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ABSTRACT

The ways in which current studies in sociolinguistics relate to the field of speech pathology are discussed, with particular focus on the role of sociolinguistics in standardized testing. The content validity and criterion-related validity of standardized tests is considered. Disproportionate distribution of scores for particular cultural groups indicates bias in test materials, rather than significant differences in actual subject capability. Examination of the issue from a sociolinguistic perspective includes consideration of differences in linguistic forms which speakers may have as a part of their linguistic system, testing as a social situation, and task bias. A test user should know: (1) whether the test measures what it claims to measure; (2) what the assumptions underlying the testing task are; (3) what problems will be encountered by speakers of non-mainstream varieties of English and how to interpret results of such speakers; (4) how accessible information on individual test items is; and (5) what justifiable classifications and assessments can be made, given the tests' potential for sociolinguistic bias. The speech clinician should know the linguistic characteristics and the verbal styles and functions of local non-mainstream varieties, and should develop an awareness of the role of the speech pathologist in dealing with dialect differences. (CLK)

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On the Relationship of Sociolinguistics and Speech Pathology

Ann Taylor Huey Memorial
Lecture Series

Northwestern University
December, 1976

Walt Wolfram
Federal City College and
Center for Applied Linguistics

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On the Relationship of Sociolinguistics and Speech Pathology

There is little doubt that the last decade has witnessed great advances in the study of language in its social context. This development has not only touched the theoretical and empirical foundations of linguistics, but has spread its influence on a number of adjacent disciplines, such as education, reading, and speech pathology, among others. We now know a great deal more about the linguistic structure of various non-mainstream varieties of English, and descriptions of these varieties are expanding at an impressive rate. While such studies might be justified on a purely academic and descriptive basis, the interest has not been limited by these boundaries, resulting in a concern for the applied implications of this research. Naturally, the field of speech and language pathology has been somewhat affected by the directions of sociolinguistics, as witnessed in establishment of the Committee on Communication Behavior and Problems in Urban Populations.

Despite the increased interest in the application of sociolinguistic research, the relevance of such information in many day-to-day situations is still open to serious question. Thus, after a decade of discussing the issues concerned with teaching reading to speakers of non-mainstream varieties of English, it can still be questioned whether we are any closer to realistic solutions than we were at the outset of the current sociolinguistic interest. And, unfortunately, the fact of the matter is that there does not appear to be any substantial decrease in the illiteracy rate among such non-mainstream groups.

With our questionable history of attempted application behind us, I would like to attempt to tie together some of the ways in which current studies in sociolinguistics relate to the field of speech pathology. Whereas some of the conclusions drawn here would appear to have a strong empirical basis, there are others which admittedly are tentative suggestions. Only continued experimentation over a period of time will tell if we have been

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successful in the practical application of theoretical and description advances.

There are obviously a number of aspects of the relationship between sociolinguistics and speech pathology, but a treatment of all these facets is obviously beyond the scope of a reasonable presentation at this point. Rather than discuss the various dimensions of the relationship which extend from the initial screening of a child to the extended therapy with a client, I would like to focus in on one particular area for more detailed treatment, namely, the issue of standardized testing and the role of sociolinguistics. There are a number of details that have to be dealt with in any serious treatment of this relationship with respect to testing, and I shall attempt to cover some of the main areas of each. In treating this in an organized manner, I would first like to specify the sociolinguistic levels of potential test bias, then discuss the specific guidelines that emerge from this consideration for those who are called upon to administer and interpret results from such tests. Finally, I would like to summarize the types of sociolinguistic information that speech pathologists must have if they are going to successfully deal with this issue on a day-to-day basis.

Dialect Diversity and Testing

The importance that mainstream society places on standardized tests is fairly obvious to most educators. Crucial decisions to the diagnosis of educational abilities are often based on standardized test scores of one type or another -- decisions that affect children's current and future lives in our society. Admittedly, test scores are difficult to resist, given their widespread use by all types of agencies. Standardized tests are used as instruments that produce objectified, quantitative information of one type or another. Quantifiable scores do show significant distinctions between various groups of individuals, so that their use as an objectifiable parameter of measurement can become a highly valued basis for evaluating a group or an individual's performance. Obviously, when a test reveals significant differences between various groups in the population, we have demonstrated something. But the uneasy question which arises is whether the instrument actually measures what it is designed

to measure. Do the scores faithfully represent the domain set forth by the tests? And, we may take this one step farther and ask what can be inferred about other behavior on the basis of a test. This would involve assessing the usefulness of the measurement as an indicator of some other variable or as a predictor of behavior. These questions deal with the test validity (the former case being a matter of content validity and the latter criterion-related validity).

