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ABSTRACT

Conformity to Standard English, ethnic background, socioeconomic status (SES), and modes of presentation were investigated to determine the influence of these four factors on reading comprehension among fifth graders. Homogeneous groups within four experimental categories were formulated: middle SES white students, low SES white students, middle SES black students, and low SES black students. Two experimental treatments, aural-oral (A-O) and visual-reading (V-R), were involved. Findings indicated that (1) the comprehension of children whose speaking patterns conform to Standard English was significantly greater than that of children speaking a dialect, regardless of treatment; (2) the comprehension of middle SES children was significantly greater than that of low SES children when tasks were expressed in Standard English; (3) the comprehension of white children was not significantly greater than that of black children when tasks were presented in either the A-O mode or combined A-O and V-R modes; (4) comprehension of white children was greater when the directed tasks expressed in Standard English were presented in the V-R mode; and (5) the subjects more readily understood materials presented in the A-O mode than materials presented in the V-R mode (Author/HOD)

INTERACTION OF DIALECT, SES, AND ETHNICITY UPON LISTENING AND READING COMPREHENSION OF FIFTH-GRADERS

A DISSERTATION

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study is concerned with the severe reading deficiencies often exhibited by black children who come from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Many disciplines provide many theories about the cause of these problems and/or the remedies for such problems.

This study will present an overview of the various causation theories and remedial approaches, and empirical evidence as to the relevance of these theories in the on-going effort to teach black children to read. It will also serve to present information regarding the influence of register selection and usage, socioeconomic status, ethnic background, and mode of presentation upon reading behavior.

Background of the Problem

Research on the acquisition and the development of language has indicated that by the age of 5 or 6 a child is linguistically mature enough to use most of the basic sentence forms of his language (Fraser, Bellugi, & Brown, 1963; Loban, 1963; Menyuk, 1963a).

During his preschool years, the child has developed

amazing language maturity. He can comprehend and produce unique sentences; distinguish grammatical from non-grammatical statements; utilize context clues to solve questions and confusions that may be presented by the statement; understand statements which are represented by different surface structures but share a single underlying meaning (e.g., active and passive voices); and also understand the different underlying deep structures which may be represented by a single surface structure (Ruddell, 1970a).

Summarizing the research on the acquisition and development of language before the child's entry into school, two generalizations must be assumed to be true for the purposes of the ensuing study:

1. the child's ability to comprehend language precedes and exceeds his ability to produce language; and
2. the child's language comprehension appears to be a direct function of his control over the grammatical and lexical components of the discourse [Ruddell, 1970a, p. 15].

There is more than adequate evidence to suspect that during the ages of 5 to 11 the developmental sequence of syntactical pattern control continues to develop.

Menyuk (1963b) identified some of the sequential elements in children's syntax extending through the first grade. Strickland's work (1962) gave evidence of a definite relationship between sentence complexity and grade level. Research by Loban (1963) indicated a developmental

sequence of complexity in sentence structure by demonstrating that the average sentence length increased through the elementary grades.

Chomsky (1969), studying children's acquisition of syntactical structures, found that: (1) active syntactic acquisition takes place up to the age of 9 and possibly even later, and (2) there is an orderly progression toward the final stages of the acquisition of syntactical structure.

Speakers who utilize dialectal patterns have also acquired the fundamental syntactic forms of their language by the age of 5 or 6, and once again there is reason to believe that the development of their language continues during the following years (Baratz, 1969a; Labov, 1969).

The problem arises when the nonstandard dialects of English spoken by many disadvantaged blacks differ in basic ways from not only standard English, but also from the nonstandard speech of disadvantaged whites (Pederson, 1964; Stewart, 1969). This problem is manifested in the classroom where the child is expected to deal effectively in a learning environment in which standard English is the prevalent means of communication.

Variation in language performance may be due to the child's background of language forms which are associated with a unique social environment. Thus, a child from such a social environment may only be able to function on

an informal functional level while a child from a less unique, broader language background may be able to move with more facility from one language level (or form) to another.

The crucial issue here is whether the child who lacks flexibility--uses an informal code in a setting which calls for a formal code--will be severely handicapped in learning to read even though he may possess an untapped ability to learn the formal code and the needed flexibility.

Significance of the Study

Linguists, psycholinguists, and sociolinguists have made substantial contributions in the defining of the act of speech and the development of language patterns. Reading theorists and researchers have also made substantial advancements in the defining of the reading act and its development.

The four disciplines are interrelated and interdependent, yet they do not always develop coordinated theories and compatible methods, especially when the disciplines themselves are subject to theoretical tensions.

Although many of the theories emanating from the various fields overlap, the investigators within each discipline have attempted to relate various language theories to the reading act without taking into consideration the

hypotheses and the empirical findings of those in allied but separate fields. Thus, the lack of acknowledgment of one another has often replaced rapprochement among the disciplines.

Of late, a more radical group of theorists have made attempts to discover the possible causes for the reading failures of countless black people. Theorists, dealing with various issues involved in the teaching of black children to read, have proposed corrective programs based upon hypothesized differences of a dialectal nature.

It seems feasible that this latter group may have plunged too far ahead in a zealous spirit, thus avoiding certain necessary steps in the development of causative theory(ies), and in turn avoiding the issue of justifying their remedial theories. It is also important that the relationship between language experience and the reading process be accounted for.

There appears to be a distinct but bearly developed link between each of these latter two stages and processes, respectively. One of the major goals of this study is an exploration of the components of that link by synthesizing the work of the linguistic, psycholinguistic, and socio-linguistic theories in order to more directly relate their influences upon one aspect of reading--the influence of dialect, race, and socioeconomic status upon comprehension.

Much research has been carried out relating the mode of presentation and the visual and auditory perception of preschool and primary-grade children of varying socio-economic background. Investigations have also focused in on the effect of training to read within these areas toward the goal of preventing reading problems.

Unfortunately, problems have not been prevented, despite these investigations. This may be due, in part, because much of the research in this area has either produced no significant results, or has produced significant results contradictory to other similar studies.

Researchers often make unsubstantiated recommendations which are based on the premise that children of varying socioeconomic status be given differentiated reading instruction based on hypothesized weaknesses and strengths in the areas of visual and/or auditory modalities. Such recommendations are being followed by some schools. Therefore, it is important to determine if the comprehension of children of different socioeconomic levels, races, or register usage is indeed affected by the mode of presentation.

The present study is designed to investigate the following questions in the hope of clarifying and/or confirming the findings of some of the extant, contradictory studies. (1) How is comprehension affected by the interaction of a particular register and a particular mode of

presentation? (2) How do children of varying socioeconomic levels respond to different methods of presentation? and (3) Is a child's comprehension affected when his ethnic background interacts with a specific mode of presentation?

Statement of the Problem

The major purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of register selection and usage--standard vs. nonstandard English--upon reading comprehension.

Subsidiary topics under investigation included the effect of socioeconomic status, race, and mode of presentation upon that same aspect of reading.

To these ends it was necessary to: (1) account for by classification, the subjects' socioeconomic status, race, and familiar register; (2) adapt an instrument which would measure, within the scope of this study, comprehension; and (3) employ the instrument utilizing two different modes of presentation of the tasks.

Statement of the Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested to provide answers to the basic questions of the study:

Hypothesis 1. When presented with tasks expressed in standard English, the comprehension of children whose speaking patterns conform to standard English is not significantly greater than the comprehension of children

whose speaking patterns do not conform to standard English.

Hypothesis 2. When presented with tasks expressed in standard English, the comprehension of children from middle socioeconomic status families is not significantly greater than the comprehension of children from low socioeconomic status families.

Hypothesis 3. When presented with tasks expressed in standard English, the comprehension of white children is not significantly greater than the comprehension of black children.

Hypothesis 4. When presented with tasks expressed in standard English, the ability of children to comprehend will be the same regardless of the mode of presentation of material; specifically, visual vs. aural presentation.

Uniqueness of the Study

A great deal of experimental, descriptive, and clinical research has been done in the field of comprehension. The literature contains studies which can substantiate the relationships of comprehension to a variety of variables, among them register used, socioeconomic status, ethnic backgrounds, and modes of presentation.

These studies are often the work of one investigator attacking an isolated variable. Interpretations based on such studies might be seriously modified and possibly reversed in the light of additional information

gained from one composite study of several variables with the same group of children.

The purpose of the present study was to identify which of the above-mentioned variables affected comprehension and to measure the degree of effect. The investigator was unable to find any such study in the literature.

Definitions of Terms

Standard English. A variety of American English used as a reference point in school language instruction to increase the individual's repertoire of important and useful ways of communicating. This variety of American English is often heard on network radio and television newscasts (Bailey, 1965).

Dialect. 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 (McDavid, 1964).

Register.

> The name given to a variety of a language distinguished according to use. The category of "register" is needed when an account of what people do with their language is needed. Dialects tend to differ primarily, and always to some extent, in substance. Registers, on the other hand, differ primarily in form [Halliday, McIntosh, & Strevens, 1964].
>
> Specific realms of language usage, such as the realm of professional jargon or a style directed to a given sort of audience [Emig, 1972].

Comprehension. For purposes of this research, comprehension is defined as the measured level of understanding of the stimulus materials included for study in this investigation.

Limitations

1. The immediate objective of this study was not to design an instrument to measure reading comprehension. The treatment tasks utilized in this study were adapted from the Garvey-McFarlane materials (1970) to accommodate, but not to be utilized beyond, the scope of this study.

2. The Hawthorne Effect must be considered since the subjects received special attention under rather unusual circumstances. They were aware that they were participating in an experiment and this may have influenced their performance.

3. Although this investigator utilized certain syntactical features in order to assess comprehension of such features, it was not the purpose of this study to analyze the responses of the treatment groups to the specific syntactical structures.

4. The sample of critical syntactical structures of language patterns comprising the comprehension measures was not exhaustive. Selection of other structures might possibly yield different results.

5. The only intelligence test scores available

were derived from the California Short Form Test of Mental Maturity, (Sullivan, Clark, & Tiegs, 1962). Although this test yields a non-language intelligence score, as well as language and total intelligence scores, the former items comprise only one-third of the test. It is accepted that in a test such as this, the resultant intelligence test score is a function of the child's ability to read, and often a function of the child's socioeconomic status. Lohnes and Gray (1972) conclude, after extensive study in this area, that environment does influence the development and changes in intelligence, and that beginning reading methods and materials do have considerable impact on intelligence.

6. Listening and reading comprehension scores were derived for each subject using two instruments appropriate to the sought criteria. One set of tasks utilized the aural mode of presentation, while the other set of tasks was presented visually. In all cases the aural treatment was presented first, thus eliminating the possible counter-balancing of the effects of each mode of presentation. The findings of the study pertaining to the influence of mode of presentation must be understood with this limitation in mind.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter presents an overview of the research concerned with the relationships among: the students' selection of registers, ethnic backgrounds, socioeconomic status, and their ability to comprehend oral and printed materials.

This review will not attempt an exhaustive discussion of the following topics. However, it will attempt to indicate the major areas of investigation in related disciplines and their relationship to the present study, and to synthesize some of the more pertinent research related to the problem.

Linguistic Perspective

Theorists of reading, within the last decade, have begun to fell the reverberations of the work of Chomsky. His transformational-generative theory of language (Chomsky, 1965, 1967) converges about the principles of "universal grammar" (Chomsky, 1967).

These principles fall into two categories: formal universals (determines the structure of grammars, and the form and organization of rules) and substantive universals

(defines the sets of elements that may figure in particular grammars) (Chomsky & Halle, 1968).

These principles emphasize an innate, formalized system found within man which allows him to derive the more abstract, underlying structures of language from its surface representation. The universals have been proposed as characteristics of all human languages in order to allow the system of transformational theory to function.

Transformational theory suggests that language is structured upon various levels. The first level, the surface structure, encompasses the graphemic, morphographemic, phonemic, and morphophonemic systems which represent morphemic and syntactic structures. One dimension of this level is a resultant product of the reading act--the decoding process.

The second level allows for the processing of language for interpretation. This level consists of structural and semantic readings. Components of this level include transformational rules as well as an individual's understandings for vocabulary.

The third level, deep structure of language, is the most difficult level to grasp. It is at this level that the syntactic and semantic elements of the statement are integrated for language interpretations and stored in memory.

By means of operations called "transformations," the speaker can generate an indefinite series of deep interpretations of a sentence as represented by one surface structure. For example, within the structure of the English language the active and passive forms of a sentence are paraphrases of each other, thus both are derived from the same underlying foundation. In order to extract the distinctive features of the surface structure from the underlying foundation unit, a transformational component is needed that will operate on the element of a linguistic string.

The principal components of the sound-meaning relationship are phonology, syntax, and semantics, among which syntax "plays the central creative role [E. Brown, 1970]." However, the interaction between the latter two components of the relationship is often so extensive that they become "blurred and elusive [Mehta, 1971]." At times syntax and semantics are treated by the transformationalists as separate entities, and in other instances as synonyms.

