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ABSTRACT

In a practicum study, 21 students in a speech and debate class were encouraged to discuss openly the roles of Black English (BE) and Standard English (SE), use both freely in the classroom, and engage in speaking situations in the classroom and forensic tournaments to develop confidence and proficiency in their speaking abilities. The objective was to acknowledge the validity of the students' home dialect (BE) while promoting proficiency in SE, empowering them for full freedom of expression in both. Results indicate increased use of SE in code-switching situations and notable growth in self-esteem. Exercises were developed for use in both the speech and debate class and the English curriculum, which is often literature- and writing-centered. Appended materials include a form used to survey English teachers, student self-critique form, a list of topics for improvisational accent or dialect skits, and results of a student survey in speaking confidence. Contains 24 references. (MSE)

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH BIDIALECTISM:

ENCOURAGING STANDARD ENGLISH IN A BLACK ENGLISH ENVIRONMENT

by
Elizabeth Dianne Campbell

A Practicum Report

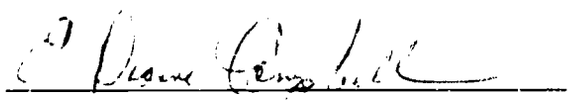
Submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the Advancement of Education at Nova University in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science.

The abstract of this report may be placed in a National Database System for reference.

September/1994

Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. When it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other professionals in the field and in the hope that my own work, presented here, will earn similar respect.



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Abstract

Empowerment Through Bidialectism: Encouraging Standard English in a Black English Environment
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Speakers of Black English (BE) are generally considered to be at a disadvantage in personal and career advancement. However, BE is the birth language of a significant portion of the population and to invalidate the use of BE is to disenfranchise that population group. Teachers are confronted with the dilemma of balancing respect for ethnic identity with preparing students to function successfully in competitive work environments. By employing a bidialectic approach, that is, the acknowledgement of the validity of the students' home BE dialect while encouraging proficiency in Standard English (SE), teachers can empower students to full freedom of expression in both BE and SE. Subject students in a Speech and Debate class entered into open and candid discussions on the subject of language and its implications, utilized both BE and SE freely, and engaged in speaking situations in both their classroom and at forensic tournaments to develop confidence and proficiency in their speaking abilities. The result was increased utilization of SE in code-switching situations, as well as notable growth in self-esteem. Exercises were developed for utilization in the Speech and Debate classroom as well as for application in the English classroom which is traditionally literature- and writing-centered.

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CHAPTER I

Purpose

The responsible teacher in an inner-city school is confronted with a dilemma -- how to balance respect for students' ethnic identity with the need to prepare them for the realities of functioning in a highly competitive, critical society. At question in this practicum is the teacher's approach to dealing with ethnic dialect -- that is, addressing the way in which students speak and how it will impact their future career success, and what role the conscientious teacher should take in the issue.

This practicum took place in a senior high school in a large metropolitan area in the Southeastern United States. The student demographics of the school were 81 percent Black, 18 percent Hispanic, and 3 percent non-Hispanic White. The instructional staff was 25 percent Black, 18 percent Hispanic, and 57 percent non-Hispanic

White. With the addition of all other administrative, clerical, and service personnel, the staff ethnic characteristic changed to 42 percent Black, 16 percent Hispanic, and 42 percent non-Hispanic White.

Of the school's 2,400 total population in grades nine through twelve, 1,072 qualified under the District Comprehensive Dropout Prevention Plan (County Public Schools:25). This plan considered eight factors in early identification of potential dropouts:

1. Major Exceptionality = learning disabilities, emotionally handicapped, etc.,

2. Limited English Proficiency (LEP) = assigned to ESOL for five semesters or more,

3. Absences = 18 or more occurrences of absence in previous school year,

4. Age = two or more years older than the grade level average,

5. Stanine = reading stanine less than four,

6. School = attended three or more schools,

7. Grade Point Average (GPA) = Three or more D's or F's for the previous school year,

8. Suspension = total days of indoor or outdoor suspension in previous school year,

A severity ranking of the risk factors was based on the number of the profile criteria which the student met. In the subject school, 561 students were at level

two, that is, meeting two of the criteria; 325 at level three; 132 at level four; 49 at level five; and five at level six.

Several criteria can be cited as indicators of the general tone of the school: approximately 25 percent of the school population had reading stanines of less than four; nearly 20 percent had 18 or more occurrences of absences. In addition, 20 percent of the students were on indoor suspension at some time during the year, and 15 percent were on outdoor suspension.

In the subject school, Black English (BE) was the predominant dialect, even amongst the few Hispanic and White students. Peer pressure reinforced the continued employment of BE not only in social settings but within the school environment. It was not considered socially acceptable to use Standard English (SE) on a regular causal basis. Students who did so were labeled "Oreos," Black on the outside but White on the inside.

The researcher in this practicum addressed the issue from the perspective of an English teacher back in the classroom for six years, following 20 years in highly competitive private industry. From a schedule of three classes of English Nine and one class of Speech

and Debate, the Speech and Debate class was selected for practicum application. This was viewed as a forum conducive to open and candid considerations of language that would yield strategies which could be employed across the English curriculum.

The social pressure to utilize BE was revealed through the response to a survey of the English teachers in the subject school (Appendix A). The teachers observed that, on the average, 30 percent of their students used SE in spoken language, and 40 percent in writing. They also observed that when a variation from SE form was brought to the students' attention, 55 percent adjusted very easily, 27 percent adjusted with a little difficulty, 4 percent sometimes had difficulty, 13 percent usually had difficulty, and only 5 percent didn't know the SE form.

Several teachers, observing that the use of BE is frequently a matter of social choice, made statements such as: "My students seem to know Standard English but choose to speak in Black English." Or, "This is how they speak at home, at school, at work. They want to fit in. Those who speak SE are made fun of -- 'They want to appear white.'"

Social Implications Of BE Dialect

Public judgement is hard on non-standard English speakers, and particularly hard on speakers of Black dialect. British poet Dabydeen (1990:31) looked back four centuries at attitudes toward language used by Africans. The concept of Blacks being both scientifically illiterate as well as being ignorant of the rules of grammar is "firmly entrenched in European thought," the poet asserted. Dabydeen cited 17th Century travel literature and anthropological writings that discussed the "natives'" language as a reflection of their bestiality, focusing (p.32) "on the monstrosity of their organs of speech as well as their organs of propagation."

Further noted by Dabydeen was an 18th Century publication which described Hottentots as "Barbarians, who are in every respect scarce one degree above Brutes, having no language among them but a confused gabble." And then in the 19th Century, Dabydeen continued (p.33), "the equation between African and animal sustained by the issue of language...gave moral validity to the slave trade."

Noting the influence of British thought on American standards, Baldwin (1992:91) observed, "To open your mouth in England is (if I may use Black English) to 'put your business in the street': You have confessed your parents, your youth, your school, your salary, your self-esteem, and, alas, your future."

Sledd (1983:667) asserted that standardized language is an instrument of dominion over others. He pointed to the first standardized written English, Chancery Standard of 1430, which was "confined to the privileged and powerful in and around the capital city of London, within a radius of no more than sixty miles."

Teachers with trepidation on the issue would quake under Sledd's condemnatory blast against,

> ...teaching the compulsory, mandatory, imposed, coerced, enforced, obligatory, regimented use of standard English simply to flatter the prejudices of the powers that be, and it does no good to argue that by coercing students now, we give them 'freedom to choose later.' However it may be concealed, the chief purpose of present coercion is to condition students to comply with later coercion, and two coercions do not one freedom make.

Sledd then poked a finger directly at the English teachers' collective breast and said that they, "should oppose the educational bureaucracy ... because the

bureaucracy will never oppose the corruptions of our corrupt society." Unrelentingly, Sledd questions, "whether English-teaching in the United States is a fit occupation for persons with a social conscience."

In a later article (1988:171), Sledd told teachers to stop equating the term "good" with "standard," and "bad" with "nonstandard," and adds the suggestion that, "teachers should generally accept or maybe encourage more diversity, not less, than they are inclined to." The feisty writer cautioned that, "English will remain a world language only if its users everywhere can feel that in some sense English is their own."

While Sledd 's passion for peaceful linguistic cohabitation is appealing in its idealism, the practicality of Noguchi (1991:30) stands a better chance of survival in the cold light of first period Monday morning. Essentially, Noguchi concluded that teachers should be armed with a sword of equality in one hand and Warriner's grammar in the other, "...Teachers stand a better chance of changing the writing habits of students than of changing the seemingly knee-jerk reactions of offended readers."

