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ABSTRACT

Numerous investigations of the relationship of oral language skills to the acquisition of reading show that the nonstandard language of the child accounts, at least in part, for classroom failure. Even a teacher who is well informed about the nature of nonstandard language and its relationship to reading and academic success requires a valid oral language test instrument to evaluate his students and plan accordingly. One test which has been used successfully with over 1,500 students from different cultural and ethnic background throughout the United States is the "Gloria and David Beginning English Test Six." This sentence repetition test has been found highly reliable for evaluating language in terms of language dominance (Standard English, Negro Nonstandard English, or Spanish); and Standard American English comprehension, production, phonology, inflections and syntax. The purpose of this study was to determine if 50 tapes are required to adequately train someone to use the test. The research design involved evaluating the oral language performance of ten black children at three different times and correlating these ratings with the mean ratings of 15 linguistic experts. Since the author of the test felt 50 tapes would be required to train one teacher, the study was constructed around this number. (Author/JM)

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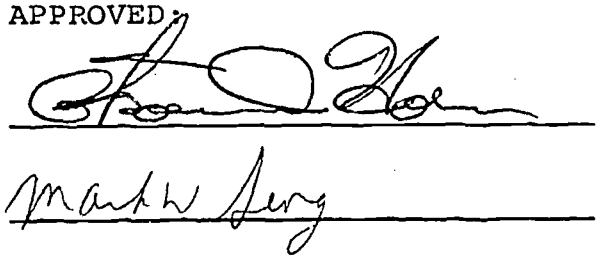

THE COMPARISON OF ONE TEACHER'S ORAL LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT AND A PANEL OF EXPERTS' ORAL LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT OF TEN BLACKS

by

SUSAN HARVIN LAWHON, A. B.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter Page

LIST OF TABLES

Table | Page

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Challenge: Reading Failure

The high percentage of academic failure among the black school population is a major challenge to contemporary educators because of its relationship to the child's self-concept and ultimate social effectiveness. Successive failure at school tasks quickly teaches the black child that he is intellectually inferior, of little self-worth and of low social value (Baratz, 1970, p. 11).

In myth, the school's chief goal is to help each child achieve his potential and take his place among the mainstream of society as a productive human being. In reality, the schools contribute to the low socioeconomic black's disadvantage by ineffectively coping with teaching reading. The failure of our educational system to teach functionally adequate reading skills to minority children is one key to the fact that urban blacks learn less than their white middle class counterparts.

Reading ability is the important measure of success in our educational establishment. Both our schools and our pupils are evaluated on the basis of reading

scores, or achievement tests which heavily rely on reading. Reading is a necessary learning tool: progress in school depends on the constant development of reading skills. Failure to acquire this ability adds to the black's growing isolation from school as a social institution. The alienated then drop out of school at the earliest possible legal age; this insures failure in the economic market and reinforces the cycle of poverty plaguing the disadvantaged. The problem of reading thus becomes a pressing social problem as well as an educational challenge.

Yet our educational system has failed to fully understand why teaching an urban black child to read is difficult. At present this problem has reached crisis proportions. The Civil Rights Commission in its report on Equal Educational Opportunity (1966), known generally as the Coleman Report, provided detailed statistics indicating that minority achievement scores in the urban Northeast were as much as one standard deviation below the majority pupils' scores in grade one. By grade six this represents 1.6 years behind; at grade 9, 2.4 years behind, and at grade 12, 3.3 years. Thus the deficiency becomes greater for the minority pupils at progressively higher grades. The Coleman Report noted that student social class was a stronger determinant of achievement than

school program and that the cumulative deficit figures were considerably more appalling for the South than for the urban Northeast.

One qualification must be made regarding reading failure: not all blacks have problems in learning to read. But the evidence of failure is sufficiently widespread to warrant educators to ask why a disproportionate number of black children fail to achieve in reading.

Labov (1970) provides perhaps the best orientation towards the problems of the black school population:

> An understanding of nonstandard language is a necessary first step in understanding one's students and in achieving the goals of education (p.5).

Similarly, Horn (1970) emphasized the relationship between language and reading for the disadvantaged.

Horn identified factors contributing to the reading retardation or failure of blacks and other disadvantaged. The most important of these were:

> (1) widespread ignorance on the part of practitioners concerning principles of language learning. . . ;
> (2) frequent introduction of the decoding phase of initial reading instruction before adequate oral language development has occurred;
> (3) inadequate or nonexistent tests for assessing phonological and syntactical problems and oral language fluency in American English; and
> (4) teachers' inability or failure to diagnose and remedy oral language deviations that seriously inhibit learning to read in Standard American English (Horn, 1970, p. 7).

The accumulating evidence presented in numerous articles on the relationship of oral language skills to the acquisition of reading indicated that the nonstandard language of the child accounts, at least in part, for classroom failure (Baratz and Shuy, 1969; The Florida FL Reporter, Special Anthology Issue, Summer/Fall 1969). Teachers, texts and evaluation procedures employ standard English as the lingua franca of the public school. Yet the black child comes to school with a different language, creating a mismatch between the language of the learner and the language of the learning. Goodman (1965) has hypothesized that the greater the difference between these two languages, the greater the difficulty in learning to read will be.

Two qualifications must be noted before proceeding. First, growing up in a black ghetto does not necessarily mean growing up speaking nonstandard language. Second, approximately 95% of the children in the black ghetto do speak Negro Nonstandard English (NNE). It is the medium by which they communicate, transmit their culture and maintain solidarity. About 15% of that 95% speak both standard and nonstandard, or are bidialectal.

Labov (1969) concludes from his work with blacks in the New York ghetto that teaching standard English must take high priority within the school curriculum because of

its relationship to reading and subsequent academic success. Moreover, teachers must be instructed in nonstandard language as well as standard in order to successfully combat the child's ignorance of the system of standard American English (SAE):

> . . .the fundamental situation that we face is one of reciprocal ignorance, where teacher and student are ignorant of each other's language system, and therefore of the rules needed to translate from one system to another (p. 29).

Even if the teacher were well informed about the nature of nonstandard language and its relationship to reading and acdemic success, he could not begin to plan lessons and sequence appropriate materials until he had a complete profile of the child. Certainly, pursuant to his planning, must come oral language assessment. Yet, to date, the lack of valid oral language test instruments prohibits adequate evaluation.

Indeed, much of the current misconceptions about nonstandard language stems from inappropriate and invalid tests (see chapter two, p. 43). Natalicio and Williams (1971) emphasized the importance of assessment in any educational program and especially in the area of language. They noted:

> A technique for assessing linguistic baselines, i.e., the initial levels of linguistic effectiveness, is

> requisite to determining which children should participate in which educational programs. It is also essential in determining the effects of the participation of a given group of students in a given program (p. 3).

If teachers are to prevent cumulative deficits in their black children's achievement and if they are to promote each student to his fullest potential, they must concern themselves with oral language and, in particular, oral language assessment.

One test which has been used successfully with over 1,500 students from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds throughout the United States is the Gloria and David Beginning English Test Six (Card, 1970). Natalicio and Williams (1971) found this sentence repetition test highly reliable for evaluating language in terms of language dominance (Standard English, Negro Nonstandard, or Spanish), SAE comprehension, SAE production, SAE phonology, SAE inflections and SAE syntax. Such a test could be a useful diagnostic instrument for the classroom teacher if she were trained to use it.

Purpose of the Study

In the search for a valid and reliable oral language test, one also wants to find one that can be easily administered, scored and used for instructional guidance. If the Gloria and David Beginning English test is to be

practical for widespread use, a teacher must be able to give and evaluate it. How much training would efficient assessment require?

W. R. Devine, President of Language Arts, Inc. and author of the test, believes one must appraise at least fifty tapes before any appreciation develops for each child as a unique user of language.

Statement of The Problem

The aim of this correlation study was to determine if fifty tapes were indeed necessary for teacher training, at least for a sample of one.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Recognition of Black English

The prerequisite for accomodating the linguistically divergent in American public schools is the acceptance of nonstandard language, or dialects, as different but equal language systems. Of paramount importance to this researcher is the recognition of black English, or Negro Nonstandard English as a linguistic and social reality. The acceptance of this fact by educators, politicians and civil rights leaders will pave the way for a movement toward the more important phase of adapting attitudes, materials and methods for the benefit of students from a different cultural background with a different language.

In 1966 Stewart observed:

> In advocating the validity of terms like "Negro dialect" and "Negro speech," it is indeed difficult to generalize uncontroversially about so sensitive a topic as a social dialect variation. Yet, because of the fact that Negroes make up such an important part of our nation's socio-economically disadvantaged population, any attempt to deal with the language problems of the disadvantaged in general must certainly involve dealing with the language problems of the disadvantaged Negro in particular. For those whose local language problem involves remedial English

> teaching primarily to disadvantaged Negroes, knowledge about the details of their language competence and performance will be of the utmost importance Stewart, 1971, p.47).

Black English (BE) is an example of one of many language varieties in the United States. Like other dialects, it is associated with a subordinate social and economic group. This association gives rise to the myth that the black's linguistic capacity is deficient when, in reality, his dialect is an adequate communicative system within his own environment. Unfortunately, the deficit fallacy lingers on that blacks have deviant speech which is deterrent to cognitive growth.

But the outlook for the recognition of BE as different but equal is hopeful thanks to the work of linguists such as Stewart, Labov and Shuy, Wolfram and Riley in Washington, New York and Detroit. By using ghetto informants, these linguists have described the features of BE as well as the differences between Standard American English (SAE) and BE, which occur with respect to phonology, syntax and vocabulary. Some of the phonlogical and syntactical features are listed below in Table I.

In essence, the existence and recognition of BE depends on the position one takes in the deficit-difference controversy. Proponents of the difference view of black speech maintain that all humans develop language.

TABLE 1

SOME PHONOLOGICAL AND SYNTACTICAL ELEMENTS OF BLACK ENGLISH WITH EXAMPLES OF CONTRASTS BETWEEN STANDARD ENGLISH AND BLACK ENGLISH

Phonology

1. r-lessness (Carol = Ca'ol)
2. l-lessness (help = hep)
3. Implied final consonant clusters, especially if the cluster ends in /t/, /d/, /s/, or /z/ (hold = hol)
4. Weakening of final clusters, most often t and d (road = row)
5. Similar sounds of short "e' and "i"; before nasals the sounds of these vowels are often indistinguishable (cents = since)[1]

Syntax

1. Omission of the -s possessive suffix (John's cousin = John cousin)
2. Omission of the -s from the third person singular (she works here = she work here)
3. Use of "be" to express habitual action ("he working right now" to express present but not continuing action as contrasted with "he be working everyday" to express continual, habitual action.
4. Absence of the copula or linking verb
5. Multiple negation (I don't have any = I don' got none)[2]

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[1]Extracted from William Labov, "Some Sources of Reading Problems for Negro Speakers of Nonstandard English," in Teaching Black Children to Read, pp. 29-67.

