local residents recall being punished at school for speaking French on the playground. The Acadian who attended school became bilingual as he learned English in addition to his native French which he never learned to read or write.

Because the Acadian became literate only in English, that language has become the prestige language. Parents, knowing that their children would have to speak English in school, were inclined to speak English at home resulting in the fact that fewer and fewer of the educated Acadians in this generation speak French. For example, the situation in a family of the writer's acquaintance is typical. The great-grandmother is a fluent speaker of French, a language she also reads and writes. She neither speaks nor understands English. Her daughter, who has completed two years of college, is bilingual, but literate

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[2]Harry Lewis Griffin, The Attakapas Country (New Orleans: Pelican Publishing Company, 1959), pp. 95-7.

only in English. The grandchildren, all college graduates, are monolingual speakers of English who can understand French. The great grandchildren are monolingual speakers of English who do not understand French.

In the white community, then, French is spoken by only a few of the preschool children. It is interesting to note, however, that a public law was passed in 1968 creating the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana, a group that has been most active in its efforts to encourage the use of the French language. French television programs have been inaugurated; spot announcements on radio and television urge parents to speak French to their children and efforts are being made to make French a part of the elementary school curriculum. It is impossible to conclude at this time whether or not these efforts to save the language will be successful.

Because the area has been bilingual for over 200 years, the English of the natives, both Negro and white, even of those who do not speak French, often shows French interference.

The Negro in Lafayette Parish

The black community, although separate from the white, has felt the influence of the Acadian language and

culture. When the Acadians arrived in the Attakapas country, there were already Negro slaves in the Louisiana territory. Anthony Crozat brought in the first shipment of twenty slaves in 1712. By 1724, there were so many Negroes, free and slave, in the territory that the famous Code Noir, a piece of legislation intended to protect the slaves from cruelty and to regulate their conduct, was issued in Louisiana. Church records indicate that there were Negro slaves in the Attakapas District as early as 1756. Early census records show the growth of the Negro population in the Attakapas District and Lafayette Parish. In 1803 there were 1,266 Negro slaves in the Attakapas District, by 1810 the number had grown to 3,219. In 1830 there were 2,367 Negro slaves in Lafayette Parish, and by 1860 there were 4,387. (Figure 2 indicates the geographic boundries of Lafayette Parish at these dates.) In 1860 there were about an equal number of whites and Negroes living in the parish, the number of whites being 4,319.[3] The population is now 75 percent white; 25 percent black.[4]

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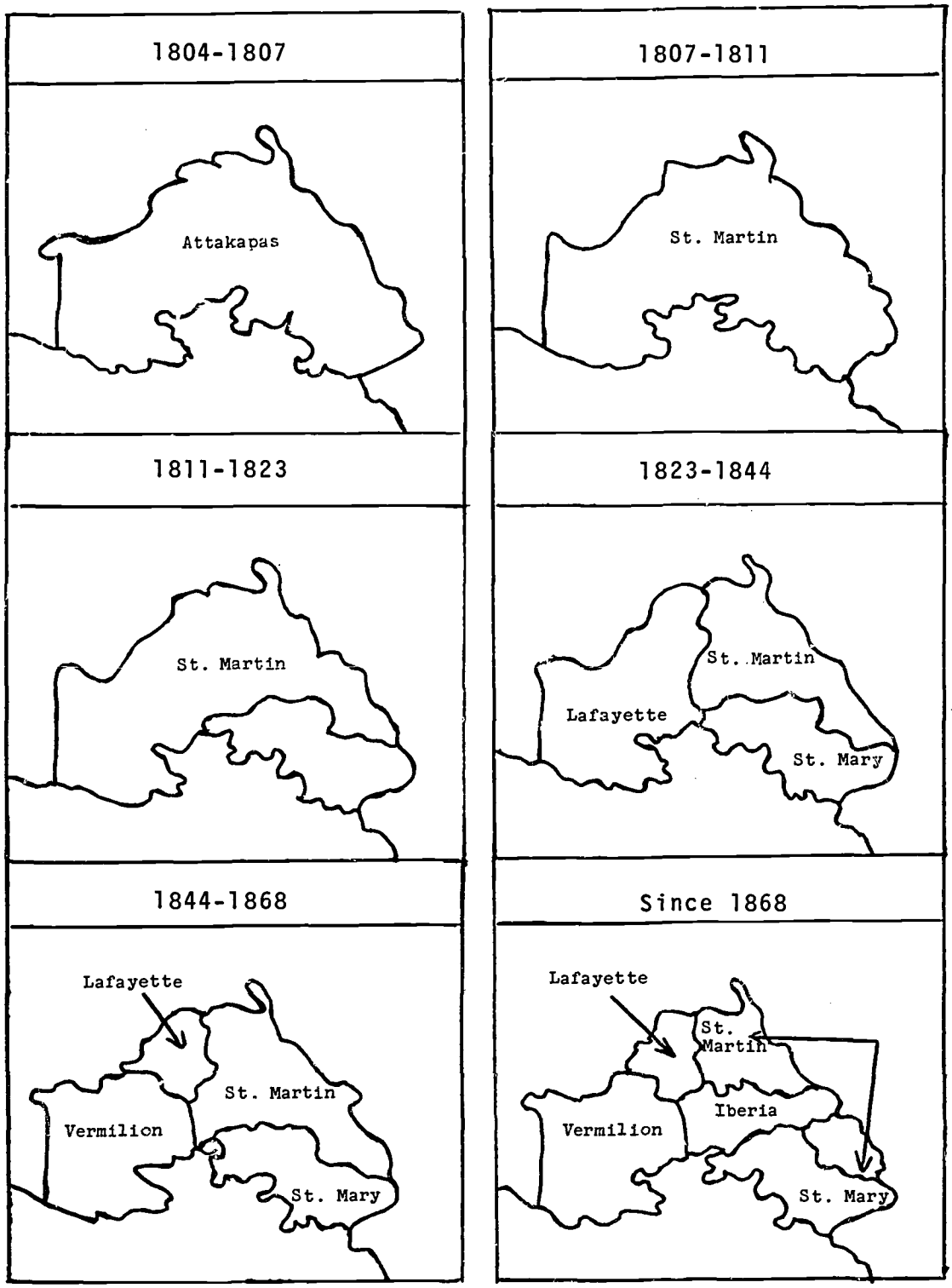
[3]Harry Lewis Griffin, pp. 147-9.

[4]Hilliard E. Chesteen and Richard H. Rolston, Indices of Poverty of the Dioceses of Lafayette (Baton Rouge: Franklin Press, 1968), p. 8.

Figure 2

GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES OF LAFAYETTE PARISH



Source: Maurine Bergerie, They Tasted Bayou Water, New Orleans: Pelican Publishing Company, 1962.

The Negro slave acquired from his Acadian masters the French language and the Catholic faith. Today he takes pride in these two characteristics which set him apart from the larger group of American Negroes. He is somewhat inclined to regard the non-French speaking, protestant Negro who comes into the community as an intruder.

As a result of the Acadian influence, French, or rather a dialect of French, locally called "Creole" or "Gumbo," is the first language of most of the Negroes over thirty who are natives of Lafayette Parish. Education has been slower to influence the Negro community. For example, 8.4 percent of the white population over twenty-five has had no formal education while 34.7 percent of the same segment of the nonwhite population has never attended school.[5] It is because fewer Negroes attended school and learned English that one finds many more blacks than whites who speak only French. One could conclude, then, that the Negro child has more contact with a second language than does the white child in Lafayette Parish.

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[5]Hilliard E. Chesteen and Richard H. Rolston, p. 12.

Background of the Problem

The extent and degree of bilingualism, the ability to function in two languages, among school age Negro children is unknown. Some idea of the numbers who speak a dialect that would prevent them from entering the mainstream of the dominant culture if they so desired can be gleaned from consideration of the educational attainment of the adults from whom the children learn their first language; 61.3 percent of the Negroes over twenty-five in Lafayette Parish have had less than five years of schooling.[6] One must also keep in mind that the school system and the social structure of the Negro community has been almost completely separate from that of the white, factors which certainly aid in the preservation of a dialect.

