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ABSTRACT

A program designed to decrease the number of linguistically differentiated, nonstandard speakers of English in Texas classrooms and to help potential dropouts attain proficiency in the use of English (thereby allowing them to achieve mobility in the dominant Anglo-American culture) is described in this report. The program provides linguistically different Negro and Mexican-American students the opportunity to acquire skills in standard spoken English. The problem is reviewed in general terms with emphasis placed on the sociocultural implications of dialectal variations. A review of the literature precedes a detailed description of the program implemented at Ector High School. A summary, limitations, conclusions, and recommendations concerning the project are included. Appendixes contain relevant project information and sample questions and exercises used. A bibliography is provided. (RL)

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ACTION RESEARCH IN ORAL ENGLISH FOR THE LINGUISTICALLY DIFFERENT SECONDARY STUDENT: ODESSA, TEXAS

by

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THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

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DEDICATION

This work is respectfully dedicated to

Dr. Paul Diederich,

my mentor and my very dear friend.

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

I should like to express my sincere appreciation to the administration of the Ector County Independent School District, Odessa, Texas, who made this research possible; to Dr. Thomas D. Horn, supervising professor, without whose encouragement this thesis might never have been written; to Dr. John G. Bordie for his service on the thesis committee; to all members of the faculty of The University of Texas at Austin who, without exception, have given generously of their time, guidance, and encouragement; and to my daughters who so graciously and willingly made their share of sacrifices.

V. F. R.

The University of Texas at Austin
March 15, 1971

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CHAPTER I

THE RATIONALE

The Tricultural Classroom

Although the population of Texas is comprised of many culture groups, the ethnic composition of most Texas high schools during the first half of this century was monocultural within a dual school system. In many communities, students were separated into three groups at the elementary level, and segregated schools were maintained for Negroes, Mexican-Americans, and Anglo-Americans. The smaller ethnic groups, usually of European descent, were grouped with the Anglo-American students. However, because of the conflict in culture and language and the pressures of economic needs, most Mexican-American students dropped out at the end of the eighth grade and sought employment. Only the most linguistically gifted and economically advantaged Mexican-American students who could accommodate themselves to the middle-class Anglo culture remained. Thus, a dual system was maintained at the secondary level, one for Negroes and one for the dominant

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culture and the other sub-cultures, and each tended to be homogenous in culture, values and language within its own confines.

In recent years many Texas high schools have changed rapidly from monocultural to tricultural as a result of the raising of compulsory attendance laws, the rise in socio-economic index, the enforcement of the 1954 Supreme Court decision, and the demands of industry for a more skilled work force. Mexican-Americans who might otherwise have dropped out and Negroes who were segregated in their own schools are being integrated into classrooms which were predominantly white. Depending on the size of the community or the area of the state in which they are located, many classes have become not only bicultural, but in many instances tricultural.

A Definition of Dialect

If "standard" American English is ascribed only to those speakers who reproduce with almost absolute fidelity those sounds prescribed by dictionaries in a manner prescribed by textbooks, then the number of standard speakers in the United States would be numerically

molecular. Efforts to define standard English in America have met with little consensus. However, in May, 1968, a group of educators and linguists meeting at the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D. C., evolved the following working definition of standard American English:

> A socially unmarked variety of American English used as a reference point in school language instruction to increase the individual's repertoire of important and useful ways of communicating. This variety of American English is often heard on network radio and television newscasts.[1]

For purposes of this paper, this definition will be used as a reference point whenever referring to "standard English."

Some provision must be made, however, to allow for differences in phonology, morphology, and vocabulary which occur from region to region and within regions but which conform to standard English in syntax. Because the large majority of English speakers in the United States reflect some regional differences, such speech will be referred to as "community standard."

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[1]Thomas D. Horn, Reading for the Disadvantaged, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1970), p. 4.

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Dialect is any form of a language which persists in a locality or in a group and which differs consistently and markedly in phonology, syntax, morphology, and vocabulary from that considered community standard. Under this definition, the term applies not only to native English speech systems which differ from the community standard, but to acquired English systems which differ because of interference of native language which occurs in the acquisition of English as a second language.

Texas classrooms contain speakers of many dialects, but two have been identified as being of major concern to Texas teachers. Negro dialect is the native language system of its speakers. Details may vary from one region to another, but certain elements of its structure appear to be basic and are common to most members of this culture group. The dialect of some Mexican-Americans is not native, but is acquired as a result of interference of elements of his native Spanish in his efforts to produce English. Some students of Mexican descent who are not native Spanish speakers reflect the phonological differences of his community which differ from the community standard. This dialect will also reflect differences, but again will retain certain common characteristics. Although these two

speaking systems differ distinctly in origin, each is linguistically different from standard English and community standard and sufficiently constant in form and structure to a point where each may be characterized as dialect.

The speech of most Mexican-American and Negro secondary students is identifiable by ethnic origin and differs from the community standard in phonology or syntax to the degree that it may be considered nonstandard.

Dialect Outside the Culture

Most linguists now recognize dialects as viable and effective means of communication within the culture of the speaker. That the native dialect of the Negro persists despite consistent, concentrated, and ineffectual efforts of the educational institution to eliminate it is eloquent testimony to its effectiveness. Although Spanish may be the first choice of the Mexican-American within his culture, his dialect and that of the Negro may be socially essential because they reflect native cultures.

The problem which confronts the linguistically different secondary student is that he no longer lives

within his culture and that his contacts outside that culture are constantly increasing. The dialect which has served him and may continue to serve him effectively becomes increasingly ineffective and impractical in a multicultured society to a degree that it is a handicap academically, socially, and economically.

The Problem

Many Mexican-American and Negro students at the secondary level speak in dialects which differ in phonology from that of the community standard to the degree that they actually have difficulty in making themselves understood outside their own cultures. Although many school systems have now instituted programs in oral English at the elementary level, many secondary students have not been the beneficiary of such programs. Nor can it be expected that the scope of such programs will be such that the need for instruction at the secondary level will be eliminated in the near future.

The purpose of this thesis is to describe the design and development of an experimental program in oral English for linguistically different speakers at Ector

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High School, Odessa, Texas, and to emphasize the need for refinement of such a program for inclusion in many secondary schools throughout Texas. A program which offers the linguistically different secondary student an opportunity to acquire functional fluency in standard English is essential if he is to utilize the skills and abilities which a high school education provides.

The problems for the linguistically different secondary speaker are somewhat different from those which faced him in the elementary grades. Most students, both Negro and Mexican-American, who have attended schools in the United States understand the words spoken in standard English. Although there will be a range among students in this ability to decode (understand) as there is with any skill, fundamentally the phonology and syntax of standard English are no longer major factors in listening or reading comprehension. Most students entering the tenth grade have been exposed to at least fifteen years of reception via radio, television, and textbooks. He may or may not have had teachers who spoke in standard English. Failure to comprehend is usually due to culture conflict or vocabulary.

At the secondary level it is the student's inability to encode (speak) in standard English and the

teacher's inability to decode the student's dialect which act as obstacles to academic achievement. All too often the student's questions cannot be understood and he is asked to repeat. After a few such experiences, the less venturesome student will choose confusion or inaction to the awkwardness of having to repeat. The teacher who does understand the student's dialect may call attention to his choice of words as undesirable and insist that he speak correctly. Many students soon retreat behind a wall of silence, and this obvious reticence and seeming disinterest often causes the student to be classified as slow or lacking in intelligence. Others may attempt to counter this frustration by creating a diversion and becoming discipline problems.

Even the student who is achieving adequately may be encountering language interference which neither he nor the teacher recognizes, thus diminishing his potential. Furthermore, many students who have mastered the ability to encode in script have not learned to encode orally.

Classroom discussion is dependent on the ability to understand and be understood. Where two or more dialects are represented within a single classroom, students may be unable to understand those of other cultures and

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the teacher may not fully understand any of them. The deterent to free and open exchange of ideas inherent in such a situation may be so discouraging to both teacher and students that such efforts cease. Only those instructional methods which require a minimum of oral communication may be used, and not only the constricted instructional technique but the monotony it imposes become obstacles to progress.

Conflict between the dominant Anglo-American culture on which most instructional material is based and the student's native culture continues to be a factor in his ability to comprehend standard English. Although cultural awareness and understanding are not themselves features of the spoken language, it is through oral communication that awareness and understanding are best transmitted. Once oral exchange is limited or restricted to one culture, the more difficult it becomes to create understanding between cultures.

Although the student's peer group within the academic community may be bicultural or tricultural, he is disposed to restrict his associations to those students within his own culture. Difficulty in oral communication is a contributing factor to polarization between the races

and the cultures and must be eliminated before better understanding and relations can be achieved.

Economic opportunities open to the linguistically different student may have already been restricted by his failure to acquire certain skills due to dialect or first language interference. His options may be further reduced when his ability to encode in community standard English is so limited that he cannot be understood by standard speakers. He may find only jobs requiring a minimum of oral skills are open to him even though he has all other qualifications for a more desirable position.

Toward a Solution

If education is preparation for living, then it is incumbent upon the planners of the secondary curriculum to scrutinize very carefully and very realistically the present and future needs of the linguistically different student and the role oral language will play in his ability to satisfy those needs. It is only a very remote possibility that the student can exist entirely within his culture, doing business only with other members of his culture group and finding suitable employment there. Even

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if this were a likely possibility, the decision to do so should be the choice of the individual rather than a matter of necessity imposed upon him because of his inability to function in community standard English.

The secondary English curriculum is broad in its development not only of skills but of concepts in the cognitive and affective domains. All of these studies are not only desirable but defensible. However, for the linguistically different student, certain factors are extant. Of the four major language skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, the skill in which he is weakest and the one most likely to be the greatest handicap to his mobility in mainstream culture is the ability to speak in standard English with sufficient skill that he can be understood. Few programs at the high school level are designed to aid him in acquiring this skill.

Because the number of hours of useful formal instruction in English are now very limited, the program for the linguistically different student must consider not only what he needs to know but what he needs to know most. A program which provides every opportunity to acquire and practice the skills necessary to speak standard English is mandatory if education is to fulfill its commitment to this particular student.