Although there are various aspects of validity that have at times become controversial issues with respect to standardized testing, one of the recurrent themes relates to the appropriateness of such measurements for different cultural groups. Included in the concern for cross-cultural applicability is consideration for various non-mainstream groups, including Blacks, rural Southern white, and Chicanos, among other groups. In many instances, we find that the distribution of scores among these groups is disproportionate when compared with mainstream populations. These findings have raised several different questions concerning the tests. One of the questions posed has been whether higher test scores from high socio-economic groups reflect genuine superiority of one type or another. Or, do high scores result from an environmental setting which provides certain advantages? Or, do the differential scores reflect a bias in the test materials and not important differences in capabilities at all? Recent research in testing (Roberts 1970; Meier 1973; Cicourel et al 1974) indicates the last question is becoming increasingly important in the consideration of test application across different social and cultural groups in American society. It is also the area in which linguistics can play a significant role in suggesting ways of examining specific tests and the testing process in general.

Although we might look at the general question of test bias from several different approaches, our central concern here is that of a sociolinguistic perspective. From this perspective, we are interested in how language diversity in the context of society may be used to the advantage of certain groups as opposed to others. Our knowledge of differences between mainstream and non-mainstream groups serves as a basis for understanding certain types of potential sociolinguistic interference in testing. Although we shall examine in some detail the affects of these types

of dialect differences on testing language skills, the crucial nature of the testing question actually carries us somewhat farther than the differences in linguistic form which we have discussed there.

Differences in Linguistic Form

One aspect of test interference involves the differences in linguistic items which speakers may have as a part of their linguistic system. The background of this sort of investigation is found in the descriptive accounts of various linguistic systems as they contrast with responses to linguistic items considered correct by tests. In a sense, this is what is done in contrastive linguistics where the descriptive accounts of linguistic systems are placed side by side in order to observe where the patterns of a language are similar and where they are different. In contrastive studies as they are applied to different language or dialects, these comparisons often serve as a basis for predicting where a speaker of Language Variety A will encounter difficulty when confronted with Language Variety B. Although all predicted interference will not, of course, be realized for one reason or another, the comparison can anticipate many of the patterns or items which will, in fact, interfere. On the basis of a contrastive analysis of standard English and a non-mainstream variety such as Vernacular Black English or Appalachian English, we may therefore predict what types of interference we would expect a test to potentially hold for the speaker of these dialects.

Language tests may be used for a wide range of purposes, including the assessment of language development, auditory discrimination, articulatory development and so forth. In all these cases, the norms called for in the test may systematically conflict with the language system of a non-mainstream speaker. Although each of these language tests might be dealt with in detail, we may most efficiently discuss our perspective by illustration. For this purpose, we shall focus on the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities (henceforth ITPA), a widely used test in several different disciplines, particulary in speech pathology and learning disabilities assessment.

The ITPA consists of a battery of tests to measure various facts of cognitive abilities. It is essentially a diagnostic tool in which specific

abilities and disabilities in children may be delineated in order for remediation to be undertaken when needed (ITPA Examiner's Manual, 1968:5). Among the various subtests is one entitled "grammatical closure", which was designed to "assess the child's ability to make use of the redundancies of oral language in acquiring automatic habits for handling syntax and grammatic inflections" (ITPA Examiner's Manual, 1968:11). While the manual mentions that the test elicits the ability to respond in terms of standard American English, no warning is given about the use of this test with children who may speak non-mainstream varieties of English. The test is, in fact, routinely administered to quite different dialect and social groups. In the grammatic closure subtest, the child is asked to produce a missing word as the tester points to a picture. For example, the examiner shows a plate with two pictures on it, one with one bed and the other with two beds. The examiner points to the first picture as he says, "Here is a bed."; he then points to the second picture and says "Here are two ____.", with the child supplying the missing word. The focus is on a particular grammatical form, such as the plural -s in this case. All of the responses must be in standard English in order to be considered correct.

With this background information in mind, let us consider the specific items of the grammatic closure test in terms of the grammatical description of two illustrative varieties. Based on our contrastive analysis of the items considered to be correct responses according to the test manual and the different grammatical rules of these dialects (cf. Wolfram and Fasold 1974; Wolfram and Christian 1976), we may predict those cases of possible divergence accounted for by the grammatical rules of these varieties. According to the manual for scoring, all these items would have to be considered "incorrect", even though they are governed by legitimate linguistic rules which simply differ from dialect to dialect. In Table 1, each of the stimulus items in the test is given along with the responses considered to be "correct" according to the test manual, and, where applicable, the corresponding dialect form which would be appropriate for a speaker of Appalachian English or Vernacular Black English based on the descriptions of these dialegts we have given in various works. In all the cases, strict adherence to the scoring procedure in the manual would eliminate the form produced because of the different rule in the dialect in question.