Noguchi further counseled,

> ...If it turns out that the adverse reactions to certain linguistic features ultimately result not from the features themselves but from the social groups that produce them, then it seems far more enlightening and productive to remove the linguistic features as a cover and to expose the prejudice for what it is. That is, if people in power unfairly make it difficult for certain social groups to climb the socioeconomic ladder, we should try not to give these perpetrators an opportunity to hide the more underlying cause by letting them use nonstandard features of writing as the discriminating factor.

Even armed with knowledge of the certain social and economic consequences that the BE-speaking student will suffer, the English teacher would have to be a completely insensitive despot not to feel a great sense of trepidation when treading the sacred ground of home dialect. Here is the language that the child has learned from parents and grandparents and all who are secure and familiar. A teacher, probably of a different race and socioeconomic strata, who is in this child's life less than five hours a week for 10 months, has a greater risk of alienating and offending than a chance of gaining enthusiastic participation and acceptance.

Ethnic Identity Threatened

The threat of homogenization and loss of identity emerges as motivation for not only the retention of,

but pride in, the identity created by non-standard speech. This creates a set of reasons for the continued use of BE, and a conflict for those who choose to utilize SE. Nevertheless, while users of BE defend it as a mark of ethnic pride, they also tend to associate it with a judgement of inferiority from other races. Thompson (1990:314) said that writers using BE consider themselves to be simply "careless" writers who do not proofread well or are simply not good at writing. They do not associate themselves with what others call "'Black dialect.' The insinuation is that such a speaker comes from an inferior environment. Because peer judgement is important...[they] ... avoid such an association."

Aponte (1989:11), born and raised in Harlem, voiced frustration with constantly having to defend the "Whiteness" of using SE. "I wanted to be liked and wanted to blend....But speaking as I did made blending difficult." Aponte's solution was that found by many students, becoming "polylingual" and "sensitive linguistically in the way animals are able to sense the danger of bad weather." The solution brought a double-edged frustration though: first, that "'Talkin' White'

implies that the English language is a closed system owned exclusively by Whites," and second, that to "talk White" implies "not being Black enough, or as somehow being anti-black." Without using the term, Aponte recognized bidialectism as well as the societal need for its validation in both race's communities.

Harmon and Edelsky (1989:36) considered the development of language facility a "catapult...out of family, community, class or ethnic group" which caused students to believe they "must choose between the old and new discourse." They added that this belief was reinforced by teachers who honor, "the 'melting pot' mythology which romanticizes rejection of one's roots as a prerequisite to Americanization, upward mobility, self-improvement, and financial success."

The painful loss of identity is echoed in Christensen's (1990:36) recollection of childhood humiliation due to a teacher's attitude on English usage. The conclusion reached was that,

> The real version of the melting pot is that people of diverse backgrounds are mixed together, and when they come out, they're supposed to look like Vanna White and sound like Dan Rather. The only diversity we celebrate is tacos and chop suey at the mall.

Baldwin (p. 93) observed that, "A child cannot be taught by anyone who despises him." The Black American novelist says that teachers demand, essentially, "That the child repudiate his experience, and all that gives him sustenance, and enter a limbo in which he will no longer be Black, and in which he knows that he can never become White."

There is a "need for teachers to be made aware of the potency of negative expectations that appear to be held for Black Dialect speakers," Cecil (1988:36) cautioned.

Seymour (1986:87) saw very direct and severe connections to teachers' attitudes toward Black English:

> A child is quick to grasp that while school speech is "good," his own speech is "bad," and that by extension he himself is somehow inadequate and without value. Some children react to this feeling by withdrawing; they stop talking entirely. Others develop the attitude of "F'get you, honkey." In either case, the psychological results are devastating and lead straight to the dropout route.

Language usage requires students to make a decision about who they are and who they will be at a very young age. This is a particularly daunting challenge, considering that to change one's way of

speaking holds the frightening threat of alienation from one's roots, and does not assure acceptance by mainstream society. As Harman and Edelsky (1989:36) put it,

> ...One must decide that reading and writing are things that "people like me" do. But who am I like; my Chicano (or Black, or Navajo, or Thai, or Israeli, or working class) parents or spouse, or my mainstream teacher?

As long as students feel that the school environment not only does not understand them but also does not value them, they will not be inclined to remain in the negative atmosphere. In schools such as the subject one, where the potential drop-out criteria identify nearly half the entire student body, a significant part of the teachers' responsibility is for acknowledgement and validation of individual significance.

However, even in the face of these social issues, teachers are still expected to bear the responsibility for preparing students for careers and personal advancement. Robbins (1988:23) related that, "...Better jobs do go to the speakers of standard English." The conclusion he drew was, "Since the real world is judgmental and critical, we do students a great

disservice by continuing to ignore this serious issue."

Simply put, a number of conflicting considerations fall into the laps of teachers who are expected to be able to sort them out and "do the right thing," as their BE-speaking students would say:

- Historic perspective,
- Dialect cast system,
- Cultural identity,
- Threat of homogenization and assimilation,
- Individual evolving personal identification,
- Demands of the working place.

Bidialectism in Perspective

A solution that bears consideration is the espousal of bidialectism. In reality, the term "bidialectism" is just another example of the delicate euphemisms employed to conceal ramifications of the long injustice against Black Americans. The term may be defined in any manner of ways, but what it comes down to is White Americans acknowledging that Black Americans have their own pattern of speech, that nothing should be done about the original pattern, but that, in schools, Black students should be empowered to acquire the additional facility of utilizing what is commonly called "Standard English."

The term "bidialectism" in all honesty applies to consideration of only Black English. No one would have the temerity to suggest that we encourage Cajuns in Louisiana's Bayou Country to accept bidialectalism, or a White native of Brooklyn, or a White native of Boston, or a White native of Georgia. Our Black students know that, just as they know that the discussions of "Black English" really mean, "as opposed to White English."

Establishing the revolutionary concept of bidialectism as one step toward mending one of the many inequities between races is not the result of conscientious and innovative educational thought. It came with the lawsuit, "Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School Children v. Ann Arbor School District Board" (473 F. Supp. 1371 [1979]).

The outcome of the case was that, under the equal protection laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States' Constitution, Judge Charles W. Joiner mandated that the school district provide training for the teachers so that they could appropriately relate to and communicate with the children and thus deal with the language differences

that needed to be overcome so that the children could learn to read. The school board was required to prepare a training plan that would provide teachers "with knowledge about the children's use of a 'Black English' language system; and suggest ways and means of using that knowledge in teaching students to read." In essence, the court mandated what is now termed "bidialectism."

With this researcher's recognition of the hypocrisy of the term, there also comes an awareness of the fact that "bidialectism" is at present the only nomenclature to approximate the present effort toward peaceful cohabitation of what were once considered mutually exclusive elements -- Black English and Standard English. This practicum focuses on the development and implementation of teaching methods that de-stigmatize the home dialect and make the utilization of Standard English a less-oppressive experience. It assumes:

- A validation of the students' home dialect as well as the commonly accepted standard dialect;
- A recognition of the right to use the home dialect;
- Encouragement to fully develop the ability to change register between the home dialect and standard English.

The objective of this practicum was the development of methods which lead to the empowerment of students to express themselves fully and with confidence, using either dialect equally well, depending on the time, place and circumstances. As a result of this, each individual student will develop assurance that they will be heard as a person, and come into recognition of their own individual personal value. Specifically, the goal was to encourage 80 percent of a class to voluntarily reduce utilization of BE by 50 percent during speeches; to attain a 10-point growth in self-confidence and willingness to speak in front of groups, as measured by pre- and posttests; and increase participation in forensics tournaments. Additionally, observations from other teachers and parents were used to determine the validity of the researcher's perceptions of student improvement.

CHAPTER II

Research and Solution Strategy

From all the readings and recommendations one might consider on the subject of the relationship of Black English (BE) and Standard English (SE), there comes a concise statemen' of need: Attitude Adjustment. It becomes clear that one's first challenge in this arena is to acknowledge and combat deeply rooted preconceptions. The next step is bidialectism.

The landmark July, 1979, ruling by Judge Charles W. Joiner in the case of 11 school children against the Ann Arbor, Michigan, School District made law what many teachers, especially English teachers, consider heretical if not impossible. In essence, Joiner stamped the court's indicia of authority on bidialectism. The judge mandated acceptance for BE-

speaking students' dialect, while, at the same time, requiring the school district to teach students facility with "the standard English of the school, the commercial world, the arts, science and professions." Joiner stated that, "This action is a cry for judicial help in opening the doors to the establishment....It is an action to keep another generation from becoming functionally illiterate" (473 F. Supp. 1371).

The ruling also mandated that the school board plan appropriate action to assist the professional staff to appreciate, understand, and respond appropriately with children who speak BE. But, while charging the school board, the ruling clearly indicated who the judge saw as pivotal to the situation: "...teachers who fail to appreciate that the children speak a dialect which is acceptable in the home and peer community can result in the children becoming ashamed of their language and thus impede the learning process" (1376).

