

AN INVESTIGATION OF CERTAIN SOCIO-LINGUISTIC
PHENOMENA IN THE VOCABULARY, PRONUNCIATION
AND GRAMMAR OF DISADVANTAGED PRE-SCHOOL
CHILDREN, THEIR PARENTS AND THEIR TEACHERS
IN THE DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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ANNE ELIZABETH HUGHES

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ABSTRACT

AN INVESTIGATION OF CERTAIN SOCIO-LINGUISTIC PHENOMENA IN THE VOCABULARY, PRONUNCIATION AND GRAMMAR OF DISADVANTAGED PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN, THEIR PARENTS AND THEIR TEACHERS IN THE DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

by Anne Elizabeth Hughes

The purpose of this investigation is to determine certain socio-linguistic phenomena in the vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar of disadvantaged pre-school children, their parents and their teachers and to describe the language behavior of the informants in terms of educational implication. In order to accomplish this end certain disadvantaged pre-schoolers in the Head Start program, their parents and their teachers were selected as speech informants. The speech of these three groups was taped so that certain phonological, grammatical and vocabulary items could be transcribed and analyzed at a later date. A second interview was conducted with a sample of the teachers who served as informants in the first interview as well. The purpose of the second interview was to determine the teachers' concepts of the language problems of the pre-schoolers and their parents. Their reactions to the speech of the children and their parents, both from their personal classroom experiences and after listening to a tape of the children and their parents, were also recorded so that the implications of the teachers' attitudes could be studied at a later date.



This study used the research techniques of the Linguistic Atlas Project and included the biographical data of its informants. The data tabulated were: his age, his sex, his race, his academic experience, his birthplace and the birthplace of his parents, paternal and maternal grandparents, his residences, his travel experiences and his occupation, all of which contributed to the speech information, and pointed to some indices of social stratification in the language of these informants.

The study discovered that the teachers' concepts of the language problems of the children were correct in some instances and incorrect and incomplete in others. Some teacher-informants vaguely identified such matters as, the deletion of the final consonant stops /d/ and /t/ correctly, but made no mention of the /d/ and /t/ deletions in the medial position. The substitution of /n/ for /ŋ/ in the phonology of the disadvantaged child was correctly identified, but it was not understood that this substitution takes place at times in middle-class speech as well as in the speech of the lower socio-economic level speaker; this is not always a social class marker. The teachers were disturbed by the use of "seen" rather than "see" in the grammatical system of the child, but failed to recognize that this may be a phonological item rather than a grammatical one. Though the items in the grammatical system of the disadvantaged speaker were identified by an analysis of the data, the teachers were much more



concerned with vocabulary rather than grammatical usage. Certain grammatical items identified as being those items found in the speech of the disadvantaged pre-schooler and his parent were: The "s" inflection, the double negative, the pronoun redundancy and the "done" perfective auxiliary. In terms of educational implication, the grammatical items identified are of prime importance to the teacher; it must be understood that vocabulary differences may be an importation from another region of the country and is not in and of itself good or bad for that reason. Grammatical usage, on the other hand, can prevent a man from adequately functioning in a society which accepts the prestige level speech as that of the educated man.

It is important to know that social classes determine language and that speech is determined by the social community of which the individual is a member, not the race or ethnic group in which he is born.

Finally, the data of the study reveal naive attitudes toward language and a lack of understanding of the disadvantaged on the part of the teacher, whose language identification with disadvantaged speech is hard to analyze due to her guarded use of language in the classroom.

It is recommended that education be provided for the pre-service and in-service teachers in the areas of cultural relativity and the nature and use of language. The study concludes with the strong recommendation that the teacher



gain a knowledge of how the English language works so that the instructor can identify the actual language problems and can teach children the use of standard English by the use of "switching devices." All groups should be allowed to retain their cultural heritage with the knowledge and use of the prestige dialect which will help them to be adequately functioning individuals in a standard-English speaking community.



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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Need for the Study

This investigation is concerned with some ways in which pre-school children, their parents, and teachers differ in vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. There is a growing need for just this type of information about social dialect and language learning. In particular, the children from culturally disadvantaged homes and homes where foreign languages are the usual means of communication present a problem of great concern to teachers. One group of scholars has gone so far as to say:

In the deprived home, language usage is more limited. Much communication is through gestures and other non-verbal means. When language is used, it is likely to be terse and not necessarily grammatically correct. In any case, it is likely to be restricted in the number of grammatical forms which are utilized. Thus, the deprived child enters school inadequately prepared for the typical language tasks of the first grade. The greatest handicap seems to be a lack of familiarity with the speech used by teachers and insufficient practice in attending to prolonged speech sequences.¹

¹Benjamin S. Bloom, Allison Davis, and Robert Hess, Compensatory Education for Cultural Deprivation, based on working papers contributed by participants in the Research Conference on Education and Cultural Deprivation, June 8-12, 1965, University of Chicago (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1966), pp. 70-71.

Whether or not such generalizations are supportable will be part of the focus of this research.

Previous Research

In historical perspective, the Linguistic Atlas Project, begun in the early 1930's, is recognized as the most definitive survey of American English usage. Originally under the direction of Hans Kurath, Chairman of the American Council of Learned Societies Committee on American Speech, the Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada is important as the most comprehensive extant record of American English usage. Even though World War II interrupted the progress of the Atlas, three volumes of maps bound as six and an interpretive handbook were published between 1939 and 1943. In addition to the published works, thousands of field records, as yet unpublished, have been collected. These records contain over 750 items of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary, all of which are elicited from topics of ordinary interest and understanding to most of the informants. These topics were weather, food, health, home, work, religion and superstition, sports and hobbies. Thus responses provided comparable data for the investigation.²

²Raven I. McDavid, The Linguistic Atlas Project (an unpublished paper written in August, 1950, and described as "A brief account of its [the Linguistic Atlas] influence upon research in American English, and its implications for the study of the regional aspects of American culture"), p. 1.