We see, in this Table, that 26 of the 33 items have alternant forms in Appalachian English, and 23 of the 33 have different forms in Vernacular Black English. These are forms which are a legitimate part of the grammatical systems of these varieties, yet they would have to be considered incorrect responses. To understand what the implication of such divergence may be for diagnosis of language abilities, consider the hypothetical case of a ten-year-old Appalachian English speaker. Suppose that such a speaker obtains correct responses for all of the other items in the test, but his appropriate Appalachian English responses are considered to be incorrect according to the guidelines given for scoring this section. When the raw score of eight correct responses is checked with the psycholinguistic age norms for this test, we find his abilities to be equivalent to those of a child of four years and five months. This, of course, may be somewhat exaggerated, given the fact that most of the features of Appalachian English are variable and a particular speaker may not use all of these features as a part of his system. Instead we may arbitrarily say that the Appalachian English speaker only realizes approximately half of the potential Appalachian English alternants in his actual performance on such a test. This would give him a raw score of 20 correct responses, and his psycholinguistic age level according to this measurement would be that of a child six years and eight months of age. This is still over three years below his actual age, and would, in many cases, be sufficient to recommend such a child for remedial language training. The implications for using such a test to assess the language capabilities of the Appalachian English speaking child appear quite obvious given the norms of the test and the legitimate differences found in the Appalachian English system. On the basis of a test such as this, it would be quite possible to misdiagrose a child's language abilities and penalize him for having learned the language of his community.

Testing as a Social Occasion

Although a primary focus in this study has been specific differences in the linguistic rules of standard English and non-mainstream varieties, the extent of sociolinguistic considerations in tests is not restricted to different linguistic items. There are other matters which take us beyond the limitations of systematic differences between linguistic items *per se*

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as discussed above. One of the important considerations in any test is the context of the testing situation. Testing, like other types of behavior, necessarily involves the existence of a social occasion. The testing process is not devoid of cultural context regardless of how standardized the testing procedure may actually be. Testing is "social" in several ways. First of all, it is social in the sense that it involves interaction between the test administrator and the test taker. Second, it involves a particular division of labor, that distinguishes the testing situation from other aspects of behavior. And, finally, it is social in the sense that it operates on the output of socialization that has taken place prior to the actual situation.

Test construction involves elaborate plans for the manipulation of the subject's behavior. These plans are first based on the assumption that the test designer has a viable (though perhaps implicit) model which can serve as a guide for his own actions in constructing the test. It is further assumed that the researcher knows the ways in which the properties of situations might influence the behavior of the subjects, and how to place these properties under contral in the standardization of procedures.

In order to promote the orderly interpretation of data that are derived from the test situation, the researcher has no other alternative but to presume that the subject can enter and remain in the experimental frame constructed for the test. In other words, he must assume that the subject can play the researcher's game. And, if he cannot bring the subject into the experimental frame, then there is no objectifiable way in which the abilities of the subject which the tester wants to measure can be tapped.

The basic issue here, then, concerns the assumption of the "sameness" of the environment and the irrelevance of potentially different socialization processes which may lead to this test situation. From a sociolinguistic viewpoint, the question at this point is determining the extent to which potentially different historical backgrounds may be individualistic or cultural. We cannot completely dismiss the individual aspects which may result in different perceptions of the social occasion since there seems to be some evidence that certain individuals from all socio-economic groups may be adversely affected by the judgmental and competitive conditions that characterize the testing situation. But we must go one step farther and look at the systematic cross-cultural aspects of the testing situation.

For a number of reasons, we are led to believe that the testing situation is culturally biased in favor of particular classes. The regulation of the testing situation, the social style of the test administration, the expectations of the experimental frame, and the expected behavior of the test takers while engaged in the testing activity all point to a particular class orientation. Those individuals who are not members of this class, then, are likely to be at some disadvantage when in this situation.

Although we have not looked systematically at the social values to be found in tests, we would be remiss to conclude even a brief section on testing as a social occasion without mentioning something about the assumed values in the testing situation. That there are particular value orientations that are assumed in testing seems to be fairly obvious in many types of standardized tests. Intelligence tests that contain questions "Why should a promise be kept?", or "What should you do if you find an addressed stamped envelope on the street?", and "Why is it generally better to give money to an organized charity than to a street begger?" call for a fairly obvious value orientation which matches the overt moral ideals of the society of the test designers. In a sense, then, the intelligent person is the one who can play the game and give back these ideals, regardless of how he may actually feel or behave. What is often missed, however, is the sort of value assumptions to be found in tasks which seem to be more neutral on the surface. As Labov (1970) has pointed out, even the most seemingly innocuous task of getting a young child to talk about something he is interested in is laden with value assumptions. Labov points out that among the other sorts of problems which the child must accept an orientation in which value may be placed on talking about the obvious, the goodness of talking just for the sake of talking, and that the child will not be penalized for what he says. The tester accepts these assumptions and therefore expects the child to accept them. But the child may have good reason not to accept them. All suspicions that children have do not come from the overt advice that their parents have given them about accepting candy from strangers. There may be very good reasons found in a child's background for not wanting to accept M&M's to talk "just to be talking". Any differences in the value orientations of the test designer and test taker can again throw off our assumptions about the neutrality of testing as a social occasion.