After examining a number of approaches to dealing with the responsibility of respecting the social issues represented by Black English, discussed in the preceding chapter here, and considering the goals of

teaching as summarized by Judge Joiner, this teacher concluded that a bidialectic approach was appropriate. With it, students are encouraged toward increased articulation in both the home language and Standard English.

This concept flies in the face of more than a century of tradition, as cited by Tchudi and Mitchell (1989:8), in which English teachers have been, "perceived as defenders of the language against onslaughts of 'barbarians,' including their students." These esteemed authors of English classroom pedagogical practice observed of time-honored drills on grammar and correctness (253), "It seems apparent that teaching rules and laws does not significantly change performance, and most research attempts to prove otherwise have failed."

But old habits are hard to break, it would seem. Teachers have been hearing about bidialectism for a while, but, so far, most have passed it off as if a fad from the Sixties like the open classroom or the Afro hair style, certain that the pendulum will swing back to a grammar-centered method of instruction. In a recent survey of English teachers in the subject

school, several teachers indicated that what is needed is more time for workbooks and grammar book drills. A bidialectic approach would probably not be difficult for these teachers to relate to if their students were Hispanic, Oriental, or Slavic. For teachers of students who use Black English, however, an adjustment of attitude is needed.

Following the Ann Arbor decision, there has grown a convincing body of evidence that the teacher proponents of SE must first come to respect and accept, indeed to develop a peaceful cohabitation with, BE. This is what occurs in the learning process as the BE-speaker becomes proficient in SE, according to Edwards (1985:78) who put it succinctly, "It is, of course, nonsense to think it is impossible to learn the standard dialect without first cleansing the tongue of the vernacular." Edwards sternly charged teachers not to approach (79), "inner-city English speakers in a manner which can cause them to feel that their natural speech habits are diseased."

In a careful analysis of the social, historic and economic aspects of language usage, Seymour (1986:92) emphatically concluded that the only solution is to:

> "...officially espouse bidialectism. The result would be the ability to use either dialect equally well -- as Dr. Martin Luther King did -- depending on the time, place, and circumstances. Pupils would have to learn enough about Standard English to use it when necessary, and teachers would have to learn enough about the inner-city dialect to understand and accept it for what it is -- not just a 'careless' version of Standard English but a different form of English that's appropriate in certain times and places."

The fact that this practicum took place in a speech and debate classroom naturally implies that most of the work was oral. Additionally, it provided an opportunity to attempt techniques which might be added to the standard English classroom where the primary emphasis is on literature and writing. Oral exercises have been recommended by a number of writers on the subject of BE-speaking learners. Alexander (1995:27) offers 16 suggestions which are peppered with phrases such as, "...Allow students to read orally...read aloud passages...role-play different situations...conduct a television survey...observe body language and speech...mimic newscasters speech...write skits to role-play...," and others.

Scott (1995:69), said, "Formal reading instruction should be replaced with an intensive oral language program." Tchudi and Mitchell (256) included in their

recommendations, "...speaking and listening...role-playing...writing a short speech," and "translating the dialect they find in the fiction they read into the dialect they speak."

Finch's (1985:81) recommendations extend the traditional English teacher even further from familiar territory. Methods proposed include, "Be frank about your ignorance of particular dialect words, expressions, etc....Encourage students to teach you their dialect, explain the nuances." Finch also encouraged teachers to do something they may feel uncomfortable with, discuss dialect.

Input from peers in the subject school indicated to the researcher that teachers view themselves as respectors of individuality and cultural sensitivities, they just don't want to talk about them. They have adopted a pattern of avoiding the discussion of home language because they don't want to appear insensitive and/or ignorant. At the same time, at least as important a motivation for silence on the subject is their preference to avoid situations which could lead to heated discussions and possible accusations that they are racist.

In this practicum, the instructor involved the students in the discussions of language variations, but did so by utilizing many outside sources, most of them Black, who wrote on varying aspect of the topic. Harmon and Edelsky (1989) pointed out the merits of persuading students that it is not only safe to bring their primary discourse into the classroom, but there can be an exploration of a collection of dominant and subordinate discourses together, the objective being to create a multi-discursive classroom. Students are thus more likely to (p. 36) "... decide to add Standard English conventions to an existing repertoire, rather than to trade old ways for new." This was the result in the classroom which is the subject of this practicum.

This approach was supported by the findings of Thompson (1990), who introduced students to articles and essays on language usage and encouraged open discussion and writing on them. Thompson found that this functioned as a significant part of the process to heighten self-esteem, which freed up inhibitions to utilize language in general.

Thompson also included a sharing of observations on language experiences which would not generally be

discussed in a classroom. By developing a sense of trusting and mutual respect within the classroom, there came an increased freedom for expression. This was a liberating experience for the student silenced by a fear of possible "wrongness" being discovered, and helped overcome the sense of "powerlessness" with language. Thompson's strategy was utilized in this practicum.

A fear of other people thinking poorly of them causes users of Black English to not want to be associated with the term, Thompson observed (1990:314). "The insinuation is that such a speaker comes from an inferior environment." This teacher's previous experiences support that observation. Students' strong objections to the suggestion that they speak "Black English" indicate past judgements on their speech as, "wrong," "bad," "dumb," "ignorant," and a number of other terms that are contrary to this teacher's conviction that different is not synonymous with deficient. Based on the students' response to terms, the labels used in this instructor's classroom were "Casual" and "Formal" rather than "Black" and "Standard."

In actuality, the terms "Casual" and "Formal" are more accurate descriptors of the students' way of speaking. Many students have the ability to switch between BE and SE as circumstances require, or to at least adjust easily when variations are brought to their attention. Brown (1987:208) defined speech register as "a variety of language used for a specific purpose." The linguist illustrated with, "When you converse informally with a friend, you use a different style than that used in an interview for a job with a prospective employer." Students' abilities to shift between BE and SE related strongly to the register of casual and formal, and the use of these terms assisted in their self-image development.

This instructor utilized tape recordings with a previous effort. At that time, the students' initial reaction to hearing their work was enthusiastic, but then faded. The decline in interest may have been a matter of the novelty wearing off. More likely though, it was probably related to the comments on structure and dialect usage which the teacher added to the tapes following each speech, and the fact that, prior to this, there had not been enough time spent on

discussing language usage and establishing philosophy. Tapes assigned to each student for this practicum were available for review purposes only, with no instructor comments added.

Based on the published findings and the recommendations of above mentioned researchers, plus this instructor's experiences, the practicum utilized the fo lowing elements.

The progression of assignments included:
* opening survey of speaker confidence,
* a planned speech of self-introduction,
* full-class and small-group choral readings,
* individual poetry readings,
* class discussions on speech patterns and dialects,
* group improvisational skit presented in "formal" English,
* group skit presented in a regional dialect or unique accent,
* Impromptu speeches on topics of common interest
* individual speech on a current event with the expression of an opinion on the subject,
* closing survey of speaker confidence.

Additional elements included:
* team work/collaborative learning as a means to build confidence and enthusiasm for participation,
* a wide variety of material available to be read aloud and presented,
* performances of choral readings and poetry to other classes to add challenge and significance to the effort,
* discussions on the use and power of language based on outside readings.

Because of the teacher's previous experience, and the insights gained from researchers noted earlier in this paper, it was projected that this might be an emotion-charged situation. Therefore, several Black teachers of these students were advised when the subject of dialect was to be discussed, in the event that they were called upon for consultation on the topic. The teachers were given copies of the readings to be utilized, and time was spent discussing the philosophy and the approach. They were in strong agreement that the need should be addressed, were supportive of the approach, and were willing to engage in dialogue with the students if the subject were presented by them. As it turned out, this precautionary effort was not necessary this time, but in the future this step will be taken again to avoid the possibility of a student misunderstanding the intent.

CHAPTER III

Implementation Plan

Against the background of awareness reviewed in the preceding two chapters, this researcher launched an effort with the objective of encouraging 80 percent of a class to voluntarily reduce utilization of BE by 50 percent during speeches. A supporting objective was a 10-point increase in self-confidence and willingness to speak in front of a group. Input from parents and the students' other teachers was also sought, so as to validate the researcher's perceptions of growth and to determine whether the students were applying their newly found skills in other areas. The initial plan was to focus on 20 students for a nine-week period, however, the class became 21 students, and the planned exercises were interrupted by requirements needed to

prepare for speech and debate tournaments, so the process required a full semester.