For future work in American English to be valid--particularly where questions of regional or social distribution are concerned--the Atlas materials must be made accessible to the greatest possible number of scholars. It is such scholars that will formulate new historical analyses on the basis of the descriptive evidence presented in the Linguistic Atlas. Such analyses may lead to new interpretations of particular details in the history of the language; or, applied to the study of dialect representations in literature, may throw light on the speech of particular periods or places.³

One of the most extensive and comprehensive studies of language problems of interest to this research, because of its focus on urban areas, has been reported by William Labov who utilized a sample of the speech of individuals who lived on the Lower East Side of New York City. Labov improved on the highly systematic methods of dialect geography to study regional variation in speech patterns as proposed by the Linguistic Atlas. This investigation reveals that the first approach to the study of language behavior is a descriptive one. The evidence must include an account of the language of native speakers of the community.⁴

According to Labov, linguistic data must include:

(1) features which are constant in the speech of the informants and features which fluctuate; (2) structural descriptions which attempt to describe the phonology, the verbal

³Ibid., p. 1.

⁴William Labov, "Stages in the Acquisition of Standard English," Social Dialects and Language Learning, NCTE publication of 1964 Conference, ed. Roger W. Shuy (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE, 1966), p. 77.



auxiliaries and those areas of greatest variation; (3) a study of the social significance of the isolated forms and systems through the construction of a random sample of the linguistic community; and (4) a consideration of the influence of other languages on the speech of English speaking Americans.⁵ The conclusions of Labov's study suggests that there are two main solutions to language problems:

1. early training which permits lower class children to enter the acquisition route at a higher point than they normally would (see Table 1),
2. special training which increases the normal rate of acquisition of standard English.⁶

There seems to be little doubt concerning the needed research in urban areas. Raven I. McDavid, Jr., notes that there is a significant difference between "local standard" speech in Chicago, derived from western New England and Pennsylvania mainly, and the "non-standard dialect of the black ghetto," traced to South Midland and the South. This further suggests, however, that urban speech study be accompanied by information concerning the linguistic behavior in the feeder areas of the urban area under language investigation. Another aspect of language study which needs further attention is paralanguage and the language of Negroes. Still another problem confronts the linguist and the educator: should the speaker of a sub-standard dialect be

⁵Ibid., pp. 99-101.

⁶Ibid., pp. 102-103.



TABLE 1.--Percentage of agreement with adult norms shown by members of 28 families, based on two variables.*

Age	Per Cent Conformity With Adult Norms
8 - 11	52
12 - 13	50
14 - 15	57
16 - 17	62
18 - 19	64
20 - 39	84

Some working class families, and all of the lower class families, are to be seen operating at much lower level of conformity to adult norms. Despite this great variation in relative position, we see that the slope of most of the lines is similar. Some working class and most lower class families are apparently too far removed from the middle class norms to assimilate them efficiently, and we can see that those youngsters who are below 50% at 18 or 19 years old will probably not reach any significant degree of conformity while they still have the learning ability to match performance to evaluation. At the ages of 35 or 40, these individuals may be able to evaluate the social significance of their own and other speech forms, without being able to shift their own performance.

*William Labov, "Stages in the Acquisition of Standard English," Social Dialects and Language Learning, NCTE Publication of 1964 Conference, ed. Roger W. Shuy (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE, 1966), pp. 89-90.

taught to eliminate that type of linguistic behavior or should he be encouraged to use a standard dialect in addition to his own speech, as dictated by the social situation?⁷ This research will suggest an approach to the solution of this problem.

Here in the United States, there are a number of English teaching situations which appear to involve a quasi-foreign language relationship between a standard variety of English and some English-based pidgin or creole or nonstandard, natively spoken dialect of English. It is primarily in the densely populated and more fluid and competitive social environment of the larger cities, however, that the resultant problems are likely to have the most serious consequences for the nation as a whole. Of the various urban dialect problems, I doubt if any is more widespread or has been more resistant to self-correction than that involving the nonstandard speech which is⁸ characteristic of many urban Negro communities.

William Stewart indicates that no real approach to speech problems of any racial, ethnic or community group can be made until the linguistic situation can be identified and described and until the teacher of English is technically prepared to actually carry through an effective program of remedial English for sub-standard dialect speakers. The individual classroom teacher, too, must have

⁷Raven I. McDavid, Jr., "Social Dialects: Cause or Symptom of Social Maladjustment," Social Dialects and Language Learning (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE Publication, 1966), pp. 8-9.