Task Bias

In addition to the aspects of the social occasion discussed above, testing makes certain types of assumptions concerning the specific tasks involved in test-taking. The standardization process of testing requires not only that the test be uniformly administered, but that the test materials be understood and interpreted uniformly by the subjects taking the test. The assumption that there is one correct answer is based on the constructor's faith that he and the test taker share a common symbolic background in which objects have only one meaning which is apparent to all. From this perspective, meaning is not negotiated and built up over the course of the interaction, but it is assumed to share a commonness by the way in which the task is arranged.

All tests, no matter what the focus of the particular subject matter, must start with the assumption that the test taker comprehends the instructions (whether written or oral). These instructions are dependent upon linguistic comprehension of some type, so that even tests which do not seek to measure language skills at all still involve language and certain assumptions about it. From a linguistic standpoint, this involves the comprehension of sentence meanings, including the presuppositions and implications of questioning.

The obviousness of the instructions and questions becomes a point at which we must investigate the possible discrepancy between the interpretations of the test designer and testee. The first observation is that not all presumed obvious information is in fact necessarily obvious. In some cases, the appeal to obviousness comes from an inability to design the task clearly enough so that only the intended interpretation is possible. However straightforward the task may appear to the test designer, we can never exclude the possibility of ambiguity in the task. Although psychometric means of "validating" procedures may exist, there is no assurance that this is sufficient. We know, of course, that there are a number of reasons why an individual may not obtain the "correct" response. From our vantage point, it becomes crucial to know exactly why a subject or groups of subjects did not come up with the correct response. A subject may give an incorrect response because he is unfamiliar with the vocabulary; or he may obtain the incorrect answer because he interpreted the question

in terms of his own common sense; or because his presuppositions did not match those of the test designer. In terms of potential task interference, it becomes important to identify exactly why the answer is considered inappropriate by the test designer but not by certain test-takers. From a sociolinguistic perspective, it becomes essential to identify some of the potential ways in which the task as presented may interfere with the identification of correct responses. We are here concerned not so much with the stated protocol in test administration, but with the subtleties of the task which may interfere with the assumption of "obviousness."

Different groups may share a desire to succeed in their performance on a test, but simply interpret the protocol of "obvious" instructions differently. Take, for example, the simple instruction to repeat something. The first problem we must recognize is that the instructions to repeat allow for more than one interpretation. One interpretation calls for verbatim repetition, whereas another allows for similarity in communicative content through paraphrase. The second problem lies in the assumption that the test-taker can extract from his real life uses of repetition (which are drastically different) and remain in the experimental frame where repetition is an end in itself. Interestingly enough, an informal survey of lower class children's performance on a sentence repetition task showed two types of departures in the performance of the task (King 1972). One was a tendency to respond in terms of language use outside the context of the specified experimental frame which called for verbatim repetition. Thus, asked to repeat a sentence like "Is the car in the garage?" while being shown a picture of a car in the garage, many children chose to answer by giving the information relevant to the question rather than simply repeating the question. This, of course, is a reasonable way to respond to a question -- outside the specialized testing situation. The other problem involved a tendency to give more detail than the verbatim repetition called for in the response. In essence, many of the stimuli were paraphrased rather than repeated verbatim. From the children's perspective, the paraphrase had to be interpreted as an attempt to succeed at the task, but from the test designer's perspective, the task was not followed as prescribed. Strict verbatim was the avenue for success in this task, not detail recapitulation. But suppose the child's experience suggests that positive value

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should be placed on those types of language use which might involve a paraphrase or caricature of what a first party has said rather than verbatim recall. One can see how interpretations of this sort would lead to serious misunderstandings of the "simple" instructions to repeat.