Chomsky believes that written language has a life of its own and can be more than an exact representation of oral language. He purports that the message printed can be a better transporter of semantic and syntactic information for speakers of various dialects than an oral

version of the same message.

Transformationists contend that a chief characteristic of human language is the distinction between linguistic competence and performance. This distinction is one of the principal linguistic universals suggested by Chomsky (E. Brown, 1970; Chomsky, 1967). Performance, by definition, is based on knowledge of language and other factors, such as memory, restrictions, distraction, or inattention. Competence is defined as the potential performance of an individual which is unaffected by the grammatically irrelevant factors as mentioned above (Chomsky & Halle, 1968). McNeill (1970) summarizes competence as "a theory about what the child knows [p. 9]."

A linguistic universal of the transformational theory defines the deep structural component of the grammar as a systematic set of recursive rewrite rules. The generative power of the entire competence system is derived from this recursive feature of the base grammar.

The above distinction might also be viewed as a differentiation between surface and deep structure "in order to account for the phenomena of synomy, paraphrase, anomaly, and semantic ambiguity in performance, and facilitate semantic interpretation from more general abstract underlying structures [E. Brown, 1970, p. 53]."

Psycholinguistic Perspective

Entwisle (1971) finds that, in general, reading models do not account for "group differences in oral competence or the social context of communication acts [p. 6-122]." Much of the literature pertaining to these topics has not been empirically substantiated to a satisfactory degree.

Nor do many models address themselves to the relationship between oral competence and reading competency. In fact, "little is known about how oral competence specifically affects reading performance [Entwisle, 1971, p. 6-124]."

Even less attended to is the combined effects wrought by the relationship between social class variation and the changes in oral competence as a child progresses through the school years.

One possible exception to Entwisle's generalization (1971) pertaining to models is Ruddell's model of communication (1970b).

Ruddell's model is an indirect explication of the Chomsky model. It divides language into three levels: (a) surface level--including morphemic and syntactic components, (b) interpretation--including structural and semantic components, and (c) deep structure--including integration and storage.

Ruddell's model encompasses two important aspects of language development. First, Ruddell assumes a child's ability to understand language to be a function of the child's ability to see relationships between the components of a sentence.

The research of Fraser et al. (1963) supports the view that children must comprehend grammatical contrasts before they are able to produce the contrasts.

Gibbons (1941) found a high correlation ($r = .89$) between the ability to see the relationships among the parts of a sentence and the ability to understand the sentence, when intelligence was partialed out. Using a "disarranged phrase test," she also found a significant correlation ($r = .72$) between the ability to see relationships between parts of sentences and total reading achievement.

Secondly, Ruddell contends that children's comprehension scores will be significantly higher if the passage reflects their oral speech patterns than if they do not. He substantiates this hypothesis by citing a study (Ruddell, 1965) which compared fourth-graders' oral language patterns to various written patterns.

Understanding the sentence structure would, according to Ruddell, better enable the child to narrow alternate word meanings and, thus, enhance his comprehension. Research by Miller (1962) and Miller et al. (1951) has

shown that words in context following a similar grammatical pattern are perceived more accurately than when in isolation. Goodman (1965a) has demonstrated that although children may be unable to decode words in isolation, they deal successfully with the same words when placed in context, thus supporting the contention of Ruddell and Miller as to the importance of context in narrowing semantic possibilities.

Reading is not simply a matter of going from print to speech sounds. At the very least, Ruddell contends, reading is a recoding operation which still requires that the reader decode from oral language to meaning. The reader must derive from the surface structure an underlying or deep structure and the interrelationship must be clear. It is here where dialect differences may produce reading difficulties.

Goodman's research has led him to call reading a psycholinguistic guessing game which draws on the child's knowledge of language structure. He depicts the child as an active, not a passive, processor of linguistic input. It is Goodman's opinion that reading material which makes use of the child's well-practiced knowledge of syntactic structures takes advantage of his natural linguistic expectations to foster success in the process of learning to read.

Sociolinguistic Perspective

Sociolinguistic theoreticians have made provisions within their models and/or theories to sate the needs existing in the linguistic and psycholinguistic models. These provisions focus on relationships which are believed to be common to all members of a species. Sociolinguists believe that such a focus has two implications: (1) it tends to make both model builders and reading instructors ignore group variation and intra-group variations; and (2) it tends to bypass the social components of the act of reading and the frequent social context of the reading act.

Sociolinguistic partial theories of reading rest on the following assumptions as suggested by Shuy (1969):

1. There is a relationship between characteristics of the code and the communication situation. Components of the face-to-face interaction influencing speech are: the personnel, the situation, the function of the interaction, the topic, the message, the channel, the rules of verbal output, and the comprehension of those invclved.

2. Linguistic diversity is related to social interaction.

3. For communication to occur, there must be: shared categories of meaning, shared lexicon, shared order or rules for the basic grammatical relations.

4. Reading disability can be caused by behavioral mismatch with language phenomena.

Language Deficient Hypothesis

The past decade saw the rising acceptance level of the language deficit concept. Before the new popularity of this theory, it had been commonly held that all languages possessed equal status and were potentially able to communicate the speaker's intention. The basis of the language deficit concept assumes that the use of nonstandard English induces a lack of concept development and an overall verbal inferiority. The proponents of this view assume that linguistic competence is synonymous with the development of standard English, and that the utilization of any linguistic system other than standard English is deficient and inferior.

Bernstein (1961, 1962) and Bernstein and Henderson (1969) have characterized two patterns of speaking and have attributed each of them to a particular social orientation.

A child from a working-class family (position-oriented) will tend to use a "restricted code," which is characterized by limited subordination and syntactical redundancy." Working-class families emphasize the communal

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*Restricted Code: simpler sentences, restricted grammatical range, fewer subordinated clauses, more exophoric pronouns, fewer expressions of uncertainty, fewer self-corrections, and fewer abstract words [Entwisle, 1971].

over the individual, the concrete over the abstract, positional over personalized forms of social control, and substance rather than exploration of motives and intentions.

In contrast, a child of a middle-class (person-oriented) background will gravitate toward the use of an "elaborate code." In the person-oriented system, the child makes his role. As he makes his role, he learns to cope with ambiguity and ambivalence. This type of family, early in a child's life, sensitizes him toward his language development so they may apply their favorite modes of control.

Use of the "elaborate code" can account for meaningful explication of specific topics. The functions of the syntactical factors in this code appear in terms of subordination and expression of complex relationships. Although the same aspects can be incorporated in the "restricted code," they can be far more parsimoniously handled with the use of the "elaborate code."

Elements of the "elaborate code" facilitates the transition from oral to written language comprehension and production, especially in the area of the greater subordination control required in the shift from an informal to a formal functional level.

The implications of dialect variation for reading seems to be somewhat more complex than first anticipated.

Upon entering school, the child from the low socioeconomic environment (using the restricted code) is required to use language in situations in which he may not be linguistically prepared to cope. This inability to cope may be due to syntactic factors and limited lexical control.

Metfessel's (1966) research findings have supported Bernstein's (1961, 1962) hypothesis that limited lexical control may contribute to this inability. Studying second-grade children, he found that those from concept-deprived backgrounds possessed a comprehension vocabulary only one-third the size of the average of their age-equivalent peers.

Thus, the working-class child may experience a communication discontinuity; he is now not only exposed to the restricted code of his home, but also to the elaborate code of the school.

It is important to note that Bernstein thought that the orientation toward codes was probably independent of the psychology of the child--independent of his native ability.

Skinner and Holland (1961) maintain that confusion between the codes may cause different sets of referential meanings for the language learned at school by the low socioeconomic level child.

Further perplexities may occur when a child does

not possess the flexibility to match a particular dialect to a particular situation. According to Bernstein, the exposure to communicative discontinuity will, over a period of time, reduce the child's potential to be educated.

Language Difference Hypothesis

The belief that children of lower socioeconomic status, more specifically--black children--have defective conceptual and communication systems has been contested by Baratz (1969a, b), Baratz and Baratz (1970), Labov (1969), and Stewart (1969). The findings of these studies indicate that black children use different but structurally coherent linguistic and cognitive systems.

The dialect under discussion, according to some researchers, cannot be rejected as an unworthy approximation of standard English. Variously called "Black English," "Negro Dialect," or "Negro Nonstandard English," the same researchers would contend that it is a fully formed linguistic system in its own right with its own grammar and pronunciation rules that are highly elaborate and sophisticated, and different from those governing the standard English used by most white Americans.

The findings of a study conducted by Marwit et al. (1972) lend empirical support to the claim that Black English is a separate, highly consistent language with

fixed grammatical rules that differ in particular ways from the rules governing the language used by most white Americans.

Their sample consisted of white and black second-graders who had been divided into high, middle, and low socioeconomic status. Half of each of the six groups were tested by black examiners, half by white examiners.

A test consisting of 24 ambiguous drawings, each accompanied by sentences, was administered to each subject. The sentences, read by the examiner, described the drawing as either an object or a person engaged in some action. The object or action was labeled by a nonsense syllable and presented to the subject in such a way that he was required to derive the present, plural, possessive, or time extension form of the nonsense syllable.

The results supported the hypothesis that white children supply more standard English endings to nonsense syllables designed to represent the plural and possessive of nouns and the present and time extension forms of verbs than black subjects.

DeStefano (1972), however, suggests that the non-standard forms used by some black students may not be consistent with fixed grammatical rules of black English, but may vary from child to child. DeStefano researched productive language differences in low socioeconomic fifth-

grade black children living in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Differences were demonstrated by the use of nonstandard syntactic forms in both speech and writing.

The data for speech sources consisted of tapes of the children's speech as well as notes made of the children's syntactic structures while listening to them talk to each other and to other members of the teaching team. The data for writing sources consisted of written compositions.

The study indicates that there are individual differences of kinds and degree in the nonstandard forms used in speech and writing. DeStefano concluded that the written and spoken language of black students is not consistent; and that they appear to be able to switch their language codes in order to fit the situation.

Labov and Cohen (1967), analyzing the "Systematic Relations of Standard and Nonstandard Rules in Grammar of Negro Speakers," report that many black speakers of the nonstandard dialects show evidence of mastering the perception and comprehension of both standard and nonstandard speech. In speaking, though, they translate or form all utterances in the nonstandard dialect.

Weber (1970) analyzed the oral reading errors made by first-grade children over a period of 7 months. For purposes of the study, children were classified as high or

low achievers according to their placement in reading groups. Reading material consisted of a basal reading series and supplementary materials used with some groups. Errors were classified in four categories: substitution, omission, reversal, and insertion. The analysis of errors revealed that substitutions comprised 80% of the total number of errors made; and the differences between the two groups appeared negligible. A syntactic analysis resulted in the finding that 91% of the errors were grammatically appropriate and that the difference between the high and low groups in this respect was not significant. Judged on the basis of semantic appropriateness, 92.8% of the errors were found to be consistent with the meaning of the sentence. The author concluded that effects on the syntactic and semantic level suggested that children were transferring their ability to handle verbal language to the reading task.

The latter two studies, along with Goodman's (1967) examination and interpretations of reading errors made by dialectal speakers, make it reasonable and possible to hypothesize that under certain circumstances speakers of a dialect may be able to comprehend standard written text and translate into their own dialect as they read. However, the circumstances may not be in communion with the child's language background if certain conditions are not

met. First, the written material which the child encounters in school should be of a level in which the child feels competent. As far as the low socioeconomic child is concerned, this condition is seldom met because the material is one level above his informal and familiar register. Second, limited language backgrounds provide few opportunities for the development of the ability to shift in a functional manner. This is a considerable handicap in deciphering materials which are usually written at the formal level (e.g., hafta--have to; wanna--want to; they'll--they will) (Ruddell, 1970a).

However, Goodman (1969) contends that certain oral language sequences, which result from morphophenemic rules cutting morphemic boundaries in the flow of speech, are so common that the child does not differentiate the singular components in the sequence (e.g., with'm--with them), thus facilitating comprehension.

Approaches to the Teaching of Reading to Dialect Speakers

Children, whose language habits differ from the socially acceptable qualifications of a school system or society, face both overt and covert handicaps in education. According to Venezky (1970), there are two types of deviation from standard English: language development and dialect differences. Venezky's viewpoint is representative

of many psycho- and sociolinguists, who purport that one facet of education which fosters such handicaps is demonstrated by the reading programs which are not equipped for him.

For the language of the blacks and others from low socioeconomic backgrounds, there are no standards which quite distinguish normal articulation from exceptional articulation, that list expected vocabulary or age graded syntactic development, or that suggest how reading is to be taught where dialect-based problems exist. It is the purpose of this section to review some of the alternate approaches suggested for the teaching of reading to speakers of nonstandard English.

Dialectal Readers

Baratz (1970), representative of other supporters of this theory (Labov, 1969; Stewart, 1969), states that the linguist generally operates on three basic assumptions about language development:

1. Any verbal system that is well ordered with a predictable sound pattern, grammatical structure, and vocabulary is a language, and no one language is structurally better than any other language.
2. Children learn language in the context of their environment. Dialect the child acquires within the intimacy of his home is his mother tongue and is most deeply and permanently rooted.
3. By the time a child is five years old he has developed language. The concern of the linguist is discovering the rules that govern a language or dialect and the implications contained therein. Educators and teachers of black children should

> be knowledgeable of the linguist's findings and generate teaching strategies based on these findings [pp. 130-131].