⁸William A. Stewart, "Urban Negro Speech: Sociolinguistic Factors Affecting English Teaching," Social Dialects and Language Learning (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE Publication, 1966), p. 12.



some knowledge of linguistic structure in order to help him evaluate the language problems of children in his class.⁹

As this research involves an urban area of wide variation in ethnic and racial composition, Stewart's experiences are of keen interest to this investigation:

. . . Once, while observing a reading class in operation in the District, I noticed one of the pupils read 'he brother' for 'his brother.' The teacher seemed to consider this a reading mistake (i.e., a failure to perceive grapheme-phoneme-meaning correspondences). However, I strongly suspect that it was essentially a case of grammatical interference, since the basilect equivalent of 'his brother' is, in fact, 'he brother.' Ironically, this would indicate more success than failure on the teacher's part, the child having understood the meaning of the printed material so well that he began to supply his own linguistic expression for the situation described.¹⁰

Another point of interest is proposed by Charles Ferguson who asks just what is the responsibility of the school in terms of language teaching? Surely there is a vastly different situation when the children speak a regional variety of some other part of the country, or some other country. In the Southwestern communities, the influence of Spanish is unquestionably present; in the heavily Negro areas of the South, the Negro dialect is in evidence. In the North of the United States, various ethnic groups influence the speech when German, Polish, Italian, and other foreign languages are spoken in the home. In the case of the Negro in the North of the United States,

⁹Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁰Ibid.

you do not have a regional dialect, nor another language, nor, necessarily, the case of the substandard dialect, as it is in ordinary adult conversation, but the conversation of the community group as a whole.¹¹

There are many aspects to consider when seeking a solution or solutions to language problems: it must be decided whether individuals should be taught to be biloquial or if an attempt should be made to eliminate substandard English totally by imposing some kind of Standard English. This, too, is a concern for other disciplines, in particular, sociology and psychology. What would be the attitudes of individuals whose self-image may be involved in such linguistic activity? At what age should this linguistic re-education begin, if it is to be the proposed solution to language difficulties? What about the education of the elementary teacher who is not, in most cases, a language specialist? Or would the solution be to bring in linguistics as a special area of training for the elementary teacher who previously was a generalist in her approach to her elementary classroom teaching? Finally, what about parental influence on the speech of the child?

Encouragingly enough, there is an increasing number of research studies reported every year in the area of the elementary English language arts. In 1965 alone, ninety-nine studies were reported to the National Council of

¹¹Charles Ferguson, "Teaching Standard Languages to Dialect Speakers," Social Dialects and Language Learning (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE Publication, 1966), pp. 112, 116.

Teachers of English. Many of them were concerned with the problem of substandard and standard English, as is this research.

In one such piece of research reported by Charlotte Brooks, it is reported that the culturally different child with a speech pattern of substandard English, who may be perfectly happy while saying "what comes natur'llly," can be both happy and successful if she is taught standard English in addition to her "natural talk." If standard English is taught from the very beginning of the child's school experience, with the best approaches to the teaching of foreign languages, the bidialectal knowledge will allow the child to employ standard English in appropriate situations.¹²

Along this same line, Carl Lefevre feels that the child must make the dialect change on his own initiative:

. . . Changing his dialect is a highly complex psychosociological process, involving his teachers, to be sure, and his family and childhood friends-- but above all, it depends on the child's own emergent goals and aspirations, the image the child projects for himself of his future role in life.¹³

Lefevre states further that the child must make this speech discovery for himself if he is to accept a different speech pattern which he can come to use with ease.

¹² Charlotte K. Brooks, "Some Approaches to Teaching Standard English as a Second Language," Elementary English (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE Publication, November, 1964), p. 733.

¹³ Carl A. Lefevre, "Language and Self: Fulfillment or Trauma?" Elementary English (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE Publication, March, 1966), p. 234.

It is worse than idle--it can be traumatic--to attempt "corrections" of the child's developing speech when he is merely passing through phases of imitation and creation. He should be allowed to make his mistakes himself, without prompting from teachers, workbooks, and handbooks of possible errors; he should be allowed to work out his mistakes for himself, with assistance but without too much purification from on high. In his own time the child will discover and make his own the language and the way of life suitable for him--if we do not interfere in unwitting, harmful ways.¹⁴

McDavid agrees too that it must be the individual himself who accepts or rejects a standard dialect. The responsibility as teachers is to encourage the acceptance of standard dialects, but not to "stigmatize other varieties as reflecting mental or moral deficiency, but only remark objectively that they reflect a kind of experience different from that of the dominant culture."¹⁵

Of vital importance to this research is the attitude of elementary teachers, in terms of language behavior. It is proposed by Muriel Crosby that the wrong attitude on the part of the teacher may retard the child's learning of informal standard English rather than to advance the process. If the individual feels disapproval or rejection of his speech on the part of his teacher he may refuse to communicate entirely. When this happens the child's

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 284.

¹⁵ Raven I. McDavid, "The Cultural Matrix of American English," Elementary English (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE Publication, January, 1965), p. 41.



interest in language suffers, just when enthusiasm and interest in anything new should be at its height.¹⁶

Kenneth Goodman says that the child's existing language is that on which literacy is built:

. . . even after literacy has been achieved future language change cannot come about through the extinction of the native dialect and the substitution of another. I believe that language growth must be a growth outward from the native dialect, an expansion which eventually will encompass the socially preferred forms but retain its roots. The child can expand his language as he expands his outlook, not rejecting his own sub-culture but coming to see it in its broader setting. Eventually he can achieve the flexibility of language which makes it possible for him to communicate easily in many diverse settings and on many levels.¹⁷

Current Research in Progress

The current social dialect studies now under investigation are exciting in their approach and scope of language research. One such study is that being developed by the Department of Education, George Washington University on "Research on Language Facility and Dialect Transformation in Children." Attention is focused on this research for the present investigation is concerned with the language of children.

¹⁶Muriel Crosby, "English: New Dimensions and New Demands," Dimensions of Dialect, ed. Eldonna L. Evertts (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE Publication, 1967), p. 4.