In second language learning emphasis is generally placed on developmental learning: listening, speaking, reading and writing, in that order. When the French-speaking child enters a school in which English is the language of instruction, he is forced to cope with all four language skills simultaneously. The child who speaks a nonstandard dialect is placed in a position similar to

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[6] Ibid.

the bilingual child in that both must function in a language that differs significantly from the language of their home.

Purpose of the Study

In September, 1967, the "Freedom of Choice" plan of desegregation went into effect in Lafayette Parish. The plan gave each child in ninth or a higher grade the opportunity to choose the public school he wished to attend. In the case of children in the eighth or a lower grade, the parents could choose. The plan also provided that at least two teachers of the opposite race be assigned to each school in the Parish. Although this plan did not achieve the degree of racial integration authorities had hoped it would, it did place a number of white teachers in contact with disadvantaged Negro pupils for the first time in the history of public education in Lafayette Parish.

In May, 1969, as the parish was facing the complete abolishment of the duosystem of schools, a meeting was called of those teachers who had been teaching in schools of the opposite race in order that they might discuss the problems they had met. The greatest difficulty seemed to be one of language, and in particular the first two language skills, listening and speaking. The teachers

had great difficulty understanding the speech of the Negro pupil, and conversely, the Negro child found his white teacher difficult to understand.

As a result of this meeting, it became evident to those involved that programs to meet the needs of linguistically disadvantaged children cannot be designed, nor can much effective teaching take place, until the oral language proficiency of these children can be evaluated and improved. This study, then, seeks to determine the oral language proficiency of a group of fourth grade Negro children from a French speaking linguistic background in Lafayette, Louisiana.

To make the evaluation the Oral Language Proficiency Test[7] used by Thomasine H. Taylor for her investigations with Spanish speaking children in San Antonio will be administered. The test is described in Chapter III.

Studies have been made that show the relation between fluency in English and reading achievement. Pauck used the Ott-Jameson Self Test to measure the English oral

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[7]Thomasine H. Taylor, "A Comparative Study of the Effects of Oral-Aural Language Training on Gains in English Language for Fourth and Fifth Grade Disadvantaged Mexican-American Children," Ph.D. Dissertation, College of Education, The University of Texas at Austin, 1969.

fluency of a group of first graders whose first language was Spanish and found a high degree of correlation between fluency in English and each of the subtests of the Metropolitan Achievement Tests.[8] By correlating the results of the Oral Language Proficiency Test with the results of the E.T.S. Reading Achievement Test administered to fourth grade children by the Lafayette Parish Schools, this study will seek to determine if a significant degree of correlation will be found between the Oral Language Proficiency Test and each of its subtests and the reading achievement test. If a significant degree of correlation is present, one might assume a causal relation. The results from this study could then be used as a basis for implementing oral language teaching techniques in remedial reading programs for disadvantaged children, and in reading readiness programs at the head start and kindergarten levels in the school district.

Inherent in the study is the gathering of additional data relevant to the usefulness of the Oral Language

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[8]Fredrick G. Pauck, "An Evaluation of the Self Test as a Predictor of Reading Achievement of Spanish-Speaking First Grade Children," Ph.D. Dissertation, College of Education, The University of Texas at Austin, 1968.

Proficiency Test. The test has been widely used on a casual basis, but has had limited use under research conditions.

Statement of the Problem

This study seeks to: (1) gather samples of, and information about children's oral language skills; (2) determine the degree of correlation, if any, between the Oral Language Proficiency Test and reading achievement and verbal ability scores; (3) test the feasibility of the Oral Language Proficiency Test, particularly the fluency subtest, with another population.

Statistical Hypotheses

The research design calls for testing the following null hypotheses listed below.

1. There will be no significant correlation between the score on the total language test and the reading test score for the fourth grade subjects tested.
2. There will be no significant correlation between the score on the total language test and the verbal ability test for the fourth grade subjects tested.

3. There will be no significant correlation between the score on the phonology subtest and the reading test score for the fourth grade subjects tested.
4. There will be no significant correlation between the score on the phonology subtest and the verbal test for the fourth grade subjects tested.
5. There will be no significant correlation between the score on the fluency subtest and the reading test score for the fourth grade subjects tested.
6. There will be no significant correlation between the score on the fluency subtest and the verbal ability test for the fourth grade subjects tested.
7. There will be no significant correlation between the variable considered in this study, i.e. reading, verbal ability, phonology, fluency, and total language, and the failure of one or more grades during the first three years of school by the fourth grade pupils tested.
8. There will be no significant difference between the fourth grade groups tested in San Antonio and the fourth grade group tested in Lafayette in phonology.

9. There will be no significant difference between the fourth grade groups tested in San Antonio and the fourth grade group tested in Lafayette in fluency.
10. There will be no correlation between the two subscales and the total score on the Oral Language Proficiency Test, i.e., fluency and total score, phonology and total score, and phonology and fluency.

Proposed Data Analyses

The method of analyses to be used for hypotheses (8) and (9) is an analysis of variance. To test the remaining hypotheses a correlation technique using a 3 × 3 intercorrelation matrix will be used.

TABLE I

RESULTS OF READING COMPREHENSION TEST GIVEN PUPILS AT GRADES 6, 9 AND 12, BY REGION OF THE UNITED STATES AND ETHNIC GROUP, 1965

Number of Grade Levels Behind the Average White Pupil in the Metropolitan Northeast, by Group

Race and Area	Grade Levels Behind at Grade:		
	6	9	12
White, nonmetropolitan:			
South	0.5	0.8	1.0
Southwest	0.1	0.3	1.0
North	0.2	0.3	0.5
White, metropolitan:			
Northeast	-	-	-
Midwest	0.1	0.1	0.3
South	0.3	0.4	0.4
Southwest	0.4	0.7	0.4
West	0.2	0.5	0.8
Negro, nonmetropolitan:			
South	2.7	3.7	4.9
Southwest	2.4	3.3	4.5
North	2.2	2.6	3.8
Negro, metropolitan			
Northeast	1.8	2.6	2.9
Midwest	1.8	2.3	2.8
South	2.1	3.0	3.9
Southwest	2.1	3.0	4.1
West	2.1	3.1	3.8

SOURCE: James S. Coleman and others, Equality of Educational Opportunity (Washington, U.S. Office of Education, 1966).

TABLE II

RESULTS OF VERBAL ABILITY TEST GIVEN PUPILS AT GRADES 6, 9 AND 12, BY REGION OF UNITED STATES AND ETHNIC GROUP, 1965

Number of Grade Levels Behind the Average White Pupil in the Metropolitan Northeast, by Group

Race and Area	Grade Levels Behind at Grade:		
	6	9	12
White, nonmetropolitan:			
South	0.7	1.0	1.5
Southwest	0.3	0.4	0.8
North	0.2	0.4	0.9
White, metropolitan:			
Northeast	-	-	-
Midwest	0.1	0.0	0.4
South	0.5	0.5	0.9
Southwest	0.5	0.6	0.7
West	0.3	0.3	0.5
Negro, nonmetropolitan:			
South	2.5	3.9	5.2
Southwest	2.0	3.3	4.7
North	1.9	2.7	4.2
Negro, metropolitan:			
Northeast	1.6	2.4	3.3
Midwest	1.7	2.2	3.3
South	2.0	3.0	4.2
Southwest	1.9	2.9	4.3
West	1.9	2.6	3.9

SOURCE: James S. Coleman and others, Equality of Educational Opportunity (Washington, U.S. Office of Education).

C H A P T E R I I

THE TESTING OF ORAL LANGUAGE

Prior to the N.D.E.A. Act of 1958, tests of the spoken language were all but unknown. As the initial stress in second language teaching and learning shifted from reading and writing to understanding and speaking, tests of these two skills were devised for the evaluation of both students and teachers. However, even now one finds far more tests of listening comprehension than of speaking. One reason is that individually administered speaking tests are time consuming for the examiner. A fifteen minute test administered to 100 students takes three full days and one hour of a fourth day for an examiner working eight hours a day.[1]

Nelson Brooks[2] describes the formal speaking test as one in which the learner is directed to repeat a series of expressions as he hears them, reads aloud from

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[1]Robert Lado, Language Teaching: A Scientific Approach (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1964), p. 162.