The implementation of this practicum called on a modicum of equipment, a considerable store and variety of printed materials, and a degree of sensitivity and involvement that may be greater than the instructor has ever before expended on previous efforts. Without the latter, there was perceived a danger of creating an atmosphere of defensiveness, hostility and distrust. With it, it was hoped, the door would be open for candid communication, growth in student self-esteem, healthy bonding amongst the students, and, ultimately, increased utilization of SE. The investment proved more than worthwhile.

The steps taken involved: an individual effort; team and individual efforts focusing on articulation and emphasis; individual and class considerations of language; a group effort that dealt with dialects and accents; a group effort presenting formal English situations; individual extemporaneous speaking; and then a look at world events accompanied by the expression of an opinion on them. There was sufficient variety in these steps to keep the student involved and

interested. The process involved both receptive and productive language skills: speaking, listening, writing, reading, and group discussions. The projects combined individual and team work, and they utilized a variety of materials that were both written by others and created by the students. Each new step took the students further into exploration of language and the enjoyable and meaningful use of it.

Materials required included:

- Tape recorder and headset to record speeches and listen to tapes;
- Approximately 30 one-hour tapes, one per student;
- Books of poetry on loan from library;
- Choral reading selections (Crannell, 1987, was a good starting point);
- Articles on language (Gosgarian, 1992, and Eschholz et al, 1990, were good starting points);
- List of situations to be presented in varying dialects;
- List of situations for improvisational skits in SE;
- Two weeks of newspapers and two months of news magazines.

In addition, a student self-critique sheet was designed (Appendix B) to direct students to specific areas of improvement needed, particularly those dealing with BE/SE variations. There was resistance to this instrument when it was introduced. Since the objective of the practicum was voluntary adjustment to speaking

patterns, and it became apparent that the students considered committing observations to writing was too formalized and forced, the self-critique sheet was not utilized.

Tape recordings were made of students' speeches presented during the period, with each student being assigned a numbered tape cassette for their exclusive use throughout the term. The anticipated plan was that the instructor would listen to each tape and prepare a student-by-student analysis of the type and frequency of the BE variation utilized. Individual files were established in anticipation of periodic conferences to be held with individual students to review and discuss their BE/SE status and progress as documented on the tapes. It was at this point that accommodation to meet unexpected variables was required.

What this researcher discovered was unequivocal confirmation that BE/SE code switching skills were firmly in place. When confronted with a podium and microphone, the students utilized SE. The rare exceptions came later in the exercises when students were fielding heated cross-examination questions from the floor. Instead of individual files, note sheets on

each student were maintained in the teacher's lesson plan book. In addition to language usage, observations were made on the note sheets on a speech-by-speech basis of all aspects of the student's speeches, including posture, volume, inflection, eye contact, etc. These observations were then shared with the students in individual consultations. In retrospect, it must be concluded that the students' consideration of writings on the subject of BE usage was key to their continued voluntary utilization of SE, since a previous effort utilizing tape recorded speeches revealed extensive use of BE and this step had not been employed at that time.

A total of eight different exercises were scheduled for this period. The first exercise was a speech of self-introduction in which the students were generally strained and uncomfortable. The second exercise was choral reading in groups, which was enjoyable even though sometimes noisy. Students then presented poems of their choosing, which became a very personal exercise. After an atmosphere of energy and participation had been established with the first three exercises, there came the consideration of language and

usage. Ensuing exercises included group skits demonstrating dialect perceptions, group skits using formal English, impromptu speeches, and discussions of current events.

Readings on language and usage were taken from a number of newspaper and magazine articles, as well as published collections of essays on the topic. Working in groups of two to four, the students selected the specific article or essay they wanted to deal with, read them and reported on them to the class. The ensuing class discussions were open, candid, and sometimes heated, but the fact that the floor was open for the topic to be covered created the license necessary to use BE or SE at will, which led to the students demonstrating full facility with SE.

With this freedom and the ensuing efforts, there came increased willingness to speak in general, and a growth in confidence and self-esteem which could be heard in the power, tone, and pace of recorded speeches. Meanwhile, the classroom became a place of broad-ranging and sometimes intense discussions on usually substantive matters, with each student certain of enfranchisement to participate. Students came to

feel a sense of safe space in this classroom, and, in fact, it became the favored meeting place during lunch, after school, and whenever they had free time during another class.

While one could not specifically measure the above points, a quantitative analysis of changed attitudes toward public speaking came through the communications anxiety test scores from the beginning and end of the semester period, and the number of students participating in forensics competitions. The shift toward increased confidence averaged four points, which was less than hoped for. But, more significantly, 15 of the 21 students participated in tournaments. Three students achieving final rankings in several meets.

With previous years' students in this class, there had been very limited participation in tournaments. This involvement requires students to overcome not only a reluctance to speak in public but also their apprehensions about entering competitive situations. In addition, those who did enter events were confronted with the reality that not many Black students were involved. Developing participation in tournaments requires inspiring students' self-confidence and

instilling a sense of trust that the instructor will "be there" for those who are thrust into what they perceive as an alien and hostile environment. This demands a tremendous investment on the instructor's part, and a "leap of faith" on the students' part.

Schedule of Activities

Before any activity took place in the classroom, the pre-survey of speech confidence (Heppler) was taken. Since the practicum setting was a speech and debate class, the opening discussion covered the merits of speaking effectively, how life and options can be changed by overcoming fear of speaking in public, what individual goals students might hold for themselves relative to public speaking, and the enjoyment students might have with participation in competitive events.

The schedule of assignments listed below is presented as if it were an uninterrupted nine-week unit. In actuality, the considerable increase in participation in tournaments created frequent interferences to the planned activities. Sometimes the interruption was only for a day or two, but as students began entering more events, the time required became

longer due to the focus needed on matters such as practicing scripts, re-working sections of original oratories, and researching persuasive speeches for student congress bills. Students not participating in tournaments became involved with helping others with research or with listening to and critiquing the presentations. In addition, the Monday class following each tournament always included time for the participants to share with the class their tales of victory or near-victory. This shared preparation and recap time were valuable supports for the students who competed and helped others overcome their apprehensions about entering forthcoming tournaments.

First Assignment,
Autobiographical Speech

Days 2 through 5 - Begin with discussion of tape recording procedures for speeches, assignment of numbered tapes to students.

- Discuss first presentation, a brief autobiographical speech which is a self-introduction to the class.
- Instructor writes suggested outline on the board for guidance.
- Draw names for order of presentations.
  Students do in-class preparation for speeches, with individual assistance from instructor.
  Presentation of speeches.

Second Assignment,
Choral Reading

Days 6 through 12 -- Begin with distribution of choral reading materials, discussion of the events to take place in the next few days.

- Students break into groups of two to four each, depending on the material they have chosen to present.
- Instructor works with each individual group, reads material to model clear articulation, emphasis, and pacing.
- Groups practice in various parts of the classrooms, recording and listening to their group practice efforts when they feel they are almost ready.
- Each group presents its material to the class.
- Class goes "on tour," presenting readings to other classes.
- Class discussion of feelings and observations about experience of presenting to other classes.

Third Assignment,
Poetry Readings

Days 13 to 20 - Begin the unit on poetry reading with discussion of how it works.

- Students have access to approximately 20 books of poetry on loan from the school library. From these, each selects a poem to present.
- The instructor emphasizes that only the presenting student has a copy of the poem in question, this is not like reading aloud from the literature book in class, so the student has to read loudly, clearly, and with emphasis and variation.

- Students have several days to review and select poetry. Some need considerably longer than others to decide which material best represents them.
- Students do a trial reading, record and listen to it, before they fully committed to a specific poem.
- Students prepare a brief written introduction to their poem, including title, poet, and statement of what the message is.
- Instructor works with individual students on interpretation, emphasis, articulation.
- Students practice their material, record it and listen to themselves before they present to the class.
- Students present their poetry to the class.
- Class goes "on tour" and presents to other classes.
- Discussion of observations on presentations to other classes; how it felt to be up there alone; what they thought about other students' responses; any changes in feelings about poetry in general; thoughts on participation, practice and the way they represented themselves in the presentations. In short, a chance to reflect and bask in a little glory.

Fourth Assignment,
Examination of Language

Days 21 through 24 - Launching the discussion of the way we talk in varying circumstances and opening the floor to consideration of BE and SE.

- Use question and answer format on language tolerance:
  Q: If you were born in Germany, what language would you speak?
  A: German.
  Q: If you got a job and had the opportunity to head the company's office in Japan, what would you have to do?

A: Learn Japanese.
Q: Does that mean that there's anything wrong with German?
A: No.
Q: Does that mean that Japanese is better than German?
A: No.
Q: When you went back to Germany on vacation and went to visit your grandmother, would you speak to her in Japanese?
A: No.
Q: Should your friends and family in Germany feel free to criticize you because you sometimes speak Japanese?
A: No.
Q: Would you have gotten the promotion to head the Japan office if you had been unwilling or unable to learn Japanese?
A: No.