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CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Nature of Current Research

The classroom teacher searching for answers to the oral language problems of linguistically different secondary students will find that an abundance of research is being conducted in the field of the linguistically different elementary student, but very little is directed toward the needs of the secondary student. Furthermore, research findings are not readily accessible to the average teacher but must be sought in the libraries of large colleges and universities. Moreover, the literature is primarily descriptive and theoretical. Experimental classroom programs are confined almost entirely to the preschool and early childhood years. Most of the research centers itself upon either the language problem of the Mexican-American or that of the Negro to the exclusion of the other, and it completely ignores the fact that millions of classrooms contain multiple ethnic groups.

For the teacher attempting to meet the needs of linguistically different secondary students, a careful

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review of the literature and research findings offers a firm base on which to build a program. A study of the few experimental programs in existence can provide direction. But for the tricultural secondary classroom, the teacher will find little or no prescriptive literature.

A Linguistic Perspective

Almost everyone has an image of what he considers to be standard American English, yet almost no one is able to define it to the satisfaction of others. It has been variously defined as being nonexistent to being the speech of educated Americans. One definition describes it as a variety of English which can be understood by most English speakers regardless of their own particular speech patterns,[1] while another merely calls it "front-door English."[2] On the other hand, Troike states "there is no such thing as 'standard' language as contrasted with dialects; there are only more or less culturally valued or socially

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[1]Kenneth R. Johnson, The Culturally Disadvantaged, (Palo Alto, California: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1970), p. 144.

[2]Virginia F. Allen, "Teaching Standard English as a Second Dialect," The Florida F/L Reporter, Vol. 7, No. 1, (Spr/Sm, 1969), p. 124.

prestigious dialects."[1] For educational purposes, the definition reported by Horn seems a valid working definition.[2]

The view of modern linguists that dialect is a viable means of communication within its community of speakers is one which may be very slow to find acceptance by the average classroom teacher, especially those with some years of classroom experience. Yet, this view is hardly new:

> Dialectologists like Raven McDavid, Albert Marckwardt, and Roger Shuy have been working for years against the notion that vernacular dialects are inferior and illogical means of communication.
> All linguists agree that nonstandard dialects are highly structured systems; they do not see these dialects as accumulations of errors caused by the failure of their speakers to master standard English.[3]

Some schools are beginning to recognize the existence of dialects, but most have yet to learn that

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[1]Rudolph Troike, "Social Dialects and Language Learning: Implications for TESOL," The Florida F/L Reporter, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Spr/Sm, 1969), p. 98.

[2]Thomas D. Horn, Reading for the Disadvantaged, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1970), p. 4.

[3]William Labov, "The Logic of Non-Standard English," in Language and Poverty, edited by Frederick Williams (Chicago: Markham Publishing Co., 1970), pp.184 185.

the speech of even the lowest socioeconomic group is a viable language system.[1] However, it is beginning to appear that there are teachers who recognize that nonstandard dialects do have validity for many situations which make them essential to their students.[2]

That nonstandard dialects do constitute a viable means of communication and may be socially essential to their speakers within a given speech community does not mean that such dialects do not constitute a handicap to mobility in the dominant culture. That language has been the center of so much attention may be because it marks the deeper social boundaries which divide the American population.[3] In one classroom, a student responding to the teacher's request for a definition of a canal stated that it was a "dish of water." The teacher equated his "dish" with a "saucer" and precipitated an incident embarrassing to both teacher and child. Most classroom teachers would concur that such incidents occur hourly in literally

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[1]Nancy Modiano, "Where Are the Children," _The Florida F/L Reporter_, Vol. 7 (Spr/Sm, 1969), p. 93.

[2]Allen, "Teaching Standard . . .," p. 124.

[3]Frederick Williams, _Language and Poverty_ (Chicago: Markham Publishing Co., 1970), p. 396.

millions of classrooms across the country. Not only must standard English be mastered to the extent necessary to assure effective social communication without embarrassment or discomfort, but the pupil must understand the social, vocational, and economic benefits of learning and using standard English.[1]

An English teacher in Detroit's inner-city schools noticed that a frequent reason given for rejecting Negro students as salesmen, telephone operators, and the like was that Negroes could not be "understood."[2] Further testimony is added by Green, who writes:

> I have had experience working in Detroit, San Francisco, and Oakland with many Negro youngsters who were experiencing language-communication problems, which in many cases, were the result of substandard English. One of the most immediate social ramifications that was related to their language difficulty was in their attempts at finding employment. It is well known that most super-market and dime store managers, for example, are reluctant to hire people who may have difficulty communicating with others.[3]

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[1]John K. Sherk, Jr., "Dialect--The Invisible Barrier to Progress in the Language Arts," The A and B Reading Bulletin (Rockleigh, N.J.: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., undated), pp. 1-4.

[2]Edward R. Fagan, English and the Disadvantaged (Scranton, Pa.: International Textbook Company, 1969), p. 31.

[3]Robert Green, "Dialect Sampling and Language Values," in Social Dialects and Language Learning, edited by Roger W. Shuy (Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1964), p. 122.

Most linguists feel that nonstandard dialects of certain ethnic groups impose not only a social stigma upon their speakers, but actually create a barrier to effective communication. Perhaps America may eventually reach such linguistic sophistication that Negro dialect and the accent of the Mexican-American will be considered "quaint" and "charming" as are those of Charles Boyer and Zsa-Zsa Gabor. Until our society reaches that exalted level, it will be well to remember that asserting that "linguistically black is linguistically beautiful" ignores the fact that most Americans speak similar dialects and that those who do not are linguistically different. "While we may teach linguistic tolerance, such a goal may be rather elusive."[1] And further, accented speech can be a severe stigma socially and economically handicapping the Mexican-American.[2]

Three Points of View

If nonstandard dialect is a viable means of communication but a handicap to its speakers seeking mobility

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[1]Richard Ripstrom, "Negro Speech and Others: A Reply," Reading Research Quarterly, Vol. 6 (Fall, 1970), p. 124.

[2]Thomas P. Carter, Mexican Americans in School: A History of Educational Neglect (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1970), p. 151.

in the mainstream culture, the question then arises as to what policy the school should adopt regarding the use and acceptance of nonstandard dialect as opposed to standard American English. Educators may be said to assume three positions with regard to nonstandard dialect: eradicate all nonstandard dialects and require students to speak standard English; teach the student to become bi-dialectal; teach nonstandard usage to standard speakers.[1]

Although many classroom teachers cling tenaciously to the "one way" theory of speaking, only a few linguists or educators take that position. Rafferty, former State Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of California, strongly urged the return of teaching that "right is right and wrong is wrong" with regard to the social varieties of English.[2] Supporting Raffety is Smith who observes, "We can only hope that teachers of English, especially of the deprived, can resist the notion of linguistic equality."[3]

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[1]Roger W. Shuy, "Bonnie and Clyde Tactics in English Teaching," The Florida F/L Reporter, Vol. 7 (Spr/Sm, 1969), p. 81.

[2]Max Rafferty, editorial in San Diego Union, Sept. 10, 1967, as cited in Shuy, "Bonnie and Clyde . . .," p. 81.

[3]Mortimer Smith, The New English Bulletin of the Council for Basic Education, Vol. 13 (Sept., 1958), p. 4 as cited in Shuy, "Bonnie and Clyde . . .," p. 81.

Taking a position almost diametrically opposite Rafferty and Smith is Sledd who equates programs in bi-dialectalism with "the linguistics of white supremacy."[1] Sledd's views are reinforced in a somewhat more temperate vein by O'Neill's observation:

> Instead of "enriching" the lives of urban children by plugging them into a "second" dialect (if that enterprize is too "enriching" [sic]; why don't we let everyone in on the fun and games; "enrich" the suburban kid with the urban dialect.[2]

Others point out the futility of teaching standard speech to students only to have them denied social and economic mobility by society. Some contend that it is impossible to hold standard speech before a student as a model without unconsciously disparaging his native dialect.[3]

The majority of linguists, however, reject both the theories of eradication and perpetuation of nonstandard

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[1]James Sledd, "Bi-Dialectalism: The Linguistics of White Supremacy," The English Journal, Vol. 58 (Dec., 1969), p. 1307.

[2]Wayne O'Neill, "Paul Roberts Rules of Order: The Misuses of Linguistics in the Classroom," The Urban Review, Vol. 2, No. 7, cited Shuy, "Bonnie and Clyde . . ."

[3]Davenport Plumer, "A Summary of Environmentalist Views and Some Educational Implications," in Language and Poverty, edited by Frederick Williams (Chicago: Markham Publishing Co., 1970), pp. 267-269.

dialect in favor of teaching standard English as a second dialect. Shuy takes the position that it is the major task of English teachers not only to teach pupils their own language but to help students understand that language has a number of social dialects and to help them to use different dialects for different occasions.[1] Most adopt the position that the ability to speak standard English is essential while at the same time they defend the integrity of the individual's native dialect or language. The student then has alternatives. He may choose to eradicate nonstandard "forever" or to become fluent in both standard and nonstandard.[2] Or if he so chooses, he may reject standard English in favor of his native dialect. The goal is to make clear to the child that the choice of a dialect is a matter of "social appropriateness and expediency rather than one of right versus wrong or good versus bad."[3]

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[1]Roger W. Shuy, "Sociolinguistics and Urban Language," in "Language and Poverty". . ., p. 346.

[2]Shuy, "Bonnie and Clyde . . .," p. 81.

[3]Troike, "Social Dialects . . .," p. 98.

Methods

In approaching the problem of teaching standard English to nonstandard speakers, linguists first turned their attention to methods used for teaching foreign languages. However, it soon became clear that the nature of the problem was somewhat different. Negro students were, after all, native English speakers. Most Mexican-American students at the secondary level were already speakers of English as a second language, albeit nonstandard. Most linguists recommend that some features of TESOL techniques be adopted, but for the nonstandard dialect speaker, a combination of methods will be required.