[2]Nelson Brooks, Language and Language Learning: Theory and Practice (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), pp. 252-3.

the printed page and talks about some pictures, putting all of his responses on tape for later evaluation. For the evaluation of the speaking skill, Brooks suggests the following criteria:

a. Are the individual sounds (vowels, consonants) correctly pronounced?

b. Are the intonation patterns, the ups and downs and the syllabic stress, satisfactory?

c. Does the promptness of utterance reveal that the student is speaking without internal reference to English?

d. Do the spoken words fall easily into place in the right form and order?

e. How "natural" or "native-speaker" is the general impression given by the student as he speaks?

The use of tape recorders and modern language laboratory facilities have made speaking tests possible. However, the complexity of administering and the subjectivity of scoring them has made such tests rare even in the foreign language courses which list speaking as one of the major objectives. Tests of the other three skills are used for the evaluation of student progress.

Language Testing and the Linguistically Different Child

Another area in which oral language tests are used is in sampling the language skill of children before

they have learned to read and write. In this case, if one is going to test language, it is the speaking skill that must be used for evaluation in spite of the fact that it is a time consuming task and subjective.

These tests of oral language, for the most part, have been constructed in conjunction with programs designed to give the linguistically different child additional training in language and with programs of teaching English as a second language.

Examples of Oral Language Tests

The Ott-Jameson Test of Spoken English: This test, designed for use with Mexican-American children, consists of two parts. Part one measures phonology or the production of sounds. The child is given a series of prerecorded sentences which he is directed to repeat. Each sentence is constructed to evaluate one phoneme, which is the only phoneme the evaluator is concerned with, in listening to the sentence. The response is evaluated as: correct, minimum change of phoneme or neither. Part two is a test of fluency. It consists of a series of prerecorded questions designed to elicit three levels of speech, literal, inferential and imaginative. The questions are

structured so as to involve the pupil personally in the pictured situation. The entire test is administered by means of a cartridge recording machine, using a 15-minute two-tract cartridge tape with instructions and questions prerecorded and time-spaced on one track; the second track is provided for recording the student's responses. Part two also uses an automated filmstrip viewer which is synchronized to project the picture stimuli related to the questions on the cartridge.[3]

Because the entire test is prerecorded the examiner variable is reduced.

In speaking of the fluency part of the test Pauck observed that because each question is spaced with a limited amount of time, and since the questions are unrelated to each other, it appears to penalize the thoughtful, reflective child.[4]

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[3]Elizabeth H. Ott, "A Study of Levels of Fluency and Proficiency in Oral English of Spanish-Speaking School Beginners," Ph.D. Dissertation, College of Education, The University of Texas at Austin, 1967, pp. 139-142.

[4]Frederick G. Pauck, "An Evaluation of the Self Test as a Predictor of Reading Achievement of Spanish-Speaking First Grade Children," Ph.D. Dissertation, College of Education, The University of Texas at Austin, 1968, pp. 151-2.

The Michael Test of Oral Language Production:

This test, designed for elementary E.S.L. programs, consists of four scales: communication, structure, vocabulary, and pronunciation. The primary objectives of the test are to measure competence in English syntax and pronunciation. Part 1-a consists of 98 items for which 51 pictures are provided; part 1-b consists of 87 items with 67 pictures. The authors indicate that the test requires from fifteen to twenty minutes to administer after the examiner has become experienced.

No mechanical or recording devices are used in the administration of the test and the examiner scores each response as it is given on a score sheet provided for each child. It is permissible to repeat a test stimulus at any time and the examiner is directed to employ a technique called "branching," the giving of additional test item stimuli in those sections dealing with syntax.[5]

The examiner variable would be a major factor in this test.

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[5]Richard E. Sullivan, "Review: A Test of Oral Language Production," The University of Texas at Austin, mimeographed, December 2, 1969.

The Gloria and David Oral Language Proficiency Test: This is the test employed by the writer in this study. It is described in detail in Chapter III.

The Gloria and David Oral Bilingual Test--Spanish-English: This test, developed by Language Arts, Inc., of Austin, Texas, is administered in the same manner as the Oral Language Proficiency Test. The Spanish-English Bilingual Test contains fifty-one sentences, twenty-five English and twenty-six Spanish.

Ernest F. Haden states that the test "is an instrument which should give discrimination between the dominant, or first, language and the second language for each subject tested, and one that would have a high degree of diagnostic value in pinpointing those particular items which need instructional intervention in each language."[6]

The Gloria and David Oral Bilingual Test--French-English: This test, also produced by Language Arts, Inc., is patterned after the Spanish-English test consisting of twenty-five French sentences and twenty-five English sentences. The test should yield the same information as the Spanish-English test. It was used in this study with

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[6]Ernest F. Haden, "An Evaluation of the Oral Bilingual Test--Spanish-English," The University of Texas at Austin, mimeographed and undated.

those children who stated that they could speak French. (See Chapter III.)

The Garvey-McFarlane Test of Standard English Proficiency: This test was designed to assess the degree of proficiency in the production of Standard English of a group of inner-city children in Baltimore, Maryland. Intended for use with fifth grade children, the test employs a sentence repetition technique. The stimulus material consists of sixty sentences which represent fifteen different syntactic or morphological features of Standard English. The sentences were prerecorded by a white, male speaker trained in "network" English. The test was administered by a team of two examiners, one who instructed the child and operated the playback machine, the other who handled the recording machine. The test required about 13 minutes to administer.

Each test was scored twice. One investigator scored during the testing session and the other investigator scored by listening to the tape. Interexaminer differences were resolved by mutual agreement upon rehearing the response.[7]

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[7]Catherine Garvey and Paul McFarlane, "A Measure of Standard English Proficiency of Inner-City Children," American Educational Research Journal, 7:29-39, January, 1970.

The Urban Language Study and Materials Development Project: Although no formal test was used in this project, one of its objectives was similar to those of the tests mentioned above: to gather language samples and analyze them with the aim of producing information on which an approach to teaching Standard English could be based. The data were collected by using interviews with informants under specially controlled situations and by recording free, spontaneous conversations of school age Negro children from a lower socioeconomic level in Washington, D.C. Details of the methods used and samples of the conversations can be found in Conversations in a Negro American Dialect.[8]

Conclusions

All of these studies and tests seem to point up the need that exists to analyze language patterns and measure progress. It is also apparent that the tests of oral language that require specialized training for administration and evaluation in addition to electronic

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[8]Bengt Loman, Conversations in a Negro American Dialect (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1967).

equipment are not feasible for use by the classroom teacher. The need is now for language tests that can be administered and scored by persons without a great deal of specialized training. In the meantime, an effort should be made to express the information obtained from the tests now in use in terms that can be readily interpreted by classroom teachers.

C H A P T E R I I I

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH DESIGN, PROCEDURES, AND DATA ANALYSES

The research design of this study was formulated to (1) determine the degree of correlation, if any, between the reading achievement of a group of disadvantaged fourth grade Negro pupils and their oral language competence as measured by the Oral Language Proficiency Test; (2) ascertain the effectiveness of the test, originally designed for use with disadvantaged Mexican-American children, when used with Negro children from a French speaking background. For the former, an analysis of variance was computed from the fourth grade scores obtained from the Mexican-American children in San Antonio and the scores obtained in Lafayette, Louisiana; for the later, an intercorrelation analysis was used.

Description of the Sample

In the summer of 1969 the writer discussed her plan to measure the oral language level of a group of Negro pupils with Mr. Harold Gauthe and Dr. Catherine Janes,

supervisors of elementary schools for the Lafayette Parish School Board. They both agreed that Paul Breaux Elementary School was typical of the four Negro elementary schools in the city of Lafayette, and granted permission for the study to be conducted there. The school's principal, Mr. Robert L. Henderson, agreed to the plan and supplied the examiner with a list of the 205 pupils who were enrolled in six sections of fourth grade at the school. From these 205 fourth graders, a random sample of fifty was chosen.

The 1969-70 academic year was to be Paul Breaux's final year of operation as an all-Negro school. The Freedom of Choice plan of desegregation had served to achieve at least token integration in all of the white schools in the district, but no white students had enrolled at any Negro school while the plan was in effect. During the summer of 1969, the school district was ordered to submit a new plan for desegregation. Under this new plan, Paul Breaux would be paired with a nearby formerly all-white school, Le Rosen Elementary School. These two schools (located within five blocks of one another) would serve all children in the area, Paul Breaux housing the upper grades and Le Rosen housing the lower grades. It must be noted, then, that although the Lafayette Parish School System was technically desegregated in 1967, Paul Breaux Elementary School,

at the time this study was conducted, had never ceased to be a segregated school. The student body, the principal, his staff and all members of the faculty, except two Caucasian teachers, were members of the Negro race. All of the fourth grade teachers were Negroes who had received all of their education in the Negro school system.