Quite obviously, task interference may be reflected in the choice of a general method for obtaining the desired information. The information which the test taker has to give back is relatively constant, but one method may tap this information to a much greater extent than another. There is a specific type of language style which is often typical of testing. Where else, for example, is a question defined as the completion of a sentence (e.g. The speedometer tells you...) or particular wh- post-posing patterns (A speedometer tells you what? as opposed to What does a speedometer tell you?). As it turns out, such types of questions may be used when the person asking the question (e.g. teacher or test constructor) has the answer and the task of the person asked the question is to give the correct response (Humphries, forthcoming). This notion of question is, of course, somewhat different from the way questions are used in the real world, and one which calls for particular acquisition of the form and significant of such "questions". Middle class children, because of their familiarity with specific tasks as they are employed to get certain types of information, would appear to hold a serious advantage over their working class counterparts in playing the test game. Given the fact that testing tasks involve a particular type of extraction from real life language tasks, the only way an equal chance for success can be assured for all social groups is to ensure similar familiarities with the tasks.

Principles to Guide the Test User

In the previous sections we have presented a sociolinguistic perspective on testing. We have also provided examples of the types of potential sociolinguistic interference that may be found in tests. At this point, we may summarize our discussion by setting forth some principles to guide the test user in the consideration of tests. Although some of the principles relate specifically to a sociolinguistic perspective on testing, others are more general in nature. In terms of general standards and guidelines for tests, I would strongly recommend that all test users become familiar with the

principles set forth in Standards for Educational and Psychological Tests, which gives a much more extended set of guidelines.

[illegible] The test user must compare what the test claims to be [illegible] it actually tests. It cannot always be assumed that a test [illegible] assesses what it claims to. With respect to language, we must ask what aspects of a language are actually being tested as compared to what the test claims to tap. All tests which consistently differentiate groups of individuals measure something, but not necessarily what they set out to measure. For example, the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, which is widely used in a number of different disciplines, may be an effective measure of a person's receptive ability to recognize the pictorial referents of dialectally-specific lexical items. This, however, is quite different from the general claims about assessing vocabulary acquisition it makes, let alone any indications of intelligence which may be derivative of the test. The initial question of content validity is the touchstone for evaluating any testing instrument.

Principle 2: The test user must consider the types of assumptions which underline the testing task. Tests which involve participation of some type involve certain assumptions about the nature of this participation. The range of assumed abilities may, of course, vary greatly from test to test. For example, one test of language may require only that a child show recognition of a pictorial reference through the activity of pointing. Others may involve the assumption of reading ability and an orientation of a particular multiple choice format. If the assumptions necessary for performance on the test cannot be met satisfactorily by all the test takers, then the test will prohibit the collection of adequate data on the actual test items.

Principle 3: The test user must ask what specific problems may be encountered by the speaker of a non-mainstream variety of English. Given the current faddishness of ridiculing tests, it is imperative for the test user to give an account of the specific ways in which a test may hold potential for bias. For example, we have given specific cases where the speaker of Vernacular Black English or Appalachian English may be expected to give alternant forms according to the grammatical rules of these dialects. The demand for specific information naturally requires a knowledge of the dialect in question and available reference works. In cases where descriptive reference works may not be available, the observant test user may pay attention

to the linguistic form of an individual and check his usage against that of the speaker's peers to see if test performance can be attributed to a legitimate dialect difference or not.

Principle 4: *The test user should consider the accessibility of information on individual items in the test from the scoring.* In some cases, recurrent patterns in the answers of test takers may give important clues as to the nature of sociolinguistic interference. On one level, test scores must be considered as important sociolinguistic data, and there are a number of ways in which the data can be analyzed if the test user has access to information on specific items. Without such specific information, however, the sociolinguistic usefulness of test results is minimal.

Principle 5: *The test user should know how to interpret the results of a test for non-mainstream speakers.* Given the possible ways in which a test may systematically favor certain groups, it becomes essential to know how the results from a given test must be interpreted. For example, it is important to know what a raw score of 7 out of 33 correct responses on the ITPA grammatic closure subtest may mean for the Appalachian English speaker who systematically uses legitimate Appalachian English alternants for many of the items which would have to be scored incorrect according to the directions for scoring in the test manual. The language capabilities of such a speaker may be very different from that of the speaker of the mainstream variety who obtains a score of 8 or the Appalachian English speaker who obtains a low score not because of the Appalachian English alternants but because he has a genuine language disability.

Principle 6: *The test user must know what justifiable classifications and assessments can be made in light of the test's potential for sociolinguistic bias.* Ultimately, the use of test results in the decision-making process is the most crucial aspect for the test user to consider. Given the potential for bias that many tests hold, the test user must proceed with extreme caution in accepting diagnoses and classifications based on test scores. In fact, it is reasonable to suggest that no diagnosis or classification of language capabilities should be made solely on the basis of a standardized test score. Evidence from tests must be coupled with other types of data, including observations outside of the testing situation. Ultimately, attention must be given to the individual's use of