The focus of this school of thought is that dialectal readers are best for dialect-speaking children. Specifically, the above theorists recommend the development of beginning reading materials that are written in dialectal language patterns and then the use of systematically organized transition materials to lead the students to the eventual reading of texts written in conventional standard English.

The assumptions underlying this procedure are: (1) oral language affects reading and other school tasks; (2) most teachers denigrate the child's language; (3) black children required to learn standard English must perform two tasks at once--that of learning a new dialect and that of learning to read; (4) these materials will provide psychological benefits, with the built-in ingredient of success; and (5) that there is sufficient mismatch to warrant distinct materials.

Few studies have actually investigated whether children's materials structured more like the way children speak is a linguistically sound way to help them relate the language brought to school and the language encountered in written materials.

Ruddell (1965) found that fourth-graders

comprehended materials written with patterns children frequently use in their oral language significantly better than material written with patterns children infrequently use.

In an attempt to compare the language behavior of standard and nonstandard English speakers, Baratz (1969b) administered a sentence repetition test composed of 15 standard English sentences and 15 Black English sentences to third- and fifth-grade, black and white lower income subjects. The subjects repeated each sentence after having heard it twice from a tape. The assumption made was that the black children were learning a well-ordered but different linguistic system than their white counterparts.

It was found that black subjects repeated nonstandard sentences significantly better than white subjects. White subjects repeated standard sentences significantly better than black subjects. Black subjects produced consistent, systematic nonstandard linguistic patterns when responding to standard sentences. The same behavior was exhibited by the whites. A significant interaction of age and grammatical features was found for both groups. The results indicated that there are two dialects involved in educating black children, that black children are not usually bi-dialectal, and that black dialect interferes with attempts to employ standard English. It was stressed that

standard English must not be used as a criterion for language development except where it is the language of the adults in a child's environment.

Data such as these have been cited as evidence of the existence of a dual linguistic system in American schools and as an explanation for the reading difficulties of disadvantaged black children. The "interference effect," as postulated by Baratz (1969b) and Stewart (1969), results from introducing disadvantaged children to reading materials written in standard English.

This investigator questioned the validity of Baratz's conclusions and found them to be unwarranted extrapolations derived from the nature and the results of the experiment. The deviations which were observed in the oral responses of the subjects to aural stimuli did not necessarily mean that these children experienced serious interference when confronted with the visual stimuli of standard English readers. No data on the actual reading achievement of the students were given nor were the students asked to read any part of the test. On the basis of this experiment, it appears that Baratz's hypotheses should have met with rejection rather than acceptance; the assumption that dialect materials should facilitate the task of learning to read was not verified by the research.

Tatham (1970) investigated second- and fourth-

graders' comprehension of materials written with frequent oral language patterns and infrequent language patterns. The majority of the subjects were from middle socioeconomic backgrounds. She constructed two tests, each of 37 sentences, in which comprehension of a sentence was determined by the selection of an appropriate picture as an answer. Analysis of the results found that both groups under investigation comprehended materials written with frequent oral language patterns better than materials written with infrequent oral language patterns.

The significance of the Tatham study upon the present study is limited because Tatham included few low socioeconomic subjects in her sample, nor did she make any attempt to integrate nonstandard English speakers and their responses into her results. The major implication of this study seems to be that middle-class, standard English speakers better comprehend materials written in middle-class, standard English language patterns than materials coded in nonfamiliar patterns. Might one infer from the results that low socioeconomic status students and/or speakers of nonstandard English comprehend materials written in nonstandard English patterns?

English as a Second Dialect

One of the major assumptions underlying this viewpoint is that a language is acceptable where it works,

where communication occurs. Thus, no attempt is made to change the student's home language. The focus of English as a Second Language is to add a classroom dialect, to the child's present one, one which will increase the social and economic mobility of the student and one which functions in working situations to which the student aspires.

Rystrom (1970) investigated the influence of black dialect upon reading achievement. He postulates that if black children experience unique problems in learning to read because of the dialect they speak, then unique solutions will be required to raise their reaching achievement.

In order to confirm or reject his position, Rystrom formulated three hypotheses: (1) black dialectal speakers could be taught to use features of standard English which do not occur in black dialect, (2) that knowledge of these features would have a positive and a significant influence on word reading scores, and (3) that phoneme-grapheme controlled readers have a positive and a significant influence on word reading scores.

Research was conducted in a rural Georgia school whose student body was black. The four first grades of the school were divided in such a way that interactive effects could be identified. Two of the four groups received training in the standard English dialect 20 minutes a day

for 80 days. The control groups received a language placebo. In order to examine effects between phoneme-grapheme controlled readers and dialect training, the four classes were also divided into two groups taught to read using basal series and two groups which used a linguistic series.

All three hypotheses were rejected. No interaction between dialect training, linguistic readers, and reading achievement was indicated. The data presented did not support the assumption that a dialect training program will significantly increase the reading achievement scores of children who speak Black English.

In fact, dialect training had a negative effect upon decoding skills. The children who received instruction in standard English were able to read fewer words than the children who did not receive the same training. Instead of enhancing phoneme-grapheme correspondence learning, the training seems to have confused the children.

In an attempt to gather evidence to support the theory of teaching standard English as a second language, Ruddell and Graves (1972) investigated the relationship between syntactical language development and the socio-ethnic status of beginning first-grade children. It was hypothesized that the number of errors made by the subjects would be a function of socio-ethnic status, and that certain types of errors would prove to be a problem only for

the low socio-ethnic group.

The subjects were selected from 24 first-grade classrooms representing a wide range of socioeconomic levels.

The investigators contrasted the error rate on familiar items for the two groups. Their findings suggest that the performance of the groups in their use of standard English was influenced by the adult language model of their preschool years, as well as by the amount of practice they have using standard English in a variety of situations.

The identification of syntactical constructions, which was a problem for the Low Black Group but not for the High White Group, demonstrated the need for providing extensive practice for the former group on such items, according to the investigators. They also concluded that the former group of students needed meaningful opportunities for using the grammatical contrasts of standard English in oral and written contexts.

Ruddell and Graves (1972) suggested that consideration should be given to the teaching of standard English as a second dialect. In this way the students could preserve their home or first dialect and use it in situations for which it is appropriate, while they learned to use standard English to achieve increased success in school.

Acceptance of Dialect Renderings

Goodman (1969) also supports a language difference approach to dialect (vs. the language deficit approach), the differences being found in the areas of phonology, syntax, vocabulary, and intonation. He criticizes Bernstein's research (1961, 1962) for failing to separate differences in dialect from immature linguistic development.

However, Goodman at this point differs from the other proponents of the language difference theory. Relying on his experiences with his involvement in the teaching of reading to the black children in the Detroit innercity. Goodman (1965b) states:

> Parents and leaders in the speech community would reject the use of special materials which are based on a non-prestigious dialect. They usually share the view of the general culture that their speech is not the speech of cultivation and literature [p. 858].

He goes on to point out other practical matters which would make this approach difficult to implement. In an integrated classroom, each child would have the reading materials which most closely match his language and environment, making instruction difficult. It would also be difficult to prepare special materials for each dialect group.

Goodman views the language style and comprehension debate as twofold issue: should schools accept nonstandard language and build on it, or reject it and try to teach

the preferred dialect of the school. Goodman strongly expresses support of the former alternative. He believes that it is not necessary to have special materials, and that children can be encouraged to read the way they speak. All of Goodman's writings stress that standard English must not be used as a criterion for language development except where it is the language of the adults in the child's environment.

Goodman (1970) rejects Rystrom's (1970) assumption that the reading process involves matching phonemes with graphemes. Drill on foreign linguistic features results in uncertainty and confusion for the students. Phonemes must be those of the reader. Dialectal students must be encouraged to shift toward their own dialect in grammar, in vocabulary, and in phonology when meeting the printed page.

According to Goodman, educators must build on linguistic strengths, not weaknesses, of the students who use a restricted code through such things as language experience approaches, personalized reading programs, and perhaps current basal readers.

Goodman (1969) concludes that one of the ultimate goals of the school is to make language a flexible tool of thought, learning, and communication; and it is the responsibility of the teachers to utilize the home language as a tool for effective communication.

Modes of Presentation

Few would claim that the processes of listening and reading are independent, although differences clearly exist. Most differences between listening and reading which are fairly open to observation involve storage and retrieval differences. A reading display is available over time; a listening sequence is only available for intervals not controlled by the subject. A reading display allows a focused search of static materials; the listener must store all he searches. A reading display allows the reader to "shelve" mentally irrelevant parts of the display; the listener must decide on irrelevancy immediately or risk interference of one part of the sequence with another. Furthermore, the listener must put the message together segment by segment and depend upon internal retrieval processes to scan any portions of a message which is to be compared with other parts of the message. The reader can consider the entire display of the message as many times as he wishes to repeat his perusal. The reader also can search at his leisure for the organization of the writer without great strain to his memory and retrieval processes. A full understanding of language, then, will only be achieved--if one realizes that the information handling processes of reading and listening are considerably different.

To this point, it is assumed that reading, which utilizes the visual mode to comprehend a written display, might best facilitate comprehension. However, in fact, writing tends to be more formal than speech, especially in the areas of syntax and lexicon; standard English is more stringently adhered to. Thus, the question is raised: how is the information processing of the nonstandard English speaker affected when he is asked to deal with either a written display or an aural message coded in standard English?

Few studies have attempted to ascertain whether or not the mode of presentation affects the reading comprehension of children characteristic to those of the present study; and the results of these studies are extremely contradictory.

Bruininks (1970) attempted to determine if teaching approaches consistent with visual or auditory perceptual strengths of pupils would facilitate learning to recognize unknown words. The sample consisted of 20 boys with high visual and low auditory abilities and another group of 20 boys with the opposite perceptual pattern. The subjects were considered economically disadvantaged, with a mean chronological age of 8 years 7 months, and a mean intelligence score of 90 on the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale. Each subject was administered six auditory and six visual

perception tests to measure modality strengths and weaknesses. Subjects were taught to recognize 15 words by a visual approach and another set of 15 words by an auditory approach based primarily on procedures from the Mills Learning Methods Test. Data were collected on immediate recall and delayed recall for each perceptual dominance group. Analysis of variance on immediate and delayed scores failed to show significant differences between comparisons involving perceptual dominance groups, methods of teaching, and order of teaching presentation.

Reynolds and Palmatier (1969) studied the associations of 20 lexical words presented orally, visually (pictorially), and graphically (printed) to ascertain the common and unique responses. The subjects were randomly selected from the adult illiterates whose reading levels ranged from third to eighth grades. Each of the three treatment groups included lower (grades 3, 4, and 5) and upper (grades 6, 7, and 8) reading achievement. The responses were tabulated for frequency for each mode and coefficients of correlation were calculated. The coefficients were too low to account for a significant portion of the variance. The responses were then grouped into five categories (i.e., people, clothing) for closer inspection. A large proportion of responses was unique to a mode of presentation. Because the subjects were immature in

reading, the authors concluded that the mode of input affects the response, which implies that reading, listening, and viewing may not share common processes.

Dornbush and Basow (1970) examined the behaviors of good and poor readers, in grades 1, 3, 5, and 9, on memory of auditory and visual tasks in bisensory simultaneously presentations to the auditory and visual modalities, with one or the other to be recalled first as directed by the investigator prior to the presentations. Three durations of presentation--fast, medium, and slow--were used. The investigators found that more items were retained by the channel reporting first rather than second, although differences were greater for the auditory than for the visual channel. Analyses of variance revealed a significant interaction between modality and rate of presentation, especially for visual recall, which increased as rate did. Auditory recall, however, remained fairly constant. Auditory recall was consistently higher than visual recall.

These results do not at all reflect those of Linder and Fillmer (1970) who investigated the effectiveness of auditory, visual, and auditory-visual presentations to black, low socioeconomic, second-grade readers. Learning tasks involved sequential recall of: (1) eight familiar objects, (2) eight digits, and (3) eight colors. The

primary finding was that the auditory channel proved to be significantly inferior to the visual and auditory-visual channels for the three tasks combined. There were no significant differences between the visual and auditory-visual results.

Summary of the Literature

Linguists have striven to provide a theory of language which could be a basis for fruitful comprehension research. Recent developments in this area are represented by transformational grammar, which is a theory about innate structure of natural language. It provides a description of the structural relations within sentence.

Reading comprehension involves understanding sentences, and understanding sentences involves using the information about the structural relations of sentences as described by transformational grammar. The structural relations necessary for sentence comprehension are not only given in the surface structure, but also in the underlying or deep structure of sentences. Sentence comprehension cannot take place without the recovery of these underlying relationships.

Thus, a necessary condition for sentence comprehension, which is a prerequisite for the comprehension of larger units of discourse, is the recovery of deep structure. The literature indicates that one way for

researchers to investigate comprehension is to examine children's abilities to recover the deep structure of sentences.