¹⁷Kenneth S. Goodman, "Dialect Barriers to Reading Comprehension," Elementary English (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE Publication, December, 1965), p. 860.

The objectives of the study being conducted at George Washington University are:

1. To develop a revised code for classifying errors and deviations in speech samples and a method of transferring speech phonetically to computer tape.
2. To administer the Dailey Language Facility Test to a nationally representative sample and develop norms for spoken speech, including various 'dialects' and deviations from standard English.
3. To determine how various 'dialects' are related to rural urban factors, socio-economic status, ethnic group, basic level of language facility, aptitude and achievement measures, quality of educational opportunity, and various characteristics of the home and neighborhood environment.
4. To develop and evaluate materials for teaching standard English to preschool children who speak dialects.

Procedures of the Study:

Data are available for distributions of 24 major types of errors in speech for 15 District of Columbia schools for the Dailey Language Facility Test. The basic code, developed in this study for classifying serious errors in speech, pronunciation, and grammar in the speech samples, will be revised and particularly designed for coding differences between urban dialects and standard English.

The Dailey Language Facility Test will be administered in the spring of 1966 to a nationally representative sample of 1500 boys and 1500 girls each in kindergarten, 1st grade, and 3rd grade in approximately 20 schools. For 200 of the urban students, mothers and other family members would also be tested and interviewed. Each protocol would be transcribed by specially trained typists on to magnetic tape using phonetic symbols, word for word, preserving the child's pronunciation. Normative distributions would be made for each word used, by sex, grade, ethnic group, general level of language facility, size of city, type of family, type of neighborhood, and type of school. A series of factor analyses of the complete set of measures would define the way various speech

errors or deviations relate to each other and, in effect, give detailed definitions of the various dialects that exist.

On the basis of the analysis results, curriculum and study materials will be developed for teaching standard English to pre-school and kindergarten pupils. This curriculum would emphasize avoidance of the errors and deviations found to be most frequent.¹⁸

The results of this study can be of invaluable help to both the linguist and the educator for the breadth of its scope and the depth of its investigation. The ultimate goal of the investigation which is to analyze and apply the discoveries to the actual teaching situation can be a great help to the teacher of the primary school child who seeks a solution to the speech problems of her youngsters.

Another equally interesting study being conducted on problems of the speech of urban children is reported from the Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland. Its concern is "Speech Development in Children with Emphasis on the Development of Syntax in Urban Children Who Speak a Non-standard Dialect."

As one facet of our research is the speech of the pre-schooler, this developmental study is of interest to our investigation.

The problems that this study proposes to study are:

¹⁸John T. Dailey, Clinton A. Neyman, Jr., and Dean L. Des Roches, "Research on Language Facility and Dialect Transformation in Children," Current Social Dialect Research at American Higher Institutions (Washington, D.C.: Clearinghouse for Social Dialect Studies, Center for Applied Linguistics, NCTE, April 11, 1966), p. 5.

1. What are the differences between the urban child's control of his own non-standard dialect, and his control of the standard dialect?
2. What syntactic structures are available to the child?
3. Are there discernible stages in his syntactic development?

Twenty 5-year-old children were taped for 20-30 minutes of free speech and imitations of ten sentences incorporating passive conjunction, adjective, relative clause, inversion, separation, possessive, negative, t-subordinate and t-object constructions. These same structures were used to test the child's comprehension ability.

Results: Speech production--Three main categories of analysis are being used:

- (1) Range of structures used by each child and frequency of occurrence.
- (2) Total number of kernels and transformations per child.
- (3) Amount of syntactic complexity in each child's speech. Children recoded imitations to fit their own dialects.

Speech comprehension--Discrepancies were discovered between the group's responses on the imitation and comprehension tasks to the same structures, which could be understood by referring to the child's dialect. For example, possessives were poorly imitated but apparently well understood ("receptive bilingualism"). A rank-order of difficulty was developed for the ten experimental structures. The order of difficulty from most to least difficult was: relative clause, (negation, possessive, t-subordinate, tied), (passive, inversion, conjunction, tied), adjective, separation, and t-object. This gives information about the degree of control the children have over these structures. The frequencies of occurrence of these structures in free-speech production are being tabulated to compare with their order of difficulty in the imitation/comprehension tasks. A quantitative index of syntactic complexity was developed based on a weighting system applied to each kind of grammatical rule. The number and kind of

rules applied to a kernel to generate a transformation were the determinants of the measure of the sentence's syntactic complexity. This index predicted the order of difficulty of the structures.

The next stage of the research, to begin shortly, will involve the Negro and white children from 2 groups each, to isolate the effects of dialect, race and social class. The same procedures will be used with a larger number of syntactic structures.¹⁹

Both phases of this study will be of help to the teacher concerned with the linguistic behavior of her children in kindergarten or the primary grades. To adequately describe both the non-standard dialect and the standard dialect in terms of the child's understanding of the differences will be the best guide possible to future work in the teaching of standard English to the elementary child. In addition, the final phase of the study which proposes to involve both the Negro and the white child in an attempt to isolate social and racial factors in speech performance is evidence both the linguist and the educator alike seek. The argument is not a new one to either the sociologist or the linguist, and certainly the classroom teacher may develop her teaching techniques with more real meaning if the differences are noted and built into the curriculum--if these differences do exist and can be predicted. Curriculum development will be both more meaningful

¹⁹Harry Osser, "Speech Development in Children with Emphasis on the Development of Syntax in Urban Children who Speak a Non-standard Dialect," Current Social Dialect Research at American Higher Institutions (Washington, D.C.: Clearinghouse for Social Dialect Studies, Center for Applied Linguistics, NCTE, April 11, 1966), p. 12.



and change can take place more rapidly and completely if the goals are formulated and the procedure can be determined.