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Stimulus with "Correct" Item According to ITPA Test Manual	AE Alternant	VBE Alternant
1. Here is a dog. Here are two dogs/doggies.		dog
2. This cat is under the chair. Where is the cat? She is on/(any preposition--other than under--indicating location).		
3. ch child has a ball. This is hers; and this is	his'n	
4. dog likes to bark. Here he is barking.		
is a dress. Here are two dresses.		dress
6. he boy is opening the gate. Here the gate has been opened.		open
7. There is milk in this glass. It is a glass of/with/for/o'/lots of milk.	No preposition	
8. This bicycle belongs to John. Whose bicycle is it? It is John's.		John
9. This boy is writing something. This is what he wrote/ has written/did write.	writed/writ has wrote	writed/wrote
10. This is the man's home, and this is where he works. Here he is going to work, and here he is going home/back home/to his home.	at home	
11. Here it is night, and here it is morning. He goes to work first thing in the morning, and he goes home first thing at night.	of the night	
12. This man is painting. He is a painter/fence painter.	a-paintin'	
13. The boy is going to eat all the cookies. Now all the cookies have been eaten.	eat, ate, eated, eat	ate
14. He wanted another cookie; but there weren't any/any more.	none/no more	none/no more
15. This horse is not big. This horse is big. This horse is even bigger.	more bigger	more bigger
16. And this horse is the very biggest.	most biggest	most biggest
17. Here is a man. Here are two men/gentlemen.	mans/mens	mans/mens
18. This man is planting a tree. Here the tree has been planted.		
19. This is soap and these are soap/bars of soap/more soap.	soaps	soaps
20. This child has lots of blocks. This child has even more.		

Stimulus with "Correct" Item According to ITPA Test Manual	AE Alternant	VBE Alternant
21. And this child has the most.	mostest	mostest
22. Here is a foot. Here are two feet.	foots/feets	foots/feets
23. Here is a sheep. Here are lots of sheep.	sheeps	sheeps
24. This cookie is not very good. This cookie is good. This cookie is even better.	gooder	gooder
25. And this cookie is the very best.	bestest	
26. This man is hanging the picture. Here the picture has been hung.	hanged	hanged
27. The thief is stealing the jewels. These are the jewels that he stole.	stoled/stealed	stoled/stealed
28. Here is a woman. Here are two women.	womans/womens	womans/womens
29. The boy had two bananas. He gave one away: and he kept one for himself.	hisself	hisself
30. Here is a leaf. Here are two leaves.	leafs	leafs
31. Here is a child. Here are three children.	childrens	childrens
32. Here is a mouse. Here are two mice.	mouses	mouses
33. These children all fell down. He hurt himself; and she hurt herself. They all hurt themselves.	theirselves/theirself	theirselves/theirself

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Table 1. ITPA Grammatical Closure Subtest with Comparison of 'Correct" Responses and Appalachian and Vernacular Black English Alternate Forms

language in a number of different social settings before any decision can be made regarding a child's language capabilities.

The Added Responsibility of the Speech Clinician

Apparent in the above discussion is an expanded range of responsibilities that I am proposing for any speech clinician that is involved in the administration and interpretation of tests results. These responsibilities fit into a somewhat broader framework of expertise that I am calling for on the part of this profession, since it is so integrally involved with linguistic diversity of one type or another. Whereas the knowledge of some general linguistic theory and methodology seems imperative for the speech and language pathologists because of the common focus of interest, it seems apparent that a similar appeal for sociolinguistic expertise can be made without unduly forcing the issue. This does not mean that I am calling for speech pathologists to become sociolinguists, but it does assume a cross-fertilization process which goes beyond the evening lecture or mini-workshop on this topic. It is a legitimate and essential topic area that deserves the serious consideration of an allied profession. In light of this appeal, I would like to conclude with a consideration of the types of sociolinguistic knowledge which I think are essential to integrate into the training of speech and language pathologists who invariably must function within a multicultural and linguistically diverse society.

(1) The Speech and Language Pathologist must have knowledge of the particular linguistic characteristics of the local non-mainstream varieties. If a speech and language pathologist can be expected to know the general rules of the standard phonological and syntactical systems of a language as a basis for identifying language deficiencies for the child from the standard English-speaking community, it seems only reasonable to ask that the same requirement be made of the speech pathologist who deals with children from a non-mainstream community. What is ultimately essential for the clinician in screening and diagnosis is whether a child speaks the language of his community peers, regardless of what the tests say his forms ought to look like. Naturally, it is as essential to diagnose genuine pathologies in non-mainstream communities as it is in mainstream communities, but this cannot be done unless we are aware of the rules of the language community.