The student's familiarity with standard English is a major factor to be considered in choosing instructional techniques. If the student already has a receptive knowledge of a more formal speaking system, most of the instructional task involves guiding him toward an automatic productive control of mainstream dialect.[1] Most of these students are "possessive or unconscious bidialectals," and need only to be activated to conscious ones.[2] They

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Einar Hagan, "Bilingualism and Bidialectalism," in Social Dialects and Language Learning, edited by Roger W. Shuy (Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1964), p. 125.

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have received practice in listening to standard English from school, radio, television and movies, as well as from personal contact with speakers of standard English.[1]

One of the few projects designed for older students who already spoke English was developed at Claflin College. The first problem the staff faced was the task of devising procedures and materials that would give the students the kind and amount of drill they needed for the mastery of standard patterns while at the same time satisfying their natural desire for college level instruction.[2]

Most students do need and do benefit from pattern practice, but a great deal of alteration must be made, especially for junior and senior high school students who reject imitation and repetition. They need to start at a point meaningful to them, preferably with a statement made by a student. Also found useful has been the use of nonstandard sentences which can be translated into standard dialect. It is suggested that the practice in EFL instruction of withholding written material be abandoned with the student literate in English and that teachers take

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[1]Johnson, The Culturally Disadvantaged . . ., p. 124.

[2]Allen, "Teaching Standard English . . .," p. 123.

advantage of the written material to present the contrast between standard and nonstandard.[1] Much of the success attributed to audio-lingual-oral programs which stress habitual patterns of behavior may be the result of the structuring of the content which is introduced.[2] Due to the paucity of experimental programs at the secondary level, no one instructional method appears to offer instant solution to the problem. The teacher must again choose from a variety of methods and adapt them to the needs of the particular students in a given classroom.

Culture Conflict

Linguists are aware that planners of any program which purports to move the linguistically different speaker toward a command of standard English must come to grips with the conflict of cultures facing the adolescent. Referring to the Negro student, Johnson writes:

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[1] Irwin Feigenbaum, "Developing Fluency in Standard Oral English" (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, undated monograph), pp. 116-119.

[2] John G. Bordie, "Language Tests and Linguistically Different Learners: The Sad State of the Art," *Elementary English*, Vol. 47 (Oct., 1970), p. 824.

> Increasingly, Black people are developing a pride in themselves and their identity. . . . They are prideful of their history, their music, their physical appearance, their customs . . . and their language. This pride in themselves, coupled with the reluctance of whites to assimilate Black people, has caused Black people to hold on to their identity labels. Thus, many Black children will not want to learn standard English because it is white, not Black.[1]

Lambert makes the same point for the Mexican-American student:

> The more proficient one becomes in a second language, the more he may find that his place in his original membership group is modified--second culture may become a competing membership for him. He may experience feelings of chagrin or regret as he loses ties in one group, mixed with the fearful anticipation of entering a relatively new group.[2]

It is possible to teach second dialect without forcing the child to reject his original dialect or culture. To do so, however, will require the greatest ingenuity, skill, and commitment on the part of the teacher.[3]

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[1]Johnson, The Culturally . . . , p. 124.

[2]W. E. Lambert, "Psychological Aspects of Motivation in Language Learning," The Florida F/L Reporter, Vol. 7 (Spr/Sm, 1969),

[3]Fagan, English and . . . , p. 60.

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CHAPTER III

THE PROGRAM

Ector High School

Ector High School is one of three high schools in Odessa, Texas, a city of approximately 90,000 people located in far West Texas in the center of a very rich oil basin on which its economy is based. Until Ector was opened in 1957, all Anglo-American and Mexican-American high school students attended a school in the northwest section of the city, and all Negro students attended a high school in the south part of the city. Ector was built in the south part of the city to serve Anglo-American and Mexican-American students living adjacent to and south of the railroad tracks. Since most Mexican-American students lived in this school district, the original white high school became almost entirely Anglo in composition. Negro students continued to attend the all black school until 1967, when this school became a junior high school and the students in the three upper grades were transferred to Ector. A third high school, predominantly Anglo-American,

was built in the northeast section of the city. A map of the city showing the location of the three high schools can be found in the Appendix.[1]

In 1968, the ethnic composition of Ector High School was 46 percent Spanish speaking students of Mexican descent, 29 percent Negro, and 25 percent Anglo-American. However, this percentage is constantly changing with the percentage of Negro students increasing and the percentage of Mexican-American and Anglo-Americans decreasing as increased economic opportunity has allowed these groups to move into other school districts.

Students in grades seven through eleven were ability-grouped for English classes. Because only three units of English were required for graduation, only college preparatory English classes were offered at the senior level. The courses of study in all grades were traditional in nature with more emphasis being placed on basic skills in remedial classes and a greater concentration on literature and composition in the accelerated classes. The English curriculum included no instruction in oral skills other than that which normally occurs in any classroom, usually of a corrective and negative nature.

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[1]Appendix, p. 78.

In the spring of 1968, several events conspired to focus attention on the problem of dialect in speech and the handicaps that such speech was imposing on its speakers. A Mexican-American youth was elected president of the student body, but when he attempted to preside in assembly, only the other Mexican-American students could understand his English dialect. It was necessary for him to step aside and allow an Anglo-American student to speak. Two Negro boys in the distributive education program were sent for a job interview. The personnel director of the potential employer reported that these young men were qualified in every way except one for the job openings--the customers were unable to understand their dialect. The office manager for an oil company reported that his organization had employed two Ector graduates and that they were as efficient as any employees he had with one exception--it took two years of coaching by standard speakers before these girls could handle the telephone and make themselves understood by the callers. It was at this point that the decision was made by the Ector administration to initiate some type of instruction in oral English at the secondary level. The availability of federal funds for programs designed to meet the needs of minority group students made such a program economically possible.

Efforts were made by the Ector administration to find other programs which might serve as a guide for the Ector project. Research uncovered many such programs at the elementary level. Most programs directed toward oral English were incorporated in bilingual instruction and the teaching of English as a second language. A few included instruction specifically designed for the Negro student. In fact, Ector was at that time involved in a pilot program at the primary level which was directed to both the Mexican-American and Negro students. However, no program was found which seemed to be designed to meet the needs of secondary students. Not only was it felt that such a program would benefit students now in the upper grades who had not had the advantage of the newer teaching methods at the elementary level, but that there would continue to be a significant number of students who would not receive such instruction or who would fail to reach the desired proficiency and could benefit from further instruction.

Pupil Selection

Since the program was approved too late to choose students on a more selective basis, the decision was made

to begin with students already assigned to basic English classes for the fall of 1968, as being the ones who might benefit most from its instruction. Students had been assigned to basic classes on the basis of past academic performance, teacher recommendation, and the standardized test scores. One classroom teacher was assigned to design and develop the program of instruction. No other personnel was assigned to the project. Pupil-teacher ratio was 24-1 at the beginning of the program and dropped to 20-1 at the conclusion.

A total of ninety-three students in four classes was enrolled in the program. Seventy-nine students completed the course. Of the fourteen students who left the program, seven transferred to other schools, one entered the armed forces, one joined the Job Corps, one dropped out after being arrested for burglary, and two were sent to reform school. Others who left the program stated that they were going to work. It was not feasible to enter a student in the program after the period of orientation. The actual drop-out rate was less than ten percent.

Table 1 shows the ethnic origin and sex of students who completed the program:

Table 1

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS IN ORAL ENGLISH PROGRAM

BY SEX AND ETHNIC ORIGIN

Ethnic Group	Male	Female
Mexican-American	29	20
Negro	17	12
Anglo-American		1

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Students ranged in age from fifteen to twenty-one years. One class consisted entirely of sophomore students taking sophomore English. The three junior classes contained not only junior students but many senior students who needed junior credit for graduation.

No one involved in the design and implementation of the Ector project was trained in speech or linguistics, and in the absence of research data, the only information available on which to base a program was personal observation of speech patterns of the two major dialects involved. The entire program of instruction was based on the premise that at this point in the student's academic career, time would not permit instruction leading to total acquisition of standard speaking skills even if the methodology required were known. Instruction, therefore, would be directed toward those features of the dialect which created the greatest handicap in being understood by standard speakers.

Objectives

Long range objectives:

1. To enable the student to communicate orally at a functional level socially, academically, and economically outside his native culture.

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2. To destroy those barriers which tend to isolate a culture from society as a whole.

3. To create those values of self-confidence and self-respect which isolation tends to nullify.

Immediate objectives:

1. To help the student acquire those phonological skills essential to his being understood by standard speakers.

2. To encourage acceptable grammatical usage.

3. To identify those usages which are peculiar to a culture to the extent that they are meaningless to anyone outside the culture.

4. To build active vocabulary.

Physical Plant

The communications laboratory was equipped with twenty-five training stations for students and one instructor station. Desks were detached, flat table top with a storage unit for books. Detached chairs with casters allowed free movement with a minimum of noise. The student stations were numbered two through twenty-six and units three through twenty-six were double stations. The room was divided into two sections with a wide aisle down the center. One side had six double stations and one single station. The other side had six double stations.

Electrical outlets at the floor level followed the side walls and provided an outlet for each station. Traffic was routed down the center aisle.[1]

Each station was equipped with an IBM Executary dictating machine. This is a compact recording unit designed for office use. Model 211 operates on 105-125 volts, 60 cycles. It measures approximately 9-1/2 by 11 inches and stands four inches high. The machine weighs 11 pounds. A full power controlled microphone with coil cord is contained in an arm suspended on a cradle from the left hand side of the machine. The machine records for fourteen minutes on a revolving circular, magnetic tape, four inches wide, which is inserted through an opening on the right hand side of the machine over two rollers housed within the machine. Seated in the microphone arm is a lever which controls recording and replay and which also allows instant replay of the last six seconds of recorded material. Located at the front of the machine is a scanning bar which enables the student to immediately replay his entire tape or to begin the replay at any given point on the tape. Recording is amplified through solid state speakers. One

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[1]A floor plan of the oral English laboratory can be found in the Appendix, p. 79.

is contained in the microphone arm and plays at a volume audible only to the speaker when it is held to the ear like a telephone receiver. The second is located at the rear of the machine and provides volume audible throughout the classroom. Partial erasure of given material requires only that the student set his scanning bar at the beginning of the material he desires to delete and record over it. A simple control located over the Magnabelt erases the entire tape in six seconds. The student uses a single tape which stores in an individual folder as long as it is serviceable, in many cases more than two full semesters. The heavy cardboard folder provides a plastic spade which protects the recording band. The folder is housed on a shelf according to class period and never leaves the classroom.[1]

Instructional Materials

Most instructional materials available for the teaching of oral English are designed for use with the non-English speaker and are aimed at helping the student acquire the structure of English by having him repeat

[1]A sketch of the IBM Executary dictating machine and microphone can be found in the Appendix, p. 80.

standard English sentence patterns. These materials, as are many prepared exercises, are designed to teach skills and may be considered to be devoid of content. Experience has shown that the secondary student who already speaks an English dialect regards such materials as monotonous and irrelevant. Prepared materials currently available were rejected for this reason.