In the literature there is repeated reference to the speech problems of children, specifically, the sub-standard dialect of the culturally deprived child. In evidence of this, some linguistic studies have made the deprived child the central figure for linguistic study.

In 1962 Dominic Thomas selected at random 50 Negro children of kindergarten age from one economically underprivileged urban community and 50 white children from the same type of economically depressed area. The white children were also of kindergarten age. His findings were that all of the children showed deficiencies in amount, maturity, and quality of oral expression, but the Negro children were somewhat more deficient than the white.²⁰ Clarence Wachner reporting on the Thomas study, indicated that these same children were asked 20 questions on different topics in individual interviews. In total the children spoke 33,668 running words of which only 1,365 were different. This vocabulary served as a beginning for a language arts program for the culturally disadvantaged children in the Detroit Public Schools.²¹

²⁰ Dominic R. Thomas, "Oral Language Sentence Structure and Vocabulary of Kindergarten Children Living in Low Socio-Economic Urban Areas" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, 1962).

²¹ Clarence W. Wachner, "Detroit Great Cities School Improvement Program in Language Arts," Elementary English (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE Publication, October, 1966), p. 592.

It is axiomatic that cultural deprivation is more likely to occur among families of low socio-economic status. As shown by Eels, et al., Coleman, and Havighurst and Janke²², this cultural deprivation results in a level of cognitive ability which is usually lower for children from low status families than for children from high status families.

The label "non-verbal" is one which is often used in speaking of disadvantaged children, but Mukerji and Robison strongly disagree with this judgment. They reported that their experiences did not support this label, although they conceded that children of different ethnic backgrounds did reflect problems of standard English enunciation, syntax, vocabulary, pronunciation and sentence structure. These researchers further suggested that one of the most serious language problems of the disadvantaged child was that they had little knowledge or experience in classifying terms. Classifying fruits or vegetables, for example, posed a problem for these children.²³

Analysis of changes in the children's behavior support the effectiveness of certain teaching strategies in helping disadvantaged children make noticeable progress toward overcoming some of their language deficits. Determining specific goals of standard English for social communication and conceptualization moved the teacher to evolve new skills which were sharply differentiated to meet clearly defined needs. Because children's

²² Kenneth Eels et al., Intelligence and Cultural Differences (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), as quoted in Elementary English (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE Publication, October, 1966), p. 592.

²³ Rose Mukerji and Helen F. Robison, "A Head Start in Language," Elementary English (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE Publication, May, 1966), p. 460.

deficits were frequently assessed by both observational data and simple, informal tests, the teacher acquired precise diagnostic information about the needs of specific children. Thus, new teaching strategies developed more precise and varied tools to assist children in their efforts to conceptualize their world and to encode their understandings in language capable of communication, storage, and higher levels of thinking.²⁴

In his discussion of the problem of teaching a standardized language to the disadvantaged child, Allison Davis suggests not only must the speech patterns of children be identified and described, but the attitudes of these children toward their teachers and school must also be considered. Davis says:

1. There is an easy-to-detect lack of interest in school due to a cultural lack of identification with the school, its activities or its teaching personnel, and
2. There is an open rejection of school activities and school tasks with no desire to learn more about anything in the school environment. . . .²⁵

If the statements mentioned about the language lack of the disadvantaged child are true and if Davis' analysis of this child's school attitudes are also true, the first concern of the teacher of the young disadvantaged child is to attempt to build a strong and trusting relationship

²⁴
Ibid., p. 463.

²⁵
Allison Davis, "Teaching Language and Reading to Disadvantaged Negro Children," Elementary English (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE Publication, November, 1965), p. 793.



between herself and the child.²⁶ If this rapport can be established between the teacher and the learner, an easy oral communication can be the vehicle whereby language can be studied by the teacher in terms of its phonology, vocabulary, and grammar. If sub-standard English is used, it must be first known to the teacher before any attempt is made to teach standardized English as the accepted means of communication. Where free discussion flourishes, there will be an atmosphere in which the speaker of a sub-standard dialect can feel no personal threat in a learning situation where the teacher introduces standard English through her speech.

At the present time, at least two studies are reported which concern themselves with linguistic problems of the disadvantaged or culturally deprived child:

Carl Bereiter directs the first study at the University of Illinois. Its project title is: "Acceleration of Intellectual Development in Early Childhood" (An Academically-oriented Pre-school for Culturally Deprived Children).

This is a pilot program in which 15 disadvantaged Negro 4-year-olds are being given a high-intensity program of direct verbal instruction in language, reading and arithmetic. The major emphasis in all phases of the program is on teaching basic language statement patterns.

After three months, gains of 12-15 months in language age were obtained, and after a further three months, further gains, 9, 5, and 8 months, were obtained on the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities (ITPA) subtests for auditory-vocal automatic, auditory-vocal association and

²⁶Ibid., p. 797.

vocal encoding. Gains well in excess of chronological age gains were obtained on almost all other subtests.²⁷

Finally, it is of value to know that this linguistic training consisted of structural language training (acquisition of grammatical statement patterns and the logical organization of these patterns, with an emphasis on perfecting the pronunciation). Work was done on the important verbal and non-verbal factors in cultural deprivation, without publication of the results at this date.