Linguists and psycholinguists also have attempted to discover, define, and investigate those variables which intercede between what individuals know of their language (competence) and what they actually do in using the language (performance).

This section has briefly described two language hypotheses which attempt to characterize culturally different people, the models' implications to the teaching of reading, and influential factors affecting comprehension.

The Language Deficit Hypothesis maintains that there is a relationship between social structure and language development, and that the restrictive language of low socioeconomic status children is deficient in analytical power, abstract representation, and complex conceptual organization resulting in impoverished intellectual thought processes.

Support of this model requires the schools to teach the disadvantaged child standard English as quickly as possible to develop logical thought, academic success, and social and economic growth.

The Language Difference Hypothesis maintains that verbal systems are arbitrary, established only by

convention, and that nonstandard English dialects are coherent, logical, and structurally systematic, differing merely in form and function from standard English. The relationship between dialect variations in language and cognitive development is trivial.

This hypothesis implies that while learning a standard dialect may be advantageous for reason of textbook utilization, teacher-pupil communication and equal employment opportunity, it would not be required for intellectual advancement.

Alternatives are grouped into two main divisions, namely, the retention of existing materials and the revision of materials.

If present materials are utilized, then dialectal renderings of standard English must be accepted. If new materials are integrated into the reading program, then either of two approaches may be pursued: the design and use of dialect readers which are followed by a transition into standard English, or the integration of lessons directed toward the students' learning standard English as a second language.

What is indicated by a review of the literature pertaining to various registers of English, socioeconomic status, ethnic background, mode of presentation, and their relationships to comprehension is the need to collect data

which will discriminate the influences of each of the former four upon the latter.

This accomplished, researchers may not as often theorize, experiment, and practice within the singular areas which may affect comprehension without implicit or explicit recognition of other areas of possible influence. This study was conducted with the intention of providing such basic data.

The basic issue for this study is not the exploration of the acquisition of language, nor the exploration of the dialectal child's use of his language, but his ability to use competently and understand communications expressed in an alternate code.

CHAPTER III

SUBJECTS, MATERIALS, AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this chapter will be to: (1) describe the subjects and the materials used, (2) explain the treatment procedures, and (3) indicate the methods of analysis.

Subjects

The subjects were drawn from four elementary schools from the city of Elizabeth, New Jersey. One of the schools was located in one of the most depressed socio-economic areas of the city, two were situated in low socio-economic areas, and the last was located in an area which drew its student population from all socioeconomic levels.

The subjects were placed in four categories: middle socioeconomic white fifth-graders; low socioeconomic white fifth-graders; middle socioeconomic black fifth-graders; and low socioeconomic black fifth-graders. There were 20 subjects in each category. The subjects were chosen using random stratification from the cumulative records of each of the schools. The subjects, regardless of category placement, all had the following in common: all had been born in the states of New Jersey, New York, or Pennsylvania

(although many spent vacation time with families in the Southern states); all had spent their school years in the Elizabeth school district; none came from bilingual homes; none had ever suffered serious speech difficulties; all achieved at least scores of 80 on the verbal, non-verbal, and total IQ scores on the California Test of Mental Maturity (administered to students in October, 1970); and none had repeated a grade for any reason.

The resultant subject sample ranged in age from 10 through 11 years. The 80 subjects were tested during a 4-week period in the late spring of 1972. There were no replacements within the original sample.

In order to scale their socioeconomic background and status, the Duncan Socio-Economic Index Scale was used. As described by Reiss (1961), a subject's position on the scale is determined by the occupations of the head of the household. Each subject was assigned a score from the index. The resultant 80 scores naturally formed two groups. The first group of scores ranged between 0 (welfare recipient) to 25 (mechanic); within the confines of this study, any score within this range was considered to represent low socioeconomic status. The second group of scores ranged between 32 (building superintendent) to 92 (medical doctor); any score within this range was confined to represent middle socioeconomic status. All of the

pertinent information gathered was recorded on a Background Information Form. An example of this form can be seen in Appendix A.

Instrument

The stimulus tasks consisted of 40 sentences representative of 10 syntactic or morphological features of standard English. These sentences were selected from the 60 stimulus sentences used by Garvey and McFarlane (1968, 1970) in their attempt to devise "A Measure of Standard English Proficiency of Inner-City Children" (1970) (see Appendix B). An underlying purpose of the Garvey-McFarlane study was to establish identifying factors of subgroups who utilize systematically different language patterns. The authors of the sentences describe the terminology and the contents of the sentences as being "familiar and interesting to the children [p. 3a]."

The original Garvey-McFarlane sentences employed 15 grammatical structures. Studies (Labov & Cohen, 1967; Loman, 1967) have resulted in the implication that there may be a tendency in the "spontaneous speech" of low socioeconomic urban children (ages 9-12) toward the production of certain forms differing--but functionally equal--to the standard English forms. These indications and forms served Garvey and McFarlane as the basis for the selection of the 15 grammatical structures.

The following modifications of the Garvey-McFarlane instrument were made for the present study.

Garvey-McFarlane applied the Kuder-Richardson$_{20}$ formula to their results in order to measure the internal consistency of the four-item scales. Only 10 of the 15 structures achieved a reliability of .55 or greater, and only these 10 structures were used in the present study (see Appendix B).

The total set of materials used in this study consisted of 42 of the Garvey-McFarlane sentences. Each of the 10 structures which achieved a reliability of .55 was represented by four sentences, two of which were used for the aural-oral tasks (20 sentences) and two of which were used for visual-reading tasks (20 sentences). The two remaining sentences were presented to each subject before the onset of each of the two parts of the session (aural-oral, visual-reading tasks) in order to: (1) establish the ability of the child to understand the tasks, (2) note any possible speech impediment not noted on the cumulative folder, (3) spend some of any initial nervousness that a subject may have, and (4) regulate the volume of the tape recorder when used. As in the original Garvey-McFarlane test, the stimulus sentences within each group of 20 were reordered so that the structures and the sentences within each structure were noncontinguous (see Appendix C).

Aural-Oral Tasks

Two sentences from each of the 10 syntactical structures were presented to each subject via a tape recorder. The voice was that of a white female speaking at a normal rate of speed.

A 6-second interval separated the end of one sentence from a short tone or ring that signaled the beginning of the next sentence.

As can be seen in Appendix C, some of the sentences had associated questions which were formulated in order to ascertain: (1) the child's understanding of what he had heard or read, and (2) if he had properly interpreted the critical structure as presented in the sentence.

Visual-Reading Tasks

Each of the remaining 20 sentences was typed on a 2-1/2 x 8" card. In accordance with the pattern established with the aural-oral materials, some of the sentences had associated questions.

Repetitive Sentence Technique

The repetitive technique has been used empirically as a vehicle for the identification of language structures which are assumed to be in the repetoire of those students who use standard English and which represent a ceiling level in the control of standard English.

McNeill (1970) hypothesized that children's imitations are usually reformulations of adult sentences. Adult sentences which are too long to be retained in immeidate memory are altered to fit the child's grammar. Menyuk (1963a), empirically substantiating McNeill's hypothesis, concluded that a child produces in imitation only what he produces in spontaneous speech. It seems reasonable, therefore, that imitation may be used to study children's productive capacities.

Bellugi (1970) and R. Brown (1970) studied spontaneous dialogue between adults and children and analyzed the children's responses to the adults' questions. The aptness of the answers was used as an index of comprehension. An adult asked, for instance, "What did you hit?" If the child answered "arm," it was assumed that the question was understood. If the child answered "hit," it was assumed that the child did not know the transformation relating Wh-forms to the underlying objectives of sentences.

Labov and Cohen (1967) report the use of a repetition technique with speakers of nonstandard English. Their work shows that the standard English utterances are understood, but that while some sentences are repeated exactly, others are translated or transposed into nonstandard equivalents. It is suggested that such an approach could reveal

the upper limits of ability to handle certain patterns in standard English and thus might be used to discriminate among groups of nonstandard English speakers if those groups represent structurally different dialects.

Procedures

A pilot study was completed to test the materials and procedures used in this experiment. The results of the pilot gave indication that the study was feasible with several modifications of the original outline.

The pilot study was conducted with a population similar to the one used in the study, except the subjects were 18 low SES fourth-graders instead of fifth-graders. More than a few of the low socioeconomic children were unable to read many of the stimulus sentences. The pilot was extended to 8 low SES fifth-grade children, who experienced little frustration when reading the materials.

The original outline of the study called for the subject to restate the sentence in his own words (in addition to the steps of the finalized tasks) in order to yield a syntactical-interpretation score. The pilot revealed that the subjects usually responded to this request by either: (1) repeating the sentence exactly as they had read it, or (2) repeating their answers to the previously answered comprehension questions

During both the pilot and the reported study, each

child was seen individually by the investigator. Before each session began, each student was told that the investigator was developing part of a new reading program and was trying it out in various schools. They were assured that it was not a test of any sort and that there would be no report back to their teachers. They were then asked if they would participate. No student refused to do so.

Aural-Oral Tasks

The task was explained to the subject, who was then presented with two preliminary sentences, via tape recorder. The sentences were presented one at a time, after the examiner was assured that the subject understood the task and that the volume of the set was comfortable.

The student was directed to repeat each sentence and a recording was made of his repetitions. Although the student was cognizant that his responses were being recorded, steps were taken to make the recording as unobtrusive as possible.

Following some of the repetition tasks, questions were asked to ascertain: (1) the child's understanding of what he had repeated, and/or (2) if he had properly interpreted the critical structure as presented in the sentence. These responses were also recorded.

Visual-Reading Tasks

After the aural-oral set of tasks, the subject was then asked to read the remaining sentences from the 10 structures. The sentence on each card, which was held by the experimenter, was read by the student. The experimenter then removed the stimulus matter and the student would repeat what he had read. Both the reading and the repetition were recorded. Questioning, as described above, would ensue, and the student's responses were recorded.

Each session required approximately 25 minutes.

Scoring

After the session, the investigator played back the tape of the student's responses and scored them on a protocol, an example of which is given in Appendix B. A score of 1 was given for each response in which the critical structure of syntax was read and/or repeated exactly. A score of 1 was also given for each comprehension and syntax-understanding question which was answered correctly.

If the response was not read or repeated, or if the associated question was not answered correctly, a score of 0 was given.

Table 1 provides examples of the scoring procedures.

TABLE 1

EXAMPLES OF THE SCORING PROCEDURES

Stimulus sentence	Response	Score
Even Robert couldn't lift the box by himself.	Even Robert couldn't lift the box by himself.	1
	Even Robert couldn't lift the box by hisself.	0
	Even Robert couldn't lift the box . . .	0
Associated questions		
How many people were trying to lift the box?	One.	1
	Many.	0
	I don't remember.	0
Could he do it?	No.	1
	Yes.	0
If the box had to be lifted, how could he do it?	Ask for some help.	1
	(No answer)	0

Treatment of the Data

All of the pertinent data concerning the subjects and their scores were transferred to IBM cards by the examiner. The data were processed at the Center for Computer and Information Services, Rutgers--The State University of New Jersey. The BMD X64, General Linear Hypothesis Program (revised April 1971), was used to analyze the data. The data cards were prepared and arranged according to the outlines in BMD: Biomedical Computer Programs (Dixon, 1967). *F* values were compared for significance using a standard table.

The data for the following treatments were analyzed separately: (1) aural-oral, (2) visual-reading, and (3) aural-oral and visual-reading.

The first and second sets of data were analyzed using a three-way fixed effects model of analysis of variance for which a general linear hypothesis was used. There were two levels of socioeconomic status with two groups of different ethnic origins nested within these levels. Each group was further divided into two levels of conformance to standard English. Figure 1 presents the statistical design used to assess the interaction of SES, ethnic origins, and standard English conformity. Three main effect sources of variation, plus the corresponding interactions, made up the three main effect sources of variation. Thus,

	Socioeconomic Status							
	Middle (n=40)				Low (n=40)			
	White (n=20)		Ethnic Background Black (n=20)		White (n=20)		Black (n=20)	
			Conformity to Standard English					
	High (n=10)	Low (n=10)	High (n=10)	Low (n=10)	High (n=10)	Low (n=10)	High (n=10)	Low (n=10)
Comprehension								

Fig. 1. Statistical Design I: Three-way analysis of variance.

there were eight cells (2 x 2 x 2 = 8).

The third set of data was analyzed using a four-way fixed effects model of analysis of variance for which a general linear hypothesis was used. There were two levels of socioeconomic status with two groups of different ethnic origins nested within these levels. Nested within each group are the modality treatments, each of which is divided into two levels of conformance to standard English Figure 2 summarizes the analysis used. Four main effect sources of variation plus the corresponding interactions made up of the four main effect sources of variation. Thus, there were 16 cells (2 x 2 x 2 x 2 = 16).

The fourth set of data concerning sex was treated to two one-way analyses of variance to assess the effect of sex upon A-O and V-R comprehension scores. The F ratios of .62 for A-O scores and 1.65 for V-R scores were not significant at the .05 level.