In order to present an idea of the socioeconomic conditions in the area served by the school, the investigator obtained information concerning the education and occupation of the parents of the children included in the sample. Only fifteen of the fifty children had a father who held a full-time job. Eighteen listed miscellaneous labor as their occupation, meaning that the man obtains whatever work he can, usually yard maintenance. Most of these men manage to work only one or two days a week earning a weekly wage of about $10. Twenty-eight of the mothers were gainfully employed; twenty-three of them as domestic servants. The median level of education for the fathers was grade five; for the mothers it was grade six. Sixteen fathers and nine mothers indicated that they had completed less than four years of schooling. It is interesting to observe that many of the children had already surpassed the level of education of their parents by the time the children had reached grade four.

TABLE III

HIGHEST GRADE COMPLETED BY THE PARENTS
OF CHILDREN IN THE SAMPLE

	Father	Mother
No Formal Education	6	5
First Grade	2	1
Second Grade	2	1
Third Grade	6	2
Fourth Grade	1	2
Fifth Grade	2	6
Sixth Grade	4	5
Seventh Grade	3	2
Eighth Grade	3	7
Ninth Grade	0	4
Tenth Grade	5	0
Eleventh Grade*	1	5
Twelfth Grade	0	1
First Year College	1	1
Second Year College	0	1
Third Year College	0	1
Information Unavailable	14	6

*Until 1949, public high schools terminated with eleventh grade in Louisiana.

A look at the educational experience of the children tested revealed that twenty-one of the pupils had participated in the Head Start Program. Twenty-three of the fifty children had repeated grades; ten repeating one grade, twelve repeating two grades, and one boy repeating more than three grades. The children ranged in age from eight years nine months to sixteen years two months. Only one of the fifty children tested had attended school outside of Lafayette Parish, and this was in neighboring St. Martin Parish.

Most of the children have daily contact with Creole, the dialect of French spoken by the Negroes in the area. Five of them said that they could speak Creole; thirty-seven said that their parents spoke that language. In only five cases was no French at all spoken in the home.

One can conclude that the background of these fourth grade children is bilingual, one of poverty, little education and almost no contact with the dominant culture.

Description of the Test

In August, 1969, the writer decided to use the phonology and fluency subtests of the Oral Language Proficiency Test to measure the oral language of a group of

Negro children. This test, refined by Thomasine H. Taylor, is designed to yield a quick check of the phonological skills of elementary school children and a measure of their fluency in the use of the English language. It is described below:

> Phonology: The phonology test is a commercially prepared review lesson, designated as Test 6.[1] The test is composed of a twenty frame filmstrip accompanied by a prerecorded series of forty modeled sentences. The pictures have been lifted from the five previous instructional filmstrips with the intent of including all troublesome phonemes for nonstandard English speakers. The instrument has 616 phonemes in the thirty-six sentences considered for evaluation from which a raw score of gross deviations can be attained.
>
> Fluency: The fluency test consists of another filmstrip[2] using pictures of the same children seen in the phonology section of the test. In prerecorded instructions (see Appendix A) the subjects are directed to describe the five pictures as they appear on the screen. This test yields a measure of fluency in the form of a count of the number of words spoken in the 150 seconds allotted to the subject for verbalization.[3]

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[1] Gloria and David Beginning English, Series No. 20, Test 6, Language Arts, Inc., 1205 West 34th Street, Austin, Texas 78705.

[2] Gloria and David Spanish Intermediate, Series No. 60, entitled "Saturday's Activities," Language Arts, Inc.

[3] Taylor, op. cit.

Administration of the Test

By the opening of the 1969-70 school term, arrangements had been completed to test a random sample of fifty fourth graders from Paul Breaux Elementary School. Special electronic equipment and permission to use portions of the Gloria and David materials were supplied through the courtesy of Language Arts, Inc., of Austin, Texas. The arrangements for the testing were basically the same as used by Taylor, except that a reel to reel tape recorder replaced the second Assistant machine permitting the recording to be made on a reel tape instead of on cartridges.

The following description of the mechanical arrangements is the one supplied by W. R. Devine, President of Language Arts, Inc., with modifications to include the use of the reel to reel recorder:

> The equipment employed included a Language Arts Assistant, a Wollansak Stereo Tape Recorder, an automated filmstrip viewer, and an earphone-microphone headset. Because the recording of each child was required to contain the test as well as the responses, a special machine arrangement was required. The equipment was set up in the following manner:
>
> The filmstrip viewer and the headset were placed on a student desk. Behind this, on a large desk, were placed the Assistant and the tape recorder. The

Assistant was employed to play the prerecorded test cartridge and to change the accompanying filmstrip pictures at the predetermined time. This filmstrip was synchronized with the audio portion of the test. A patch cord was inserted into the back of this machine to activate the automated filmstrip viewer.

A patch chord with a 500 to 1 attenuator carried the signal from the output of the Assistant to the mike input of channel one of the tape recorder. The earphone jack of the student's headset was placed into the other output socket. The student's microphone jack was inserted into the mike input socket of channel two of the tape recorder. (See Figure 3.)

On September 4, 1969, the equipment was transported to the school and testing was begun. Mr. Henderson provided the examiner with an unused classroom which permitted the equipment to be set up and the test to be administered without distractions or interruptions.[4]

The examiner greeted each child at the door, calling him by name and introducing herself to the child. As they walked toward the equipment, the examiner explained that the child would sit at the desk facing the "little TV screen" on which he would see some pictures. As most of the children had never seen a headset, the child was allowed to pick up the set and examine it while the examiner explained that he would hear someone speak through

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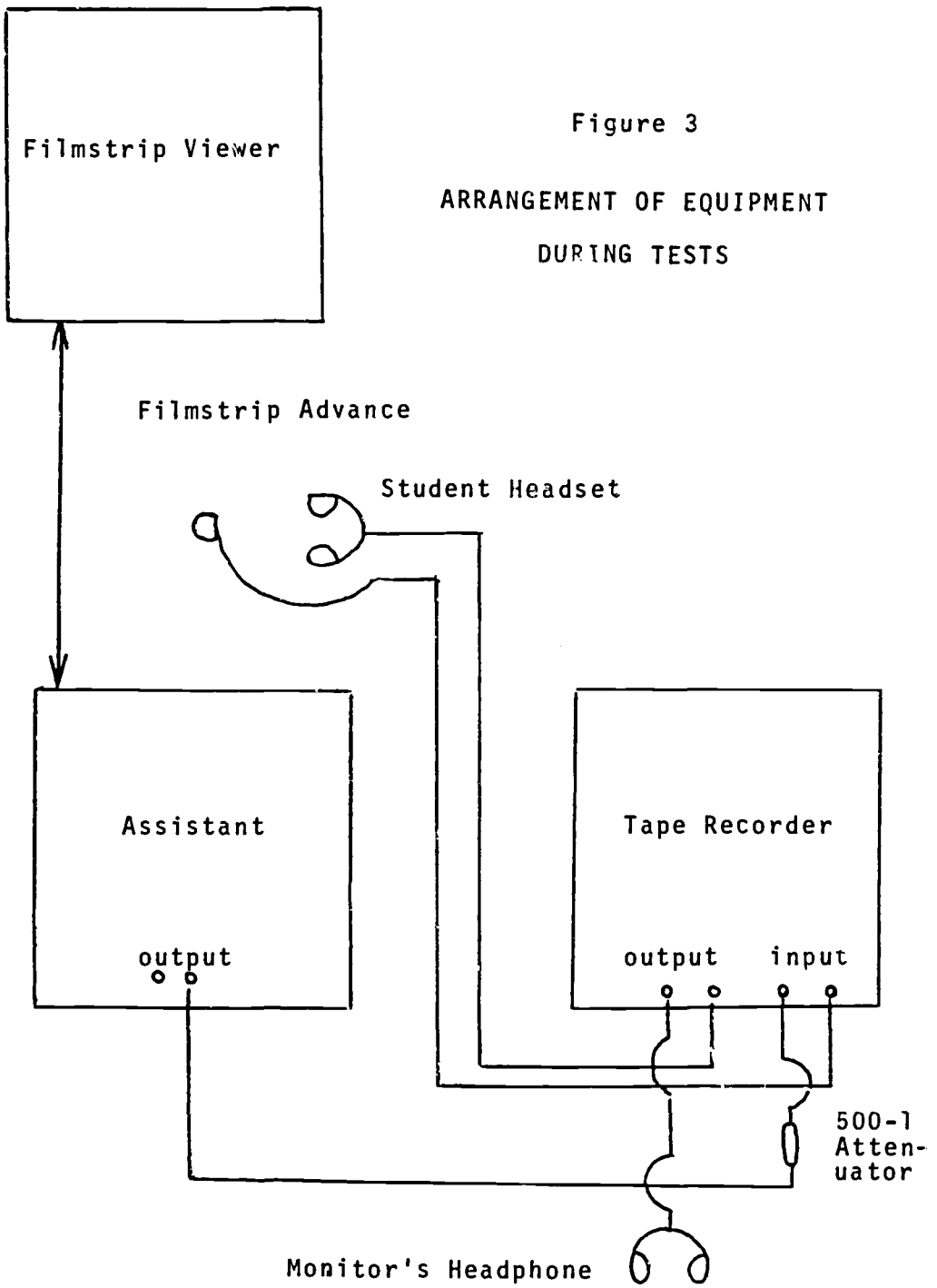
[4]Photographs of the actual testing situation are found in Appendix B.