A daily newspaper was chosen as primary stimulus for a number of reasons. Past experience in using the newspaper in the classroom, particularly with reluctant readers, had proved it to be a powerful motivating force. The newspaper appeals to the secondary student as being relevant, contemporary, adult, and representative of an environment with which he can identify. The degree to which most newspapers conform to standard usage may be considered representative and may be used as an acceptable criterion of achievement. Its content is sufficiently varied that all students need not respond to the same stimulus, a factor which became extremely important in evaluation. The interest level of the material is such that reinforcement may occur outside the classroom as well as in. And while the student is acquiring an alternate system of language, he is also exposed to information and concepts of value.

Both the Negro and the Mexican-American student might benefit from repetition of a sentence pattern such as, "This is a chair." The Negro student speaking in dialect may say, "Dat be a char," while the Mexican-American would say, "Thees ees a share." However, both will reject such a statement as being ridiculous and refuse to become involved in such an exercise. After all, everyone he knows knows what a chair is. However, the question, "Which of the chairs advertised on page six in your newspaper do you like best?", seems reasonable and deserving of an answer. However, in the course of answering the question, the student necessarily uses the word "chair."

Interest stimulated by the newspaper can lead to other materials written in standard English such as magazines, books, and anthologies of literature. Poetry proved to be a particularly valuable means of teaching phrasing and inflection.

The use of the newspaper requires that the instructor prepare materials on a daily basis. Once the particular skill to be taught has been identified, the adaptation of materials from the newspaper is relatively easy. However, many instructors may prefer the convenience of prepared materials, and the preparation of such materials by qualified people should be given high priority.

Procedure

Secondary students, particularly at the high school level, react very favorably to specifically stated objectives. The student whose understanding of the objectives of the course is so clear that he can articulate in personal terms the performance competencies which he expects to have at the end of the period of instruction, the method whereby he will acquire these competencies, and the justification for his efforts will bring into the classroom positive attitudes to the extent that his chances of reaching those objectives are greatly enhanced. His understanding and acceptance of these objectives are crucial to the ccess of any program. The period of orientation must be very carefully conducted.

Orientation

A period of approximately three weeks was allowed for orientation. During this period students were introduced to the stimulus material, a metropolitan daily newspaper. Also during this period, the students were informed that the course would depart from the usual in that they would be using office type machines. However, the machines

were not made available to them during this preliminary period.

At this point in the experience of most students, contact with a newspaper has been casual. If the student is to receive dual benefit from the stimulus material, then he must understand the role the newspaper plays in a free society and his responsibility to be an informed and critical reader. Because it was considered essential that the student have a clear understanding of the rationale which supported the stimulus material, considerable time was used in presenting the newspaper as an instructional tool. Students became acquainted with the different sections and their functions, the different styles of journalistic writing and their purposes, and the relationship of the information chronicled to their personal lives.

The period of orientation might be shortened, but it cannot be eliminated. It is during this period that the instructor must create the atmosphere for learning and establish rapport between instructor and students. And to introduce the machines before the set of each class is established is to invite vandalism.

Introduction of Objectives and Machines

At the beginning of the fourth week, the rationale and objectives of the course were explained. This is possibly the most critical step in the entire program. If the students do not comprehend and accept the objectives, progress may be minimal.

The students were first acquainted with regional speech variations which are different, but which do not necessarily handicap conversational communications. However, it was explained that certain speech deviations which develop wherever society divides itself for any reason often become handicaps, and this is not limited to race or native tongue.

The word pecan was given as an example of geographical variation in pronunciation. In the Southwest, the word is pronounced with both vowel sounds short and the accent on the second syllable. In the northeastern areas, especially metropolitan New York, the word is pronounced with the first vowel sound long and the accent on the first syllable. The difference in pronunciation from one geographical area to another can become an absolute barrier to functional communication such as that necessary to purchase a package of nuts. Because these students

had had very little contact with people outside their community, they were unaware of the extent of difference in the spoken language from one region to another and within regions.

Once the fact that speech differences may be based on reasons other than ethnic origin was established, attention was called to the fact that students within the classroom spoke in different dialects, and the reasons for this were discussed. Although students were very much aware that their speech reflected their ethnic origins, that such speech was being regarded as a viable speaking system worthy of respect was a new experience for most of them. Their styles of speaking were then contrasted with that of the larger part of the community and the different patterns were labeled "cultural dialect" and "common dialect," two terms which were to remain constant throughout the program. The words "standard" and "nonstandard" were never used.

Before the student can accept a goal as worthy of his efforts, he must first be willing to recognize that a problem exists. At the secondary level, the student is actually subconsciously, if not consciously, aware of the problem. All that is necessary to create conscious

awareness is to call to his attention the number of experiences he has had wherein he was asked to repeat what he said because his listener failed to understand him. He first encountered this problem in most instances when he entered school. However, as teachers adapted themselves to understanding the student or both accepted the need to repeat spoken communication, this problem slipped into the realm of the subconscious. His second encounter with the problem was on an occasion when he was compelled to transact business or make purchases in a store where employees were from another culture. These occasions may have been limited in number because the student most often makes his purchases near his own neighborhood where the personnel is most likely to be from his own culture. His third encounter, and the one where he is most likely to become consciously aware of speech handicaps is when the student enters the labor force. By the time they have reached the junior level of high school, almost all of the boys and many of the girls have had some experience in the labor market. The exception to this is the Mexican-American girl whose culture discourages her seeking employment outside her culture. Her experiences are usually confined to baby-sitting for other Mexican-American families or

occasionally for an Anglo-American family with whom her family has a close relationship.

It was made abundantly clear to the student that the purpose of this course was not to eliminate or change his cultural speech patterns but to provide him with alternate forms for those differences which actually constituted a handicap. Culture reflected in his speech should be a source of pride. The extent to which he chose to go in patterning his speech to that of the majority of the community was an option that was solely his to exercise. It was pointed out to the student that the dialect common to the Southwest is considered by some to be among the least melodious of any in the nation, and that the intonations and inflections of his cultural speech were far more pleasing to the ear provided that they were clear and distinct and met the more general rules of good usage.

All that is necessary to persuade the student to recognize and acknowledge that a problem exists is to call these experiences to his attention, provided the instructor has created a climate of respect for the student's culture. To fail in this respect is to invite disaster by making the student defensive. Once the problem was consciously acknowledged by the student and his awareness of it was

reinforced by the sound of his own voice which he might never have consciously heard before, he readily accepted the goal set before him as one worthy of his efforts. No student in the program evidenced a negative attitude toward the objective.

The goal as stated to and by the student was simple and direct--to make his speech clear and distinct to the degree that he could converse easily and with confidence with a person of any culture group. The student was never allowed to lose sight of his goal. The discussion was brought back to the point frequently so that the student was ever conscious of just what objective he was attempting to achieve and that it was attainable and worthwhile.

Levels of Usage

Peoples of all cultures automatically and instinctively vary their level of usage to one appropriate for the situation or the particular group with whom they are speaking. The ability to change dialect from one culture to another may be considerably more difficult and require conscious attention and discipline.

Acquisition of this skill may not prove as difficult for the bilingual student as for the native English speaker of a nonstandard dialect. Once the bilingual student has mastered certain usages, the change from one culture to another will actually involve a change of languages. Therefore, he may not be as apt to revert to those deviations which proved a handicap. Furthermore, he may be able to make the transition from acquired deviations to standard usage at an earlier age than the Negro or Anglo-American student. It is very possible that the native Spanish-speaking student who enters school speaking no English may never acquire these deviations if instruction is immediate and reinforced throughout his academic life.

For the native English speaker whose environmental language differs in structure from that which is considered community standard, the change from one dialect to another may be considerably more difficult. The environmental language is so deep-seated and reinforced with such frequency that no substantial change may be possible before adolescence when his contact with other cultures is broadened. At the elementary level or intermediate level, his concept of appropriateness may be limited to what is suitable in the presence of the classroom teacher

and what will suffice for all other occasions. The concept of different levels of usage may be acquired almost subliminally throughout the course of study.

Using the Machines

The machines were individually placed before the students for their examination but not for operation. After students had examined their machines and become acquainted with their parts, they were allowed to come to the front of the room and record their voices on the demonstration machine. Many students heard their recorded voices for the first time.

On the second day all machines were ready to use and the students began operating their machines following a very structured rote method. All the student was allowed to record were the sentences, "My name is ________. I live at _______." Students followed a method of instruction which resembled "follow the leader."[1] A check was made to see that each student had recorded successfully.

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[1]Sample exercise, p. 81.

The same rote method was used throughout the week to make sure that all students were operating their machines correctly and with ease. No effort was made at this point to do more than ascertain that each student was recording his natural speaking voice. Many students mastered the operation of the machine in one class period, but by the end of the week every student had become familiar with his machine to the point where conscious attention did not need to be directed toward mechanical operation. No difficulty was encountered by having twenty-five students recording at one time. The best volume for recording is slightly lower than the average conversation, and the noise level of the room with all students recording was very low. The machine did not pick up the sound of the voices of adjacent students.