A study in contrasts was reported comparing the functioning of the educationally deprived and the educationally advantaged children. This study is being conducted at the University of Michigan. The project title is "Longitudinal Comparison of the Psycholinguistic Functioning of 'Educationally-Deprived' and 'Educationally-Advantaged Children.'"

The purpose of this research is to explore the relative psycholinguistic functioning of school-age children in relation to several socio-cultural variables. Three samples of kindergarten-1st-grade children were drawn from a de facto segregated school (75% Negro), an integrated school, and a de facto segregated school (100% white).

Baseline performance was determined for all Ss on: 9 subscales of the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities; cognitive maturity test; several phonetic measures; several syntactic measures; free operant verbal responding.

²⁷Carl Bereiter, et al., "Acceleration of Intellectual Development in Early Childhood," Current Social Dialect Research at American Higher Institutions (Washington, D. C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, NCTE, April 11, 1966), p. 11.

Post-test measures will be taken after one year during which time the de facto group 1 will be integrated into group 3. The same tests will be carried out annually on the same group, with new tests to be devised and used periodically.²⁸

Not only will the linguist be vitally interested in the results of such a comparative study, but also the educators and sociologists and psychologists; each of these disciplines is deeply involved in problems of the disadvantaged, one of which is sub-standard linguistic behavior. It may be that when all of the disciplines work as one, the problem of building the self-image of the disadvantaged may be solved by linguistic competence.

The beginning of any program of instruction which involves young children in terms of their linguistic habits must consider how the pre-schoolers speak to their family and peers. Walter Waetjin found that the young child from the culturally deprived community tends to speak in "short, simple, often incomplete sentences. Their limited repertoire of conjunctions discourages any well-organized or complex thinking."²⁹

It is essential, according to Ruth Strang, that the young child should first be taught to speak and understand

²⁸Loren S. Barritt, Mervyn I. Semmel, and Paul Weener, "Longitudinal Comparison of Psycholinguistic Functioning of 'Educationally-Deprived' and 'Educationally-Advantaged' Children," Current Social Dialect Research at American Higher Institutions (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, NCTE, April 11, 1966), p. 14.

²⁹Walter Waetjin, "Factors Influencing Learning," South Carolina Guidance News (Columbia, S. C.: State Department of Education, Vol. 12, October, 1962), p. 56.

the standard English before he is taught to read and write it. The critics of primary reading materials--teachers, parents and the writers themselves, agree that beginning readers indicate the need for more materials written in the vocabulary and sentence patterns that the young children themselves use in talking. Thus research must start with the very young if curriculum change is to be effective.³⁰

Ruth Strickland, in speaking of needed research in oral language, says that one of the chief responsibilities of the elementary teacher today is to learn as much as she can about the language children use. In this search, most teachers need guidance in their work to help children "achieve language that will be an asset, not a liability." It is the work of the teacher to guide youngsters in their acceptance of standard English as the entry into social acceptability on a level where they can communicate with others satisfactorily. Finally, it is acknowledged that teachers will have to be provided with "knowledge that will help them build wholesome and realistic attitudes toward children's language and what needs to be done about it."³¹

³⁰Ruth Strang and Mary Else Hocker, "First-Grade Children's Language Patterns," Elementary English (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE Publication, January, 1965), pp. 38-41.

³¹Ruth Strickland, The Language of Elementary School Children: Its Relationship to the Language of Reading Textbooks and the Quality of Reading of Selected Children (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University, Bull. 38, No. 4, July, 1962).

If it is to be acknowledged that sub-standard dialects do present problems for children and teachers and that the deprived child, in particular, suffers from the inability to communicate with others on a standardized English level, it must be a problem that teachers should be able to cope with from the child's first encounter with the school experience. As pre-school experience is being provided for youngsters through local and federal assistance, the teacher is charged with the responsibility of providing an approach to the solution to the linguistic problem. Albert Griffith proposes that we are now in a language revolution and that all teachers--elementary and secondary alike--will have to gain professional competence in the area of linguistics as an answer to the problem of adequate (and better) communication between child and society. It may seem an impossible task, to re-educate the teachers of the country who lack this language knowledge. However, if teachers are truly professional in their approach to their jobs of teaching the children the complete and satisfying approach to the science of language, it can be done.

They must somehow develop the necessary linguistic competence by: attending state teacher's college next summer, or by attending an institute here and a workshop there, or perhaps just buy a few books and read a few periodicals.³²

³²Albert J. Griffith, "Linguistics: A Revolution in Retrospect," Elementary English (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE Publication, May, 1966), pp. 504, 540.



John Dawkins challenges the words of Griffith, somewhat, when he claims that linguistics can be taught in the early grades by any good teacher without reference to further college preparation. The teaching-learning process is one of discovery, which in "the best sense of the term is precisely what linguistics is"! What Dawkins proposes is simple yet solid:³³

1. We want to teach a disciplined way of thinking.
2. ... to teach ways of organizing knowledge.
3. ... to teach children to make valid generalizations.
4. ... to teach children to ask significant and relevant questions.
5. ... to teach children something about the nature of languages in general and English in particular.
6. ... to further the growth of concepts.³⁴

A thought-provoking question that becomes vital in this linguistic research is the influence of parental language on the language behavior of their children. Doris Noell found that the language usage of parents greatly determines the usage of children.³⁵ Mildred Templin says, further, that little change takes place after the age of three in the parts of speech used and articulation growth takes place between the ages of three and four--when most

³³John Dawkins, "Linguistics in the Elementary Grades," Elementary English (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE Publication, November, 1965), p. 762.