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(To trade false positive cases for false negative cases is not much of a trade-off.) One of the contributions that sociolinguists have made to adjacent fields within the last decade is the descriptive accounts that are available for various non-mainstream varieties. While some of these descriptions have included a great deal of linguistic detail, there are also specially designed descriptions which concentrate descriptive accuracy rather than technical formalization. The general description includes varieties such as Vernacular Black English, Appalachian English, and Southern and Northern White nonstandard varieties. Furthermore, there are emerging studies of English varieties influenced by other language sources, such as Chicano and Puerto Rican English. Of course, there are aspects of local variations in these varieties that might not be available, but these can be supplemented by the aware observer of language in the speech community. It is essential for the speech pathologist to look at the speech patterns of a child from a non-mainstream community and compare it with that of his peers to make accurate assessments of pathological and normal language characteristics of the community. We are not here demanding elaborate formal descriptions, but a more-than-casual awareness of the speech patterns of the community. It is impossible to conceive of a speech pathologist rendering adequate services in a non-mainstream community without such knowledge.

(2) The Speech Pathologist must be familiar with verbal styles and functions that may characterize non-mainstream groups. It is becoming clear that linguistic forms are not the only aspect of differences characterizing the subcultures of American society. The values placed upon speech and the functions of speech may differ substantially from one group to another. Thus, it is quite possible that one group may place one value on a particular style of speech while another may place a conflicting value on certain speech styles. For example, the art of story-telling in some parts of Appalachia might be a highly developed art form while such is not the case in a corresponding mainstream group. Of more relevancy, may be the fact that one group may place importance on repeating verbatim whereas another group may consider paraphrasing information with the emphasis on style essential in language usage. As we mentioned earlier, such information may have a crucial bearing on how a child views a testing situation which assumes a particular value. Or, for example, a child's culture may place a negative value on

giving "obvious" informat whereas the mainstr m educational system traditionally places a great deal of value in the early stages of education on giving back certain types of obvious information. The effects of these types of differences, although much less studied than linguistic forms as such, is extremely important in viewing how children may react to particular tasks they are requested to do on the assumption that they share the values of mainstream-oriented adult interacter. This means that the speech pathologist may not only be expected to approach some of the expertise of the linguist, but the ethnographer as well (i.e. the ethnography of speaking). While our knowledge of different language functions and styles is still emerging, it is essential to stress the importance of observing children in more naturalistic settings. We have sometimes been so influenced by the objective measures that are available to us through the experimental or testing framework, that we forget the importance of observing kids where kids can be kids -- on the playground, after school, and in the home. We are too familiar with the non-verbal child in a clinical setting who becomes the animated fluent child in his natural environment to be confined by our imposed "objective" constraints of the clinical setting. Besides, it is in a naturalistic setting that we will be able to get the important information about the ethnography of speaking that is necessary to complement what we know about the linguistic forms of non-mainstream groups. We must thus add information on the ethnography of speaking to information on differences in linguistic form.

(3) <u>The Clinician must develop an awareness of the role of the Speech Pathologist in dealing with dialect differences</u>. Given the fact that the speech pathologist, for one reason or another, will be referred cases for consideration where a client has no more than a dialect difference as opposed to a genuine deficiency, it becomes expedient to consider the role that such a clinician plays in these cases. One approach, which I have often recommended in the past, is that the speech pathologist refuse to deal with such cases out of principle, since we know that the dialectally divergent person does not really need therapy in the standard use of this term. If clients and people who refer such cases could learn to accept dialect differences as systematic and regular, albeit different, all would be well and good. Unfortunately, a number of experiences have taught me that this preferable policy is not as simply dealt with as first imagined.

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A recent experience we had in our clinic demonstrated the reality of such situations as opposed to the ideal. A potential adult client from the deep South came to our clinic requesting help to "rid her of her Southern dialect". When told that she really did not have a speech and language pathology of the sort dealt with in our clinic and what our position of dialect differences was, she still insisted that she wanted to change her dialect, and if we did not help her, then she would go where she could get the help she wanted. Aware that there are only too many centers that would accept her as a client from a perspective on dialect differences very different from our own, we had second thoughts. The woman had her mind made up, but we had our principles. Given the woman's insistence, we were faced with whether we would undertake this task or leave it to someone else who did not share our perspective on dialect differences.

I therefore hesitate to categorically reject the notion that a speech pathologist should out-of-hand reject all opportunities to teach standard English, although I admit to ideological nightmares over such a concession. If, however, standard English is to be taught, I think there are specific conditions and guidelines which must be present. Adequate strategies for teaching standard English meet the following conditions:

(a) The teaching of standard English must take into account the group reference factor. Quite clearly, the readiness of a person to learn another dialect or language depends in part on the willingness of the person to identify with the group with whom the language is associated. It is questionable whether over-zealous parents can project this factor if a person's immediate associations do not call for such a need. A person must desire to reduce the social distance between himself and the group whose language he wants to learn if he/she is genuinely going to learn the standard variety.