Instruction

All but a very few students enrolled in the program spoke in a dialect which reflected ethnic culture. The degree to which this dialect differed from the language used by the community varied from slight to great. The basic approach was to use as much material as possible

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which initiated with the student within the context of his own usage and need, to identify those points of interference, and to provide alternate speech forms. The objectives as stated required that instruction be aimed primarily at phonology and morphology. Alternate structure in syntax and vocabulary were secondary objectives. The method of instruction was based on three progressive levels: (1) structured response; (2) deliberate response; and (3) spontaneous response.

Structured Response

The initial level was termed the structured level. This level required the student to write down everything he intended to say in his own words before dictating the material. Many students had mastered written skills in standard usage which were not reflected in their speech. In other words, although they might write the words "he thinks," the "s" marker does not exist in the structure of the student's environmental language and so he continued to say "he think." By having the student first write, it was possible to take advantage of skills he already had but did not use in his speech.

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In the beginning, this instruction took the form of answering questions based on material in that day's newspaper. One set of papers equal in number to the largest class was received each day, providing each student with an individual copy for classroom use. It was during this period that the instructor was able to identify and isolate specific speech patterns and deviations. In some instances, these deviations crossed culture lines and were common to all three cultures, but primarily the deviations were identifiable by culture.

Having students record material which they had previously written in their own words provided a simple means for identifying handicapping differences in phonology and morphology. The instructor first listened to the recorded material without recourse to the written material. As words or phrases on the recording were incomprehensible, the instructor referred to the written material to find exactly what sounds the student was failing to enunciate in a manner comprehensible to a standard speaker. These deviations were then noted and called to the attention of the student. If the deviation was common to a number of speakers of a particular culture, specific exercises were designed to provide drill in the alternate pronunciation.

As common differences were identified, a pattern of instruction soon evolved. The particular deviation in question was identified and discussed, and the sounds were usually illustrated on the board using contrasting words and phonetic spelling. However, all exercise material employed the regular spelling. Common dictionary symbols were used to indicate pronunciation because these were the symbols with which most students were familiar.

A common difficulty for the Mexican-American student was the use of the voiceless th and the voiced th. An exercise sheet was prepared listing all the words in the dictionary which began with th, properly marked to indicate pronunciation. Each student was provided with the list and instructed to hold his microphone poised for use in the record position. The instructor would pronounce a word correctly. The student would then depress his record bar and repeat the word, releasing the bar as soon as he had finished. The instructor would continue through the list of words with the student repeating and recording each one in turn. When this procedure was completed, the student's tape contained the list of words recorded in his own voice with only a natural pause between each word. The

student was able to listen to his recording as he followed the printed list. A student might listen to his recording several times as he followed the list on the printed form before erasing his tape and rerecording the list. As students listened to their recordings, the instructor moved through the classroom answering questions, assisting students who were having difficulty, and checking recordings to find problems.

Such rote exercises were always followed by a content exercise which incorporated the particular enunciation being studied. A lesson as described would be followed by a lesson based on material in the newspaper but so structured that in performing the exercise the student would be unconsciously forced into using words beginning with th.[1]

Although such an exercise was directed toward a difference in the Mexican-American dialect and the common dialect, it was always possible to execute such an exercise so that it also included differences in Negro dialect and the common dialect. Substitution of the "d" for the "th" sound in Negro dialect reported by some

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[1]Sample exercises, pp. 82, 83.

researchers was not found to be a usage of this particular group. However, many Negro students did substitute a "d" sound for a "t" in final positions. The Negro dialect alsc practices an economy of sound in articulating certain ending consonants and consonant clusters and some intermediate consonant sounds. Discussion before the exercise would alert both culture groups to the differences peculiar to their group and any differences which might be common to both groups.

Each student had his tapes audited at least twice each week by the instructor. Students were allowed to record and erase as many times as they felt they might improve their recording before they were audited. As each student completed his final recording for auditing, he set his machine in the audit position and signaled the instructor. The student and instructor listened together to the recording, sometimes discussing any change which might be indicated. It was possible for the instructor to dictate comments following the student's recording and to correctly enunciate as a pattern any words which might have been mispronounced. The student was then able to listen to the word correctly enunciated as many times as he needed. This involved a minimum of time and effort

from the instructor, yet provided each student with immediate individualized instruction.

A system of cross-culture auditing was initiated which not only facilitated progress but led to a spirit of cooperation between the cultures. Because students were able to hear deviations in the speech of another culture more easily than in their own, each was required to have his tape audited by a student of another culture before it was audited by the instructor. Students were soon adept at identifying differences peculiar to a culture. A spirit of comradeship seemed to develop between the cultures as they began to realize that although their cultural dialects differed from one another, both differed from the common dialect to a degree that set them apart and they shared a common problem. It was necessary that exercises be carefully structured to give as much repetition and reinforcement as possible in a given amount of material.

Importance of the stimulus material was quickly apparent. Students would tolerate a limited amount of rote drill such as word lists, but it was essential that the utility of the skill be demonstrated quickly by moving into relevant material. Not only interest, but competence dropped noticeably if the follow-up material was

of low interest or outside the realm of the student's experience or ability to comprehend.

As instruction progressed and the phonemes and morphemes which caused the greatest interference were identified, exercises became more comprehensive. Students gained reinforcement in usages already studied as they acquired skills in others. The omission of certain morphemes was found to be common to all three cultures, as was the articulation of others.

Table 2 shows the nonstandard usages of Mexican-American students which appeared most frequently. Phonetic symbols have not been used in this or other tables because many teachers are not familiar with the phonetic alphabet.

The syntactical structure which caused the greatest difficulty for the Mexican-American student was the phrasing of the question. Presenting the English structure deductively rather than inductively seemed to be the most economical approach. Question patterns were studied and then the student was presented with various situations in which he frequently found himself seeking information. He practiced formulating questions he would need to elicit the desired responses.[1]

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[1]Sample exercise, p. 84.

TABLE 2

HIGH FREQUENCY

NONSTANDARD USAGES OF MEXICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS AT ECTOR HIGH SCHOOL, ODESSA, TEXAS

Variable	Nonstandard	Standard
	Syntax	
Questions	He is here?	Is he here?
Prepositions	in Tuesday	on Tuesday
	on the sky	in the sky
	Phonology	
sh-ch	chew	shoe
	shursh	church
f-v	gif, haf	give, have
s-z	hass	has (haz)
short i	mees, thees	miss, this
short o	woe-rth	worth
th-th	them	them
Plural nouns	*two boy	two boys
Verb forms	*he talk	He talks
	*he talk	he talked
	*he talked (talk-ed)	he talked (talkt)

*Common to Negro students

Table 3 shows the nonstandard usages of Negro students which were most frequent. Many characteristics of the Negro dialect are also common to regional dialects of the Southwest.

Although Negro dialect uses the verb "to be" in a manner quite different from standard English, Negro students were cognizant of the standard structures and only needed practice in encoding. The same was found to be true of the double negative which is obligatory in Negro dialect but considered incorrect by standard speakers.

Stress, intonation, and phrasing posed problems for the Mexican-American student, and a departure from the practice of using as little structured material as possible was necessary. However, rather than using sentence patterns, poetry was used to attack this problem. Material was taken from sources including nursery rhymes and A Child's Garden of Verses. This material proved to be unfamiliar to almost all of the students and could be read rather than recited. For instance, none of the students was familiar with "Simple Simon." This material was presented to the students on ditto sheets, but instead of typing the material in verse form, words which should be read together were grouped together on a single line.[1]

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[1]Sample exercise, p. 85.

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TABLE 3

HIGH FREQUENCY

NONSTANDARD USAGES OF NEGRO STUDENTS AT ECTOR HIGH SCHOOL, ODESSA, TEXAS

Variable	Nonstandard	Standard
	Syntax	
Verb forms	He be sick	He is sick
	He gone	He is gone.
	He do.	He does.
Double negative	He don't got none.	He doesn't have any.
Pronoun form	they house	their house
	Phonology	
Simplification	go'n	going
	bar'n	borrowing
Omission	I 'on' know.	I don't know
	ne'er	never
d for t	ford	fort
	dirdy	dirty
r omission	wah	war
Vowel sounds	mah	my
	wush	wish
	rite	riot
Possessive marker	John book	John's book
Plural marker	*two book	two books
Verb forms	he do	he does
	*he talk	he talks
	*he walked (walk-ed)	he walked (walkt)

*Common to Mexican-American students.

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This avoided the sing-song effect which resulted when material was presented in verse form. The same procedure was followed in presenting this material as the word lists. The instructor read each group of words which should be articulated at one time, and the student recorded only his own voice repeating the words. When the exercise was completed, the student had his own voice recorded reading the selection in its entirety. This unit proved so popular with the students it was repeated later in the course using selections from American literature.

At the end of the third month, students were not producing the phonology of standard English, but they were approximating it to a degree that almost everything they recorded was comprehensible to the standard speaker.

Deliberate Response

In the eleventh and twelfth weeks of the program, the students were introduced to the second level of instruction, termed the deliberate level. At this point the student was to consider his subject carefully, deliberate on what he wanted to say, and mentally formulate his responses before recording. The purpose of this level was

to draw the student away from his dependence on the written word and more nearly simulate conversational speech.

The transition from the structured response to the deliberate response proved difficult for many students who found security in the written word and easier for others who found writing uncomfortable. Several different approaches were tried before some students were able to make the transition. The approach which proved most effective for the most students was to choose a story from the newspaper which had a very high interest level. Students read the story silently, then it was read aloud and discussed at length. Finally each student was instructed to tell the story into his recorder as he might tell it to a group of students of several cultures. Great care was exercised to make sure the story selected was of such interest that the student might actually choose to relate it to his peers. One such story concerned a park board hearing to consider granting a permit to hold a rock music festival in a city park.

Each student was allowed to make the transition at his own speed and in the manner that seemed best for him. Many students found a dittoed outline prepared by the instructor useful; others made notes. Complete

transition for all students required a period of approximately four weeks.

At this point in the instruction, it was necessary that more and more of the responses be subjective in nature. The instructor no longer had the written work to clarify responses that were not clear, and auditing actually assumed more validity for this reason. On the other hand, individual voices and dialects had become so familiar as to make it difficult for the auditor to distinguish between his ability to understand what he was hearing and his familiarity with the material. This problem was diminished when each response was subjective or based on different stimulus material. For instance, if each student was directed to read a story in the newspaper which interested him and then retell the story, the variety in responses increased. It was necessary for the instructor to give only one set of directions, but the different responses possible could number in the hundreds.