The mean predicted values obtained from the analyses of variance tables were used to determine which one of two groups or which one of two treatments could be held accountable for the larger part of the variance contributing to any obtained significant differences.

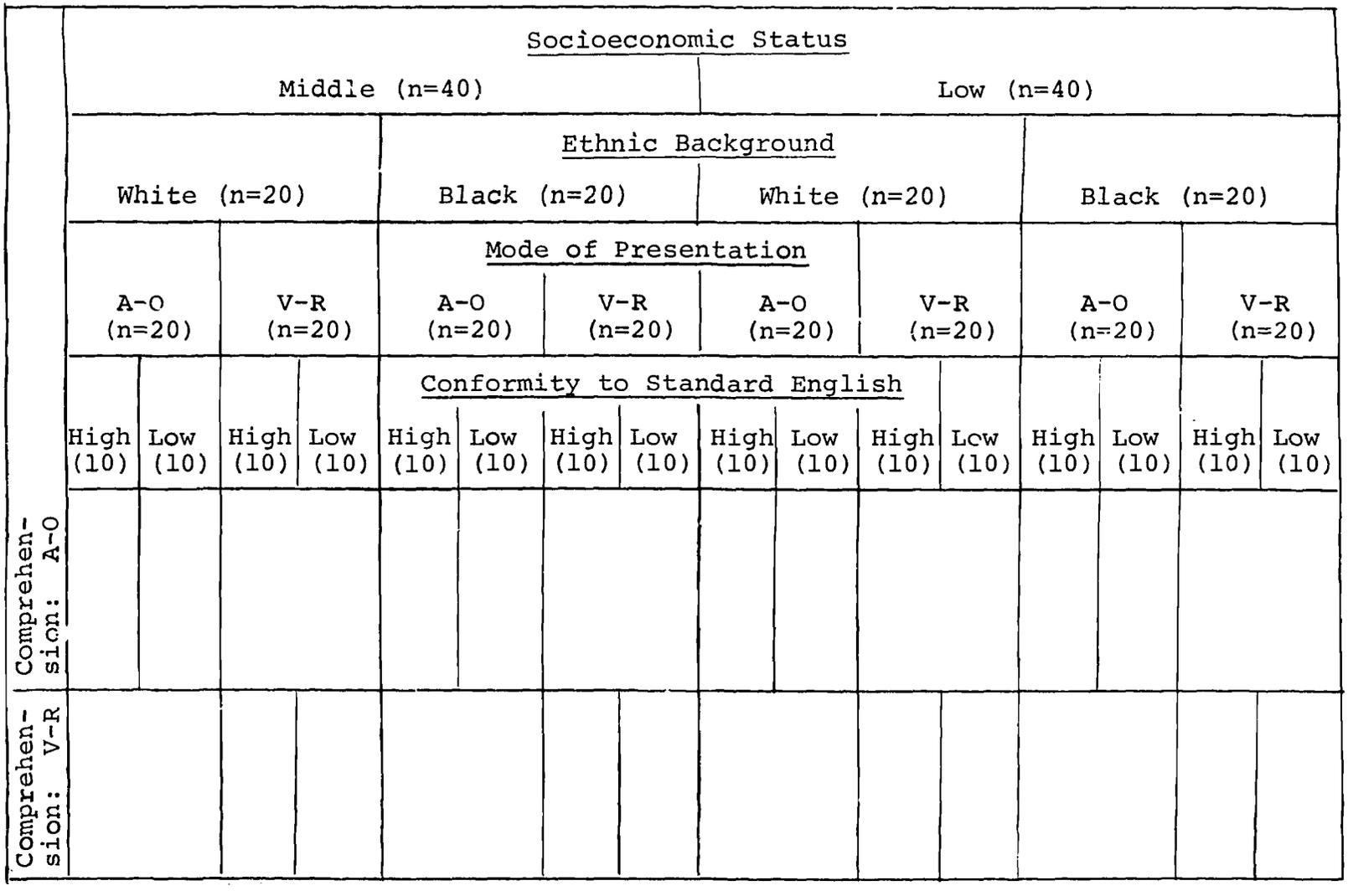

Fig. 2. Statistical Design II: Four-way analysis of variance.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this chapter will be to analyze the data derived from the present study in the light of the questions proposed in the statement of the problems. The information will be presented in the stated order of the hypotheses of the study.

Hypothesis 1: The Influence of the Ability to Conform to Standard English upon Comprehension

The first hypothesis, that when presented with tasks expressed in standard English, the comprehension of children whose speaking patterns conform to standard English is not significantly greater than the comprehension of children whose speaking patterns do not conform to standard English, was rejected.

The effect of conformity to standard English upon comprehension was significant at the .01 level when the A-O treatment was employed. This is demonstrated by Table 2. Table 3 reports a higher level of significance (.005) when the V-R method was employed. When the treatments were combined, the effect of standard English conformity was also highly significant (.005) to comprehension, as

can be seen in Table 4. High conformance groups made more correct responses than the low conformance groups, regardless of the mode of presentation or a combination of modes, as noted in Table 5.

None of the possible two-, three-, or four-way interactions involving conformity to standard English was significant. These results support the conclusion that students whose dialect conforms to standard English comprehend aural and read material better than those students who utilize a nonstandard English style of speaking.

Hypothesis 2: The Influence of Socioeconomic Status upon Comprehension

The second hypothesis, that when presented with tasks expressed in standard English, the comprehension of children of middle SES families is not significantly greater than the comprehension of children from low SES families, was rejected.

Table 4 presents the analysis of variance of SES effect upon combined A-O and V-R treatment responses which was highly significant at the .005 level. There were significant differences in performance between the middle and low SES groups when presented with the A-O treatment (.01) as shown on Table 2. Table 3 demonstrates that there were also significant differences (.05) between the comprehension of middle and low SES subjects when presented with

TABLE 2

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF THE AURAL-ORAL TREATMENT

Sources of variation		Degrees of freedom	Sum of squares	Mean square	F value
Conformity	(C)	1	90.31	90.31	7.63**
Socioeconomic status	(S)	1	86.11	86.11	7.27**
Ethnic	(E)	1	2.81	2.81	0.24
C x S		1	12.01	12.01	1.01
C x E		1	23.11	23.11	1.95
S x E		1	2.11	2.11	0.18
C x S x E		1	0.01	0.01	0.00
Residual		72	852.70	11.84	

**p < .01.

TABLE 3

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF THE VISUAL-READING TREATMENT

Sources of variation		Degrees of freedom	Sum of squares	Mean square	F value
Conformity	(C)	1	110.45	100.45	12.41*
Socioeconomic status	(S)	1	61.25	61.25	6.89***
Ethnic	(E)	1	42.05	42.05	4.73***
C x S		1	2.45	2.45	0.28
C x E		1	4.05	4.05	0.45
S x E		1	18.05	18.05	2.03
C x S x E		1	1.25	1.25	0.14
Residual		72	640.40	8.89	

*p < .005.

**p < .01.

***p < .05.

TABLE 4

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF THE AURAL-ORAL AND VISUAL READING TREATMENTS

Sources of variation		Degrees of freedom	Sum of squares	Mean square	F value
Conformity	(C)	1	200.26	200.26	18.93*
Socioeconomic status	(S)	1	146.31	146.31	13.83*
Ethnic	(E)	1	33.31	33.31	3.15
C x S		1	12.66	12.66	1.20
C x E		1	23.26	23.26	2.20
S x E		1	3.91	3.91	0.37
C x S x E		1	0.51	0.51	0.05
Modal		8	587.15	73.39	7.23*
Residual		72	731.32	10.16	

*$p < .005$.

TABLE 5

SUMMARY OF MEAN PREDICTED VALUES DERIVED FROM ANALYSES OF VARIANCES

Aural-Oral Treatment			
Conformity to standard English		SES	
High group	vs. Low group	Middle group	vs. Low group
29.07	27.62	39.73	37.65

Visual-Reading Treatment			
Conformity to standard English		SES	
High group	vs. Low group	Middle group	vs. Low group
26.15	23.80	25.85	24.10

Ethnic background	
White	vs. Black
25.70	24.25

Aural-Oral and Visual-Reading Treatments			
Conformity to standard English		SES	
High group	vs. Low group	Middle group	vs. Low group
27.95	25.71	27.79	25.88

Mode of presentation	
Aural-Oral	vs. Visual Reading
27.67	25.99

only V-R tasks.

Directionality of the accumulation of more correct answers lies toward the higher SES groups regardless of the treatment or combination of treatments as noted from the summary of mean predicted values in Table 5.

None of the possible two-, three-, or four-way interactions involving SES was significant.

Thus, it appears that SES does have considerable influence upon comprehension and that these influences are more evident when a combination of modes are utilized than when used separately. If applied separately, the A-O treatment is more subject to effect by SES than the V-R treatment.

Hypothesis 3: Ethnic Influence upon Comprehension

The third hypothesis, when presented with tasks expressed in standard English, the comprehension of white children is not significantly greater than the comprehension of black children, was rejected in part.

Only in the V-R treatment did the ethnic background of a subject have influence upon his comprehension. This significance, at a .05 level, can be seen in Table 3. The summary of mean predicted values for the influence of ethnic background, summarized in Table 5, indicates that the comprehension of white subjects was significantly

better than black subjects.

Table 2 shows that although there were small differences in comprehension between black and white subjects, when dealing with A-O tasks, the differences were not significant. Nor were there significant differences of comprehension between the black and white subjects when the two modes of presentation were combined (see Table 4).

None of the possible two-, three-, or four-way interactions involving ethnic influence upon comprehension was significant.

It may be concluded from these results that race may influence the comprehension scores of black students only when the mode of presentation of material requires the student to understand self-read matter.

Hypothesis 4: The Influence of Mode of Presentation upon Comprehension

The fourth hypothesis, that when presented with tasks expressed in standard English, the ability of children to comprehend will be the same regardless of the mode of presentation of material, was rejected.

As shown in Table 4, there were highly significant differences between the aural-oral treatment and the visual-reading treatment at the .005 level. The mean predicted values, as summarized in Table 5, indicates that subjects performed significantly better in response to the

A-O treatment than to the V-R treatment.

None of the possible two-, three-, or four-way interactions involving modality effect upon comprehension was significant.

Summary of Results

The results of this study are summarized below. In order to test the stated hypotheses, two three-way analyses of variance (A-O treatment and V-R treatment) and one four-way analysis of variance (A-O and V-R treatments) were performed.

Tables 2 through 4 indicate the results of the analyses. It can be seen from these tables that the following variables and all possible interactions of these variables were analyzed: conformance to standard English, SES, ethnic background, and mode of presentation.

Analyses of variance reveal that choice of register significantly affects comprehension regardless of the use of treatment or combination of treatments. This factor contributed toward highly significant differences between the high and low conformance to standard English groups when these groups were subject to combined treatment. Not as extreme, but still statistically significant, were the effects of conformity when the students were subject to A-O or V-R treatments.

Subsequent comparison tests of all significant

results of analyses indicate that the ability to conform to Standard English was found to affect comprehension positively, conversely, increased deviations from standard English were found to affect comprehension negatively.

With respect to SES, the analysis of variance demonstrated that this factor affects comprehension at a highly significant level when the material is presented in combined modes, and at significant levels only when one mode of presentation is used. A comparisons test indicated that, in all analyses demonstrating significance of this factor, the middle SES groups exceeded the low SES groups in accumulating correct responses.

In addition, significant differences were found for the variable of ethnic background only when the V-R treatment was employed.

In applying analysis of variance to modal effects upon comprehension, significant differences were found. A comparisons test of mean predicted values found that the trend for more correct answers was toward the A-O treatment and away from the V-R treatment.

No interaction effects were observed.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this chapter will be: (1) to discuss the results of the study, (2) to offer some possible explanations of these results, and (3) to relate this discussion and explanation to the literature.

The conclusions presented in this chapter are based on those findings of Chapter IV, and are presented within the limitations proper to the scope, measuring instruments, and investigator for this study.

The Influence of the Ability to Conform to Standard English upon Comprehension

One of the primary findings of this study is that the comprehension of a student whose register conforms to standard English is significantly greater than that of the students whose register does not.

The comprehension differential between the users of the compared registers was most extreme when a combination of treatments, aural and visual, was used. Use of the visual mode of presentation contributed toward a greater disparity between the two groups than the aural mode of presentation.

As a whole, both high and low conformity groups had more positive responses to the aural treatment than to the combined treatment, which in turn facilitated comprehension to a higher degree than a solely visual method.

Only the first of these findings will be discussed in this section; the latter findings will be covered in a subsequent section--The Influence of Mode of Presentation upon Comprehension.

The most feasible explanation of the primary finding is that such a differential of comprehension between dialectal speakers and standard English speakers is due to the children's reading skills and to the differences between their dialect and that of the reading materials.

In light of this study, it can be assumed that a child's ability to understand written language is a function of the child's ability to see the relationships between the components of what is written and the components of his own language.

Ruddell's (1965) and Tatham's (1970) findings are reflective of those of the present study: comprehension scores will be significantly higher if the passage reflects the oral speech patterns of the reader than if they do not.