(b) The goals for teaching spoken standard English should be clearly recognized in the teaching program. It is essential to keep the goals clearly in the forefront in establishing an effective program for teaching standard English. The curriculum should be reflective of the goal both philosophically and methodologically. If, for example, the goal is bidialectalism (i.e. an additive rather than a replacive dialect) rather than eradicationism, then such an approach must be formally integrated into the materials

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The goals of the curriculum must also consider the appropriateness of language usage in terms of the nonstandard and standard English forms. Just as there are contexts in which standard English is appropriate, there are contexts in which a non-mainstream variety is appropriate. The teaching of standard English must be fully cognizant of this contextual sensitivity and include it as a part of the teaching strategy. Although there may be a number of different methods by which learning activities toward this goal can be structured (e.g. role playing, setting up different contexts of real life situations), the integration of this sensitivity into the curriculum is crucial.

(c) The teaching of standard English should be coupled with information on the nature of dialect diversity. Students should know that the reason they are learning standard English is not related to any linguistic inadequacy of their own system or their failure to learn the English language. They should be taught about the systematic structure of their own language system and the patterned nature of language differences. Speakers of a non-mainstream variety should be given the social basis for learning an alternative system instead of a fallacious linguistic reason.

(d) The teaching of standard English should be based on an understanding of the systematic differences between the standard and nonstandard forms. Materials will be most effective if they are based on a knowledge of the relationship between the features of the mainstream variety and its non-mainstream counterpart. For example, any attempt to teach a mainstream alternative to Vernacular Black English should start with a knowledge of the systematic differences between the varieties, such as those given in various accounts. An understanding of the similarities and differences in the rules of the varieties provides important input into the construction of teaching strategies.

(e) The variety of spoken standard English taught should be realistic in terms of the language norms of the community. The variety of standard English which is taught should reflect the local community norms. That is, the basis of any instruction should be the informal standard English norm of the regional variety rather than a formal standard English not actually used in the region. It must be remembered that some aspects of social diagnosticity are quite sensitive to regional differences. Teaching

should focus on items that are socially stigmatized within the particular region ratner than some of the regional characteristics which may carry minimal social stigma.

If conditions such as the above can be met, then it may not be considered as total compromise for a clinician who has already taken care of all his/her pathological clients to be involved in some aspect of teaching standard English. (This sort of involvement, however, should never be in lieu of dealing with the genuine pathologies.) However, we should hasten to note that this also assumes familiarity with methods for teaching a second language or dialect, which may be somewhat different from the therapeutic strategies of the clinic.

(4) The speech and language pathologist must consider a role as a resource person with respect to social dialectology. One of the encouraging signs within the field of speech and language pathology over the last decade has been the emerging interest in linguistics and sociolinguistics. While I am not denigrating the traditional alliance that this profession has had with disciplines such as anatomy and physiology and psychology, it seemed somewhat strange to me that linguistics had traditionally been delegated a more tangential role in the field. Afterall, speech and language pathology seems most integrally related to the study of language. This seems to be changing, however, as the rigorous study of phonological systems is integrated into the consideration of "articulation disorders" and the linguistic analysis of syntactic systems is infiltrating the study of what has traditionally (although somewhat erroneously) been called language disorders. Given the range of dialect referrals which come to the clinician, it seems only reasonable to suggest that the well-trained clinician must add such a perspective to his/her competencies. As I have stated above, the fact of the matter is that many teachers and parents, unaware of the nature of systematic differences in language varieties, have and will continue to refer their dialectally-different children to the speech and language pathologist. As a resource person who deals with language, I guess this type of referral has to be expected. What is important, however, is how the clinician meets this situation. As an expert on language, it seems only reasonable to expect that more clinicians should have the expertise and sophistication in social dialects to educate those who would erroneously refer children

who are dialectally divergent. The aware speech and language clinician has an obligation to set the facts straight for other teachers through workshops, classroom input, and personal contacts. The depth of ignorance about social dialects is somewhat staggering, and myths of non-mainstream varieties as illogical, unsystematic, unworthy approximations of mainstream ones still persist in our educational systems after several centuries of existence. Movement toward equality has moved a lot more rapidly in other areas than it has with respect to language. Those who touch children's lives need to know basic facts, such as the systematic nature of language differences, that stigmatized language systems exist because there are stigmatized people rather than deficient language systems, that speakers of non-mainstream varieties learn their own systems as well and as rapidly as those of mainstream groups, and so forth. In this capacity, it appears that speech pathologists must be resource people who have the capability of educating others to the scope of dialect divergence. And although others may not share our perspective on the nature of social varieties of American English, at least they will be aware that there is a different perspective from which the nature of language diversity can be viewed, hopefully, thanks to the aware speech pathologist.

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