[2]Joan Baratz, "Teaching Reading in an Urban Negro School System," in Language and Poverty, p. 15.

Furthermore, any verbal system used by a community is a language if it fulfills the requirement of a "well-ordered system with a predictable sound pattern, grammatical structure and vocabulary (Baratz, 1969 b, p.95)." This self-contained system of black language is "inherently neither superior nor deficient (Wolfram, 1970, p. 740)."

McDavid defines "dialect" as:

> . . . a variety of language, generally mutually intelligible with other varieties of that language but set off from them by a unique complex of features of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary (1969, p. 3).

If one accepts this definition of dialect, then the recognition of black dialect depends on the establishment of systematic differences between SAE and BE. Support for BE as a divergent linguistic system can be found in Baratz's study (1969a) of third- and fifth-graders from two Washington, D. C. schools.

Baratz gave a bidialectal test in which she assessed the proficiency of black ghetto children and middle class white children in repeating SAE and BE sentences. The assumption was that lower-class black children were learning a well-ordered but different system from their white counterparts. If the BE system were used

as a criterion of correctness, the white child would have to use the BE system as well as his own SAE or be classified as "deficient in language development (p. 892)."

In repeating the BE sentences, the black children were significantly more proficient. Similarly white children responded better to SAE sentences. More importantly, the black child's responses exhibited predictable differences based on interference from the nonstandard dialect. The same behavior was evident in white children when asked to repeat the nonstandard sentences. The fact that standard and nonstandard speakers exhibit similar behavior when confronted with sentences outside the primary code indicates clearly that the language deficiency attributed to disadvantaged blacks by deficit theorists is not a language deficit so much as difficulty in code switching when the second code is not learned as well as the first (Baratz, 1969a, p. 898). The errors of the two groups represent an intrusion of the dominant language system upon the structure of the other system:

> If, indeed, nonstandard were not a structured system with well-ordered rules, one would expect that Negro children would not be able to repeat the nonstandard structures any better than white children and one would expect nonstandard patterns would not emerge systematically when lower-class Negroes responded to standard sentences (p. 899).

Since these expectations did not occur, the results of the study are that: (1) there are two dialects involved in the education complex of black children (especially in schools with a white middle class curriculum orientation); (2) black children are generally not bi-dilectal; and (3) there is evidence of interference from their dialect when black children attempt to use standard English.

The existence of BE can be argued from the standpoint of ethnic speech characteristics as well as systematic differences. If we accept Williams' socio-linguistic definition of "dialects" as "variations of English by region, community or social status (Williams, 1970, p. 381)," then recognition of BE hinges on evidence that people actually associate certain speech characteristics with the low socioeconomic black community.

Middle class American whites generally consider blacks an inferior social class and discriminate against them accordingly. Their different culture, lower economic and educational status and their speech mark them a subject population. "Ten to fifteen seconds of speech are sufficient to make reliable judgments of social status (Entwisle, 1970, p. 124)." Language, then, operates to preserve social class distinctions by erecting a barrier to upward mobility.

Entwisle (1970, p. 124) focuses on language as the key to the black's status:

> Life chances may . . . be directly shaped by linguistic habits that influence interpersonal relations, partly because speech instantaneously identifies members of a particular social group . . . . In addition, . . . when tagged as a member of that group he may be endowed with all the other modal attributes of that group--relatively low socioeconomic status, low educational status, values that emphasize immediate rather than delayed gratifications, relatively low power in the social hierarchy, or even having certain political leanings.

In addition, Loban (1968, p. 593) underscores the social power of language and the importance of the child learning SAE: "Unless they can learn to use standard English, many pupils will be denied access to economic opportunities or entrance to social groups."

It is this association of nonstandard speech with ethnic characteristics that leads the middle class to conclude the black's linguistic capacity is deficient when, in reality, his competence in black English is perfectly normally developed. Teachers have contributed to the problem of naive speech attitudes by communicating, often inadvertently and unconsciously, an air of superiority and rejection toward the student and his culture.

In his research on teacher stereotypes, Williams (1970) indicated the range of teacher influence on pupil achievement. His thesis is:

> That our speech, by offering a rich variety of social and ethnic correlates, each of which has attitudinal correlates in our own and our listeners behaviors, is one means by which we remind ourselves and others of social and ethnic boundaries, and is thus a part of the process of social maintenance (or change) (p. 381).

In support of his thesis, Williams found teachers tend to evaluate children in terms of two gross dimensions, confidence-eagerness and ethnicity-nonstandard. In separate ratings of the status of children, ethnicity-nonstandard was the predominant dimension of the teacher's judgment. From this there emerged a stereotype of the low status or disadvantaged child: his speech was rated in the direction of nonstandard-ethnic and his general performance, reticent and unsure.

Williams then speculated that teachers base much of their instructional behavior towards the child on just such a stereotype elicited from the child's speech. The child's speech and the teacher's stereotype easily fit into the dynamics of the self-fulfilling prophecy. If one extends this self-fulfilling prophecy to teachers of ghetto blacks, one can see how nonstandard language and naive speech attitudes could keep a child at a disadvantage in the classroom.

Other attitude studies found similar associations between speech, race and socioeconomic status. In his

study of the social stratification of speech in New York City, Labov (1966) found certain speech features were cues for status recognition. Shuy, Baratz and Wolfram (1969) studied the ability of Detroit residents to identify the race and socioeconomic status of adult males on the basis of a small sample of their speech. The most significant conclusion was that overall ability to identify socioeconomic status from speech samples increased as socioeconomic socioeconomic status decreased.

The foregoing sociolinguistic research findings seem to confirm what Baratz noted in her bidialectal task: two language systems do exist for the black person. These are the systems of black English and Standard American English. That these are indigenous to the separate environments and cultures can be seen in the reaction of social groups to those who attempt to violate the stereotypes. Williams (1970, p. 390) noted that the black male was regarded as a traitor if he spoke SAE in the inner city. The converse is also true that he would be considered militant or "uppity" if he used BE when the standard form was considered appropriate.

If one keeps both McDavid's definition and Williams' definition of a dialect in mind, it seems fair to conclude that a black dialect exists in the United States today as a linguistic and social reality. This dialect is a

language difference that must be considered in the educational process of the child.

Although some educators are acquiring a more current view of BE as a well-ordered, highly structured language system, Modiano (1969) recognizes that most have yet to learn that BE speech constitutes a viable linguistic system. In fact, educators and psychologists are still reinforcing the deficient rather than different view of black speech.

Nonstandard Language as Deficient

For decades the public schools have viewed SAE as "correct" and dialects as "incorrect" as if the English language were uniform. The prevailing educational policy has been to repress the nonstandard speech and teach the standard language by bombarding the child with so-called model English. In fact, few teachers speak the same "standard"; therefore, few teach the same SAE. As yet there is no commonly agreed upon form of standard English so that SAE in the South is considerably different from that of the Northeast or Midwest.

This eradication stance of schools in teaching SAE to nonstandard speakers has been denounced by Shuy (1968) as "Bonnie and Clyde" tactics. Postal (1972) also criticized the prescriptivist attitude of the schools towards

English as if English grammar instruction were the key to effective communication.

Psychologists have added experimental evidence to support the racially-biased view of nonstandard language as defective or deficient. They maintain black children receive little stimulation, hear few well-formed sentences and, therefore, are verbally impoverished. As a result of environmental factors, they cannot complete sentences, do not know the names of common objects and cannot think or convey logical thoughts (Labov, 1970a, p. 153).

Both psychologists and educators who promote the deficient language position rely heavily upon the writings of the British sociolinguist Basil Bernstein. Bernstein is said to have described the structure of lower-class language as restricted and not useful for analytic or abstract thought processes. Recently, however, Bernstein clarified his position on restricted language codes because of circulating misconceptions on the part of devotees. He acknowledged that his earlier work may have inadvertently contributed to the formulation of new educational concepts and categories such as "culturally deprived" and "linguistically deficient," thus leading to notions of compensatory education to correct these disadvantages.

Bernstein explicitly corrects misinterpretations equating restricted codes with deficiency or lack of

verbality. A restricted code

> . . . does not mean that the resultant speech and meaning system is linguistically or culturally deprived, and that its children have nothing to offer the school, that their imaginings are not significant. It does not mean that we have to interfere with their dialect (underlining mine). There is nothing, but nothing, in dialect as such which prevents a child from internalizing and learning to use universalistic meanings (Bernstein, 1970, p. 57).

Like difference theorists, Bernstein points the finger at the schools, their materials and teachers. If the context of learning--the textbooks, the teacher's examples--are not relevant to the child and his culture, then the child is not comfortable in the classroom.

> If the culture of the teacher is to become part of the consciousness of the child, then the culture of the child must first be in the consciousness of the teacher. This may mean that the teacher must be able to understand the child's dialect, rather than deliberately attempt to change it (Bernstein, 1970, p. 57).

It was the misinterpretation of Bernstein's earlier writings that formed the theoretical basis for the belief that disadvantaged children lacked cognitive skills and for the compensatory education programs to remedy this. In essence, such programs attempt to prepare the child for regular school programs by diagnosing deficiencies and planning corrective programs of concentrated remediation.

In the Bereiter and Engelmann preschool program, for example, the specific goal was to teach language and reasoning skills by direct, systematic instruction. A central part of the program was teaching SAE because of its necessity as a learning tool. The sponsors of this program have diverted attention away from the defects of the school and focused it upon the child. Rather than add a second language, Bereiter and Engelmann want to eradicate the child's indigenous language because they feel it is substandard, inferior and illogical.

Although the deficit theorists' ends of teaching standard English and reading are educationally defensible, the means make this goal morally and socially questionable. In addition to becoming victims of anomie, or cultural confusion, children who experience such cognitive and social molding (which amounts to conforming to Whitey's standards) are implicitly taught, "Alls I gotta do is walk right and talk right and they gonna make me President of the United States (Goodman, 1965, p. 859)."

Nonstandard Language as Different

The concept of verbal deprivation, based upon the work of psychologists, has no real basis in linguistic fact.

> . . . Negro children in the urban ghettos receive a great deal of verbal stimulation, hear more

> well-formed sentences than middle-class children, and participate fully in a highly verbal culture. They have the same basic vocabulary, possess the same capacity for conceptual learning, and use the same logic as anyone else who learns to speak and understand English (Labov, 1970a, pp. 153-4).

Anyone who has observed blacks rhyming, toasting, storytelling and arguing by indirection or anyone who is familiar with the black culture books of Abrahams (1964, 1970b) or Hannerz (1969) will certainly attest to the fact that blacks are anything but nonverbal. The myth of verbal deprivation is currently being exposed by the work of linguists.

These linguists make certain assumptions about language which are important for anyone working with the disadvantaged to realize. First, all humans develop language. Any verbal system used by a community that fulfills the requirements of a predictable sound pattern, grammatical structure and vocabulary is language. Second, no language structure is inherently any better than another. Spanish is not better than French, Oxford English is not better than Standard American English, standard English is not better than nonstandard. Third, children learn language spoken around them and respond to it. Finally, by the time the child is five, he has developed language. The language of black children undergoes a normal development. By the time the child enters school, he has acquired a fairly complete language system.