³⁴Ibid., p. 768.

³⁵Doris I. Noell, "A Comparative Study of the Relationship Between the Quality of the Child's Language Usage and the Quality and Types of Languages Used in the Home," Journal of Educational Research, Vol. 47 (November, 1953), pp. 161-167.

children readily learn oral language patterns as they are spoken in the home,³⁶ and that "aspects of oral language are very nearly habitual by the time a child enters first grade."³⁷

The U. S. Office of Education, in January of 1966, granted funds to a project called the Detroit Dialect Study, under the direction of Dr. Roger W. Shuy. A growing interest in urban areas on the part of both the sociologist and the linguist made the selection of Detroit a natural one. This city of almost three million individuals includes a large number of Negroes, Southern whites and immigrants whose speech would have a natural effect on the large urban area.

The research plan for this study was plotted in three stages:

1. Preparation
2. Fieldwork
3. Analysis³⁸

Shuy listed the aims of the study:

As linguists, the researchers are interested in the manifestation of Detroit speech. As dialectologists we are interested in the relationship of social status and regional background to this linguistic manifestation. We are interested, furthermore, in

³⁶ Mildred C. Templin, Certain Language Skills in Children: Their Development and Interrelationships (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1957).

³⁷ Frank B. May, "The Effects of Environment on Oral Language Development," Elementary English (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE Publication, October, 1966), p. 595.

³⁸ Roger W. Shuy, The Detroit Dialect Study (unpublished progress report, East Lansing, Michigan, April 1, 1966), p. 1.

the fact that certain patterns of speech lead to conclusions about social stratification, and we are much concerned about how our findings will be useful to the teachers of English in Detroit. We are convinced, for example, that by identifying the features of pronunciation, lexicon, grammar and syntax which characterize the less flexible groups in Detroit society, we can help the individuals in these groups to become more linguistically, and thus socially, flexible.³⁹

One of the major concerns of linguists and educators alike is the task of changing the level of speech from that which is sub-standard to standard English. The first step in this direction is to define the "problem level," approached by the Detroit Dialect Study in this manner:

. . . We feel that any attempt to bring a person from one level of performance to another requires an accurate description of the most significant features of each level. English teachers have made some progress in defining the features of the target level, but they have done relatively little to identify the problem level. Linguists feel that all language, whether used by people of high or low status, is systematic and that the most efficient method of teaching involves the teaching of patterns rather than items. Recent developments in almost all the behavioral sciences attests, furthermore, that learning does not progress from items to patterns but rather from one pattern set to another pattern set. In the case of speakers of non-prestige dialects, this means that one system (systematic though non-prestige speech) is augmented or replaced by⁴⁰ another system (systematic prestige speech).

The research aims are:

to identify the significant features of pronunciation, lexicon, grammar and syntax of native Detroiters of several social classes and age.⁴¹

³⁹Ibid., pp. 1-2.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 2.

⁴¹Ibid.

Linguistic features will compare:

equivalent responses of Negroes, Jews, Southern Whites, Poles, Canadians, and Mexicans (of different social classes and age) who have lived in Detroit for various lengths of time.⁴²

Geographical and social factors will be recorded because:

. . . Detroit is split geographically and socially, east from west, by Woodward Avenue . . . the investigation will further compare the linguistic responses of east and west side Negroes, Canadians, etc. The patterning which exists within the various minority groups will provide a focus for pedagogical applications.⁴³

The research design includes Detroit area residents who were interviewed from the following groups:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| 1. Upper elementary age | 35% |
| 2. High school age | 20% |
| 3. Parents | 35% |
| 4. Grandparents | 10% |

The selection of persons interviewed was based on the enumerated population of fourth to sixth grade elementary school children from both private and public schools. The selection was done randomly for the interviews. Older siblings, parents, and grandparents were included in the sample if they were Detroit residents. The total sample for each family included a minimum of one child and one parent and a maximum of these two plus an older sibling and/or grandparent.⁴⁴

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 3.

Fieldwork for the study followed this procedure:

1. Informants were selected.
2. Fieldwork was conducted by 12 linguists and the director.
3. Appointments were set up well in advance of the interview.
4. Each Fieldworker is equipped with a battery operated tape recorder which is useful for checking accuracy of speech and later analysis.
5. Fieldwork training preceded the fieldwork.
6. Questionnaire used is designed to elicit several styles of speech and to determine his attitudes concerning the speech of other Detroiters.⁴⁵

The Detroit Dialect Study is of special interest to this investigator because of some research similarities. The graph on the following page may illustrate these differences and similarities.

Summary

Growing research studies indicate the need for more knowledge concerning language behavior. Studies show that there is particular attention paid to linguistic problems of the culturally disadvantaged child. From the advent of the Linguistic Atlas Project to the current research in progress, particularly the Detroit Dialect Study, specific investigators suggest that an identification, description and study of the phonology, vocabulary and usage of the language is the scientific point of departure. Through

⁴⁵Ibid.