This study supports the evidence cited by Bernstein (1961, 1962), Bernstein and Henderson (1969), and Skinner and Holland (1961). The user of a restricted

speech code may be confused when confronted with another code, the product of the confusion being different sets of referential meanings.

It does not appear that the child of the restricted code is able to switch to the elaborate code, and, thus, will be unable to cope due to syntactic factors and limited lexical control.

Baratz (1969b) and Stewart (1969) do not acknowledge the "restricted" and "elaborate" codes per se as they deem this terminology to denote deficient and superior language codes, yet they do postulate the same "interference effect" as the above researchers. The findings of this investigation can neither support nor reject the assumption of Baratz and Stewart that the "interference effect" results from introducing dialectal children to reading materials written in standard English. It is beyond the scope of this study to determine the cause of such a confusion between codes; that it does exist and that it does cause less comprehension are confirmed by this investigation.

The present findings are not in agreement with those researchers (Goodman, 1967; Labov & Cohen, 1967; Weber, 1970) who contend that dialectal speakers have control over both the restricted and elaborate code, but translate all standard reading into nonstandard English

speech. It appears that there is a relationship between the reading errors made by a child reading aloud and his understanding of the materials read. Children, whose speech represents a restricted code, apparently do not effectively transfer to a more sophisticated register of their familiar code in order to competently deal with the code used by the reading task.

The first inclination of the investigator is to support those in favor of teaching English as a second dialect in order to compensate for the significant comprehension differential between dialectal speakers and standard English speakers. However, in light of Rystrom's (1970) nonsignificant and negative results, when teaching English as a second language was applied, it seems logical to concur with Goodman (1970) that drill on "foreign" linguistic features results in confusion for students.

There is sufficient evidence from this investigation to indicate that certain syntactic factors in oral language tend to be related to reading achievement. It seems reasonable, therefore, to posit that the separation of syntax and semantics is near-to-impossible, and that syntax and semantics may be the critical components of the sentence upon comprehension hinges.

The findings also imply that dialectal children do not read sentences but a series of individual words; and

the sentence meaning is some conglomerate of individual word meanings rather than a unified contextualize conception. Conversely, the child who uses a standard English code seems to appreciate that words derive their meaning from the sentence context. Even as late as fifth grade the low conformity group still fails to subordinate the perceptual-motor meaning of the separate words to the larger linguistic reality of the sentence.

In order to comprehend a sentence fully, the listener or reader must be able to relate the correct deep structure to the surface structure of the sentence and to project a consistent semantic reading of the individual words. The findings of this study strongly imply that the dialectal child is often reacting to surface structures alone, that is, a recognition of individual sounds, letters, words, or superficial syntactic patterns. This type of response is insufficient for comprehension, since comprehension requires that each sentence be given both syntactic and semantic interpretations in depth.

The above generalizations should not be misunderstood: dialectal speakers may speak fluently and competently understand when listening. What they seem to lack, however, is an appreciation of written language and an appreciation of the syntactical rules that govern the relationship of words independent of reference to an external

reality. The students may be trapped in between their dialectal pattern and the extreme contrast of the impersonal abstractions of the printed language. This hypothesis is consistent with Bernstein's (1961, 1962) conclusion that restricted language forms are sufficiently different from formal, written registers and may serve to inhibit reading competence and performance.

The Influence of Socioeconomic Status upon Comprehension

Results of the study indicate that the comprehension of middle SES students is significantly greater than the comprehension of students from low SES when presented with tasks expressed in standard English.

Based on total scores, both low and middle SES groups responded best to the aural mode of presentation. The combining of the modes yielded more correct responses than the use of the visual mode alone.

Furthermore, the findings have demonstrated that combination of approaches caused the most significant differences of achievement between the middle and low SES groups, and the aural approaches caused more of a difference in achievement than the visual approach.

This suggests the role which language plays in the two SES groups. One could but conclude that middle SES children use a register which fosters better comprehension.

Similarly, it could be concluded that low SES children did not use a register which affects comprehension in a positive manner. Rather, their low level of language functioning and their nonstandard English dialects appear to have hindered their performance on both treatments singularly and combined.

It appears that the theory posited by Bernstein (1961, 1962) is supported by this study. The child who comes from a low SES, and who normally uses a restricted code, may not be prepared to cope with material scripted or spoken in an elaborate code.

The findings of the present study closely resemble that of Ruddell and Graves (1972) who also found that the low SES groups had more difficulty identifying syntactical constructions than middle SES children.

There are strong indications from the present study, then, that choices of register by children are influenced by the adult language models of their home environments. It also appears that the schools may not be providing enough practice in the use of standard English, thereby not counterbalancing the codes and enabling effective matching of specific codes to specific situations.

Ethnic Influence upon Comprehension

The results of the present study indicate that the comprehension differences between black and white children

were not statistically significant when the standard English tasks were expressed in either the A-O or combined A-O and V-R modes.

Significant differences between the two ethnic groups resulted only when the standard English tasks were presented in the V-R manner.

These findings suggest that racial differences in comprehension appear to be associated with differences in environmental advantages. It is presumed that the differences in reading level due to race would not be as great as differences due to SES.

The study of Whiteman and Deutsch (1968), who investigated the effects of SES and race on fifth-graders' performances on linguistic measures, have documented the results of the present study. Their significant results indicate that there exist substantial differences in linguistic performance among their subjects, and these differences are attributed to SES, not racial background.

Dialectal readers which utilize specific dialectal syntactic patterns, as proposed by Baratz (1970), would have little effect toward the improvement of reading comprehension. The results of the present study revealed that the comprehension deficits experienced by the subjects of the study cannot be attributed to race, but to SES and/or register selection.

The Influence of Mode of Presentation upon Comprehension

The results of the study generally indicate that the comprehension of tasks presented in the A-O manner, as compared to the V-R manner, facilitates comprehension.

Another primary finding of the study is that the most influential of the affecting variables was conformity to standard English, especially when the modes of presentation are combined.

Breaking the generalities down, it is to be noted that when the influences of register and SES were analyzed by mode of presentation, it was found that a combining of both modes produced the highest differences between the middle SES, high conformity group and the low SES, low conformity group.

However, it is interesting to note that while the A-O mode emphasizes the difference of comprehension between the middle and low SES groups, as well as the high and low conformity groups, it was the V-R mode that emphasizes the differences of comprehension between the high and low conformity to standard English groups.

The former results may have been due to the disadvantages, for the dialectal speaker, of a written display over an oral message, especially if the message is coded in an unfamiliar language pattern. Although the reader, can peruse, store, and retrieve with somewhat more

control than the listener, in an attempt to compensate for the formality of language, the weak relationship between SES and coding styles overwhelms his decoding processes and frustration sets in. Thus, when presented with both written and oral messages coded in standard English, the dialectal child will better comprehend the oral message. The oral mode does not allow control of storage and retrieval of message segments, but the listener does benefit from the advantages of intonation and of dealing with a familiar medium.

The results of this study showed no significant interaction effects between SES and conformity. This is surprising in light of the findings of highly significant differences for both of these variables. Nevertheless, a comparison of the predicted mean values for combined modes of presentation treatment groups, going from highest to lowest result in the following order: high conformity, middle SES; high conformity, low SES; low conformity, middle SES; low conformity and low SES. In other words, the group that utilized standard English speaking styles and had advantaged home environments received the highest comprehension scores. This was followed next by the group that utilized standard English without benefit of an advantaged home environment. This would naturally follow if conformity were indeed the stronger influer e of the two

variables. Next is the group who experienced an advantaged home environment only. This is followed by the last group which experienced a non-advantaged background and utilizing only dialectal code. There is an indication that there is an unanalyzed interaction between conformance to standard English and SES that can account for these results. However, this consideration is merely speculative, since any interaction effect failed to achieve statistical significance.

The general finding of auditory presentation facilitating comprehension supports that same finding of Dornbush and Basow (1970), who found that such a mode produced consistently higher comprehension for good and poor readers than a visual mode of presentation. Conversely, the investigation of Linder and Fillmer (1970), who utilized the same treatments and combination of treatments as the present study, found that both the visual and the aural-visual presentations were superior to the aural presentation; whereby the present study found a significant difference between the two modes in favor of the aural method. However, neither of these studies utilized words or sentences in the manner of this study to evaluate comprehension.

Because no extant literature was found pertaining to mode of presentation that would closely resemble the present study, the investigator presumes the findings of

this investigation to be unique and valid for children sharing the same characteristics of those of the sample.

Ethnic background only influenced comprehension when the materials were presented in the V-R mode--the black children did not fare as well as the white children. Comprehension was not influenced to a significant degree when the materials were presented in either the A-O mode or a combination of A-O and V-R modes.

As noted in Tables E1-E4, 20 percent of the middle SES students achieved ceiling scores within both the A-O and V-R treatments (33 and 29, respectively). This serves as an indicator that modifications of these instruments for future investigations may be needed; specifically, extensions of the upper levels of difficulty on both sets of tasks.

Summary of Discussion and Conclusions

On the basis of the findings of the present study, it is reasonable to conclude the following:

Conformance to standard English. An individual's ability to understand written language is a function of his ability to see relationships of what is written and the components of his own language. Exposure to and use of elaborate language code enhances the possibility of the development of the comprehension abilities as demanded by the expectancies of the school; conversely, exposure to

and use of a restricted language code does not facilitate such development.

Regular use of only the restricted code will also restrict the development of the ability to switch to the elaborate code, thus not enabling the individual to match each situation with an appropriate code.

Socioeconomic status. There is a high, positive relationship between SES and the development of the comprehension abilities demanded by the school. The degree of influence of SES upon this development is less than that of the ability to conform to standard English, but still considerable. It appears that SES and register selection are closely associated, but the defining of the nature of the relationship is beyond the scope of this study.

Ethnic background. There is little relationship between the ability to comprehend the ethnic background. The relationship that is evident is based on the lack of ability to read materials coded in an unfamiliar register.

Mode of presentation. It appears that the auditory mode is most conducive to the evaluation of comprehension competence, and perhaps to the measurement of potential.

Presentation of scripted materials appears to be a better measure of comprehension performance, and perhaps a

better measure of comprehension achievement, as defined by the school.

The primary implication of the present study is that the child may be adversely affected by the school learning experience if, as a result of restricted communication experience, he does not regularly use language to organize events, has few structural options for storing or communicating his thoughts, cannot recognize and express a variety of alternatives in verbal problem solving, and has difficulty finding word options to express thought.

It would seem that the elaborate code as defined by Bernstein provides greater access to school learning while the dominance of a more restricted communicative style may interfere ith learning.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study was concerned with the investigation of the possible factors contributing to the rapidly growing number of intermediate-grade children who experience reading comprehension problems.

A review of the literature concerned with the above problem revealed that the following four factors were considered to influence the development of reading comprehension to a great degree: conformance to standard English, SES, ethnic background, and mode of presentation of the materials. The theorizing, discussion, investigation, and actualization of theory of these four affecting variables differed widely among the proponents of the divergent schools of thought, specifically the linguists, psycholinguists, and sociolinguists. The dissimilarities of opinion were not only concerned with the causes of reading deficiency, but also with the remedial methodology and materials.

The major purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of registers, ethnic backgrounds, SES, and

mode of presentation upon the comprehension of fifth-grade children. The investigation sought to: (1) explore the concepts upon which each school of thought founded its reading theories; (2) synthesize the concepts of one school to another, seeking common denominators; and (3) relate the literature to the findings of the present study.

Hypotheses were formulated in the null form when: (1) presented with tasks expressed in standard English, the comprehension of children whose speaking patterns conform to standard English is not significantly greater than the comprehension of children whose speaking patterns do not conform to standard English; (2) presented with tasks expressed in standard English, the comprehension of children from middle SES families is not significantly greater than the comprehension of children from low SES families; (3) presented with tasks expressed in standard English, the comprehension of white children is not significantly greater than the comprehension of black children; and (4) presented with tasks expressed in standard English, the ability of children to comprehend will be the same regardless of the mode of presentation of material, specifically visual vs. aural presentation.

The study was conducted with 80 fifth-grade students drawn from the Elizabeth, New Jersey School System. A process of random stratification was used to provide

homogeneous groups within four experimental categories consisting of 20 subjects each. The four categories were composed of: middle SES white students, low SES white students, middle SES black students, and low SES black students. The age range was from 10.0 to 11.11 years; and all students had achieved minimum I.Q. scores of 80.

The materials used were two measurement instruments which were adaptations of Garvey and McFarlane's "A Measure of Standard English Proficiency of Inner-City Children" (1970).

The statistical analyses were accomplished by using three- and four-way analyses of variance to analyze the differences among the means in the treatment groups and obtain F ratios. Another analysis involved the mean predicted values obtained from the aforementioned analyses of variance.

The primary findings of the investigation were as follows:

1. The comprehension of children whose speaking patterns conform to standard English was significantly greater than the comprehension of children whose speaking patterns are dialectal, regardless of the treatment (A-O, V-R, or A-O and V-R).

   a. The comprehension differential between the treatment groups was most extreme when a

combination of modes was employed.

b. The comprehension differential between the treatment groups was more emphasized when the V-R mode was employed than the A-O mode.