If deficit researchers find a child responding to questions with silence or one word answers, it is more likely that there are sociolinguistic factors operating upon both the adult and the child in the interview situation than that the child is nonverbal (Labov, 1970a, p. 159). In his own research with thirteen year old boys, Labov found that social situation was the most powerful determinant of speech. Interviewers, adults, teachers--all must enter into the right relationship with the child to find out exactly what he can do with language.

Differences, like deficits, can be handicapping to the speaker when he is expected to perform in a system which expects and demands the use of "non-native" standard English. This language difference will not only create a problem in terms of oral communication in SAE settings but can also interfere with learning to read and write SAE.

Relationship of Oral Language to Reading

It has been suggested in numerous articles that the widespread reading failure among blacks may be partially due to the fact that these children do not speak the standard form of English, the medium of instruction and textbooks (Baratz and Shuy, 1969; Goodman, 1972; Stewart, 1970). This relationship between the oral and written

language system cannot be overemphasized. For the speaker of SAE, there may be stylistic differences between the oral and written language but the grammar remains the same. However, for the nonstandard speaker of English, there is a marked difference between his language and that of the school. Although other educators might disagree, it is this writer's conviction that children must be taught standard English or they will continue to be underachievers.

If black children are not taught SAE, their difficulties from the written system will continue to be compounded by interference from the nonstandard speech form. Interference, according to Johnson (1971, p. 149), occurs between two languages or dialects when there is a difference either in sounds or grammatical patterns. "Mistakes" in reading which occur at points of interference are not random errors requiring "correction." When confronted with a printed page, the black child is actually given two tasks. He must decode the print and then translate it into black English. But if the child has not been taught standard English, he cannot translate the material.

As long as reading continues to be taught by conventional methods, conflict points will cause difficulty. For example, in BE, the final consonants d, b, g, p, t and k are reduced, creating more homonyms in the nonstandard dialect. To the teacher, the sentences, "The boy had a

coat," and "The boy had a cold" would be virtually indistinguishable. Most teachers would attempt to correct this "pronunciation" error by distinguishing between "coat" and "cold." But such a discrimination drill is useless and confusing for the black child.

The different phonological system of BE equips the child with different audio-discrimination skills from those expected by the teacher. While such children become exceedingly proficient at detecting subtle differences in nonstandard speech, they cannot do the same in standard English. They have learned to ignore sounds which are not significant to their dialect to the point that they cannot hear differences between nonstandard and standard speech. Johnson (1971), therefore, proposes teachers spend more time teaching context clues in reading class than wasting it on phonics clues.

Perhaps the most important area of difference between BE and SAE is syntax and its consequences for communication. Baratz (1969b) stressed the importance of interference on the syntactic level:

> Despite the obvious mismatch of the teachers' and text writers' phoneme system and that of the inner city child, the difficulties of the disadvantaged Negro child cannot be simplified solely to the pronunciation and phoneme differences that exist in the two systems. There is an even more serious problem facing the inner city child which concerns his unfamiliarity with the syntax of the classroom texts.

Discussions of interference and proposed solutions produced several studies to determine if, in fact, there was interference from BE when reading SAE, and if so, what the nature of that interference was.[1] Goodman (1968) and Weber (1969) were among the first group of studies. They analyzed the miscues of black children when reading SAE. The Goodman studies of children in grades one through three did not show much interference except when a fluent reader became engrossed in the story. In fact, he hypothesized that the number of related miscues would increase as a reader gained proficiency in reading. This was based on the assumption that with greater fluency in reading, an actual translation process would emerge in which the dialect of the text would be translated into that of the reader (Baratz, 1971, p. 5).

Weber (1969) compared first-grade white children from upstate New York with second- and post-second-grade children from the District of Columbia on a typical first grade passage. Her study did not demonstrate significant interference from black speech on reading miscues. Writing in 1970, Weber had reservations on the significance of dialect in learning to read. She suggested that it may be differences between spoken language and primarese that

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[1]The writer is indebted to Joan Baratz for pointing out studies on the relationship of BE to reading.

cause reading failure and not dialect interference. For Weber, the important question is not the significance of dialect but more generally, "How much can a written language differ from a spoken language before the task of language learning interferes with the task of learning to read (p. 130)?"

In a later study, Rystrom (1970) tested the assumption that the mismatch between black dialect and the classroom language causes reading difficulty. He gave black first-graders twenty-five minute daily lessons for eight weeks on SAE but found no relationship between dialect training and reading achievement. In a redesigned study, Rystrom again trained young children in Georgia in SAE and found no improvement. In fact, dialect training has a significantly negative effect on decoding skills and did not affect ability to produce phonologically proper utterances.

Goodman (1970) has criticized Rystrom's research for failing to grasp the deficit-difference controversy and for his confused handling of the nature of dialect. He maintains all Rystrom has done is to examine the effects of his dialect training course. Saville (1971) says Rystrom could not affirm or deny the influence of SAE in reading because the children did not learn to use SAE. While

the experiment is "potentially interesting" to Saville, she concludes it "meaningless."

Melmed (1970) investigated the relationship between BE phonology and reading interference. He constructed tests of auditory discrimination, oral and silent reading comprehension, and speech production involving the five phonological differences which Labov (1968) identified as potential sources for interference (see Table 1, p. 11). Melmed's sample population included disadvantaged third-grade children--blacks, white and Mexican-Americans. In this study, black subjects did significantly more poorly than whites and other minority groups on the auditory discrimination and oral production tests, but did not differ from disadvantaged whites and Mexican-Americans in reading competence in SAE. The problem with Melmed's study is that all his sample population were reading at or above grade level. This is not at all characteristic of disadvantaged populations.

Fasold (1971) gave a black English version of the Bible passage, John 3, to six black teenagers and asked them to read it twice. The second time, they had to supply every seventh word which had been omitted. Approximately 24% of the time, these students either hesitated or supplied the SAE equivalent. Fasold concluded the boys did not prefer Biblical materials written in BE.

A significant correlation between learning to read and facility with SAE was discovered by Baratz (1970) in a study with 481 black first- and second- graders in Washington, D. C. parochial schools. On the basis of a sentence-repetition test, she classified all children as monodialectal or bidialectal. The responses of the subjects were analyzed to ascertain what happened to the following constructions: (1) standard structures--third person singular, presence of copula, treatment of negation, if-did, past markers, possessive markers and plural markers; and (2) nonstandard structures--nonaddition of third person -s, zero copula, double negation and ain't, did-he flip, zero past marker, zero possessive marker and use of invariant be (Baratz, 1969a).

These students in Baratz's study were also given the Lyons and Carnahan New Developmental Reading Test--Bond, Balow and Hoyt, Lower Primary Reading, Form Level II. A comparison of the reading comprehension of children speaking only BE in relation to the SAE and bidialectal children revealed a significant difference in favor of the SAE group. This suggests that these black children are not learning to read traditional materials as well as their peers who speak SAE.

To date, linguists describing BE do not seem to be able to agree on the amount of linguistic interference, its

exact source or the amount of bidialectalism of some children. But they do concur that interference causes difficulty learning to read. The research on this problem is inconclusive. There are still no real tests of the source and extent of interference. Clearly, there is a great need for research in this area. The idea of Melmed that dialect readers might prove useful must be empirically tested. Other types of interference phenomena other than linguistic should be examined. Until more research is produced and evaluated, the answer to the reading problems of blacks as it relates to oral language interference must remain in the realm of speculation.

The Instructional Debate

The considerable difference of opinion on the extent and source of linguistic interference and the amount of bidialectalism among speakers of BE is mirrored in the varying proposals suggested for accomodating the black child's linguistic differences in beginning reading instruction. According to Wolfram, sociolinguistic research has yielded two strategies for teaching beginning reading to black children who speak a nonstandard language: (1) the usage of present materials with an adjustment of teaching procedures; and (2) the development of new or revised materials. If one adopts the first strategy, the alternatives

are to teach SAE before beginning reading instruction or to allow the children to read the materials written in SAE in their dialect. If one elects the second strategy, the alternatives are to neutralize the differences in the materials between the language of the text and the language of the child or to develop primers written in the child's dialect (Wolfram, 1970, p. 9).

It should be noted that although there is a difference of opinion on the means of teaching beginning reading to black children, this disagreement does not extend to the ultimate goal. Both deficit and difference theorists desire that the child be able to read materials in SAE because they regard this as a necessary skill for learning and participating in society.

Teaching SAE before reading: Teaching SAE before reading has already been discussed from a deficit viewpoint. Believing nonstandard speakers incapable of logic, deficit theorists are concerned with teaching SAE as a learning tool. This includes teaching SAE before beginning reading instruction; moreover, it means eradicating the deficient speech.

Difference theorists have advocated teaching SAE as a second language, an additional form of communication, for a number of years for its practical value. As early as 1964, McDavid wrote:

> It is likely that some form of standard English as a second language will be necessary; and it might be easier to start this second language in the kindergarten or earlier, and use this as the vehicle for reading . . . (McDavid, 1964, p. 208).

Venezky believes this approach most practical but admits several problems with teaching SAE first. One drawback is that many states do not have kindergartens. Those states that do have kindergartens may find the same resistance to early dialect training that reading readiness incurred. More importantly, the teaching of reading would have to be delayed for a semester or a year (Venezky, 1970, p. 342).

Although Venezky waives the problem of the onset of reading instruction as minor, Stewart (1970, p. 5) and Wolfram (1970) question this. Neither believe a child who speaks only BE can be taught SAE in six months to one year. Wolfram's main argument against this is the persistence of the vernacular of black children "despite consistent and pervasive attempts to linguistically acculturate them to standard English (Wolfram, 1970, p. 14).

Supportive of this view is Labov's finding that social perceptions of speech stratification do not begin to match that of adults until around the ages of 14-15 (Labov, 1966, p. 91). Without this social motivation which becomes present at adolescence second language instruction would be fruitless.

Johnson also believes the delay in reading is unwarranted since it is unlikely the black will ever learn SAE. While some blacks learn SAE features for novelty, they will not use them unless they have the opportunity to meaningfully participate in social situations where standard English is the dominant communication form. Those educators who point to a child's facility in the early acquisition of a foreign language, and conclude second dialect learning is just as easy, are equating two entirely different situations. Learning another dialect is, in many ways, more difficult than learning another language because the differences between the two dialects are so subtle as to hide the differences--especially to young children. Johnson stresses that this difficulty in learning standard English is not as important a point as the lack of association with speakers of standard English in meaningful situations (Johnson, 1971, p. 151).