Figure 3

ARRANGEMENT OF EQUIPMENT

DURING TESTS



the earphones, and he, in turn, would speak into the microphone. This explanation served to put the child at ease and made him eager, in most cases, to try out the mechanics of the test equipment. After the child was seated and the headset adjusted, the examiner returned to the teacher's desk behind the student and began both machines simultaneously, the Assistant in "playback" position and the tape recorder in "record" position.

In a few cases the child did not repeat the modeled sentence at the beginning of the test. When this happened, the examiner turned off the Assistant, walked over to the child and further clarified the instructions, demonstrating to the child exactly what he was expected to do. The examiner then pushed the "start" button on the Assistant to reactivate the test. In every case the child repeated the next sentence. The examiner then smiled, said a word of approval such as, "That's right," and returned to her position at the teacher's desk to monitor the test. In all cases this further clarification served to motivate the student to repeat the remaining test items. On the fluency section, Taylor's policy of not prompting the students was followed. Therefore, no remarks were addressed to the subjects during this portion of the test.

Remarkably, only one student failed to respond to the fluency directions.

Bilingual Test

Because five of the children in the sample claimed to be speakers of French, an additional test (a bilingual test) patterned after the phonology subtest of the Oral Language Proficiency Test was given. In the bilingual test, which uses the same filmstrip as the phonology test, the subjects are required to repeat fifty sentences, twenty-five in French and twenty-five in English. The French audio portion of the test has been taken from the French series of the Gloria and David materials.[5]

Four of the five students were able to repeat the French sentences in an intelligible manner. However, they were inclined to substitute Creole expressions for the standard French given by the model. The fifth child was able to repeat only the English sentences. A conversation with him revealed that he could only use a few French expressions. It was concluded that four of our sample of fifty pupils were speakers of French.

---

[5]Gloria et David Beginning French, Series No. 6, Language Arts, Inc.

FIGURE 4

DISTRIBUTION OF PHONEMES IN INSTRUMENT

/b/	15	/ɔr/	21
/p/	5	/ər/	15
/d/	35	/l/	32
/t/	28	/w/	8
/g/	20	/r/	36
/k/	23	/i/	18
/č/	4	/I/	41
/v/	8	/ey/	19
/f/	6	/ae/	26
/ð/	22	/ʊ/	1
/θ/	6	/ə/	49
/h/	32	/a/	11
/z/	30	/u/	10
/s/	16	/o/	30
/š/	13	/ai/	3
/m/	7	/ar/	3
/n/	32	/c/	10

Missing from the test:
/ž/, /ŋ/, /au/, /oi/.

*Adapted from Taylor, op. cit.

Scoring of the Tests

In order to record each test, 300 feet of one mil Mylar tape was allowed. This tape was spliced together with leader tape on seven inch reels. At the end of each testing session, each subject's tape was rewound onto a three inch reel, his name and code number were written on the leader tape and also on the box in which the three inch reel was stored. The examiner then evaluated each tape individually by listening to it through a set of headphones.

Phonology: The first four sentences of the phonology test were considered as practice items because some of the subjects required prompting from the test administrator before they understood that they were to imitate the model. Actual scoring began with sentence number five. As the examiner listened to the tape, she circled, on the individual score sheet (see Appendix C) the gross errors in pronunciation made by the child as he repeated the model.

In August, 1969, the writer scored ten of the tapes obtained in San Antonio and compared her evaluation with that of Dr. Taylor. The number of errors noted in

each case was approximately the same. In evaluating the tapes the writer attempted to follow the rule of marking only those errors which marked a phonemic difference or an error that would label the speech as "different" to a lay listener. Deviations were circled, counted and then subtracted from the total number of phonemes in the instrument in order to compute the raw score. Distribution of the phonemes in the instrument is shown in Figure 4.

Fluency: To score the fluency test, the investigator transcribed in writing what the subject had said about the five pictures in the 150 seconds allotted him. A word count was then made which constituted the raw score.

Analyses of the Data

An analysis of variance of the subtests in phonology and fluency was made between the fourth grade groups tested in San Antonio and the sample tested in Lafayette, and a correlation analysis was performed on the Lafayette sample treating the following variables: phonology, fluency, total language, reading achievement, verbal ability, IQ, nonverbal ability, age, and number of grades repeated.

ANOVAR and FACTOR, statistical computer programs from the Edstat-V Library at The University of Texas

Computation Center, were used to produce the analyses of variance and the correlation analysis. These two programs are documented and references to the statistical methods which they implement are also given by Veldman.[6] For use with the programs, the data were punched onto tab cards.

To test hypotheses (1) through (6) and hypothesis (9), an intercorrelation matrix was computed.[7]

To test hypotheses (7) and (8), comparisons were made between each of the three subgroups of the San Antonio sample and the Lafayette sample using the T-Test for independent means. The following formulae were used:

$$T = \frac{Dm}{S_{Dm}} = \frac{M_1 - M_2}{\sqrt{\frac{S^2}{N^1} + \frac{S^2}{N^2}}}$$

$$S^2 = \frac{\Sigma(X - M_1)^2 + \Sigma(X - M_2)^2}{N_1 + N_2 - 2} ; \quad \Sigma(X - M)^2 = N(SD)^2.[8]$$

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[6]Donald J. Veldman, FORTRAN Programming for the Behavioral Sciences (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1967).

[7]Q. McNemar, Psychological Statistics (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1962), pp. 109-168.

[8]Ibid., pp. 99-104.

C H A P T E R I V

STATISTICAL ANALYSES OF THE HYPOTHESES

This chapter will present the results of the statistical analyses performed on the data obtained from the random sample of fifty fourth grade Negro pupils at Paul Breaux Elementary School in Lafayette, Louisiana. Because only partial data were available for four of the subjects, the number considered in the analyses was reduced to forty-six. The discussion will center around the hypotheses listed in Chapter I.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant correlation between the total language score of the Oral Language Proficiency Test and the reading test score of the E.T.S. Achievement Battery.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant correlation between the phonology subtest score of the Oral Language Proficiency Test and the reading test score of the E.T.S. Achievement Battery.

TABLE IV

CORRELATION OF THE READING TEST SCORE OF THE E.T.S. BATTERY AND THE ORAL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TEST SCORES

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable		
	Phonology	Fluency	Total Language
Reading	.3349*	.4940**	.5295**

*P < .05

**P < .01

Hypothesis 5: There is no significant correlation between the fluency subtest score of the Oral Language Proficiency Test and the reading test score of the E.T.S. Achievement Battery.

The correlations obtained between the reading test score and the scores on the Oral Language Proficiency Test in phonology, fluency and total language (see Table IV) indicate that there is a relation between reading and each of the three other variables.