As responses became more subjective in nature, they reflected differences in native culture of the speaker and provided opportunity for cross-cultural exchange. Notebooks were still used even though the student no longer wrote his response. A page in the notebook served to note

the date and subject of his discussion as well as provide a place to make comments and place a grade. Only letter grades were given and only those items which had been introduced and practiced were included in the grading. At this point in the instruction, any enunciation that could not be understood lowered the mark one letter grade. This was, of course, a value judgment on the part of the instructor, but it was accepted as fair and satisfactory by the students.

Some students dictated in a manner that was stilted and formal as if they were making a class report. Individual attention was given these students to help them choose subjects for recording in which they were genuinely interested and about which they felt strongly in order to help them become more spontaneous in their recording. Others became very innovative and creative of their own volition preparing tapes of simulated news casts, weather reports, and sports events. Students often collaborated in the preparation of these tapes.

Students were not discouraged from using dialect in the preparation of these tapes provided they employed a phonology that could be understood by standard speakers. However, from time to time, the students'

sentences were lifted from their tapes and typed on ditto sheets exactly as they were spoken. Students were charged to rewrite or restate the sentences which were in cultural dialect in common dialect form.

Students worked at the deliberate level of response from ten to twelve weeks, reinforcing good usage and clear speech. As good performance rose, students dictated for longer and longer periods and gained confidence in their abilities to discipline the use of the skills which they had acquired. Students were constantly reminded of their objective--not to eliminate their native speech, but to provide them with an alternate speaking system to fit particular needs.

Spontaneous Response

At the beginning of approximately the seventh month, students were gradually moved into the final level of instruction, the spontaneous response. Almost all students had a disciplined control of clear and distinct speech, and this level was to train students to maintain that discipline in an immediate and spontaneous response.

This most often involved some sort of exercise in which the instructor dictated questions or a stimulus

to which the student must respond instantly and within a given period of time. The stimulus material was always something with which the students were so familiar that the content of the response could pose no problem. This may have concerned something personal or be objective material which all students had mastered.

Role playing was utilized to help students identify situations in which it would be to their advantage to use the common dialect. One such situation was a job interview. Students studied the classified sections of their newspapers to find a job which interested them and for which they were qualified. With another student playing the role of the employer, each student participated in a simulated job interview.

Students were given two examples to demonstrate the need to clearly articulate certain information. Every student could complete the sentence, "I stumped my ___," but found they were unable to supply the missing word in, "I live at 1213 ________ Street." The need was stressed for careful articulation of such information as well as that of names which might be unusual or unfamiliar to a particular listener.

Evaluation

The only valid means of measuring the effectiveness of this program seemed to be a comparison of the student's speech before and after instruction. Two tapes were made for this purpose, one at the beginning of the program and the second near the end.

The preinstruction tape was made at the end of the orientation period. To eliminate unfamiliarity with the audio-graphics machine as a factor in the evaluation process, it was essential that every student be completely at ease with his machine before tapes were made. As soon as this fact was ascertained, each student was given a brief autobiographical outline and asked to simply tell his story in his own words. The choice of this subject eliminated familiarity of content as a factor. Each tape was marked for identification with a black Marks-A-Lot.

The postinstruction tape was made near the end of the eighth month. Exactly the same method was followed in making the second tape as in making the first. The tapes were then paired for evaluation. Because it was impossible to get 100 percent attendance on either day evaluation tapes were made, a total of forty-four pairs of tapes were available for evaluation purposes.

The majority of the people in this West Texas community are not exposed to the cultural dialects with frequency, and most might be expected to have difficulty comprehending speakers whose phonology and morphology were markedly different from that of the common dialect. For that reason, two evaluators were chosen who were not familiar with the cultural dialects as being representative of the type of listeners the students might expect to encounter. One evaluator was chairman of a college English department, and as such, he might view the students involved in the program as future candidates in his own classes where they would profit from the ability to use standard English. The other evaluator was an officer in a local bank. As such, the subjects in the program might be future consumers of his services.

Each evaluator worked independently auditing each pair of tapes. They were instructed that the primary objective of each student was to speak in such a manner that he could easily be understood by any member of the dominant culture. The evaluators were furnished a score sheet for each student and asked to listen to the pretape and posttape of each student and rate the degree of improvement of that particular student.[1] Each pair of tapes was

[1]Sample Evaluation Sheet, p. 86.

TABLE 4

EVALUATION OF IMPROVEMENT IN FINAL RECORDINGS OF

STUDENTS IN ORAL ENGLISH PROGRAM

Student	Age	Sex	Grade level	Ethnic Group*	Work Experience	Evaluator	
						A	B
H.A.	16	M	11	N	X	Fair	Fair
J.A.	17	M	11	M	X	Fair	Exc.
J.A.	18	M	11	N	X	Fair	Good
J.A.	16	F	11	N		Good	Good
L.B.	17	M	11	N	X	Good	Good
P.C.	17	M	11	M	X	Good	Good
A.C.	18	F	12	M		Good	Exc.
M.D.	17	F	11	A	X	Fair	Good
F.D.	17	M	11	M	X	Good	Fair
C.G.	18	M	11	N	X	Good	Good
L.G.	17	F	11	M		Good	Fair
G.G.	18	M	11	M	X	Fair	Fair
E.H.	16	M	10	N	X	Good	Exc.
J.H.	21	M	12	M	X	Good	Fair
E.H.	16	F	10	N		Exc.	Fair
S.H.	18	F	10	M		Fair	Good
E.H.	17	M	10	M	X	Fair	Fair
V.H.	17	F	12	N		Fair	Fair
D.J.	16	M	10	N	X	Fair	Fair
C.J.	15	F	10	M		Good	Exc.
M.J.	16	M	10	M	X	Poor	Fair
J.J.	16	M	10	N	X	Exc.	Good
L.J.	17	M	10	N	X	Good	Good
O.J.	16	F	10	M		Good	Fair
A.L.	17	F	11	N	X	Good	Good
C.L.	17	F	10	N		Good	Good
A.M.	17	M	10	M	X	Fair	Fair
J.M.	17	M	10	M		Fair	Poor
F.M.	17	M	11	M	X	Fair	Good
C.M.	16	M	10	N	X	Fair	Good
J.M.	17	M	11	M	X	Poor	Fair
C.M.	17	F	11	M		Good	Good
G.M.	16	M	11	N		Fair	Fair
D.M.	16	F	10	M		Good	Good
A.N.	18	F	11	M		Fair	Fair
A.R.	17	F	10	N		Poor	Exc.
A.R.	16	M	10	M		Fair	Good
J.R.	17	M	10	M		Good	Good
J.S.	17	M	10	M	X	Good	Good
P.S.	19	M	12	M	X	Good	Fair
E.S.	16	F	10	N		Good	Fair
E.S.	17	M	11	N	X	Fair	Good
V.T.	17	F	10	M		Fair	Good
M.V.	16	F	10	M		Fair	Fair

*N = Negro
M = Mexican American

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evaluated twice, once by each evaluator, and the degree of improvement between the pretape and the posttape was rated as poor, fair, good, or excellent.

Table 4 shows the evaluation of the degree of each student's improvement as judged by each evaluator. A total of 71 percent of all students evaluated showed improvement of fair to good (one evaluator rated improvement as fair, one evaluator rated improvement as good).

A comparison of the percentages of improvement rated as fair to good according to ethnic group, grade level, sex, and employment experience shows considerable difference in the achievement of the groups.

Group	Percentages of Improvement Rated as Fair to Good
Ethnic group:	
Mexican American	68%
Negro	72%
Grade level:	
Sophomore	61%
Juniors and Seniors	77%
Sex:	
Males	62%
Females	83%
Employment experience:	
Employed	66%
Unemployed	75%

Although the number of students in the program was too small to allow the evaluations to render any conclusive results,

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these evaluations can serve as indicators of areas for further research. The greater improvement of girls over boys might have been expected. The fact that the more advanced students made considerably more progress than the younger ones _may be due_ to the fact that their contact with the community outside their culture group is greater, thereby making the course objectives more meaningful. It might be hypothesized that since this contact will continue to increase and provide reinforcement for the acquired skills, retention of these skills will be increased. The fact that most of those employed were boys must be considered in the interpretation of these percentages.

At the time of this experiment, no precise measurement instruments were available for evaluating oral English. Such instruments are now in the process of being developed. However, in their absence, these evaluations purport to show nothing more than that the linguistically different secondary student can move toward achieving a mastery of the phonology and morphology common to the community to a degree that will reduce the handicaps inherent in nonstandard speech.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study can be summarized as follows:

1. The number of linguistically different nonstandard speakers in the classrooms of the state of Texas is increasing.

2. Because few curriculums include formal instruction in oral English, many of these students continue to leave school without achieving a level of proficiency in the use of standard English to allow them to achieve mobility in the dominant culture.

3. Current research is directed to the elementary level of instruction or to a single culture group and is of limited value to the secondary teacher.

4. In an attempt to alleviate the above conditions, a program was designed and implemented at Ector High School, Odessa, Texas, for the purpose of providing linguistically different Negro and Mexican-American students an opportunity

to acquire skills in standard oral English.

5. To fail to provide the student with such an instruction is to deny him equality of opportunity.

Limitations

Two major problems presented themselves in the implementation of the program at Ector High School.

Teacher anticipation in auditing

Unless some provision was made to insure variety in the recorded responses, the instructor began to anticipate what the student was going to say during the auditing process to the extent that the instructor could not always distinguish between what he heard and what he expected to hear. This problem was met by: (1) having the student approach one recording each week from a subjective point of view, e. g., the content was selected according to his individual interests; and (2) using the newspaper as the stimulus, making it possible to assign each student a different story on which to base his recording. Because this material was ample and new each day, it not only

provided an endless source of stimulus material but guaranteed the student a subject in which he was interested.