In addition, Abrahams (1970a) has reservations about the advisability of imposing standard speech on these children:

> The cultural necessity in the ghetto to maintain the friendship-based peer grouping in which these varieties operate is stronger than those influences from mainstream America which would change the most disparate of black cultural patterns, including certain varieties and features of Black English. But Black English is one of the adaptive patterns so crucial to the ability to endure: we would be asking a

> great deal to expect lower class blacks to give up this adaptable expressive system that has served them so well for so long (p. 71).

There is little or no empirical evidence to recommend the alternative of teaching SAE before reading. Given the sociocultural facts, this author cannot endorse this approach until there is evidence that SAE is most effectively taught at the initial stages of instruction. At present, the sociocultural factors do not suggest this alternative as a reasonable solution.

Read SAE materials in dialect: After surveying the barriers to reading comprehension, Goodman (1965) concluded that the only practical alternative for teaching speakers of BE to read is to allow the children to read the SAE materials in their own nonstandard dialect. Implementation depends on acceptance by the school and particularly by the teacher of the language the learner brings to school.

Implicit in the acceptance of Goodman's alternative are three assumptions: (1) the standard English of the written materials is comprehensible to the child; (2) traditional English orthography poses no major problem for dialect speakers and (3) teachers must be thoroughly familiar with the black child's language.

There is a lack of empirical evidence concerning the first assumption, receptive competence in SAE. Baratz

(1969) found only indirect evidence of perceptive competence in standard English by black children. The second assumption, standard orthography, is important to consider for possible interference, especially in view of the prevalence of phonics approaches to reading. Fasold (1969) formally demonstrated that traditional orthography is as adequate for blacks as for SAE speakers. Goodman (1965) urged teachers to learn about orthography because part of the problem of teaching these children to read is the misconception of teachers that spelling determines pronunciation.

The third assumption behind allowing blacks to read SAE materials in BE was that teacher's be thoroughly familiar with the black child's language. Again, the teacher is as much a part of the problem as the cure. Labov (1969, p. 29) advises teacher education to include information on dialect patterns so that teachers will begin to distinguish between differences in pronunciation and mistakes in reading. Certainly Labov's high goal of teacher and student education to foster mutual respect and knowledge where ignorance existed should be applauded; however, implementation of this alternative is not quite as easy as its advocates may think.

To adopt this teacher dependent program on an extensive level would require an overhaul of teacher training

on the order of that recommended by Shuy (1970, pp. 18-20). This would include preparation in the nature of language in general and of SAE; fieldwork in child language; teaching oral language to disadvantaged children and the relationship of oral language to reading.

In addition, Cramer (1971) argues this alternative proposed by Goodman violates his own basic premise that the greater the divergence between the learner and the learning, the greater the difficulty in learning to read. Cramer concluded the Goodman hypothesis makes a much stronger case for dialect readers than for reading standard English materials in dialect.

If teaching agencies or school districts employed consultants to set up crash courses in linguistics geared to what teachers need to know about the systematic nature of language, its structure, its differences and its relation to reading and second language acquisition, then this alternative has possibilities. If such were the case, then this author could agree with Wolfram that this alternative be used while more drastic strategies are experimented with.

"Dialect free" readers: Shuy (1969) suggested the best way to teach reading to blacks is to train teachers in phonology and to construct special materials which would

minimize those features of potential interference.

> In the case of beginning reading materials for nonstandard speakers, the text should help the child by avoiding grammatical forms which are not realized by him in his spoken language (third singular verb inflections, for example).

The advantages of Shuy's suggested "dialect free" readers are: (1) the elimination of the most unfamiliar features of SAE to lower class blacks; and (2) avoidance of the controversy surrounding the implementation of dialect primers by eliminating the socially stigmatized features of Black English for use in the text.

Shuy's position is based upon two assumptions. First, there are more similarities than differences between standard and nonstandard English and these can be used in readers. Second, the belief that dialect-free basals are a legitimate end product (Wolfram, 1970). The validity of the first assumption is supported by the work of Labov, Wolfram and Fasold in New York, Detroit and Washington; nevertheless, important differences do exist which require this author to ask how these would effect the development of dialect-free readers. It would be difficult to write a text and avoid all the potential areas of interference.

Wolfram (1970) questions these assumptions that BE and SAE are more similar than different and that BE

readers are a legitimate goal. In considering beginning reading materials, Venezky endorses readers that are as dialect-free and culture-free as possible in content, vocabulary and syntax. But Wolfram asks if the effort of accomodation in terms of one set of materials "isn't a naive attempt to achieve an unreal goal?"

As in the case of the previous alternatives, there is no empirical data to support or reject this postion: Baratz (1971) writes,

> Indeed, the Shuy-Ginn (Project 360) approach (which one might call a non-linguistic alternative in that it consciously attempts to avoid aspects of the child's linguistic competence) has no data to stand on, save the publisher's recommendation.

Given the past performance of such commercial materials, Baratz concludes "one cannot be optimistic." Nevertheless, Shuy's idea deserves to be tested and then evaluated.

Dialect readers: Proponents of this alternative maintain that the overwhelming evidence of the role that language interference can play in reading failure indicates one of the most effective ways to deal with the literacy problem of black children is to teach them using vernacular texts that sytematically move from the syntactic structures of the ghetto community to those of the standard English-speaking community. This idea of vernacular learning was noted as early as 1953 in the UNESCO Report. But dialect

materials for speakers from an English-speaking background went unnoticed. Stewart (1969) points out that although many reading specialists realize the relationship between language differences and serious reading problems in non-English speakers, few are aware of this difficulty in a child from an English-speaking background.

In support of vernacular teaching, Stewart noted two such successes in foreign parts of the world. In West Africa members of foreign-language minority groups, who are expected to function as literates in the larger society, have benefitted from the separation of beginning reading from concurrent foreign language teaching. Pupils are first taught to read in their own language and then transfer to materials in the national language.

Similar positive findings were reported in Sweden by Osterberg (Stewart, 1969). He found that the teaching of basic reading skills in the nonstandard dialect of the children increased proficiency, not only in beginning reading in dialect but also in later reading in the standard tongue.

Baratz (1969b) has joined Stewart in recommending dialect readers,

> because of the mismatch between the child's syntactic system and that of the textbook, because of the psychological consequences of denying the legitimacy of the child's linguistic system and because of the success of vernacular teaching around the world.

One important point to remember about these dialect readers is that competent linguists must first construct a reader using this dialect in order to avoid an even greater mismatch between two different nonstandard speech varieties. One cannot ever assume any two dialects to be equal: experimental textbooks must be based on accurate linguistic descriptions of the population for whom the test is being used. For example, after mapping the dialect of blacks in Washington, D. C., Baratz and Stewart constructed experimental readers which are now being used in a research study to determine the significance of dialect texts.

Dialect readers have sparked controversy in the community. Some found the texts offensive and spoke out against maintaining undesirable speech patterns. Yet Stewart (1969) maintains that:

> If used well by educators, living Negro dialect can serve as a bridge between the personal experience of the Negro child and his acquisition of mainstream language skills.

It is the second part of the above quote that Bailey (1970) objected to:

> If used poorly, however, it will add to the confusion of pupil and teacher alike (Stewart, 1969, p. 201).

Bailey insists that a reading program must be pedagogically and socially viable as well as linguistically sound;

therefore, she advocates a language arts orientation. She cautions innovators against too hasty implementation of one alternative over another. In the past ten years black America has "been the victim of too much and too hastily conceived experimentation in our schools (Bailey, 1970, p. 7)."

Other than foreign language research and informal trials, empirical evidence is lacking on the question of dialect interference in the acquisition of reading skills. Most of the proponents of each alternative discussed make their recommendations based upon opinion or informal observation. Although one could go on and on rationalizing why one alternative is better than another, the stark truth is that all these strategies are open to serious criticism. Those committed to sound education change must require defensible support data on all proposals considered for widespread implementation in the schools. Until this data is available, none of the alternatives should be wholly rejected or accepted.

Testing

Mackey (1965) identified one priority in the area of language testing:

> Firstly, we want to find out exactly what is measured by what, what the tools available to us can do and what tools we need to measure what we want to measure.

Essentially Mackey's first priority encompasses the current state of language testing. Reliable, valid standardized tests are available for certain pupil populations to measure a wide variety of skills and abilities. Most written language tests measure the same thing: language mechanics; formal grammar; recognition of correct usage; vocabulary; reading comprehension and the like. In addition, most of these tests are printed and require "correct" answers in SAE (Bordie, 1971).

When using such standardized tests with disadvantaged blacks or other ethnic groups, it is important to consider several potential problems. Written tests can only measure written and not oral English; therefore, the test user must ask exactly what he is measuring. It is more accurate to say that the written tests measure a nonstandard English-speaking student's knowledge of standard English rather than language development or language ability (Baratz, 1969c).

Another assumption which should not be made is that verbalized responses indicate language ability. Ability to verbalize is more indicative of language analysis skills or knowledge of SAE than language ability (Bordie, 1971). There seems to be no way to evade the conclusion that such standardized tests using SAE as a criterion of correctness discriminate against the speaker of BE.

The most frequently cited test in Bordie's examination (1971) of published language tests used in studies reported in Research on Education was the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities (ITPA). This test is supposed to differentiate facets of cognitive ability by means of 346 items classed into these groups auditory reception; visual reception; visual sequential memory; auditory association; auditory sequential memory; visual association; visual closure; verbal expression; grammatical closure; manual expression; auditory closure; and sound blending (Bordie, 1971).

The size of the various subsections varies from the maximum of fifty for auditory reception to four for verbal expression. How can four items appraoch a valid measure of verbal expression? If the ITPA is to relate to practical use in the classroom, the constructors of the test need to:

> create subtests reflecting some of the increasing attention given to aspects of grammar in free speech samples and in a person's capacity to reproduce grammatical passages. Secondly, they will need to build in more systematic assessment of the environmental influences affecting differential language performance (Severson and Guest, 1970, p. 320).

Severson and Guest (1970) used this test to show some of the results obtained when using a standardized test with disadvantaged population. They conclude that

"this major standardized instrument in the area of language functioning" is weakened by trying to serve too many masters--a common failure of standardized tests as well as some research tests.

Particularly important to test construction is the examination of linguistic theories for facets of language which can be measured but which are not. Severson and Guest believe there is a need for more adequate criteria for assessing language functioning in realistic settings. Such criteria as grammatical competence and communicative effectiveness must be broken down into quantifiable dimensions before they can be useful. Further consideration should be given to language deviations as well as differences.

For the teacher the state of language tests presents a dilemma. Teachers in the classroom, realizing the value of testing, are forced by the unavailability of tests to make up their own instruments. Mackey (1965) indicates the danger of unqualified persons constructing, administering and interpreting a test which may not have any validity.

With the black population, the teacher's dilemma is more than the availability of tests. The current tests are not valid and reliable for populations speaking BE (Bordie, 1971).

This testing vacuum is a problem for educators and researchers alike: valid research studies and appropriate programs cannot be carried out until the art of testing is perfected or expanded to encompass the needs of the black population.