- Discuss the fact that variations on accent and dialect occur also among the British, Scots, Irish, Australians, and many islands of the Caribbean; between France and Belgium; between Spain and the Spanish-language countries of Central and South America; and that in China there are numerous dialects of Chinese and some of them are unintelligible to others even though they use the same alphabet.
- Establish clear and firm articulation of teacher's philosophy that there is no "right" or "wrong," and that the terms to be used will be "formal" and "casual."
-Discuss differences between "casual" and "formal" language, including the posture, gestures, facial expressions, tone, vocabulary, and other related factors. List the kinds of circumstances where one speaks casually and formally.
- Distribution of readings on language so that students can select the material they wish to review for the class.
- Groups prepare presentation.
-Establish ground rules for question and answer session at the end of each presentation: one person speaks at a time; everyone listens to the question and the answer, there are no side conversations going on; questioners wait to be

called upon to speak; everyone will be given an opportunity to speak; it is essential to stay on the subject.
- Students present the material they have read, state their opinions on the material, and preside over questions and comments from the audience.

Fifth Assignment,
Dialects

Days 26 through 31 - Begin Dialects exercise. Students discuss and explore their preconceptions and impressions of other ethnic groups; list readily identifiable national or regional accents on spoken English, attitudes we expect from people who speak in these ways, and actions we anticipate from them.

- Students will draw accent or dialect situation (Appendix C);
- Groups work to write and organize a skit illustrating the situation;
- Teams have class time to prepare presentations;
- Dialect presentations made to class.

Sixth Assignment,
Formal English Skits

Days 32 through 35 - Introduce exercise as examples of times when one is likely to use formal English.

- Students draw sample situations to be used (Appendix D);
- Groups form of two to four students each;
- Groups write own script;

- In-class practice on script and staging;
- Presentation of scripted situations.

Seventh Assignment,
Impromptu Speeches

Days 36 and 37 - Introduce exercise and how it will work.

- Student draws topic (Appendix E);
- First student has five minutes to prepare, after that, as one student goes up to podium, next student draws and prepares during speech;
- Students may use notes, are expected to announce topic, have introduction, body, conclusion;
- Speech should be a minimum of three minutes long

Eighth Assignment,
Current Events

Days 38 through 45 - Begin current events presentation. Students will have extensive supply of news magazines,newspapers, and clippings to utilize in class and for homework. They each will focus on a topic of national or international significance, explain what is happening, why class should be aware or concerned, and state what they think the recommended course of action should be.

- Class discussion will list some of the events students are aware of that are of significance, teacher writes topics on the chalkboard;

- Students have class time to skim through news magazines to develop new topic ideas that could be considered, they are added to the list on the chalkboard;
- Students select the topic they wish to research and present, teacher puts student names by topics selected;
- Students have two days' class time to prepare for presentation, individual consultation time from instructor is available;
- Students are allowed to take reference materials home for continued work;
- Before presentations begin, instructor reminds class of guidelines for question and answer session;
- Students make presentations and preside over the question and answer session.

Following the Current Events assignment, the students take the speaker confidence survey once again.

CHAPTER IV

Results

The results of this effort are extremely difficult to determine in quantitative, arithemetic terms. At the outset, the plan was to utilize two quantitative measures, the decrease in utilization of BE on the students' taped speeches, and an increase in speaker confidence as indicated by a pre and post survey.

The first measuring device was almost completely eliminated immediately with the first speech. The podium and tape recorder were virtual magic wands, whisking away most BE dialect as soon as the student was in front of them. Students did not have to go through a process of listening to their tapes in order to determine dialect interference and correct to SE, they code switched to SE as soon as they spoke into the recorder. This occurred from the very first speech of self-introduction, before there was even a discussion of the subject of usage and public perception. For the most part, students maintained utilization of SE usage

with the occasional exception of during the sometimes heated question and answer sessions as they defended the position they took in their speech.

When an early review of the tapes confirmed the observation that this usage pattern had been established, the instructor took an unannounced stroke count of variations over a week's time. In casual conversation, or during untaped class discussion, an average of two or three BE variations were noted per exchange, which lasted from 30 seconds to one minute. These were the familiar misplaced object pronoun, subject-verb agreement, slang, and articulation variations such as, "Me and him was goin'," "They was," "Ain't," "Don't want no mo," "Dis," "Dat," "Dese," "Axin'," "Git," and "Chiren."

For several reasons, it became apparent that, rather than long meetings with file reviews and tape analysis, the appropriate course of action would be to have frequent brief conferences with the students at times such as practice sessions and during preparation for specific projects. First, because there were so few BE variations used on the tapes; second, a number of first language interferences were detected in

pronunciation, and experience dictated that these were best delt with on an individual basis, one variation at a time; and third, responses to the project consultations held during the various exercises indicated that the frequent individual and supportive attention was well received and responded to. Keeping the conferences brief, less formal, and focused on only one aspect at a time, established a sense that this was something the student was doing by choice, not an assignment that was a burdensome requirement. Additionally, keeping files on the students quickly proved cumbersome and time consuming, so individual pages for comments and observations on each student's work were kept in the teacher's lesson plan book

Student Observations

One student announced in the self-introductory speech, "I have no unique talent or special interest," and consistently substituted [d] for [th] in this, that, these, those, they, etc. This student quickly became entranced with Student Congress in forensics competition and participated in 19 of 20 tournaments during the school year. By the fifth tournament, the

student was being selected as presiding officer for one of the four congress sessions held during the tournament day, and shortly thereafter was being selected for the highly competitive extra session of Super Congress that came at the close of the tournament day.

This success was despite the fact that the student continued the BE substitition of [d] for [th]. A recommendation to adjust was made by the instructor, but it was made gently, based on the value decision that the development of self-confidence and strategy awareness were higher priorities at the moment. The student's adjustment was gradual, and in direct ratio to the degree of confidence and acceptance that was being experienced. As soon as insecurity or fear of failure re-emerged, BE usage became more heavily employed. By the end of the tournament season, when the student automatically prepared files and scheduled time for participation in Super Congress, the use of BE [d] substitution was still present in casual peer conversation, but was almost completely eliminated in formal speaking situations.

A student from the Bluefields region of Nicaragua

code switched between BE and SE in casual conversation, and when at the podium in class or at a tournament spoke only in SE. However, at the beginning of the year, the student spoke in slow, measured sentences, carefully articulating each word, but with little inflection or energy. With time and experience, there was notable improvement in pace, energy, inflection, and personal power. By the end of the tournament season, this student was nominated as best Congress speaker twice, and elected once.

A Jamaican-born student was confronted with the challenge of adjusting to American BE for peer acceptance reasons and American SE for tournament competition. The student's original oratory was written for competition in SE, but the shift among three dialects created some problems in pace, pronunciation, and articulation. These were worked on at a gradual but steady pace, and at the end of the season the student placed second in the state in novice original oratory. Consistently, however, this student utilized American BE for peer communication.

A student with an extensive vocabulary and the ability to quickly form good arguments persisted in

using BE throughout all peer conversations. Among the forms were "Dat's not Martin's show," "White people is on," "I don' want him no mo," "I'm axin' you," and the colorful, "Yo parents is gonna wear out yo behin." This student chose a very complex speechto use in the declamation event of tournament competition. After a good number of hours in individual practice, the student developed very clear and distinct articulation, excellent emphasis, and placed second in the state novice tournament.

One student's self-introductory speech included three BE variations: "I'm plannin a be..." instead of I'm planning to be; "I be scared about..."; and the dropping of syllables with "La-an" for Latin, and "pow-ful" for powerful. This student also spoke in a very soft voice, did not look at the audience, had long pauses between thoughts, had little organization, and at the end simply stopped speaking without a concluding sentence. By the third speech, the student's voice was stronger and more assertive, humor was employed, and articulation was much sharper. By the fourth speech, eye contact was strong and posture was straight. The reading chosen for competition included some

challenging pronunciation -- "dissatisfaction," "femininity," "chauffeured," and "adolescent rivalry" among them, which were dealt with carefully at first and then with notable confidence.

A student's incredibly rapid pace made dropped syllables seem something of a verbal shorthand. This required a conference with the tape used as a supporting example of what needed to be changed. The choral reading and poetry were helpful in this effort, but it wasn't until the seventh speech that the student began heeding the constant reminders to slow down, and with that came complete articulation of each syllable.

A transfer student arrived "talkin' White" and quickly shifted to BE for peer acceptance. When the class came to the discussion of language, this student became particularly vocal that, "This shouldn't be called Black speech, it should be called lazy speech because a lot of White people speak the same way." The student also strongly stated that,"When Black people want to, they can talk right, just like anybody else."