The total language score showed the highest degree of correlation, .5295 with the reading score. A correlation of .4940 was found between the reading score and the fluency score, and a correlation of .3349 was shown between the reading score and the phonology score.

The correlations between total language and reading, and between fluency and reading are statistically significant at the .01 level of probability; while the correlation between phonology and reading is significant at the .05 level.

Therefore, on the basis of this analysis, the three null hypotheses are rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant correlation between the total language score of the Oral Language

TABLE V

CORRELATION OF THE VERBAL ABILITY TEST SCORE OF THE E.T.S. BATTERY AND THE ORAL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TEST SCORES

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable		
	Phonology	Fluency	Total Language
Verbal Ability	.3815*	.3603*	.4400**

*P < .05

**P < .01

Proficiency Test and the verbal ability test of the E.T.S. Achievement Battery.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant correlation between the phonology subtest score of the Oral Language Proficiency Test and the verbal ability test of the E.T.S. Achievement Battery.

Hypothesis 6: There is no significant correlation between the fluency subtest score of the Oral Language Proficiency Test and the verbal ability test of the E.T.S. Battery.

The size of the correlations between the verbal ability test score and the scores on the Oral Language Proficiency Test in phonology, fluency and total language (see Table V) supports the assumption that a relationship between verbal ability and each of the three other variables exists.

As Table V indicates, the highest degree of correlation with the verbal ability score is with the total language score of the Oral Language Proficiency Test, .4400. A correlation of .3815 is found between the phonology score and the verbal ability score and a correlation of .3603 is shown between the fluency score and the verbal ability score.

TABLE VI

CORRELATION OF READING, VERBAL ABILITY, PHONOLOGY, FLUENCY AND TOTAL LANGUAGE WITH THE NUMBER OF GRADES FAILED DURING THE FIRST THREE YEARS OF SCHOOL BY FOURTH GRADE NEGRO PUPILS IN LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable: Grades Failed
Reading	-.3929*
Verbal Ability	-.4581**
Phonology	-.5351**
Fluency	-.3262*
Total Language	-.4446**

*P > .05

**P > .01

The correlations between phonology and verbal ability and between fluency and verbal ability are statistically significant at the .05 level of probability. The correlation between total language and verbal ability meets the criteria for the .01 level of probability.

Therefore, on the basis of this analysis, the three null hypotheses are rejected.

Hypothesis 7: There is no significant correlation between the variables considered in this study, i.e., reading, verbal ability, phonology, fluency, and total language, and the failure of one or more grades during the first three years of school by the fourth grade pupils tested.

The correlations obtained between each of these variables, reading, verbal ability, phonology, fluency, and total language and the failure of one or more of the first three grades (see Table VI) indicate that a relationship exists.

The phonology subtest of the Oral Language Proficiency Test shows the highest degree of correlation, -.5351, with failure in school. Verbal ability correlates at -.4581, total language at -.4446, reading at -.3929, and fluency at -.3262 with the failure of one or more of the primary grades.

TABLE VII

MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR PHONOLOGY SUBTEST, SAN ANTONIO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT, 1968-69 AND PAUL BREAUX ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, LAFAYETTE LOUISIANA 1969

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
San Antonio LCE	27	583.96	19.34
Lafayette	46	561.46	30.45

T = 3.57

P < .001

TABLE VIII

MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR PHONOLOGY SUBTEST, SAN ANTONIO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT, 1968-69 AND PAUL BREAUX ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA 1969

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
San Antonio LCS	20	587.30	18.14
Lafayette	46	561.46	30.45

T = 3.64

P < .001

TABLE IX

MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATION, AND ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR PHONOLOGY SUBTEST, SAN ANTONIO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT, 1968-69 AND PAUL BREAUX ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA, 1969

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
San Antonio Control	27	582.67	18.14
Lafayette	46	561.46	30.45

T = 3.38

P < .001

The correlations of phonology, verbal ability and total language with failure of one or more of the first three grades are statistically significant at the .01 level of probability, while those obtained between failure in school and reading and fluency are significant at the .05 level.

Therefore, on the basis of this analysis, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 8: There is no significant difference between the fourth grade groups tested in San Antonio and the fourth grade group tested in Lafayette in phonology.

As Tables VII, VIII, and IX clearly indicate, all of the groups tested in San Antonio obtained a higher mean score in phonology than the Lafayette sample. The difference between the groups is statistically significant at the .001 level.

Therefore, on the basis of this analysis, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 9: There is no significant difference between the fourth grade groups tested in San Antonio and the fourth grade group tested in Lafayette in fluency.

Tables X, XI, and XII show the mean scores and standard deviations for the fluency test. Table X indicates that the Lafayette mean score is higher than that

TABLE X

MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATION, AND ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR FLUENCY SUBTEST, SAN ANTONIO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT, 1968-69 AND PAUL BREAUX ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA, 1969

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
San Antonio LCE	32	99.70	67.73
Lafayette	46	121.91	80.27

T = 1.15

P < .10 (not significant)

TABLE XI

MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATION, AND ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR FLUENCY SUBTEST, SAN ANTONIO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT, 1968-69 AND PAUL BREAUX ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA, 1969

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
San Antonio LCS	20	130.30	55.57
Lafayette	46	121.91	80.27

(not significant)

TABLE XII

MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATION, AND ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR FLUENCY SUBTEST, SAN ANTONIO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT, 1968-69 AND PAUL BREAUX ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA, 1969

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
San Antonio Control	27	127.30	61.41
Lafayette	46	121.91	80.27

(not significant)

of the San Antonio LCE group, while Tables XI and XII show that the control and the LCS groups in San Antonio have higher mean scores than the Lafayette sample in fluency.

Standard deviations indicate that the spread is greater for the Lafayette group than for any of the San Antonio groups. Statistically nonsignificant differences ($P = .10$) were found.

On the basis of this analysis it is not possible to reject the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis 10: There is no correlation between the two subscales and the total score on the Oral Language Proficiency Test, i.e., fluency and total language, phonology and total language, and phonology and fluency.

Table XIII shows the results of the intercorrelation matrix as it was computed using the three language measures. All of the coefficients in the table differ significantly from zero at the .05 level of significance and two of them, phonology and total language and fluency and total language, are significant at the .01 level. It may then be concluded that for each pair of the three measures there is a positive linear relationship in the population tested.

The highest correlation is between fluency and total language, .9539. Phonology and total language

TABLE XIII

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS COMPUTED ON ALL PUPILS IN THE SAMPLE, PAUL BREAUX ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA, 1969

	Phonology	Fluency
Fluency	.2983*	----
Total Language	.5680**	.9539**

*P = .05

**P = .01

correlate at .5680 and phonology and fluency correlate at .2983.

Therefore, on the basis of this analysis, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Taylor also found a very high correlation between fluency and total language (r = .96) in the population she tested in San Antonio and suggested that on the basis of this correlation that little information might be lost if only the fluency subtest were administered as a measure of general language. Should this assumption be valid, the fact that a similar high degree of correlation was found in a different population should further support this position.

C H A P T E R V

SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During these months when the federal desegregation plans are being put into effect in the South, the generally low academic achievement level of the Negro child has been a major concern of educator and parent alike. That the Negro child lags behind his white peers is well documented. The current search is for causes and cures. In this spirit, this study sought to: (1) determine the degree of correlation between the Oral Language Proficiency Test and reading achievement and verbal ability, (2) determine the relation of these variables, i.e., reading, verbal ability, phonology, fluency, total language, with success in school, (3) test the efficacy of the Oral Language Proficiency Test, particularly the fluency subtest with another population. Complete data, including scores in phonology, fluency, total language, reading, and verbal ability, were obtained for 46 disadvantaged pupils from a bilingual area in Louisiana. Statistical techniques used were analyses of variance and intercorrelations. The design included ten basic null hypotheses.

Limitations of the Study

(1) Sample Composition. Although school officials agreed that Paul Breaux Elementary School was typical of the Negro elementary schools in the district, it would have perhaps strengthened the study to have included pupils from the other three all Negro schools in the district. Also the small sample size (N = 46) limits somewhat the validity of the findings.

(2) The Experimental Test. The Oral Language Proficiency Test is not, as yet, a standardized test and the scoring procedure used for the phonology subtest is, of its nature, subjective. However, all of the tests were scored by the examiner to eliminate the intraexaminer differences.