Specifically, for the classroom teacher, the need for a test is diagnostic:

> our requirements are for tests and other measuring instruments which will allow identification of areas requiring support and subsequent proper placement in appropriate classroom or school groupings. Many techniques . . . could be more effectively exploited if sufficient accurate information were available to teachers and curriculum planning specialists. In addition to availability, the information should be in a form which may be easily interpreted by all likely users rather than remaining solely in the domain of the test specialist (Bordie, 1971, p. 76).

Before valid, reliable language tests can be constructed for the lower class black, certain problems must be surmounted in addition to those already discussed:

(1) the instruments must be fitted to individuals not just the group;

(2) test performances can be affected by the language in which instructions are given;

(3) test performances can be affected by the ethnic background of the examiner;

(4) the most common skills tested are purely mechanical even though there is no evidence correlating mechanical skills and language proficiency;

(5) without the presence of a generally accepted definition of SAE, there is no basis for a norm of SAE (Bordie, 1971; Severson and Guest, 1970; Baratz, 1969c).

Mackey (1965) identified a second priority in language testing, "the measurement of the degree of proficiency in both first and second languages of the same individual." Clearly the foregoing examinations of literature on nonstandard language, reading and instructional alternatives demonstrates the need for accurate data on bilingual and bidialectal children.

Tests must be found which can identify the child's linguistic competence, both productive and receptive, in BE; the child's knowledge of SAE, and the amount of interference of nonstandard upon standard English performance (Baratz, 1969c). This writer believes that research will continue to be inconclusive or misleading until such tests are available. Without the research findings, school programs will continue to be based on inaccurate or nonexistent data.

One potential instrument for determining who does and does not speak BE is Baratz's bidialectal oral language proficiency test. Stewart favors this test, noting that if the instrument could measure initial language, then it would also be useful for measuring progress in SAE instruction.

Another possibility in this area is the recently developed Test of Proficiency in Black Standard and Nonstandard Speech. Working at the Stanford Center for Research and Development in Teaching, Politzer, Hoover and Brown (1973) devised a sentence repetition task. The test consists of thirty sentences, fifteen in "Black Standard"[1] (Test A) and fifteen in Black nonstandard (Test B). These sentences, which were within the context of two similar stories from Black folklore, were recorded on tape by a bidialectal speaker; a black administered the test to the individual children. The administrator stopped the tape at the end of each sentence and asked the child to repeat the sentence (the repetition apparently was not recorded). In scoring both parts of the test, the researchers gave children one point for each feature in the sentence repeated correctly so that a maximum of fifteen points was possible on both parts.

The following constructions were used in the nonstandard test: the use of invariant be; emphatic use of this with here; double modals; final consonant deletion; use of pronoun subject in addition to noun subject; use of singular with the word people; inversion of negative; absence of possessive case; absence of marking of third

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[1]Black Standard is defined as English which follows most of the grammatical rules of SAE, but is marked by recognized pronunciation features (Politzer, Hoover and Brown, 1973).

person singular; analogical extension of myself, yourself to third person; copula deletion; formation of a question without the use of an auxiliary; use of invariant be+ing form to indicate customary action; lack of past tense marker; absence of possessive case; hypercorrection of past tense. The standard sentences paralleled the non-standard ones in grammatical features.

It is this writer's conviction that a sentence-repetition test would fit the need for measuring proficiency in BE and SAE. Baratz (1969), Slobin (1967), Troike (1970) and Politzer et al. (1973) have all indicated the value of sentence-repetition tests. Barritt (Baratz, 1969c) and McNeil (1965) in research on auditory memory span and sentence repetition found that successful repetiton of sentences is more dependent upon knowledge of grammatical structure than on length or semantic content; therefore, it would seem sentence repetition would be valuable for testing knowledge of grammar--the area felt to cause the most interference problems in reading. Recently, Natalicio and Williams (1971) established the validity and reliability of a sentence-repetition test, the GDBE, for use in the language evaluation of blacks.

Interest in this test and in the reading problems of blacks prompted this writer to undertake the research study presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY

Background

The Oral Language Assessment Project: On the premise that public schools neglect oral language assessment, Teacher Corps Washington began to devote efforts to train their corpsmen working with the disadvantaged in this crucial area. After reviewing existing language tests, the Teacher Corps judged them inadequate for identifying the language characteristics of the linguistically and culturally different child. It was necessary to look for an oral language test which would be more useful to the teacher in determining the linguistic potential of each child and in planning instruction.

Teacher Corps contracted with the Communication Research Center at The University of Texas at Austin to research a possible oral language test which could be used for training purposes. In this Oral Language Assessment Project (OLAP), Williams and Natalicio assessed the validity and reliability of the Gloria and David Beginning English, Test Six (GDBE). According to Natalicio and

Williams (1971), phase I of OLAP was "to assess the degree to which sentence imitations of Black and Mexican-American children (grades K-2) could be used as a basis for language evaluation." The reliability estimates reported indicated consistency in the ratings of the same child's performance by fifteen evaluators. The recorded performances do, therefore, permit independent evaluation with a high degree of reliability.

The GDBE: The GDBE is a sentence imitation test composed of forty model sentences and twenty keyed illustrations taken from Lesson six of the Gloria and David instructional materials. Included in the forty sentences are phonological and grammatical elements which have been difficult for nonstandard speakers. The sentences, modelled by a Texas-born bilingual female, are recorded on tape. The brightly colored illustrations are in a filmstrip cartridge. Each illustration accompanies the model sentences. The two cartridges, audio and visual, are synchronized at the beginning of the test so that the picture changes at the appropriate time in the sound sequence.

The test is administered on the Teacher Assistant machine (see Appendix A), resembling a small television set. Each subject, seated before the screen and accomodated with an earphone-microphone headset, watches the

filmstrip and listens to the model sentences. When he hears the sentence, he repeats it aloud and his response is recorded on the tape. Later, evaluators listen to the tape, transcribe the responses and assess the child's ability to orally reproduce SAE. Total testing time for each child is about eight minutes. A more complete description of the test can be found in Natalicio and Williams (1971).

Materials

Basic to this project were the ten samples of black children's performances on the GDBE which were used in the Natalicio-Williams study, Repetition as an Oral Language Assessment Technique (1971). Natalicio and Williams felt these samples (hereafter referred to as the Natalicio-Williams sample) were "representative of the total sample of linguistic behavior provided by 750 samples tested in San Antonio, Texas (p. 19)." These cartridge tapes were recorded in September, 1970, in grades K-2 at five schools in San Antonio.

In addition, fifty randomly selected tapes were used of black children performing the GDBE sentence-repetition task. These samples from Blackshear Elementary School in Austin, Texas, were recorded in October, 1972.

Procedure

The research design for assessing the oral language performace of ten children on the GDBE test involved the following seven steps: (1) the analysis of the GDBE test for grammatical and phonological features; (2) the instruction in analyzing the GDBE test given by Devine by means of a twenty-minute tape; (3) the initial evaluation of the GDBE tapes of the Natalicio-Williams sample; (4) the evaluation of the GDBE tapes of twenty-five Blackshear children; (5) the evaluation of the ten Natalicio-Williams sample children; (6) the evaluation of the GDBE tapes of an additional twenty-five Blackshear children; and (7) the third and final evaluation of the Natalicio-Williams sample.

In analyzing the oral language performances, the following checklist was used:

1.	third person singular present verb	Mother helps Gloria.
2.	noun plural inflections	She washed his ears.
3.	noun possessive inflections	Mother washed David's ears.
4.	replacement or omission of subject pronouns	She has the soap.
5.	replacement or omission of possessive pronouns	They are on their knees.
6.	misuse of "to be"	The light is not on.

7.	misuse of "have"	Gloria has a toothbrush.
8.	replacement of /ð/ by /d/	They brush their teeth.
9.	replacement of /θ/ by /f/, /v/, or /t/	David has a toothbrush.
10.	consonant clusters	David and Gloria are clean.
11.	poor repetition (omissions, rewording, garbing)	Gloria and David both get clean clothes.
12.	unfamiliar expressions:	
	to button	David can button his shirt.
	can or cannot + verb	Gloria cannot button her dress.
	definite or indefinite article + noun	She has the soap. Gloria gets a coat.
	preposition + possessive pronoun = noun	He has a shoe on his foot.
	negation	The light is not on.

In choosing these criteria, the researcher began by listing the features of BE differences which linguists have described (Baratz, 1969; Wolfram, 1969; Labov, 1969). Then the researcher compared this with the criteria used by Rich (1972) and expanded it to include other aspects of test validity which were most influential in the rating of oral language performance by the linguists of the Natalicio-Williams study (1971).

Each subject was rated on the seven-point scale used by Natalicio and Williams in order to yield data comparable to the mean ratings of the linguists polled.

Since the researcher was just learning to assess the GDBE using this scale and no averaging was involved in assessment, only whole numbers were used in the rating; the means of the linguists' assessments were rounded to nearest tenths for statistical comparison.

The ratings of the ten children included the following areas of performance: BE dominance, SAE dominance, SAE comprehension, SAE production, SAE phonology, SAE inflections and SAE syntax. These seven areas of performance showed high reliability in the scale ratings of the Natalicio-Williams linguists (see Natalicio and Williams, 1971, p. 29).

Notably absent from this list of performance areas are three included by Natalicio and Williams: pathologies, SAE intonation and predicting reading achievement. Because of the low reliability estimates found in the study for these performance areas (respectively, .6898, .5464, and .4709), Natalicio and Williams recommended these items be excluded in training the novice to evaluate oral language.

Hypotheses

In conducting the study the researcher tested the following hypotheses:

(1) there is no high, significant correlation between the researcher's initial ratings of the Natalicio-Williams tapes (period A) and the linguists' mean ratings of the same tapes in the areas of:

(a) BE dominance
(b) SAE dominance
(c) SAE comprehension
(d) SAE production
(e) SAE phonology
(f) SAE inflections
(g) SAE syntax

(2) there is no high, significant correlation between the researcher's second ratings of the Natalicio-Williams tapes (period B) and the linguists' mean ratings of the same tapes in the areas of:

(a) BE dominance
(b) SAE dominance
(c) SAE comprehension
(d) SAE production
(e) SAE phonology
(f) SAE inflections
(g) SAE syntax

(3) there is no high, significant correlation between the researcher's third ratings of the Natalicio-Williams tapes (period C) and the linguists' mean ratings of the same tapes in the areas of:

(a) BE dominance
(b) SAE dominance
(c) SAE comprehension
(d) SAE production
(e) SAE phonology
(f) SAE inflections
(g) SAE syntax

The researcher believed that the degree of correlation of the first evaluation would be lower than that of the third. That is, the highest significant degree of correlation would be between the researcher's third ratings and those of the linguists.

Discussion

In preparation for the initial evaluation, the researcher discussed the test with Devine and listened to his tape of instructions. He provided sheets of the forty sentences of the test (see Appendix B). Space is provided between each sentence to write in divergent responses. For a correct response, a check was placed below the word. For omissions, a straight line was drawn from the word and a zero placed at the bottom, as suggested by Devine.