Time allotments for auditing

Individual attention to each student was deemed essential to his success, but limitations of the instructor's time available for auditing purposes allowed less than three minutes per student in a fifty-five minute class of twenty students. In order to expedite this process, three approaches were used.

> (1) The first recording of the week was kept reasonably brief and was primarily diagnostic. The second recording was considerably longer, and as much as two class periods was allowed for auditing. This did not mean that the student was necessarily idle until his tape was audited. The difference in pace at which individual students worked widened the intervals at which time they were ready to be audited. The students were required to audit their own tapes and to audit one another's tapes. When a student audited the tape of another student, he was required to cross the culture line. In other words, a Negro student would pair with a Mexican-American or an Anglo-American student for cross-auditing.
>
> (2) The room speaker on each machine offered two alternatives in the auditing process. A stimulus might be posed for response and a different student called upon each time to play his response on his room speaker. Every student would respond to every stimulus given, but his response might be played for the entire class only once or twice. A large number

of students could be heard in a relatively limited period of time.

(3) The room speaker on each machine was utilized by having each student play his response in turn. This provided an opportunity for the entire class to participate in the auditing process. If the instructor faced the class, it was easy to tell by the expressions on the faces of the students if anyone was having difficulty understanding the speaker.

For maximum results, the final audit by the instructor was individual and always made in the student's presence. The only solution to the time problem of auditing is limited class size.

Reliance on face validity

The absence of any means of assessing oral language development imposed limitations on efforts to evaluate the results of the program. It was necessary that reliance be placed on the face validity of the improvement in the paired tapes. Evidence of the validity of the program is contained in a statement by Dr. Paul Diederich, senior research psychologist for Educational Testing Service, made after auditing the tapes:

I still can't get over the altogether unprecedented improvement in the speech of these students

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> that was revealed by the tapes. The differences between first and last tapes are . . . gross and obvious. Just playing the tapes is the only test of "significance" really needed. When you get an order-of-magnitude effect like this, you don't need [to do] anything fancy with statistics.[1]

Conclusions

Any experimental program must take into consideration a number of factors which may not be reflected in any statistical evaluation, but which, nevertheless, appear to play an important role in the success or failure.

1. In any discussion of dialects and cultures which they represent, it must be understood that there are no absolutes. No one student is entirely representative of a minority culture, but rather each student stands at a point on a continuum in the degree of his acculturation to the dominant culture.

2. Sociological developments in the United States in recent years have imposed emotional problems on the secondary student who is a member of a minority group that are over and above those usually associated with adolescence. The emergence of leaders from his culture with

[1]Paul Diederich, personal letter.

whom he can identify has instilled in him a new-found pride in his culture. Manifestations of this pride through his native or acquired dialect may appear contradictory to his chances of achieving certain goals fostered by the value system of the dominant culture. It is possible that only a program which recognizes not only the utility but the psychological importance of his native dialect or language will succeed. It would seem essential that respect for the student's language and culture be genuine; observation would indicate that most students have an uncanny ability to recognize insincerity although the process by which they do so is not apparent.

3. Although it might be expedient to separate the cultures for instructional purposes, having two or more groups in the same classroom which are linguistically different from the dominant culture offers certain advantages. Because they have a common problem and a common objective, understanding and respect between the cultures are fostered. Neither is inclined to feel that his group has been singled out for attention.

4. It is essential that the instructor understand the dialect of the cultures in question, and it will be necessary that he adapt his semantic choices to meet the

needs of the student. However, attempts to speak in the student's dialect might be viewed as an affectation and resented by him unless the instructor were actually a member of that culture.

5. The importance of the recording instrument chosen cannot be underestimated. The student's feeling that he and he alone controls the operation, that it begins at his command and ends at his command, and that the whole operation may be erased and begun again if he so chooses may be the controlling factor in the fact that he is willing to have his speech the object of close scrutiny.

6. Sturdiness and simplicity of operating the machine facilitate the instruction process. In four semesters of the program in which each machine was being operated approximately five hours each day by five different students, only three service calls were required to keep all the machines in operating condition. On each of these calls, only those machines which needed adjustment were serviced. Tapes were practically indestructible in normal use, and no tape was ever broken. No vandalism of the machines, materials, or furnishings was encountered although vandalism in this school was comparable to that in most schools.

7. It might be possible to program the instruction to the point where little guidance would be required of the

instructor, but the student's need to share what he has recorded is a powerful motivating force in his reaching his objective.

8. The program described, designed and instrumented by untrained personnel, indicates that students can profit significantly from such instruction.

Recommendations

Based upon the writer's experience with the study and reflecting its limitations, the following conclusions are made:

1. Alternatives for integrating an oral English program into the curriculum to the one described might be: (a) establish a similar laboratory with a director in charge and allow teachers to bring their students into the lab on a regularly scheduled basis; (b) install a team-teaching approach with as much instruction as possible conducted outside the laboratory and the students brought into the lab only for the period of time needed for recording.

Either method would provide that more students per day would benefit from using the equipment.

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2. A developmental and sequential order of skills instruction should be established. On the basis of the Ector project, it is possible to suggest three different skill areas: (a) obviously, if a student speaks in a manner that makes it difficult to communicate with standard speakers, phonology must have first priority; (b) second priority would be syntactical structure, concentrating on the use of irregular verbs, pronoun forms, question structure, and the usage of prepositions, not for purposes of communication, but because it is in this area that the greatest social stigma seems to be imposed; (c) third priority would be instruction in those areas of morphology which are not readily noticeable in speech.

3. Two areas of instruction where the audio-graphics instrument suggests itself are in the reading program and in speech therapy. Because the machine is simple enough to be operated by a primary student, it is nonthreatening and might very well be utilized for oral reading, thereby eliminating the traditional reading circle. The advantages here are obvious. In both reading and speech therapy, the time of the instructor and the students could be used to better advantage than is now being done.

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A P P E N D I X

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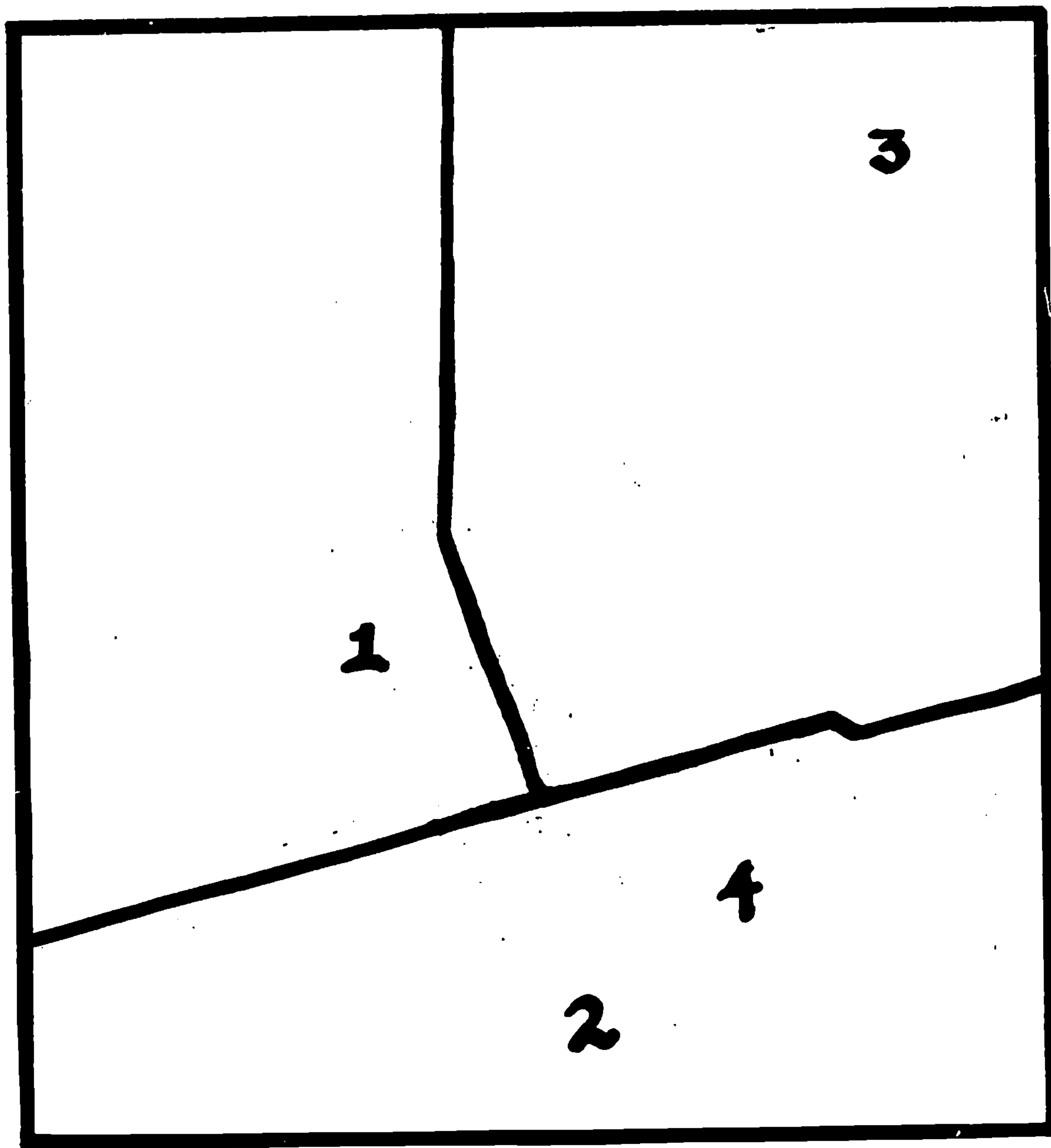
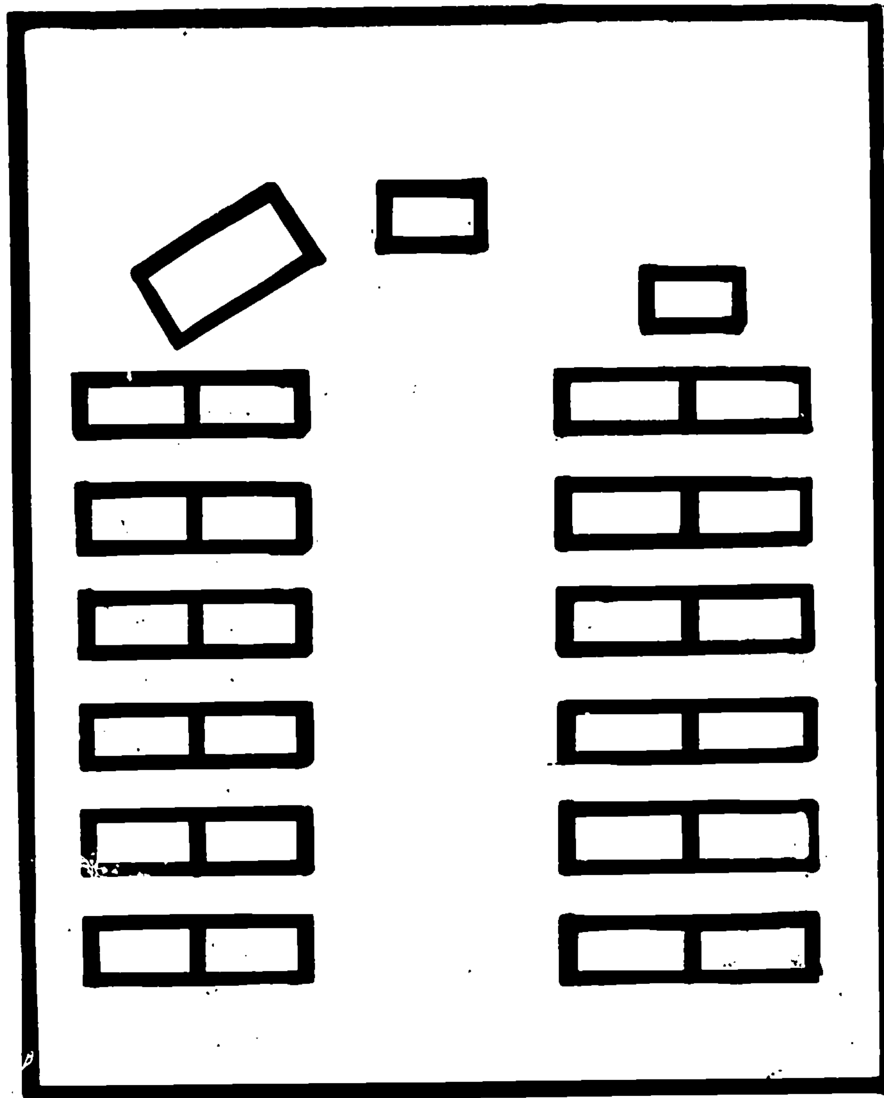
CITY MAP OF ODESSA, TEXAS