The discussion of BE/SE variations elicited opinions from all students. However, not one defended its use outside the Black community. Terming BE as

"lazy," not "wrong" or "bad," students were adamant that when the situation required, they could and would employ SE. They had, in fact, already proven this claim to be true.

The fact that the subject was made available for open classroom discussion was obviously a unique experience. Essentially, the willingness to discuss the topic was more important that the readings, but the readings were essential foundations, in that they established that this subject was significant and that there were widely differing bodies of opinion on the topic, not only within the students' community but also in print and in the academic community as well.

The discussion created an airing of opinion without conclusion or resolution, but, most importantly, it established that this classroom was a safe place for discussion and exchange. Once this was established, it became much easier for students to stand up in front of their peers. As a result, the whole process of speaking in front of a group of people became "something that I do" for each of the students, and the utilization of SE became "something that I can do when I want to" in a safe environment.

On the whole, it can be concluded that the goal of an 80 percent voluntary reduction in the utilization of BE was more than met. First, because the students voluntarily code switched to SE when confronted with the podium and tape recorder, and, second, when the lapses in their code switching abilities were brought to their attention in a supportive and personal manner, they adapted in a manner that was in keeping with their personal standards and comfort zones.

Surprisingly, the results of the communications confidence surveys did not translate into numbers the atmosphere that could be felt in the classroom. The goal was a 10 point increase in speaker confidence. When averaged, the increase in speaker confidence came to only 4.16 students. The change in confidence was determined by adding the total number on each side, determining the difference on each question, and averaging the results. With the survey used (Appendix F), "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" responses to 10 questions indicated increased confidence, while "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" responses indicated increased confidence on 15 questions. The change in the

"Undecided" responses was counted with the "Agree" responses on the 10 where agreement indicated confidence, and with the "Disagree" responses on the 15 where disagreement indicated confidence. One could surmise from the low numerical shift that the growth in confidence in this group of students was something that could be perceived by an observer, but had not yet come to awareness in the minds of the subject students. But, of course, there is no way that this could be objectively measured in this short a time.

Responses from parents indicated that this was a significant experience for the students. "I sometimes ask [my son] if he has any other class beside debate." "Would you please talk to [my daughter] and tell her that she has to do just as well on her other subjects." "This is the first time [my child] has come home excited and interested in a class." "I can't believe [my daughter] has gotten me up before dawn three Saturdays in a row to drive her to school so that she could go spend the whole day competing at a tournament." Furthermore, in a school marked by parental apathy that has reached epidemic proportions, parents have coalesced to form a nonprofit fund raising

organization for the Debate Club.

A Social Studies teacher, who has many of the subject students in class, has been enthusiastic about the change in the youngsters' sense of presence. This teacher works hard to bring outside speakers in to speak to the classes and to provide students with developmental field trips such as mock trials and mock county commission meetings. "It's so great to know that all I have to do is look at one of your kids and nod. They're ready, they stand up and ask a completely coherent question. They won't let anybody slide by, either, they put toes to the coals and follow up with tough questions. They [the guest speakers] come up to me afterward and ask if these kids are from our school or if we brought in some ringers."

The results may not be quantifiable, but they are observable. Having observed them, one can only conclude that having created a nurturing environment in which young people can express their potential, establish their presence and power, and feel the complete freedom to do so in the language of the establishment, makes all the extra effort that was required worthwhile. This is empowerment. This is education.

CHAPTER V

Recommendations

The attitude adjustment called for in Chapter Two is key to the successful involvement of BE-speaking students in the SE-speaking world.

English teachers need to relax their guard as "protectors of the language," and acknowledge students' right to a separate identity. The teachers' education and maturity should allow them to be able to look beyond the challenge immediately at hand and realize there are other examples of adjustment to language variances. Though grudgingly, the Londoner has come to terms with the Cockney and the Aussie and the American, the Castilian with the Mexican and the Venezuelan, the Mandarin with the Szechuan, and the Parisian with the Belgian. If we as teachers of our version of the mother tongue can come into recognition of a Londoner's attitude toward the American form of English, and how little concern a whole nation has for that attitude, then perhaps we can extend that awareness and recognize

a parallel in the relationship of BE and SE. With that, we will have taken a giant step in healing painful wounds.

This is not easy for the SE-speaking teacher in inner city schools where there are so many disruptions from the academic atmosphere, such as wandering groups of disenchanted students roving the halls, or the ease with the anger of minorities can erupt. Teachers are constantly adapting to unpredictable and unfamiliar variables, and only one of them is the need to overcome their responses of horror when even the most elementary topics -- not to mention academic exercises designed for literary exploration and appreciation -- are rife with "errors." The magnitude of the challenge constantly threatens to drown hopes that students will ever be able to make it in the uncompromising world "out there."

Can teachers dare to discuss the subject of home language when they know that the quickest way to incite a fist fight is with the simple rejoinder, "yo momma"? Do they dare to broach the topic of the differences of the dominant language and the minority language? Dare they fly in the face of the popular culture of rap

music and Cross Colors attire? Are they wrong? Is the world changing and they aren't keeping up? Are they dinosaurs? When will the pendulum swing back their way? Is there a chance that it won't?

Perspective comes with a few precious moments of adjusting eyes upward to broader horizons, and then homeward to other societal conflicts. On the broad scope, we need to recall the Queen's English, Parisian's French, Castilian Spanish and Mandarin Chinese. Focusing narrowly, we need to remember that recently united sperm and egg cells are being granted legal rights and mankind is beginning to realize that animals should not be subjected to the agony of laboratory experimentation. Against this background, we need to place in perspective our role as sentient beings speaking one dialect of our particular tongue becoming psychologically and philosophically conditioned to validate our fellow human beings who happen to speak a variant form.

What a marvelous evolution of the "I'm okay, you're okay" movement. "I talk okay, you talk okay." But the process is just beginning. World peace and unqualified human recognition are still just dreams.

But even if these dreams were to become reality, there would still remain the separation between the private life and the public life for each of us as individuals. While we aspire to recognition that each life merits consideration and respect for individual rights and identity, we must also recognize that there are different selves manifested in each individual -- one more in accord with one's heritage and all that's familiar, the other in accord with the standardized forms of the masses. The casual and the formal selves are empowered to individual peaceful coexistence when there is enfranchisement by the societies of each domain.

Judge Joiner had the perception and decreed the cure for the conflict of the private self with the public demand, but most American educators have difficulty swallowing the pill. The centuries-old norm says that there is no need for the BE-speaking private self's language, that we should all utilize the same public language. Bidialectism, the legally mandated reality of this aspect of human existence, has been fought -- or at least ignored -- for 30 years, and the result has been nothing more than the continued

disenfranchisement of a large percentage of one of the highly obvious races in this land of equality.

What is a teacher to do? Perpetuate a myth? fear the increasingly more obvious? Hide in bureaucratic cloaks of ancient supremacy? Throw up hands in helplessness? Flee in desperation? None of the above. The solution is the acceptance of a peaceful, symbiotic coexistence of the dialects of the minority and the majority.

Upon reaching this point of acceptance, the teacher's journey to bidialectism is well under way, for overcoming the initial barriers of tradition, habits and preconceptions is a tremendous step. The next step is rather large as well, this is the willingness to take the risk of discussing language with the students. In this practicum, the candid discussion of language was key to making all the exercises meaningful. Without having attained a significant level of candor and communication, we could well have been continuing to do grammar workbook lessons with bored compliance but little significance and certainly no longevity of application.

Employing the terms "casual" and "formal" puts language into realistic perspective for students. They know there is a difference in their language usage, and they know they can code switch. By de-stigmatizing both forms of the language, a barrier to utilization is removed. BE is no longer "bad." SE is no longer "white."

Then comes the process of creating situations in which it is comfortable for the student to utilize the newly found freedom. For the teacher in a classroom where oral communications is expected, such as that of this practicum, it is a more direct process than for the teacher whose focus is primarily literature and written communication. In the oral-based classroom, the teacher does not have to deal with the mechanical considerations of spelling and punctuation, but deals more with research, organization, delivery, self-confidence, style, and listening skills. The usefulness of these skills, however, is not confined to oral use of language, and, similarly, the teacher with a literature and writing-based pattern of instruction can benefit from adapting lessons to an oral approach.

Introducing Oral English
In the Standard Classroom

The use of choral readings is an effective first step. Students enjoy working in groups. With choral reading they figure out together what is called for, and after a few practice readings come into awareness of the need for articulation, timing, and listening to each other. The rhythmic pacing and flow of the works create a spirit of cheerleader practice or singing a popular song. Presenting their reading to the class adds a demand for excellence.