A sample might read:

He cleans his teeth with his brush.
she clean she ✓ wit 0 toothbrush

The printed transcription sheet is helpful in scoring: while he listens, the evaluator spends only the time needed for writing pupil deviations from the model.

Each of the ten tapes was transcribed and evaluated using a shortened form of Natalicio and Williams (1971) questionnaire (see Appendix C). On this questionnaire, each rating scale along a good-bad continuum was followed by a request for specific aspects of performance most influential in judgmental ratings and for specific illustrations.

This format was used in all three ratings. When all the ratings were completed, the statistical analyses were performed.

Statistical Treatment

The three sets of ratings were correlated with the mean ratings of the linguists using the Pearson-Product Moment Correlation. This was to determine whether the researcher's ratings were closely related to those of the linguists. In addition, for each of the three sets of researcher's ratings, a z score was calculated between the mean of the researcher's ratings (N=10) and the mean of the linguists' means (N=10) on the seven items of performance. Then a two-tailed t test was performed for probability of error between the two means of ratings.

Table 2 presents the seven-point scale ratings made by the researcher during the three consecutive rating periods, marked columns A, B and C respectively, as well as the rounded mean ratings of the linguists, marked column D. Table 3 lists the correlation data relating the research ratings with those of the linguists and shows the gains in r between rating period A and B and B and C. One must be cautious about interpreting these gains because it does not mean that individual ratings come closer to those of the linguists. In fact, a close examination of the researcher's individual ratings may reveal both positive and negative fluctuations in comparison with the linguists' means.

Tables 4 and 5 present the z scores and the two-tailed test results.

Findings

The first null hypothesis was that there was no high, significant relationship between the researcher's ratings of the Natalicio-Williams tapes and the linguists' ratings in the seven areas of language performance. The correlation coefficients in this initial rating ranged from .74 in SAE comprehension to .91 in SAE inflections. Only SAE dominance and SAE inflections were high correlations (.90 and .91 respectively) significant beyond the .001 level. Only the .74 for SAE comprehension was considered low; it was only significant beyond .05. This correlation is critical because receptive competence is one of the most important measures for the reading diagnostician. With the exception of the two items, SAE inflections and SAE dominance, which were significant beyond the .001 level, the null hypothesis held.

The second null hypothesis was that there was no high, significant relationship between the judgmental ratings of the researcher and the linguists for the second test period. The range of correlation coefficients narrowed considerably this time so that the span was from .89 in SAE phonology to .95 in SAE inflections. Only the

TABLE 2

FOUR SEVEN-POINT SCALE RATINGS OF NATALICIO-WILLIAMS SAMPLE OF TEN CHILDREN ON SEVEN ITEMS OF ORAL LANGUAGE PERFORMANCE: RATINGS A (PRE-PRACTICE), B (AFTER TWENTY-FIVE PRACTICE TAPES) AND C (AFTER TWENTY-FIVE ADDITIONAL PRACTICE TAPES) ASSIGNED BY RESEARCHER AND RATING D (THE MEAN RATING) ASSIGNED BY FIFTEEN LINGUISTIC EXPERTS POLLED BY NATALICIO AND WILLIAMS[1]

CHILD	BE DOMINANCE				SAE DOMINANCE				SAE COMPREHENSION				SAE PRODUCTION				SAE PHONOLOGY				SAE INFLECTION				SAE SYNTAX			
RATING PERIOD	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
72	3	4	4	4.2	4	4	4	4.5	6	6	6	6.3	5	6	5	5.1	4	4	5	4.9	5	5	5	5.0	5	5	6	5.6
76	4	6	5	5.3	3	2	3	2.9	5	6	6	6.1	3	3	3	3.7	4	4	4	3.9	4	3	4	3.1	3	4	5	4.7
77	5	6	6	5.9	2	2	3	2.7	4	5	5	5.4	2	2	3	3.4	3	2	3	3.4	3	3	4	3.2	5	4	4	4.6
78	4	5	5	4.8	4	3	3	3.4	5	4	5	5.3	3	3	4	3.6	4	3	4	4.0	4	4	5	3.8	5	4	4	4.1
79	5	5	4	4.5	4	3	3	3.4	4	5	5	4.8	3	3	3	3.6	4	3	4	3.4	4	4	4	4.4	5	4	4	4.7
80	4	4	4	4.3	4	5	4	4.4	5	6	6	5.9	4	4	4	4.8	4	4	4	4.4	4	4	5	4.2	6	5	6	5.8
81	6	6	6	6.4	3	2	2	2.0	3	4	3	4.5	2	2	3	2.8	3	3	3	2.9	3	3	3	2.9	3	3	3	3.4
83	6	6	5	4.7	4	4	3	3.5	4	5	5	5.5	3	3	4	4.1	5	4	5	4.1	5	4	3	4.5	4	4	4	5.0
84	5	6	5	5.6	2	3	2	2.8	2	3	2	3.6	2	2	2	2.4	4	3	4	3.1	4	4	4	3.2	3	4	4	3.5
85	1	1	1	1.3	7	6	6	6.9	7	7	7	7.0	7	6	7	6.9	6	6	7	6.6	6	7	6	7	7	7	7	6.9

[1]These are rounded to one decimal place. The original figures were taken from Diana Natalicio and Frederick Williams, Repetition as an Oral Language Assessment Technique, 1971, p. 32.

TABLE 3

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN THE RESEARCHER'S THREE (A, B & C) SEVEN-POINT SCALE RATINGS OF NATALICIO-WILLIAMS SAMPLE OF TEN CHILDREN ON SEVEN ITEMS OF ORAL LANGUAGE PERFORMANCE AND THE ROUNDED MEAN RATINGS (TO TENTHS) OF THE ABOVE SAMPLE OF CHILDREN ASSIGNED BY FIFTEEN LINGUISTS POLLED BY NATALICIO-WILLIAMS[1] AND CORRELATION GAINS BETWEEN RESEARCHER'S RATINGS A (PRE-PRACTICE), B (AFTER TWENTY-FIVE PRACTICE TAPES) AND C (AFTER ADDITIONAL TWENTY-FIVE PRACTICE TAPES)

ITEM	BE DOMINANCE	SAE DOMINANCE	SAE COMPREHENSION	SAE PRODUCTION	SAE PHONOLOGY	SAE INFLECTION	SAE SYNTAX
Rating							
Gain							
A	.86*	.90	.74†	.81*	.80*	.91	.82*
r gain	.08	.01	.20	.11	.09	.04	.09
B	.94	.91	.94	.92	.89*	.95	.91
r gain	.04	.06	.02	.04	.03	.04	.01
C	.98	.97	.96	.96	.92	.99	.92

NOTE. z scores showed level of significance beyond .001 for all correlations except as follows:
*significance beyond .01
†significance beyond .05

[1]See Diana Natalicio and Frederick Williams, Repetition as an Oral Language Assessment Technique, 1971.

TABLE 4

PERIOD A (PRE-PRACTICE), PERIOD B (AFTER TWENTY-FIVE PRACTICE TAPES) AND PERIOD C (AFTER ADDITIONAL TWENTY-FIVE PRACTICE TAPES) Z SCORES BETWEEN SEVEN-POINT SCALE MEAN RATINGS BY NATALICIO-WILLIAMS LINGUISTS[1] AND SEVEN-POINT SCALE MEAN RATINGS BY RESEARCHER OF THE NATALICIO-WILLIAMS SAMPLE OF TEN CHILDREN'S SEVEN ITEM ORAL LANGUAGE PERFORMANCE

ITEM	BE DOMINANCE	SAE DOMINANCE	SAE COMPREHENSION	SAE PRODUCTION	SAE PHONOLOGY	SAE INFLECTION	SAE SYNTAX
Rating Periods							
A	3.4*	3.87	2.5†	2.97*	2.89*	4.02	3.04*
B	4.57	4.02	4.57	4.18	3.74	4.82	4.02
C	6.05	5.51	5.12	5.12	4.18	6.97	4.18

NOTE. Significance beyond .001 except as marked:
*significant beyong .01
†significant beyond .05

[1]See Diana Natalicio and Frederick Williams, Repetition as an Oral Language Assessment Technique, 1971. The mean ratings of linguists were rounded to tenths for statistical comparison.

TABLE 5

t SCORES FOR RESEARCHER'S SEVEN-POINT SCALE, SEVEN ITEM RATINGS OF THE NATALICIO-WILLIAMS SAMPLE OF TEN CHILDREN AT THREE RATING PERIODS, A (PRE-PRACTICE), B (AFTER TWENTY-FIVE PRACTICE TAPES) AND C (AFTER TWENTY-FIVE ADDITIONAL PRACTICE TAPES), COMPARED WITH NATALICIO-WILLIAMS LINGUISTS' SEVEN-POINT SCALE, SEVEN ITEM MEAN RATINGS[1] OF THE NATALICIO-WILLIAMS SAMPLE OF TEN CHILDREN

ITEM / Rating Period	BE DOMINANCE	SAE DOMINANCE	SAE COMPREHENSION	SAE PRODUCTION	SAE PHONOLOGY	SAE INFLECTION	SAE SYNTAX	df
A	0.26	0.10	0.69	0.25	0.05	0.05	0.16	18
B	0.01	0.16	0.54	0.43	0.39	0,03	0.37	18
C	0.13	0.26	0.33	0.16	0.21	0.13	0.09	18

[1]These mean ratings were rounded to tenths for statistical comparison. For more details see Diana Natalicio and Frederick Williams, Repetition as an Oral Language Assessment Technique, 1971.

.89 in phonology was under the .90 figure. The significance level, furthermore, was beyond .01 whereas all others besides the phonological correlation were beyond .001. Still, there is little difference between a .89 correlation significant at .01 and a .90 significant at .001. It is true that after twenty-five tapes, the majority of the researcher's ratings were high, significant ones; therefore, the null hypothesis must be rejected.

The third null hypothesis was that there is no high, significant correlation between the third ratings of the researcher and those of the linguists. This null hypothesis was rejected entirely; no correlation coefficient was below .90 and no significance level less than .001. At the end of fifty training tapes, the researcher's ratings were highly related to those of the linguists in all seven items. In addition, the two-tailed t test showed that the researcher's ratings would change as the linguists' ratings changed and that the difference between the ratings would be small.

Comments on Items

Dialect/SAE dominance: Ratings were assigned to each child on the presence or absence of certain phonological and grammatical features. For example, child number 77 was assigned a "6" for BE dominance because of the following aspects of his performance:

absence of third person singular present verb	"Gworia take a bath."
absence of noun possessive	"Mudda washa David neck."
misuse of have	"She have soap on her head."
misuse of possessive pronoun	"She kwean she teef we he bwush."
/ð/ replaced by /d/	"Dey are on dey knees."

However, the child did correctly use SAE in the following ways:

to be	"De light is not on."
noun plural	"De children wa' dey hands."
subject pronoun	"Dey brush dey teef."