2. The comprehension of middle SES children was significantly greater than the comprehension of children from low SES when presented with tasks expressed in standard English.

a. The comprehension differential between the treatment groups was more emphasized when a combination of A-O and V-R modes of presentation were used rather than the singular approaches.

b. Of the singular treatments, the differential was significantly greater when the A-O mode was used than when the V-R mode was used.

3. a. The comprehension of white children was not significantly greater than that of the black children when the tasks were presented in either the A-O mode or combined A-O and V-R modes.

b. The comprehension of white children was significantly greater than that of black children only when the directed tasks, expressed in standard English, were presented in the

V-R mode.

4. When presented with tasks expressed in standard English, the subjects more readily understood the materials presented in the A-O mode than the material presented in the V-R mode.

The findings and conclusions should be viewed in light of certain limitations inherent to this study; namely, the scope, the materials, the sample, and the investigator.

The following conclusions were drawn from the results of the investigation:

1. A differential of comprehension development exists between dialectal speakers and standard English speakers. This differential is attributable to the children's reading skills and to the differences between their dialect and that of the materials. It does not appear that the child of the restricted code is able to switch to the elaborate code to meet the demands of a specific situation.

2 There is a high, positive relationship between SES and the development of the comprehension abilities as demanded by the school.

3. There is little relationship between the ability to comprehend and ethnic background. The relationship that is evident is based on the lack of ability to read

materials coded in an unfamiliar register.

4. It appears that the auditory mode is most conducive to the evaluation of comprehension competence, and that an instrument which makes use of scripted materials is a better measure of comprehension performance.

Suggestions for Future Research

Many other questions about the nature of the effects of dialect use upon comprehension competence and performance still remain unanswered. The following are proposed as bases for future research in the fields of comprehension, language development, and the education of the disadvantaged child:

1. What part of the differential of comprehension between low and high conformance to standard English can be attributed to a lack of understanding? What part can be attributed to the inability to switch codes?

An investigation is warranted in order to define further the relationships of register usage and comprehension. Such an investigation would develop the findings of this study and those of Baratz (1969b). The design of the study would be similar to the present one with one exception--the code used would be dialectal.

2. Can a valid and reliable instrument, which utilizes the aural mode of presentation, be developed in order to evaluate a child's comprehension competence?

3. Can a valid and reliable instrument, which utilizes the visual mode of presentation, be developed in order to evaluate a child's comprehension performance?

4. Is there a predictable relationship between a child's competence and performance?

Implications for Teaching Dialectal Students

It has not been within the scope of this study to determine if the restricted language style: is useful to the regular user, is systematic in its rules of construction, is syntactically or semantically deficient, or is as good a basis for thinking and conceptualization as any other form of language.

However, it was within the scope of this investigation to determine if dialectal speakers have the skills necessary to comprehend enough standard English in order to successfully fulfill his potentials successfully in whatever future directions he chooses. It has been found that the dialectal child does not have such abilities.

The observed differences in the role of register selection between the two conformance groups and the two SES groups found in the present study suggest some important implications for the teaching of reading.

It appears that the most reasonable and appropriate of the alternate teaching approaches is that of Goodman's

(1969) who purports that the ultimate goal of the school is to make language a flexible tool of thought, language, and communication. This can only be achieved if the dialectal child becomes aware that he possesses a language and becomes sensitive to the language code differences. This should be done directly. If a child is being taught about his and a "foreign" register, he should be told this and should be encouraged to perceive and discuss language itself.

The usual methodology used to augment the linguistic capacities of students seems to be based on a series of games and drills. These obviously have been largely unsuccessful because they are but excercises and not learning activities. Thus, children are not being made aware of language since there is no direct reference to language.

Development of efficient reading programs for speakers of dialects has not been successful because there has been a failure to recognize that the child's dialect contains a definite structure and organization and is often resistant to change. In order to devise such a program, educators must first start at a point meaningful to the learner. As the dialectal children are introduced to reading, maximum attention should be given to their oral language skills. The dialectal child should be exposed to a great deal of standard English in order to

develop receptive communication proficiency. The student should also use the language for the development of competence in expressive communication.

This language immersion must not be viewed as a totally isolated curricular area. Rather, it must be woven systematically into a thoroughly integrated program designed to expand students' repetoires of available language patterns.

Attention to syntactical differences may be especially important when the children are first mastering the decoding phase of reading, that is, when phoneme-grapheme correspondences and basic sight vocabulary are extremely important.

When utilizing the patterns of the dialect in order to accustomize the child to standard English, special consideration should be given to those speech patterns which permit the transition from the child's dialect to standard English by adding to the child's dialect, (i.e., "My car red," "My car is red"). There should be emphasis on one syntactic feature at a time, and a systematic sequence of linguistic principles should be followed. By doing this, only the specific feature is brought to the child's attention--the specific feature originating from his familiar register and immediately followed by the presentation of the same feature in the alternate register.

This study has not discounted the possibility that some dialectal children can competently function when dealing with standard English, thereby having achieved the soughtafter flexibility between registers. There has been less provision for them in the schools than for the dialectal children who experience "interference effects."

There are several reports in the literature of children reading the standard English forms in nonstandard spoken forms which were the dialect equivalents of the standard forms only to be told, by the teachers, that the readings were incorrect. In each instance the children understood what was on the page, understood it well enough to give the printed words the correct phonetic realizations in their own dialect; and in each case the teacher revealed her confusion between teaching the children to read and teaching them to speak using a different register.

The dialectal child's language is important to him; it should not be ridiculed or destroyed, but accepted and supplemented. The teacher can easily make use of the language the child brings to school. As reading instructors, they must focus on the process of reading and not attempt to bring about a minor or major trauma of altering a child's language. The teacher must realize that the use of a dialect does not impair the cognitive development of these children; rather it serves their needs as they function in their culture.

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APPENDIX A

BACKGROUND INFORMATION COMPLETED FROM STUDENT'S CUMULATIVE FOLDER

Name: Date:

Race: Grade:

Birthdate:

Birthplace:

Age:

Father:

Birthplace:

Occupation:

Mother:

Birthplace:

Occupation:

SES:

IQ:

Test: VIQ:

Date of testing: NVIQ:

Grade Level: TIQ:

APPENDIX B

GARVEY-MCFARLANE: STIMULUS SENTENCES ARRANGED ACCORDING TO CRITICAL STRUCTURES

1. Past tense verb*

When I passed by the store, I read the posters.
He stayed home from school yesterday because he had a bad cold.
When the ball hit him on the shoulder, he started crying.
When James finished studying, he turned on T.V.

2. Plural verb

Four or five girls were standing around watching the fight.
Three or four boys were cleaning up the playground this morning.
Several of my friends were invited to the Christmas party.
Two men and three women were waiting for the bus.

3. Possessive noun

They were at their grandmother's house when the fire started.
Sharon's boyfriend met her at the dance on Friday.
My father's brother came to stay with us for a few months.
They said that Mary's best friend ran way from home.

4. Copula*

The policemen are going to see what's going on over there.
You can tell he's a lot smarter than his brother.
Whenever I come home late at night, my mother is worried.
If you don't watch that dog, he's going to get loose.

5. Reflexive pronoun

Even Robert couldn't lift the box by himself.
They talked by themselves for a while and then they left the party.
The three brothers started out for New York by themselves.
Each person has to fill out the score sheet himself.

---

*Intra-structure reliability measure less than .55.

6. Demonstrative pronoun

If I have enough money, I'm going to buy some of those sports magazines.
At the fair they have those little cars that you can ride in.
I've seen both of those men around here before.
Give me some of those cards, and I'll help you sort them.

7. 3rd person singular verb

When he comes home from work, he is always tired and hungry.
When Michael walks to school, he cuts through that alley.
In the evening he eats supper, reads the newspaper, and goes to bed.
Robert says he likes to play tackle better than touch.

8. Embedded questions with 'if'

Let me see if I can remember that girl's name.
Let me ask him if he has seen my dog around here.
I'm going to ask Anthony if he has any money left.
They're going to ask him if he wants a bicycle for his birthday.

9. Possessive pronoun (whose)

Whose money did he use to buy the tickets for the game?
Find out whose name is on the teacher's list.
Ask her about whose ring she is wearing.
If we can't use David's house for the party, whose can we use?

10. Clause introducer*

It was my sister who told me not to let anyone come in.
There was hardly anything left to eat by the time we got there.
There wasn't anything to eat; there wasn't even any bread.
There were just five boys who went to camp last summer.

---

*Intra-structure reliability measure less than .55.

11. Negated auxiliary verb

If he hasn't signed up for the contest yet, he will have to hurry.
If they didn't have enough food to go around, why didn't they say so?
Dwight got some new shoes, but he hasn't worn them yet.
My sister won't go out because her boyfriend hasn't called yet.

12. Embedded questions with 'whether'

Ask Sandy whether she knows the right answer.
I asked him whether he has to work late tonight.
Ask the teacher whether we have to use ink.
Ask them whether they saw the accident or not.

13. Negative concord*

I never pay any attention to anything my brother says.
There isn't any dog that can get over a fence like that.
I'll never buy one of those plastic raincoats again.
Shirley doesn't have a brother. She doesn't have a sister either.

14. Plural noun*

The new playground is about six blocks from here.
The new glove cost five dollars and sixty cents.
Those people left about two weeks ago and they haven't come back.
I had to borrow thirty cents from the office for lunch.

15. Relatives

There was one man who tried to get away, but they shot him.
Did you recognize the one who had on the cowboy boots?
There is one man on our block who worked in the circus.
Did you find out the name of the girl who just moved in next door?

---

*Intra-structure reliability measure less than .55.

APPENDIX C

PRELIMINARY SENTENCES TO BOTH THE AURAL-ORAL AND VISUAL-READING TREATMENTS

1. We didn't see anybody inside the store.

2. Have you ever gone on a long trip?

APPENDIX D

SCORING PROTOCOLS

Aural-Oral Protocol

		Rpt.*	Comp.*
1. Three or four boys <u>were</u> cleaning up the playground this morning. How many boys were cleaning? Are they still cleaning or have they finished cleaning the playground?	1.		
2. Even Robert couldn't lift the box by <u>himself</u>. How many people were trying to lift the box? Could he do it? If the box had to be lifted, how could he do it?	2.		
3. At the fair they have <u>those</u> little cars that you can ride in.	3.		
4. <u>Whose</u> money did he use to buy the tickets for the game? Did he buy the tickets already or does he still have to buy them? What money did he use to buy them?	4.		
5. Four or five girls <u>were</u> standing around watching the fight. What does this sentence tell us? Are they still watching the fight or are they finished watching?	5.		
6. <u>Sharon's</u> boyfriend met her at the dance on Friday.	6.		
7. If I have enough money, I'm going to buy some of <u>those</u> sport magazines. Will she buy some of the magazines?	7.		
8. When Michael <u>walks</u> to school, he <u>cuts</u> through that alley. Did he use the alley only once, or did he use the alley often? What does "cut through the alley mean? How does he get to school? Ride? Walk?	8.		

*Rpt.: repetition of the syntactical critical structure of the sentence. Comp.: responses to the question associated with the stimulus sentence.

		Rpt.*	Comp.*
9. If they didn't have enough food to go around, why didn't they say so? Explain the sentence. What does "didn't" mean?	9.		
10. Did you recognize the one who had on the cowboy boots? Put that sentence in your own words.	10.		
11. They were at their grandmother's house when the fire started. Where were they when the fire started? Who did the house belong to?	11.		
12. When he comes home from work, he is always tired and hungry. How often does this happen? Only once? How many people are we talking about in this sentence?	12.		
13. Let me ask him if he has seen my dog around here. Do you think he might have?	13.		
14. If he hasn't signed up for the contest yet, he will have to hurry. What is she saying in this sentence? Might he? What does "hasn't" mean?	14.		
15. I asked him whether he has to work late tonight. What is she asking in this sentence? Might he?	15.		
16. There was one man who tried to get away, but they shot him.	16.		
17. They talked by themselves for awhile and then left the party. What is happening in this sentence? Who were they talking to?	17.		

18. Let me see <u>if I can remember</u> that girl's name.
    What is she trying to do?
    Will she be able to?

19. Find out <u>whose</u> name is on the teacher's list.
    Does she know the names on the list?

20. Ask Sandy <u>whether she knows</u> the right answer.
    What's being asked in this sentence?
    Does Sandy know the right answer?

	Rpt.*	Comp.*
18.		
19.		
20.		
Total Scores		

Visual-Reading Protocol

		Rdg.*	Rpt.	Comp.
1. My father's brother came to stay with us for a few months. Who came? the father or his brother? Tell me what's happened in this sentence.	1.			
2. In the evening he eats supper, reads the newspaper, and goes to bed. Did this happen only once or does it happen often? How many "things" happen in the evening? How many people are they talking about in this sentence?	2.			
3. They're going to ask him if he wants a bicycle for his birthday.	3.			
4. Dwight got some new shoes, but he hasn't worn them yet.	4.			
5. Ask them whether they saw the accident or not. What are they asking in this sentence? Did they? Might they have?	5.			
6. There is one man on our block who worked in the circus. Did he used to work in the circus or does he still work there? How do they know this man?	6.			
7. Each person has to fill out the score sheet himself. What's happening in this sentence? Who will help them?	7.			