The responses were not evaluated for intonation. Taylor suggested that the scoring system for this subtest used in her investigations was inappropriate.[1] Since the children in this sample were all English speakers, and it was not likely that they would be repeating language that they did not understand, no effort was made to revise this subtest.

[1]Taylor, op. cit., p. 115.

It is possible that the pictures in the fluency subtest may not be culturally "fair." However, it is the writer's opinion that the three pictures involving the father and son doing yard work were especially appropriate for this group as it is an activity with which the children were quite familiar. Also, the fact that the child was directed to give his own interpretation of what might be happening in the picture, encouraged him to view the situation in the light of his own experience.

(3) Applicability of Findings. The findings of this study should be considered directly applicable only to the sampled population. Assuming that the measures used in this study are valid and reliable, that the statistical analyses are appropriate to testing the hypotheses and that the sample is representative of the population under consideration, then the results of this study have direct application to the population from which the sample was drawn. Other valid generalizations of these findings to other populations would depend upon the other populations having the same characteristics as the sample considered in this study.

Conclusions

Keeping in mind the limitations mentioned above, one can draw the following conclusions from the study.

The null hypotheses stating that there is no significant correlation between the scores on the Oral Language Proficiency Test and the reading test scores were rejected. Also, the null hypotheses that there is no significant correlation between the scores on the Oral Language Proficiency Test and the verbal ability test scores were rejected. These correlations support the assumption that there is a relation between the oral language level of the pupils as measured by the experimental test and their reading skills as measured by the E.T.S. Achievement Test.

The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant correlation between reading, verbal ability, phonology, fluency, total language and the failure of one or more of the primary grades was rejected. On the basis of the correlations found between each of these variables and failure in school, one can conclude that there is a relation between each of these factors and failure in school. The high correlation between phonology and grades

failed suggests that oral language in itself, as measured by the Oral Language Proficiency Test, might be an important factor in school success.

The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in phonology between the fourth grade groups tested in San Antonio and the fourth grade sample tested in Lafayette was rejected. However, it was not possible to reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in fluency between the Lafayette and San Antonio samples. The lower phonology scores in the Lafayette sample might indicate that the children in the sampled population would benefit from a program of special training in oral language. The similar fluency scores, together with the consistency with which the children responded to the pictures, indicate that the fluency test succeeded in eliciting a flow of spontaneous speech from the children in the Lafayette sample as it did in San Antonio.

A positive linear relationship was found between each pair of the three measures obtained by the Oral Language Proficiency Test. The subtests correlated significantly with one another and with the total score. The highest correlation ($r = .95$) was found between fluency

and total score. Finding a similarly high correlation between these two factors (r = .96) in the results of her investigations in San Antonio, Taylor suggested that for a quick measure of general language proficiency, the two and one-half minute fluency test would give teachers essentially the same information as the fifteen minute total test.[2] The findings of this study would tend to support this position. However, this writer believes that much of the diagnostic value of the test would be lost by eliminating the phonology portion from which both phonological and morphological differences can be detected. Furthermore, as the test is now set up the child is given the fluency test after he has been successful in modeling sentences and become familiar with the mechanical aspects of the testing situation. It is possible that given the fluency test first, the child would react differently. Further research, it would seem, is needed on this point.

The Oral Language Proficiency Test as an Aid in Planning Instruction for the Linguistically Different Learner

Because the area of oral language testing is a relatively new one, it is appropriate to discuss how some

[2]Taylor, op. cit., p. 119.

of the information obtained from the Oral Language Proficiency Test can be of value to the teacher of linguistically different children, suggesting types of exercises that might be formulated by the teachers for use with classes or groups within classes when the language used by the children differs from Standard English.

The linguistically different child enters school with a fully developed language. This language has a complex system of phonology, morphology and syntax which the child has mastered. He has used this language to communicate with family and friends for about five years. At age six he finds himself in a strange environment in which his language is not accepted. The job of the school, it would seem, is to assess the language the child has, and to set about to teach him the language of the school.

This test yields an index of the pnonological skills of the children tested, an index of their oral usage of certain grammatical structures, and a measure of the flow of their speech. To illustrate how this information might be used to plan instruction, a few specific examples are taken from the body of information obtained from the children used in this study.

For example, the phonology test indicated that a significant number of the children in the sample have

a tendency to drop the final consonant in a word, especially if the word ends in a sequence of two or more consonants. Evaluation of the tests for morphology indicated that children in the population studied exibit a tendency not to inflect the third person singular present indicative of the verb form. Armed with this type of information, the classroom teacher and the curriculum specialist could plan enrichment activities to meet the needs of the pupils.

Specifically, in the area of phonology, two courses of action readily suggest themselves. The teacher might want to implement a program involving the repetition of oral language similar to the material from which the test was taken, or to focus more directly on certain problem areas he could devise some minimal pair drills. This type of drill involves "a pair of utterances--usually short--which differ in meaning, but which are exactly alike in sound except at one point."[3] For example, find ↔ fine and gess ↔ guess could be contrasted.

To cope with the morphological differences involving the inflection of the verb form, the teacher could

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[3]Earl W. Stevick, A Workbook in Language Teaching (New York: Abingdon Press, 1963), p. 53.

devise repetition drills illustrating the contrast between the singular and plural forms in the third person of the present tense of regular verbs in Standard English. For example, "He holds a book" contrasted with "They hold a book."

Drills such as the two just mentioned can be made more intelligible and more interesting to elementary school children by the use of visuals.

Recommendations for Further Research

(1) The phonology section of the test should be evaluated for morphology yielding a score which would give some indication of the oral English usage of the student.

(2) A system for analyzing the fluency responses for quality should be devised. The simple word count does not distinguish the child who uses a few well-chosen words to convey his message clearly from the one who repeats the same phrases over and over.

(3) As suggested by Taylor, the Oral Language Proficiency Test should be administered to different populations to establish norms and further determine its validity.

(4) The Oral Language Proficiency test should be administered to a group of beginning first graders and the results correlated with a reading achievement test and with success or failure of first or second grades in order to determine if the test is a predictor of reading success and/or school success.

(5) A structural analysis of the output on the fluency section of the test should be made in order to obtain a measure of the syntax used by the children in free speech.

A P P E N D I X A

PRERECORDED INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS WHO WERE TESTED

Instructions preceding Gloria and David Test 6, which was the phonological portion of the test:

Hello, will you help us learn something about the way children speak? You are going to see a series of pictures and hear a lady say a number of sentences which she will ask you to repeat. Will you listen carefully to the way she says the sentences and then try to say them exactly the way she does? Be sure that she has finished speaking before you start. Thank you, here is the lady.

These instructions were prerecorded, and the voice was that of W. R. Devine, President, Language Arts, Inc.