1. Odessa High School
2. Ector High School
3. Permian High School
4. Blackshear Junior High School (formerly Blackshear High School)

FLOOR PLAN OF ORAL ENGLISH LABORATORY
Ector High School
Odessa, Texas



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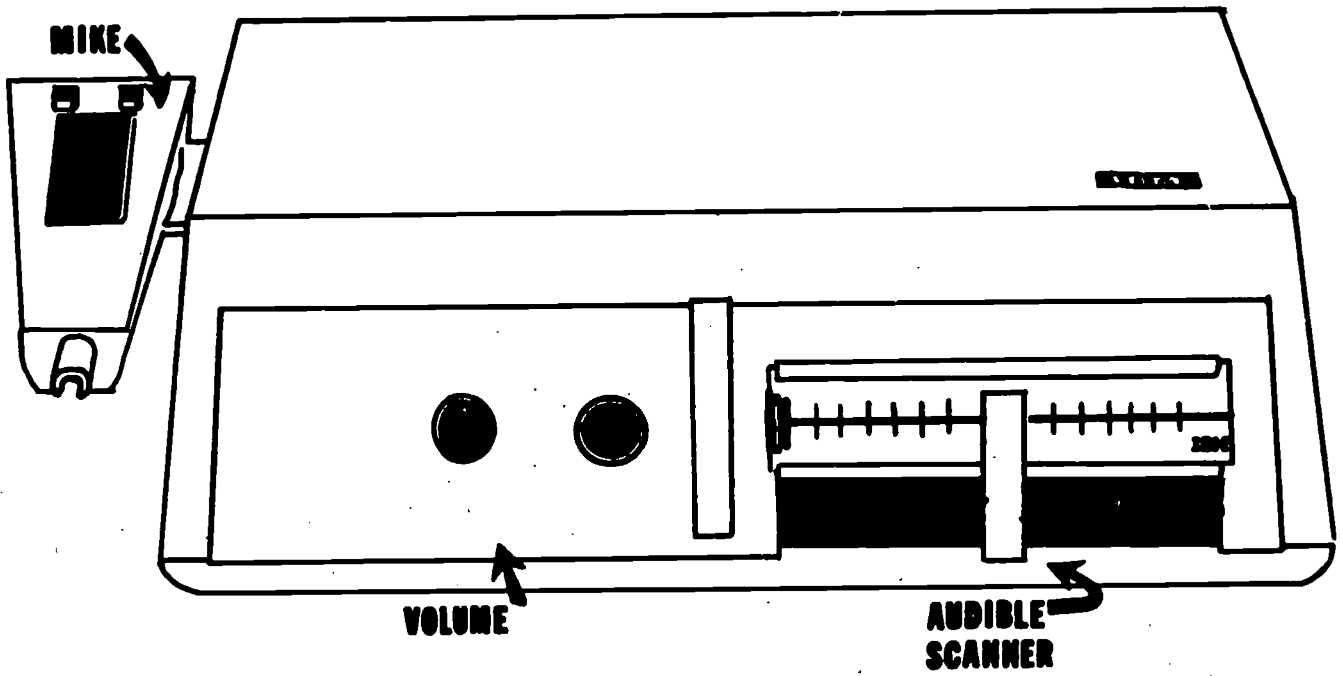

IBM EXECUTARY DICTATING MACHINE

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OPERATING YOUR MACHINES

(With each student seated at his machine, the following instructions were given orally to help him master operation of the machine. This exercise was repeated daily until each student could operate his machine without conscious attention.)

Press in your clutch and move your scanning bar to the starting point.

Pick up your microphone and switch into "record".

Make certain your red signal light is on.

Press down on the bar and speak.

Release.

Press switch to review (one click covers material recorded).

Listen.

Cradle your microphone.

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SAMPLE EXERCISE

Words Beginning with "Th"

than
thank
that
thatch
thaw
the
theater
theft
their
them
theme
then
theory
therapy
there
thermometer
thermostat
they
thick
thief
thimble
thing
think
third
thirst
thirteen
thirty
this
thorn
thorough
those
though
thought
thousand
thrash
thread
threat
three
thresher
threw
thrill
thrive
throat
throb
through
throw
thrust
thumb
thump
thunder
Thursday

SAMPLE EXERCISE

Study the exercise on page 17 of your newspaper. Answer each of the following questions in complete sentences. Dictate your answer into your machine.

1. How many items are there listed in the advertisement?

2. What time do these items go on sale?

3. How thick are the foam rubber pillows which are advertised?

4. How much does the radio cost?

5. How many shirts can you buy for $10.00?

6. How many of these things do you think you might buy if you had the money?

SAMPLE EXERCISE

QUESTIONS! QUESTIONS!

Pretend that you are in each of the following situations. Think carefully about how you would ask the question or explain what you wanted. Then dictate into your machine only the words you would actually say to the person with whom you were talking. REMEMBER: You ask a question: you do not tell a question.

1. Your teacher has asked you to go to the library and ask Mrs. Brown if the class may come to the library next Monday during this period. Dictate into your machine only what you would say to Mrs. Brown.

2. I have asked you to go to the dean's office and ask him what time the assembly will begin. Exactly what would you say to him.

3. You have been absent for two days. You do not have a telephone at home. Your mother will call the school when she gets to her job at 9:30. Explain this to Mrs. Pufal and ask permission to attend class.

4. Your brother or sister (or a friend) in another class has your lunch money. Your teacher has given you permission to go and get it. What will you say to your friend's teacher?

5. You have been absent from school for two days and your absence is excused. However, you know you will receive a zero for work you have missed unless you make it up. What will you say to your teacher about make-up work?

SAMPLE EXERCISE

The Road Not Taken (1915)

Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
and sorry I could not travel both and be one traveler,
long I stood and looked down one as far as I could
to where it bent in the undergrowth.

Then took the other, as just as fair,
and having perhaps the better claim
because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that
the passing there had worn them really about the same.

And both that morning equally lay
in leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day;
Yet, knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
somewhere ages and ages hence.
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--
I took the one less traveled by
and that has made all the difference.

EVALUATION SHEET
Oral Communications Lab
Ector High School
Odessa, Texas
May 1969

Student's Name ____

Age________ Sex__________ Classification__________________

Culture Group_____________ Employed Outside Home___________

OBJECTIVE: To identify and correct those patterns of speech identifiable by culture which prove a handicap to the student academically, socially, and economically. The purpose is not to erase all traces of the student's culture in his speech, but to enable him to speak clearly and distinctly to the degree that he can converse with relative ease in a predominantly Anglo-American community.

After auditing the tape recorded by the student before instruction and that made after an eight month interval, please rate his degree of improvement as poor, fair, good, or excellent.

Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent

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V I T A

Virginia Fields Riggs was born in Stamford, Texas, on June 1, 1923, to Lela Davis Fields and Clinton O. Fields. After attending public schools in Texas and Iowa, she entered Howard Payne College, Brownwood, Texas, in the fall of 1939 and completed her junior year there in 1942. She returned to Howard Payne College in January, 1962, and earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in the summer of that year. From 1962 to 1970 she was employed by the Ector County Independent School District, Odessa, Texas, as an English teacher at Ector High School. She was granted a leave of absence for the 1970-71 school year for graduate study at The University of Texas at Austin. She will return to Ector High School in the fall of 1971. She is a widow and the mother of two daughters.

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