The child was assigned a "3" on SAE dominance.

The most frequently cited features in this category corresponded with those of the linguists. These were: third person singular present verb; noun possessive; noun plural inflection; misuse of "have"; misuse of "to be" and the use of /ð/ and /θ/.

SAE comprehension: Researchers have found that many blacks have receptive competence in SAE but are not bidialectal. In repetition tests, Labov (1970a) found adolescent black boys could not repeat sentences correctly yet they grasped the meaning. They failed the test because they could not perceive the superficial form so much as the underlying semantic structure. Thus they have an asymmetrical language system: they perceive standard and

nonstandard but produce only nonstandard. Researchers emphasize the importance of distinguishing between productive and receptive competence and learning to use this receptive competence in SAE to build productive competence in SAE.

The performance of child number 76 on the GDBE was similar to that of the boys Labov tested. His rating on dialect dominance was "5" and on SAE dominance, "3." His comprehension of SAE was evaluated as a "6" even though BE is his production system.

In rating this child for SAE comprehension the following features were noted:

Poor repetition (not comprehension)	"De socks Ø on Gloria feet."
Use of possessive pronoun (again errors do not effect comprehension)	"Dey are on dey knee."
Correct use of subject pronouns	"She has da soap."
Unfamiliar expressions	"David and Gloria both get clean clothes."

These criteria of performance along with the misuse of "have" were the most frequently cited by the researcher in evaluative comments.

This area of performance had the lowest correlation when rated initially. The researcher began to better distinguish between productive and receptive competence after listening to twenty-five training tapes. By the

third rating the correlation coefficient was .96 (beyond the .001 level of confidence).

SAE production: Child number 72 is an excellent example of the rating for SAE production, as those criteria considered in the evaluation were the most frequently noted for all children. The child received a rating of "5" for:

Correct use of possessive pronoun	"Soap is on her nose."
correct use of "have"	"She has da soap."
correct use of "to be"	"The light is not on."
correct use of third person singular present	"Gloria cries."

However, he frequently replaced the /ð/ and /θ/ with the socially marked /d/ and /t/. In evaluating SAE production, the same factors were considered as in language dominance.

SAE phonology: This item proved most difficult for the researcher on all three ratings. Although vowels should be included in assessment as soon as possible, the researcher had to assign priorities for initial ratings. Vowels are more difficult to hear and evaluate. Furthermore, the examples Labov (1969) gives of homonyms emphasizes phonological differences due to consonant changes: rift = riff; Ruth = roof; past = pass; death = deaf; they = day; this = desk and belt = bell.

Child number 84, who rated "3" in SAE phonology made the following deviations:

/θ/ replaced by /f/	"Dey brush da teef."
/ð/ replaced by /d/	"Dey could swiss in dey clothes."
consonant clusters	"Her kean her teef wich her brush."

This particular child was difficult to rate because many differences appeared to be due to either immature speech or a physical speech impediment (dropping the l in cl and gl).

In addition, child number 77 had problems pronouncing gl, cl, dr, br and sch. In most instances l became w as in Gworia; but sometimes cl became t or kr. It is this writer's belief that, in certain cases, when there is a question between speech pathology, immaturity and dialect divergence, further testing should be done and, possibly, free speech samples elicited. This in no way detracts from the usefulness of the GDBE, however, because the test does call attention to the child's divergence. Further testing should be done to determine whether speech therapy or second dialect training is needed.

SAE inflections: This category was one of the easier ones for the researcher to recognize. The initial correlation coefficient was .91 and the last, .99, both

significant beyond .001. The most frequently noted divergences were seen in child number 81:

third person singular	"Gwowie take da baa'."
noun plural	"Gwowie have her shoe."
noun possessive	"Da socks ϴ on Gloria __ feet."
misuse of "have"	"David had a tootbrush."

The rating for child number 81 was "3." In the first three categories, the child did not use the "-s." It was omitted, whereas in the divergent use of "have" the child replaced "has" by either "had" or "have", the plural inflection of "has."

SAE syntax: Most frequently mentioned deviations again coincided with those of the linguists in the Natalicio-Williams study. These were: misuse of "to be"; mise use of "have"; possessive pronouns; unfamiliar expressions.

When rating child number 80 with a "5" the above criteria were noted except for misuse of "to be."

only 3 misuses of "have" out of 9	"He have a shoe on he foot."
only 5 misuses of possessive pronoun out of 20	"Dey are on dey knee."
1 unfamiliar expression	"Gloria and David both get clean clothes."

Comments on the Training Tapes

An interesting corollary of this study was the evaluation of fifty tapes of Austin blacks from grades K-2

at Blackshear Elementary. Table 6 shows the frequency of divergence in terms of the twelve criteria used to assess oral language in this research study. The most frequent language differences seem to be:

/ð/ replaced by /d/	61%
absence of noun possessive	58%
/θ/ replaced by /f/, /v/, or /t/	47%
misuse of "have"	33%
absence third person singular present verb	32%

It would be valuable to assess a considerably larger population to see if these frequencies increased or decreased in order to get some idea of the high priority features for second language instruction. Based on the frequencies gathered in this study, the researcher would suggest the earliest lessons focuson the correct use of "have" and the /s,z/ marker in the possessives, plurals and third person singular present verbs. The socially marked features /ð/ and /θ/ can clearly be treated in later lessons. Of course, these suggestons are subject to revision when more information is available.

Comments on the GDBE

The GDBE was not designed as a test; it was intended as a review lesson in the Gloria and David Speech Series English Instruction. But Devine apparently saw possibilities for oral language assessment in its inclusion of most

TABLE 6

FREQUENCY OF CRITERION DIVERGENCES ON THE FIFTY GDBE TRAINING TAPES OF AUSTIN (TEXAS) BLACKS FROM BLACKSHEAR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Deviations by Criteria	Third person sing-presently	noun plural	noun possessive	subj. pronoun	poss. pronoun	to be	have	/d/	/o/	conson. clusters	poor repetition	unfamiliar expressions
Mother washes David's neck.	14	--	19	--	--	--	--	12	--	--	--	--
She washes his ears.	7	17	--	2	9	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Gloria takes a bath.	8	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	19	5	--	4
She has the soap.	--	--	--	3	--	--	7	--	--	--	1	36
Gloria washes her hair.	14	--	--	--	1	--	--	--	--	6	2	--
She has soap on her head.	--	--	--	0	0	--	11	--	--	--	11	0
Gloria cries.	16	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	7	--	--
The soap is in her eyes.	16	12	--	--	1	11	--	40	--	7	--	1
Soap is on her nose.	--	--	--	--	1	5	--	--	--	--	2	1
Mother helps Gloria.	24	--	--	--	--	--	--	9	--	2	--	--
David has a toothbrush.	--	--	--	--	--	--	23	--	31	--	14	5
He cleans his teeth with his brush.	16	--	--	23	20	8	--	--	56	--	12	--
Gloria has a toothbrush.	--	--	--	--	--	--	16	--	35	2	--	3
She cleans her teeth with her brush.	9	--	--	2	11	--	--	--	48	2	10	--
David and Gloria are clean.	--	--	--	--	--	8	--	--	--	10	8	2
They are on their knees.	--	15	--	--	41	2	--	35	--	--	--	--
The children go to bed.	--	4	--	--	--	--	--	35	--	--	1	0
The light is not on.	--	--	--	--	--	4	--	36	--	--	1	0
Mother wakes Gloria and David.	15	--	--	--	--	--	--	10	--	--	4	12
The children wake the baby.	--	6	--	--	--	--	--	74	--	--	10	--
Gloria and David both get clean clothes.	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	5	29	10
They can dress in their clothes.	--	--	--	--	44	--	--	33	--	--	20	11
David can button his shirt.	--	--	--	--	9	--	--	--	--	--	13	14
Gloria cannot button her dress.	--	--	--	--	5	--	--	--	13	4	31	--
The socks are on Gloria's feet.	--	13	--	--	3	--	14	--	--	2	--	--
Gloria has her shoes.	--	--	--	--	8	--	19	--	--	--	11	5
Baby has a sock on his leg.	--	9	--	5	8	--	16	--	--	--	--	1
He has a shoe on his foot.	--	--	--	--	--	--	16	--	--	12	1	9
Gloria has a comb for her hair.	--	--	--	--	9	--	28	--	--	--	18	5
The family eats breakfast.	20	--	--	--	--	--	--	39	--	34	1	--
Gloria and David drink milk.	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	9	23	9
The children wash their hands.	--	24	--	--	--	--	--	78	--	--	12	--
They brush their teeth.	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	82	21	--	3	--
Gloria gets a coat.	10	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	6	6	2
David gets a little coat.	18	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	23	2
The children don't play today.	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	33	--	1	5	--
Today they go to school.	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	24	--	2	4	2
Daddy goes to work	13	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	4	--
Mother works at home.	12	--	--	--	--	--	--	-8	--	--	--	2

of the phonemes of SAE and in the appeal of the audio-visual material with young children he worked with. As noted earlier, sentence-repetition tests are recommended by linguists for diagnostic language evaluation. The merits of the GDBE cannot be denied. The test provides reliable indications of language dominance, receptive and productive competence in SAE and divergent features requiring attention.

The technical aspects have certain good points, too. The model utterances are of pleasing sound; the brightly colored illustrations are eye-catching; the audio tape response track is erasable and, thus, reusable. In addition, the visual film cartridge is used repeatedly. The test is administered by the Teacher Assistant rather than a person, eliminating the variable of the examiner.

Every test, however, should be subject to review and refinement. The GDBE is no exception. First, certain technical criticisms should be made. An overseer is required to introduce the child to the Teacher Assistant, allaying fears about the microphone-earphone headsets, inserting the audio-visual cartridges, and checking the equipment for proper tuning and synchronization. Then the overseer must monitor the first few frames to be sure the child understands the task and to reinforce his efforts. One difficulty comes up here.

In evaluating the Blackshear tapes, the researcher had to eliminate several tapes because no responses were recorded. Either the record volume was not turned on or the child did not understand and the overseer failed to note it. Other discarded tapes had only four or five model utterances pass by before the child began to respond.

The content of the test itself should be reviewed. Certain sentences do not distinguish language differences well. For example, sentence 1b, "She washes his ears," could be excluded. The subject pronoun "she" appears three other times and "washes" twice. Possessive pronouns are also adequately tested elsewhere. If "ears" is necessary to test noun plurals, then substitute it for "hair" in sentence 3a; "Gloria washes her ears" rather than "her hair." Only one of these two sentences is necessary since noun plurals are adequately tested by other model sentences. Yet noun possessives are inadequately tested with only two occurrences. The GDBE should be scrutinized for needless repetition and untested features.

One similar repetitive word is "has" in sentences 13-15. Children who have misused "have" in the first few sentences begin to learn and correct their errors when "has" occurs five straight times. The test should be rearranged to vary any feature such as "has" so that this built-in learning device can be avoided.