*Rdg.: Reading of the syntactical critical structure of the sentence.

	Rdg.*	Rpt.	Comp.
8. I'm going to ask Anthony <u>if he has</u> any money left. What's being asked in this sentence? Does he? Might he?			
9. If we can't use David's house for the party, <u>whose</u> can we use? They are planning to use David's house, but if they can't, what will they do?			
10. Ask the teacher <u>whether we have</u> to use ink. What are they asking in this sentence? Do they?			
11. Two men and three women <u>were</u> waiting for the bus. How many people were waiting for the bus--one or more than one? Are they still waiting or are they finished waiting?			
12. The three brothers started out for New York by <u>themselves</u>. Did they get to New York? Who went with them?			
13. Give me some of <u>those</u> cards, and I'll help you sort them. What is she asking in this sentence? How many people will be sorting?			
14. Ask here about <u>whose</u> ring she is wearing. What ring is she wearing?			
15. Several of my friends <u>were</u> invited to the Christmas party. Have they been invited already or will they be invited?			

		Rdg.*	Rpt.	Comp.
16	They said that Mary's best friend ran away from home. Was it Mary or her best friend who ran away from home?	16.		
17.	I've seen both of those men around here before.	17.		
18.	Robert says he likes to play tackle better than touch. Did he used to like to play tackle better, or does he still like to play tackle better?	18.		
19.	My sister won't go out because her boyfriend nasn't called yet. Will she go out later?	19.		
20.	Did you find out the name of the girl who just moved in next door?	20.		
		Total Scores		

APPENDIX E

CONFORMANCE RATINGS AND COMPREHENSION RAW SCORES

TABLE E1

CONFORMANCE RATINGS AND COMPREHENSION RAW SCORES
FOR MIDDLE SOCIOECONOMIC SUBJECTS:
AURAL-ORAL TREATMENT
(n=40)

White subjects			Black subjects		
Subject	Conformance rating	Comprehension score	Subject	Conformance rating	Comprehension score
1	2	27	21	2	27
2	2	33	22	1	33
3	1	23	23	1	24
4	1	33	24	2	30
5	2	30	25	1	33
6	1	30	26	2	30
7	2	30	27	1	32
8	2	31	28	2	32
9	1	30	29	1	30
10	2	31	30	2	28
11	1	32	31	1	30
12	2	30	32	2	24
13	1	33	33	1	31
14	2	26	34	2	24
15	2	25	35	1	30
16	1	25	36	2	31
17	1	31	37	2	29
18	1	30	38	1	33
19	2	33	39	2	30
20	1	32	40	1	33

Conformance: 1 = High, 2 = Low.

TABLE E2

CONFORMANCE RATINGS AND COMPREHENSION RAW SCORES FOR LOW SOCIOECONOMIC SUBJECTS: AURAL-ORAL TREATMENT (n=40)

White subjects			Black subjects		
Subject	Conformance rating	Comprehension score	Subject	Conformance rating	Comprehension score
1	1	24	21	2	33
2	1	31	22	2	30
3	1	23	23	2	21
4	1	32	24	2	15
5	2	32	25	1	27
6	1	28	26	2	23
7	2	26	27	1	28
8	2	24	28	2	25
9	2	27	29	2	21
10	2	28	30	1	30
11	2	22	31	1	31
12	1	32	32	1	32
13	2	30	33	1	32
14	2	22	34	1	30
15	1	30	35	2	29
16	1	31	36	1	31
17	1	30	37	1	22
18	1	28	38	2	28
19	2	31	39	2	28
20	2	29	40	1	30

Conformance: 1 = High, 2 = Low.

TABLE E3

CONFORMANCE RATINGS AND COMPREHENSION RAW SCORES FOR MIDDLE SOCIOECONOMIC SUBJECTS: VISUAL-READING TREATMENT (n=40)

White subjects			Black subjects		
Subject	Conformance rating	Comprehension score	Subject	Conformance rating	Comprehension score
1	2	24	21	2	23
2	1	27	22	1	23
3	2	25	23	1	25
4	2	28	24	2	18
5	2	25	25	1	24
6	2	29	26	2	25
7	1	24	27	1	29
8	1	26	28	2	24
9	1	28	29	2	28
10	1	29	30	1	28
11	2	26	31	1	23
12	2	25	32	2	22
13	1	29	33	2	28
14	2	26	34	2	16
15	2	28	35	2	22
16	1	27	36	2	27
17	1	29	37	1	27
18	1	29	38	1	29
19	1	29	39	1	26
20	2	28	40	1	26

Conformance: 1 = High, 2 = Low.

TABLE E4

CONFORMANCE RATINGS AND COMPREHNSION RAW SCORES
FOR LOW SOCIOECONOMIC SUBJECTS:
VISUAL-READING TREATMENT
(n=40)

White subjects			Black subjects		
Subject	Conformance rating	Comprehension score	Subject	Conformance rating	Comprehension score
1	2	24	21	2	29
2	1	28	22	2	28
3	1	18	23	1	22
4	1	27	24	2	21
5	2	27	25	1	23
6	1	26	26	2	21
7	2	21	27	1	25
8	1	24	28	2	24
9	2	26	29	2	15
10	2	22	30	1	28
11	2	18	31	1	26
12	1	27	32	1	24
13	2	27	33	1	28
14	2	19	34	1	24
15	1	29	35	2	20
16	1	27	36	1	28
17	2	26	37	2	18
18	1	26	38	2	24
19	1	24	39	2	24
20	2	21	40	1	25

Conformance: 1 = High, 2 = Low.

TABLE E5

SUMMARY OF SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS: SEX, SES, IQ, AND COMPREHENSION

	Middle SES		Low SES	
	White	Black	White	Black
Males	8	7	13	10
Females	12	13	7	10
Mean SES rating	5.26	46.4	16.7	14.4
IQ				
Mean	110.55	96.70	98.10	92.25
Standard deviation	13.99	11.58	11.21	8.16
Comprehension				
A-O				
Mean	29.75	29.70	28.00	27.30
Standard deviation	3.01	2.96	3.23	4.74
V-R				
Mean	27.05	24.65	24.35	23.85
Standard deviation	1.79	3.47	3.44	3.64

GRADUATE PROGRAM OF STUDIES

Institution	Course No.	Title	Instructor
Rutgers	290:521	Seminar in Educational Psychology	Kling
Rutgers	290:535	Seminar in Advanced Topics of Educational Research: Reading	Geyer
Rutgers	320:561	Foundations of Reading	Mountain
Rutgers	320:564	Remedial Reading	Zelnick
Rutgers	320:565	Laboratory in Remedial Reading	Zelnick
Rutgers	320:610	Advanced Laboratory in Remedial Reading	Kling
Rutgers	320:615	Teaching Reading Improvement for Secondary, College Adults	Kling
Rutgers	320:701	Dissertation Study II	Davis
		Dissertation Study I, III, IV	Kling
J.C.S.C.*	11:632	Reading Conference	Weiss
J.C.S.C.	11:635	Reading Disabilities I	Heiss
J.C.S.C.	11:636	Reading Disabilities II	Heiss
J.C.S.C.	11:637	Nature of Reading	
J.C.S.C.	11:641	Reading and School Curriculum	
J.C.S.C.	11:642	Seminar in Reading	Sailor
J.C.S.C.	11:643	Practicum in Reading	
J.C.S.C.	11:646	Diagnosis and Treatment of Reading Disabilities	Heiss

Courses Outside of Special Field

Rutgers	230:521	Supervision of Instruction	Hannigan
Rutgers	290:501	Introduction to Principles of Measurement	Geyer
Rutgers	290:522	Individual Intelligence Testing	Bennett
Rutgers	290:540	Principles and Theories of Learning	Bloom

*Jersey City State College

Institution	Course No.	Title	Instructor
Rutgers	290:636	Design of Educational and Psychological Experiments	Penfield
Rutgers	310:515	Philosophy of Education	Lewis
Rutgers	610:581	Reading Materials for Children	Gaver
Rutgers	615:503	Linguistic Basis of Language	Pane
Rutgers	960:531	Statistical Methods of Education I	Penfield
Rutgers	960:532	Statistical Methods of Education II	Penfield
J.C.S.C.	2:614	Curriculum Development	
J.C.S.C.	2:620	Crucial Issues of Education	
J.C.S.C.	4:600	Workshop: Alcohol Education	
J.C.S.C.	9:603	Juvenile Deliquency	
J.C.S.C.	9:605	Economic Education for Teachers	
Newark*	E51062B	Diagnosis of Learning Disabilities	Jan Tausch
Newark	51062	Remediation of Learning Disabilities	Jan Tausch
Newark	57250A	Advanced Educational Psychology	
Newark	5959	Individualized Program of Advanced Study	
S.H.U.**	BL304	Public Institutions vs. Black Self-Determinism	Jackson

*Newark State College
**Seton Hall University

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Elementary K-12, New Jersey

Professional Experience:

1964-1965	Sixth-Grade Teacher Jersey City School System Jersey City, New Jersey
1965-1967	Sixth-Grade Teacher Union School System Union, New Jersey
1967-1968	Reading Specialist Kawameeh Junior High School Union, New Jersey
1968-1970	Learning Disabilities Specialist Kawameeh Junior High School Union, New Jersey

Fall, 1970	Reading Instructor, Extension Division Rutgers University New Brunswick, New Jersey
1970-1971	Teaching Assistant, Reading Center Graduate School of Education Rutgers University New Brunswick, New Jersey
1971-present	Instructor and Co-Director of the Graduate Reading Program Seton Hall University South Orange, New Jersey

INTERACTION OF DIALECT, SES, AND ETHNICITY UPON LISTENING AND READING COMPREHENSION OF FIFTH-GRADERS

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

OF

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

BY

MARIETTA ESPOSITO PESKIN

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN: MARTIN KLING

NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY MAY 1973

ABSTRACT

This study was concerned with the investigation of the possible factors contributing to the rapidly growing numbers of intermediate-grade children who experience reading comprehension problems.

A review of the literature revealed that conformance to standard English, ethnic background, socioeconomic status, and modes of presentation were considered to influence the development of comprehension to a great degree. The hypothesizing, discussion, investigation, and actualization of theories involving these four affecting variables differed widely among the proponents of the divergent schools of theory; specifically, the linguists, psycholinguists, and sociolinguists. The dissimilarities of opinion were not only concerned with the causes of reading deficiency, but also with the remedial methodology and materials.

The major purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of the four above-mentioned factors upon the comprehension of fifth-grade children. The investigation sought to: (1) explore the concepts upon which each school of thought founded its reading theories; (2) synthesize concepts of one school to another, seeking common denominators; and (3) relate the literature to the findings of

the present study.

The study was conducted with 80 fifth-grade students drawn from a large, urban city in New Jersey. Homogeneous groups within four experimental categories were formulated. Each group consisted of 20 subjects. The four categories were composed of: middle SES white students, low SES white students, middle SES black students, and low SES black students. Each group of 20 was further divided into two groups of 10 on the basis of how well they conformed to standard English.

Two experimental treatments, aural-oral presentation (A-O) and visual-reading presentation (V-R), were involved. The statistical analyses were accomplished using three- and four-way analyses of variance to analyze the differences among the mean in the treatment groups.

The primary findings of the investigation were as follows:

1. The comprehension of children whose speaking patterns conform to standard English was significantly greater than the comprehension of children whose speaking patterns are dialectal, regardless of the treatment (A-O, V-R, or A-O and V-R).

2. The comprehension of middle SES children was significantly greater than the comprehension of children from low SES when presented with tasks expressed in

standard English.

3. a. The comprehension of white children was not significantly greater than that of the black children when the tasks were presented in either the A-O mode or combined A-O and V-R modes.

b. The comprehension of white children was significantly greater than that of black children only when the directed tasks, expressed in standard English, were presented in the V-R mode.

4. The subjects more readily understood materials presented in the A-O mode than materials presented in the V-R mode.

Four major conclusions were drawn from the results. The most salient conclusion is that a differential of comprehension development exists between dialectal speakers and standard English speakers. This differential is attributable to the children's reading skills and to the differences between their register and that of the materials. It does not appear that the child who uses a dialectal code is able to switch to the standard English code to meet the demands of a specific situation.

Secondly, the investigator concluded that there exists a strong, positive relationship between SES and the development of the comprehension abilities demanded by the school.

A third conclusion involved the insignificant relationship between the ability to comprehend and ethnic background. The little relationship that is evident is based on the lack of ability to read materials coded in an unfamiliar register.

Lastly, it was concluded that the auditory mode is most conducive to the evaluation of comprehension competence; and that an instrument which makes use of scripted materials is a better measure of comprehension performance.