Poetry reading is a natural follow-on of choral reading. If students are provided a selection of poetry books to freely choose their selection from, this becomes a personal statement with which they want to do well. The preparation of an introduction and a statement of the message of the poem expresses the student's relationship to the material, and it makes it all the more important for them to remember that they are the only ones who have copies of the poem and that they have only one chance to present it.

Reading the grade-level required plays in front of the class gets students standing up in speaking roles,

but with the comfort of the group effort and the literature book in hand. The teacher needs to prepare in advance by breaking up the play into manageable scenes. Then must come an allowance for some confusion in the room as each group practices their lines and creates some minor blocking to decide who should walk on from where and who should stand where. While the teaching of the play might not be as quiet and orderly as when students sit at their seats and read the parts, it will certainly be more enjoyable and memorable. Clearly articulating SE literature becomes something that they do. The teacher can still stop at key points for vocabulary work, review of action and conflicts, or tests on comprehension. In order to keep the audience listening attentively, grades can also be given for audience support.

Oral short story reports can precede oral book reports, and here the teacher can provide an opportunity for expressing proficiency with both casual and formal English. The teacher needs a selection of short stories, with two copies of each so that the students can work in pairs. They read the stories and prepare two reports, one in casual English, the other

in formal English, and deliver each to the class.

The short story reports create the introduction for oral book reports, utilizing formal English, and following the guidelines the teacher requires.

Term papers can also be presented orally, with the student being prepared to answer questions at the conclusion of the presentation. This adds grades for presentation and listening, makes the long research more meaningful, provides an opportunity for sharing newly acquired information, and puts the presenter in the position of authority on a topic.

If at all possible, these efforts should be tape recorded for the students' review. This adds elements of significance and formality to the effort and provides an opportunity for the students to review and appreciate their work.

By creating the opportunity for students to be in front of the classroom, the teacher not only provides circumstances in which students are inclined to utilize their formal English, there is established a right to speak on broader matters. This at least presents a doorway, and perhaps opens it, for the discussion of language and its implications on life. While the

teacher would be unwise to walk into this topic without thoughtful advance preparation, including the availability of outside readings, this area of language exploration and appreciation adds new dimensions to the teacher-student communications process, provides new perspective on utilizing SE, and removes some of the stigma from BE. The timing of when to introduce the topic should be based purely on the teacher's perception of topic flow and atmosphere within the respective class, but could well come following the poetry reading.

Avenues of Dissemination

Developing involvement in bidialectism best begins at home in the view of this researcher. In order to determine the response to the philosophy and to test the exercises, this researcher will first provide an inservice seminar with the English teachers in the subject school. The teachers willing to attempt the effort will be worked with closely, which will include discussions of philosophy and approaches and the providing of materials already developed, including a copy of this practicum document. Based on the findings

of the cooperating teachers, methods for implementation will be detailed and refined for broader dissemination.

Within the school district of this practicum, there exist two opportunities to develop further involvement in bidialectism. The first is the annual subject-area teachers' workday in which all the county's teachers in specific areas come togetner for a full day of seminars. The topic of bidialectism will be offered as one of the seminars, with this researcher as presenter. The second opportunity is the Impact II program which cites unique teaching strategies and provides seed money for both the developer and the adaptor to use in implementation. This researcher has already served as a developer with another concept, and will submit a proposal on methods to implement bidialectism.

The practicum instructor will also communicate the strategies through the local and national offices of the National Forensic League (NFL). This instructor is a member of an NFL national committee which is considering the question of how to increase inner-city youth in speech and debate, and the strategies developed will be shared as a proven approach.

Finally, it is not anticipated that the efforts of this practicum will ever be considered "completed." Language is dynamic and evolutionary, just as the human being is, and changes will be made on an ongoing basis.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Survey of English Teachers

Survey of English Teachers
(Appendix A:71)

Note To: English Teachers
From: E. D. Campbell
Re: Standard English Usage

Your considered answers to the survey below would be greatly appreciated. I'm requesting that you sign it so that it might be possible to follow up on observations you make. Your responses will be confidential. If possible, please respond by Friday, June 12.

Thank you in advance for your time and effort.

Regards,

---

1. About your classes:

LEVEL	GRADE	NUMBER OF STUDENTS
AP	_____	_____
Honors	_____	_____
Regular	_____	_____
School within a School	_____	_____
Other: _____		
_____	_____	_____

2. Please approximate the number of your students who use Standard English:

   A. in speaking _____

   B. in writing _____

3. When you bring variations from SE usage to the students' attention, what is their degree of ease in adjusting to SE form? Please indicate the approximate number of students who:

   _____ Adjust very easily
   _____ Have a little difficulty
   _____ Sometimes have difficulty
   _____ Usually have difficulty
   _____ Don't know the SE form

4. When you talk with students about usage, what terms do you use (i.e.: Standard English, Black English, broadcast, professional, business, slang, dialect, correct, incorrect, formal, street, etc.)?

5. Please explain briefly what process you use to bring variations from SE form to your students' attention (i.e.: circle on paper and rewrite required, repeat phrase spoken and wait for revision, etc.).

6. If you have any additional observations on the effort or need to encourage the use of Standard English, please use the space below. Your input is appreciated.

Please Sign Here: _____

Appendix B

Student Self-Critique Form

SPEAKER SELF-CRITIQUE FORM

Your Name:_____

Date of Speech:_____ Topic:_____

In general, what do you think about your speech?

Looking at specific factors, what do you think about:

Speech Content:

Speech Length:

Voice Volume:

Your Pronunciation:

Your Speaking Style:

Please return this form to your instructor after it has been completed

Appendix C

Accent and Dialect Speaking Situations

SPEECH "TYPE" IMPROVISATIONS

These presentations will be made by groups of two to four students. Volunteer leaders will draw topics from the hat, then return to their seats to decide how many people they need to work with, form their groups, and begin preparing their presentations.

1. A man from Texas is showing a very attractive blond model from Brooklyn through his oil fields.

2. An Australian is taking an American friend on a tour of the Outback.

3. A space ship lands in your neighborhood, a group of aliens gets out and starts discussing what they see. You don't speak their language, but, magically, you can understand each other.

4. You are training a robot how to play football.

5. Valley Girls are discussing hair, nails and shopping.

6. You have a group of Japanese people in your home for dinner.

7. A grouchy old lady is hollering at neighborhood kids.

8. A teacher from Germany has come to teach your science class.

9. A time machine takes you back to the '60s and a hippie commune.

10. Dracula and Friends greet little children on Halloween night.

11. You are a young lady going out with friends to a very elegant restaurant, and your blind date for the evening is a very romantic French gentleman.

12. You are a guest for tea with Lady Di.

Appendix D

Formal English
Speaking Situations

Situations for Improvisational Scripts

1. You are being interviewed by a college representative. You are a finalist for a full scholarship covering tuition, books, dormatory and meals.

2. You come back to your school for a ten-year reunion. Your three best friends from school are now a dentist, a senator, and a senior vice president of a New York Bank.

3. You are talking to your minister about plans for your wedding, which is going to be very big and very elaborate.

4. You are telling your mother you have AIDS.

5. You are taking a visitor from a foreign country on a tour of your school.

6. You are at church and you are trying to make a date with a good looking person.

7. You are a boy who is asking a girl's father for permission to marry her.

8. You are a girl who has just been named Miss America, you are giving your acceptance speech.

9. You are a guest on the Oprah Winfrey Show and have been asked to discuss the concerns of all teenagers in the United States.

10. You have just won the lottery for $25 million and are being interviewed by all the press. They want to know something about you, your background and family, and what you plan to do with the money.

11. You are visiting your favorite aunt. You are always nice to her because she always bakes your favorite cake and gives you nice presents.

12. You are being interviewed for a college scholarship. You have just been asked to explain why you think you deserve this scholarship and how you think it will effect your life.

13. You are being interviewed for a job in the headquarters office of a big company. You have just been asked to explain why you think you have the qualifications for the job and what you can do for the company.

14. It's 15 years from now. You are at a funeral. You suddenly realize that the person you are sitting next to is the person you were madly in love with when you went to high school.

15. You have just been named the NFL player of the year and are being interviewed by the press on your response to being awarded this honor.

16. It's 1 a.m. You are driving home and have been pulled over for speeding.

17. You are going to rent your first apartment. The owner of the building is taking you on a tour of the property. It is very elegant and exclusive and it's exactly what you want.

Appendix E

Impromptu Speaking Topics

Impromptu topics requiring descriptions. The objective is to provide full and complete descriptions of the subject drawn.