Devine now feels that "have" for "has" causes no difficulty for children in learning to read since they obviously comprehend the meaning. He advises concentrating on words that begin with th- and wh- and prepositions. He has found that these are frequently miscues in reading. Perhpas some of the other Gloria and David instructional materials should be scrutinized for possible incorporation in a revised version of Test Six.

In addition to the foregoing issues, two more remain. The language of the model seems unnatural at times. Some sentences sound like a first-grader reading primarese because each word is disconnected and emphatically pronounced. Even the child who may not discriminate between SAE and BE can sense something funny when the model says, "The children don't play today." Their response is usually a mimic of the model.

This writer, like others, also questions the repeated use of the present tense rather than the past. The logical thing would be to try out the use of past tense in some of the model utterances to see if tense makes a difference in oral language performance on the GDBE test. Both Baratz (1969a) and Politzer et al. (1973) use the past tense in their sentence-repetition tests. It should be noted in Politzer et al. the past tense was the most

difficult item. Children hypercorrected walked (walkeded). One wonders whether or not this hypercorrection was indeed a nonstandard form used regularly, as Politzer et al. maintain, or the result of immature language development, as Devine would probably argue.

In advice on the construction of sentence-repetition tests, Baratz (1969c) calls for one nonstandard sentence for each standard one. She maintains it unfair to evaluate blacks in terms of white norms. Admittedly, describing BE with the GDBE test is a more negative approach than Baratz's bidialectal task; however, in Texas it would be difficult to say exactly what the features of black dialect were, much less use them in a test.

On the whole, one must conclude the GDBE useful. Some of the above suggestions could be implemented and further experimentation with the test performed.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

After reviewing the current issues in the education of blacks, this researcher became convinced the re-education of the teacher is urgently needed. In particular, teachers must be trained in oral language assessment. Therefore, this researcher undertook a correlation study to determine the amount of oral language assessment training one teacher would require to be able to accurately evaluate the oral language of black pupils using the GDBE test.

The research design involved evaluating the oral language performance of ten black children at three different times and correlating these ratings with the mean ratings of fifteen linguistic experts. Since the author of the test felt fifty tapes would be required to train one teacher, the study was constructed around this number.

The first assessment of the ten children in the Natalicio-Williams sample took place after orientation to the test, but without previous practice. The second

evaluation was made after assessing twenty-five practice tapes. The third and final rating was performed after the second sequence of twenty-five practice tapes. Correlations were performed to test the hypothesis that fifty tapes would be necessary to train one teacher to effectively assess oral language performance using the GDBE test.

Limitations

This study is limited in scope to only one person, the researcher. The success of this researcher in learning to rate the tapes is attributed to four things: (1) the researcher's ear for speech differences as well as regional accents; (2) foreknowledge of nonstandard language and the criteria for assessing divergent responses; (3) a carefully planned evaluation procedure using Devine's instructional tape, a checklist of criteria, the questionnaire and rating scale of Natalicio and Williams, and the transcription sheets for the GDBE; and (4) high motivation. Should any of these factors be absent, it is possible that another person might require more than twenty-five tapes.

Conclusions

At the end of twenty-five training tapes all but one of the researcher's ratings were high (above .90) and very significant (beyond .001). At the conclusion of fifty

tapes, all the ratings were above .90 and beyond the .001 level of confidence. This researcher must conclude that twenty-five tapes were enough to adequately train one teacher in this instance. Fifty tapes seem unnecessary since the difference in the evaluator's effectiveness is negligible between twenty-five and fifty tapes.

Recommendations

Because of the above limitation, the researcher recommends that this study be replicated with a larger population. Ideally, teachers would be the subjects of such a study.

Additionally, the researcher recommends that a larger black population be assessed to determine the frequency of certain nonstandard features in Austin. Devine is currently evaluating some 700 tapes for the Austin Independent School District. A possible thesis topic could be to analyze these tapes to ascertain the divergent language frequencies.

Finally, the researcher recommends that the GDBE test be revised in content to discard repetitive features and to include more necessary items such as those features Devine feels are more relevant to learning to read. Then further experimentation with the test should be done.

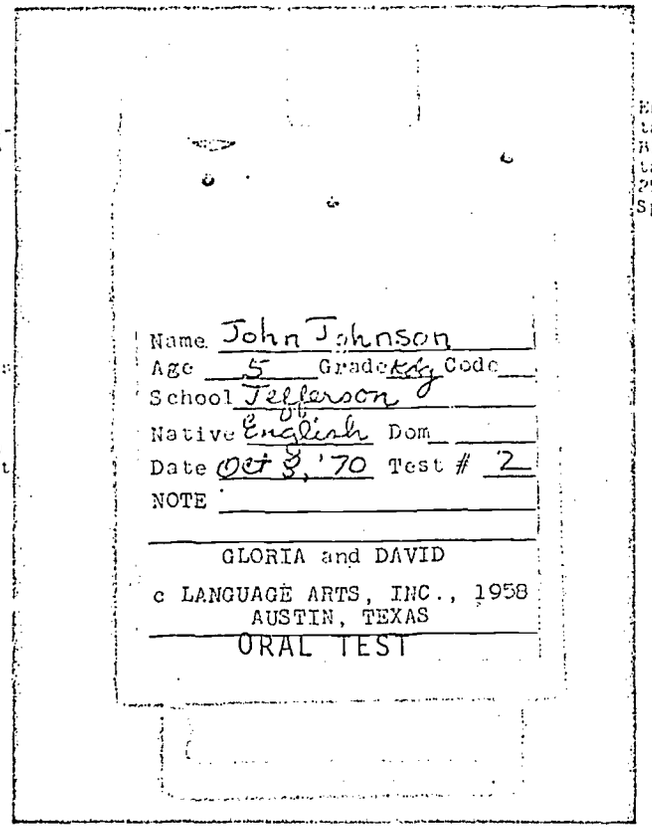
APPENDIX A

GDBE TEST CARTRIDGE TAPE AND TEACHER ASSISTANT

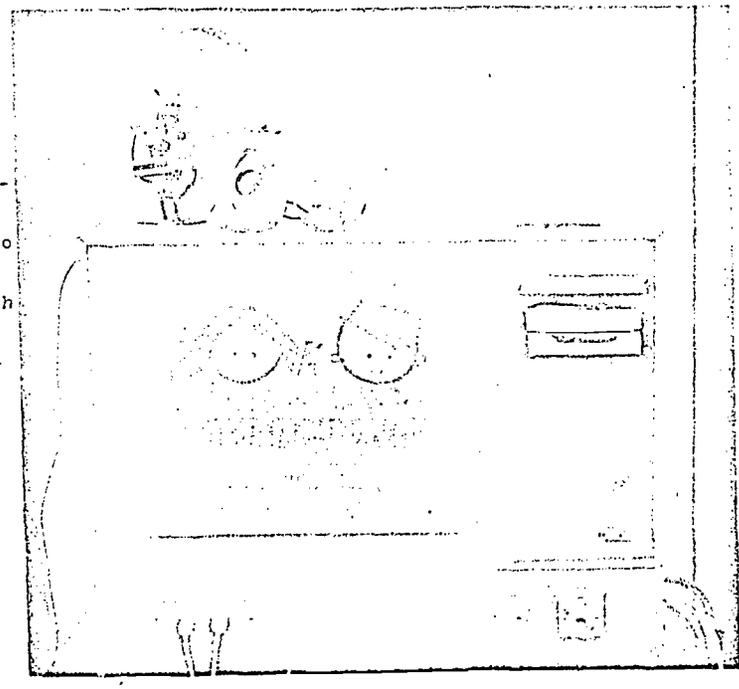
Top portion is protruding end of the picture cartridge.

Prerecorded language test is contained in cartridge which adheres to picture cartridge. They are synchronized by recorded pulses which advance the film and stop the machine at end of Test.

English Test contains 40 sentences. Bilingual Test contains 50 sentences--25 English and 25 Spanish.



Child sits facing machine wearing Earphone-Microphone Headset. Responds to recorded request that he repeat, spoken in Spanish and English. No manipulation of sound or picture is needed. Operation is automated.



As can be seen there is nothing to intrude between the student and the Test. Student is recorded on a separate track. Test material is permanently contained. Student track is erased each time Test is recorded by a speaker.

APPENDIX B

TRANSCRIPTION SHEET OF GDBE TEST

ORAL LANGUAGE TEST

NAME GRADE SCHOOL LOCATION DATE

1 Mother washes David's neck.
She washes his ears.

2 Gloria takes a bath.
She has the soap.

3 Gloria washes her hair.
She has soap on her head.

4 Gloria cries.
The soap is in her eyes.

5 Soap is on her nose.
Mother helps Gloria.

6 David has a toothbrush.
He cleans his teeth with his brush.

7 Gloria has a toothbrush.
She cleans her teeth with her brush.

8 David and Gloria are clean.
They are on their knees.

9 The children go to bed.
The light is not on.

10 Mother wakes Gloria and David.
The children wake (the) baby.

11 Gloria and David both get clean clothes.
They can dress in their clothes.

12 David can button his shirt.
Gloria cannot button her dress.

13 The socks are on Gloria's feet.
Gloria has her shoes.

14 Baby has a sock on his leg.
He has a shoe on his foot.

15 Gloria has a comb for her hair.
David has a brush for his hair.

16 The family eats breakfast.
Gloria and David drink milk.

17 The children wash their hands.
They brush their teeth.

18 Gloria gets a coat.
David gets a little coat.

19 The children don't play today.
Today they go to school.

20 Daddy goes to work.
Mother works at home.

INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT

Percentage of Response

Indicated Listening Competence (Explain)

Language Comprehension---- English------Spanish------ French

Language Production--------- ------ --------

Dominant Language---------- ------ -------- (Explain)

Language Deficiencies-Phonological-Syntactical-Others (Explain)

Indicated Reading Aptitude (Explain)

Refer to Specialists---------- Speech------Hearing------ LLD-------

Particular Individual Needs--- Listening Practice----Imitation Practice----Special---
(Give Details if possible)

General Remarks regarding individual scholastic aptitudes and suggestions.

Teacher's Reactions to Assessment (To be stated by teacher)

Individual Reading Readiness or Standardized Reading Test Score as determined by instruments regularly employed by school system.

Evaluator_____ Checked by_____

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How would you rate this child with regard to language dominance?

   Dialect: Strong__:__:__:__:__:__:__:Weak

   SAE: Strong__:__:__:__:__:__:__:Weak

   On which particular aspects of this child's performance did you base the above ratings? Be specific.

   Aspect As in:

   _____

   _____

2. How would you rate this child in terms of overall comprehension of SAE? Good__:__:__:__:__:__:__:Bad

   On which particular aspects of this child's performance did you base your rating? Be specific.

   Aspect As in:

   _____

   _____

3-7. Please rate the child in terms of production, phonology, inflection, and syntax of SAE. Use the following

   Scale: Good__:__:__:__:__:__:__:Bad

   Again, list which particular aspects of performance were important in your rating and be specific.

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