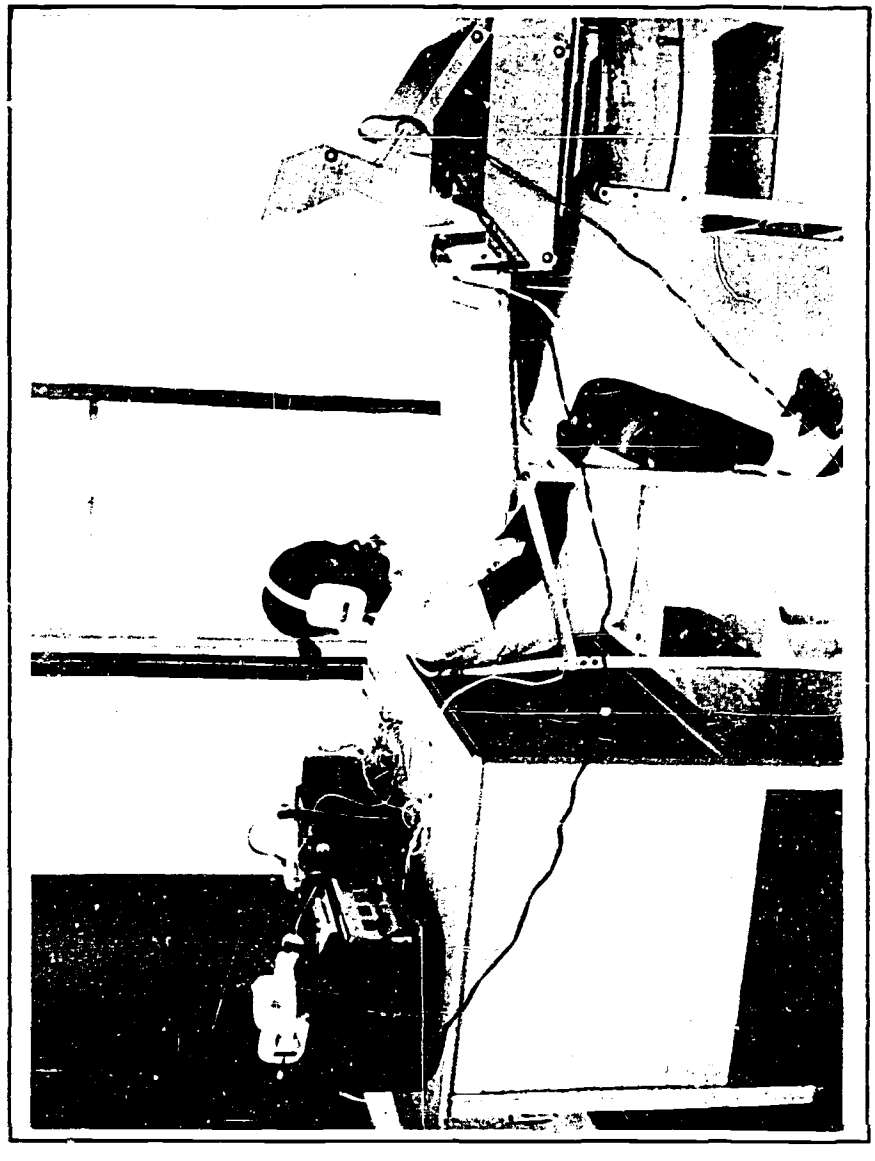
The following is a transcript of the prerecorded instructions on the test which immediately followed the phonological portion of the test.

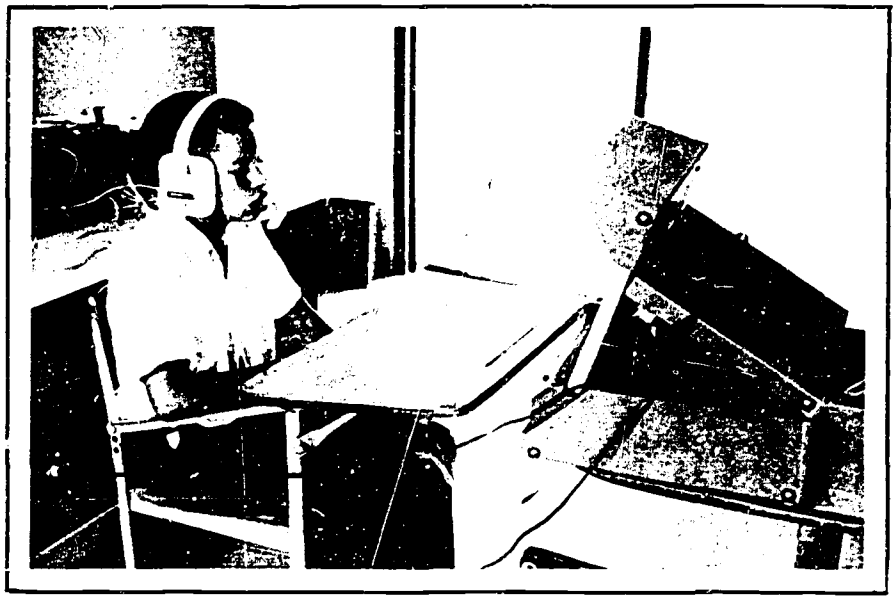
Thank you that was fine. Now will you please do one more thing? Will you pretend for a few minutes that you are a radio announcer and you were telling the people listening to you about some pictures which we will show you. Each picture will stay on the screen about thirty seconds, so you should start speaking as soon as the picture comes up and keep speaking about it until a new picture appears. Just to give you an idea, if you were talking about the picture that is on the screen now you could say, "I see a boy and girl. They seem to be about the same age--about eleven or twelve and they aren't doing anything right now--just sitting down and kind of smiling. I notice that the girl's name is Gloria and the boy's name is David. Gloria is wearing a red dress and has red ribbons in her hair and David is wearing blue jeans and a red and white sweater." Do you see what I mean? And don't be nervous. Just speak naturally. Now here is the first picture.

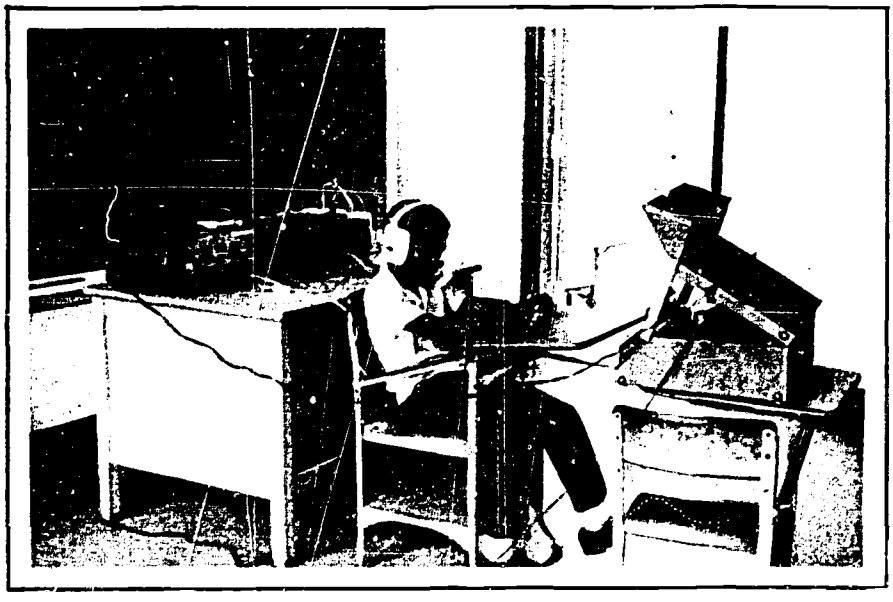
Thank you; that's the last picture.

A P P E N D I X B

VISUAL PRESENTATION OF THE TESTING PROCEDURE







A P P E N D I X C

SCORING SHEET

ORAL LANGUAGE TEST

Name _____ Age _____ Grade _____ School _____ City _____ Symbol _____

1. Mother washes David's neck.

   She washes his ears.

2. Gloria takes a bath.

   She has the soap.

3. Gloria washes her hair.

   She has soap on her head.

4. Gloria cries.

   The soap is in her eyes.

5. Soap is on her nose.

   Mother helps Gloria.

6. David has a toothbrush.

   He cleans his teeth with his brush.

7. Gloria has a toothbrush.

   She cleans her teeth with her brush.

8. David and Gloria are clean.

   They are on their knees.

9. The children go to bed.

   The light is not on.

10. Mother wakes Gloria and David.

    The children wake the baby.

11. Gloria and David both get clean clothes.

They can dress in their clothes.

12. David can button his shirt.

Gloria cannot button her dress.

13. The socks are on Gloria's feet.

Gloria has her shoes.

14. Baby has a sock on his leg.

He has a shoe on his foot.

15. Gloria has a comb for her hair.

David has a brush for his hair.

16. The family eats breakfast.

Gloria and David drink milk.

17. The children wash their hands.

They brush their teeth.

18. Gloria gets a coat.

David gets a little coat.

19. The children don't play today.

Today they go to school.

20. Daddy goes to work.

Mother works at home.

A P P E N D I X D

FORM SUPPLIED TEACHERS IN ORDER TO DETERMINE INFORMATION ON THE BACKGROUND OF PUPILS IN THE SAMPLE

NAME _____

AGE _____ BIRTHDAY _____

SECTION _____ TEACHER _____

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF FATHER _____

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF MOTHER _____

FATHER'S OCCUPATION _____

MOTHER'S OCCUPATION _____

ATTENDED HEAD START?_____ KINDERGARTEN?_____

GRADES REPEATED _____

ATTENDED SCHOOL IN OTHER PARISHES _____

IN OTHER STATES _____

NAME _____

TEACHER'S NAME _____

CREOLE SPOKEN BY: CHILD _____

PARENTS _____

GRANDPARENTS _____

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