1. If I could tame any animal for a pet, it would be.

2. My most embarrassing experience.

3. If I were to know what is going to happen in the future...

4. My favorite childhood game was...

5. The music I dislike the most is....

6. The most memorable event in my life was....

7. If I could live anywhere in the world it would be...

8. The most memorable person I've ever met was....

9. The person who has influenced my life the most....

10. The happiest event in my life was....

11. If I had one wish, I would...

12. The one thing I dislike about myself is....

13. The most memorable person I've ever met is....

14. My favorite movie of all that I've ever seen was...

15. I used to think that I wanted to be...

16. If I were rich, I would...

17. If I could throw the most elegant party in the world and invite anyone I wanted to....

18. I have always hated....

19. My favorite TV show is...

20. If I could have any special power it would be....

21. If I were a trillionaire I would...

22. If I could change one thing about myself it would be...

23. The first time I thought I was in love....

24. My favorite relative is....

25. If I could own any car it would be....

Following are general impromptu topics, now specifically requiring speeches which are descriptive in nature.

1. I'll never forget the day that.....

2. Who did he think he was.....

3. Everytime I see.....

4. The only time I.....

5. If she hadn't been.....

6. It only hurts when.....

7. If I knew then what I know now.....

8. In spite of everything, I thought that.....

9. Whether you like it or not.....

10. It was just.....

11. After all I've done for you.....

12. If I had known that .....

13. What really makes me sick is.....

14. The look on his face told me that.....

15. The most important part was.....

16. It really looked ridiculous.....

17. The timing was perfect.....

18. It was one of those days when nothing went right....

19. Sometimes I think that.....

20. I had always thought that.....but.....

21. Whenever I see..... It makes me.....

22. If you thought that was bad, you should have.....

23. Wait until I tell you what I.....

24. It was the last thing I ever thought.....

25. It was the ugliest.....

26. When she told me about.....

27. My favorite elementary school teacher....

28. The college I would select if money were no object.....

29. The place I would like to visit most....

30. My grandmother always.....

31. My favorite uncle was....

32. The most beautiful sight I've ever seen.....

33. My favorite book is....

34. My favorite childhood game.....

35. If I could be someone else, I would be...

36. When I was little, I thought that.....

37. If I could travel to Outer Space.....

38. The time in history that I would like to live in.....

39. The most frightening experience I've ever had.....

40. The person in history I admire the most....

Appendix F

Response to

Speaker Confidence Survey

COMPARISON OF SPEAKER CONFIDENCE SURVEY RESULTS

SA=strongly agree; A=agree; UN=undecided; D=disagree; SD=strongly disagree; +/- = students shifting toward increased confidence.

	SA	A	UN	D	SD	+/-
1. While participating in a conversation	2	6	5	4	3	
with a new acquaintance I feel very nervous	**0**	**8**	**2**	**6**	**5**	**+9**
2. I have no fear of facing an audience	2	3	2	8	6	
	1	**9**	**0**	**7**	**4**	**+10**
3. I talk less because I'm shy	4	2	3	5	6	
	1	**1**	**8**	**2**	**9**	**+5**
4. I look forward to expressing my opinions	2	6	8	4	0	
at meetings.	**4**	**8**	**3**	**6**	**0**	**+7**
5. I am afraid to express myself in a	1	5	5	5	4	
group.	**1**	**4**	**5**	**4**	**6**	**+4**
6. I look forward to an opportunity to	1	4	8	6	1	
speak in public.	**5**	**6**	**5**	**5**	**0**	**+9**
7. I find the prospect of speaking mildly	1	5	10	3	0	
pleasant.	**2**	**12**	**4**	**2**	**1**	**+14**
8. When communicating, my posture feels	0	3	3	11	3	
strained and unnatural.	**0**	**6**	**2**	**8**	**5**	**+3**
9. I am tense and nervous while	0	4	3	8	6	
participating in group discussion.	**2**	**3**	**5**	**7**	**4**	**-6**
10. Although I talk fluently with friends, I	2	8	3	6	1	
am at a loss for words on the platform.	**4**	**6**	**1**	**6**	**4**	**+3**
11. I have no fear of expressing myself in	3	6	4	5	2	
a group.	**6**	**5**	**4**	**5**	**4**	**+/-0**
12. My hands tremble when I try to handle	3	2	4	7	4	
objects on the platform.	**1**	**4**	**2**	**10**	**3**	**+4**
13.I always avoid speaking in public if	3	1	4	8	4	
possible.	**2**	**4**	**3**	**5**	**7**	**-2**
14. I feel that I am more fluent when talking	**1**	7	4	6	2	
to people than most other people are.	**2**	**10**	**3**	**6**	**0**	**+1**
15. I am fearful and tense all the while I	2	6	3	5	3	
am speaking before a group of people.	**2**	**5**	**4**	**9**	**2**	**+1**
16. My thoughts become confused and jumbled	3	10	3	3	1	
when I speak before an audience.	**2**	**9**	**4**	**4**	**2**	**+3**
17. I like to get involved in group	4	5	8	2	1	
discussions.	**5**	**10**	**5**	**0**	**0**	**+7**
18. Though nervous before getting up, I soon	4	5	1	4	6	
forget my fears and enjoy the experience.	**5**	**7**	**5**	**3**	**1**	**+13**
19. Conversing with people in positions of	4	5	5	6	4	
authority causes me to be fearful and tense.	**5**	**7**	**2**	**5**	**8**	**+/-0**
20. I dislike using my body and voice	3	2	5	6	3	
expressively.	**0**	**3**	**6**	**4**	**9**	**+11**
21. I feel relaxed and comfortable while	3	4	5	6	3	
speaking.	**4**	**2**	**5**	**8**	**1**	**+3**
22. I feel self-conscious when I answer a	2	5	4	6	1	
question or give an opinion in class.	**4**	**6**	**3**	**7**	**1**	**-1**
23. I face the prospect of making a speech	6	4	5	4	1	
with complete confidence.	**3**	**6**	**5**	**6**	**1**	**-1**
24. I'm afraid to speak up in conversations.	0	1	6	5	8	
	2	**1**	**3**	**8**	**6**	**+/-0**
25. I would enjoy presenting a speech on	2	4	5	4	5	
a local television show.	**3**	**6**	**6**	**3**	**3**	**+7**

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	1	**9**	**0**	**7**	**4**	**+10**
3. I talk less because I'm shy	4	2	3	5	6	
	1	**1**	**8**	**2**	**9**	**+5**
4. I look forward to expressing my opinions	2	6	8	4	0	
at meetings.	**4**	**8**	**3**	**6**	**0**	**+7**
5. I am afraid to express myself in a	1	5	5	5	4	
group.	**1**	**4**	**5**	**4**	**6**	**+4**
6. I look forward to an opportunity to	1	4	8	6	1	
speak in public.	**5**	**6**	**5**	**5**	**0**	**+9**
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pleasant.	**2**	**12**	**4**	**2**	**1**	**+14**
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participating in group discussion.	**2**	**3**	**5**	**7**	**4**	**-6**
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11. I have no fear of expressing myself in	3	6	4	5	2	
a group.	**6**	**5**	**4**	**5**	**4**	**+/-0**
12. My hands tremble when I try to handle	3	2	4	7	4	
objects on the platform.	**1**	**4**	**2**	**10**	**3**	**+4**
13.I always avoid speaking in public if	3	1	4	8	4	
possible.	**2**	**4**	**3**	**5**	**7**	**-2**
14. I feel that I am more fluent when talking	1	7	4	6	2	
to people than most other people are.	**2**	**10**	**3**	**6**	**0**	**+1**
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am speaking before a group of people.	**2**	**5**	**4**	**9**	**2**	**+1**
16. My thoughts become confused and jumbled	3	10	3	3	1	
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17. I like to get involved in group	4	5	8	2	1	
discussions.	**5**	**10**	**5**	**0**	**0**	**+7**
18. Though nervous before getting up, I soon	4	5	1	4	6	
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20. I dislike using my body and voice	3	2	5	6	3	
expressively.	**0**	**3**	**6**	**4**	**9**	**+11**
21. I feel relaxed and comfortable while	3	4	5	6	3	
speaking.	**4**	**2**	**5**	**8**	**1**	**+3**
22. I feel self-conscious when I answer a	2	5	4	6	1	
question or give an opinion in class.	**4**	**6**	**3**	**7**	**1**	**-1**
23. I face the prospect of making a speech	6	4	5	4	1	
with complete confidence.	**3**	**6**	**5**	**6**	**1**	**-1**
24. I'm afraid to speak up in conversations.	0	1	6	5	8	
	2	**1**	**3**	**8**	**6**	**+/-0**
25. I would enjoy presenting a speech on	2	4	5	4	5	
a local television show.	**3**	**6**	**6**	**3**	**3**	**+7**