<u>THE LINGUISTIC STUDY</u>	<u>GEOGRAPHICAL AREA</u>	<u>INFORMANTS</u>	<u>INTERVIEWERS</u>	<u>DATA COLLECTION</u>
The Detroit Dialect Study	Detroit, Hamtramck and Highland Park	Upper elementary children, youth, parents, grand-parents	One director, twelve linguists	Questionnaire items - by tape recorder
Head Start Dialect Study	Selected, disadvantaged schools in Detroit	Head Start children, their parents, their teachers	One supervisor-teacher director, two assisting interviewers	Selected items of common knowledge by tape recorder

<u>THE LINGUISTIC STUDY</u>	<u>BIOGRAPHICAL DATA</u>	<u>DATA FOR ANALYSIS</u>	<u>IMPLICATIONS</u>
The Detroit Dialect Study	Age, Race, economic status, nationality, family, religion, duration of residence in Detroit, occupation and educational status,	Pronunciation, lexical, grammatical items, syntax forms.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identification and 2. Description of speech features which 3. form the basis of "speech adjustment" to each communication situation.
Head Start Dialect Study	Age, Race, educational status birth records of informant, parents and their grandparents, record of residences, travel record, occupation.	Phonology, grammar, and vocabulary items.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identification and 2. Description of speech features 3. Language (attitudes of teachers toward children), 4. Parental influence on child speech.

this language revolution in progress, both the elementary and secondary teacher would have to be linguistically knowledgeable to work with children in terms of the application of this knowledge so that the movement from a sub-standard to standardized dialect could be accomplished. This study designates the pre-school child, his parent and teacher as the informants in this investigation.

Chapter II reports the method of investigation used in the research design.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH DESIGN

Since the focus of interest in this study of the speech of pre-school children, their parents and teachers is concerned with problems of the culturally disadvantaged, the United States government-sponsored Project Head Start was selected for the language sample.

First Interviews

Why Project Head Start Was Chosen

The research indicates that the culturally deprived child is handicapped in speech development, grammatical usage, and vocabulary. His auditory and visual discrimination is less than adequate compared to his middle-class contemporary. Children from the disadvantaged home suffer from a lack of vocabulary knowledge in terms of middle-class word-classifications or categories. Some authorities feel that they do not know the words for that which is non-concrete.

In the long run, the language which the deprived child has learned at home is likely to be inadequate as an aid and tool in conceptualization. Furthermore, language serves as a means of social distinctions which can limit opportunities for mobility.¹

¹Bloom, Davis and Hess, op. cit., p. 71.

Recognizing the particular needs of the deprived child, the Congress of the United States in April, 1965, passed a law in which financial aid was provided for the educationally disadvantaged:

TITLE II: FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES FOR THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN OF LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

"Declaration of Policy"

Sec. 201. ---In recognition of the special educational needs of children of low-income families and the impact that concentrations of low-income families have on the ability of local educational programs, the Congress hereby declares it to be the policy of the United States to provide financial assistance to local educational agencies serving areas with concentrations of children from low-income families to expand and improve their educational programs by various means (including preschool programs) which contribute particularly to meeting the special educational needs of educationally deprived children.²

Project Head Start became a reality with this mandate during the summer of 1965. In the city of Detroit, Michigan, some 6000 children were registered in the program as Detroit's participation in the nation's war on poverty and educational deprivation. These children were primarily from the central city area and were the children who were expected to enter the kindergarten classes of the city in the fall term of 1965.

²College and University Reports--Public Law 89-10. 89th Congress, H.R. 2362, April 11, 1965. AN ACT, Washington, D.C., United States of America.

One hundred and twenty-two schools were designated as those which would house Project Head Start, Child Development Centers. The children selected for this experience were chosen on the basis of statistics supplied by the Detroit Commission on Children and Youth, Winter, 1965. This report listed the family situations of all areas of the city of Detroit, the income and employment levels, housing conditions, and educational statistics of the family groups. The average class size in the Project was fifteen children. Experienced teachers were hired and trained in an intensive training session sponsored by Wayne State University in Detroit. Three assistants and a parent were hired to assist the teacher. Two parents were placed in the larger Centers. The initial Head Start session was a period of six weeks.³

The speech and language development program of the Project consisted of two aspects:

1. the provision of materials prepared to aid the teachers in the stimulation of speech and language development and
2. evaluation and recommendations for follow-up of children referred as having speech problems.⁴

If doubt should exist that the child of poverty needs special help in language understanding, let us look at the homes of two such children:

³Arthur M. Enzmann, "Final Report: PROJECT HEAD START," (unpublished report, Detroit Public Schools, Detroit, Michigan, Summer, 1965), pp. 2-3.

⁴Ibid., p. 8.

Shirley was a little 4-year-old girl who lived in the inner city, in a three-bedroom public housing apartment. She was the youngest of six children; the oldest was 14. . . . The parents laid down rules of conduct, almost harshly; otherwise there was practically no verbal inter-action between parents and children. To be seen and not heard--that seemed the rule in this home.⁵

In the case of another youngster, the home involved a different pattern of communication between members of the family:

Chuck was almost 5 years old. . . . Chuck's flat included a tiny living room, kitchen, and two bedrooms; there was no bathroom. In this space lived Chuck's mother and ten children. A common bathroom down the hall served six families. Chuck's mother was on welfare. . . .

Chuck's mother was somewhat intoxicated at the time of this home visit; she spoke with adequate vocabulary and her manner with her visitors was uneasy and diffident. With her children (many of whom were school-age but unaccountably lounging around the flat on a school day) her manner was aggressive. She screamed orders at them, told them to get out of the house and let her alone, and she hit Chuck when he insisted on talking with the visiting teacher.⁶

With these case studies being the rule rather than the exception, Project Head Start recognized that the children from such disadvantaged homes "tend to do poorly in language; they have small vocabularies and often seem unable to speak up and out."⁷ The goals of this program were evident in terms of speech improvement: "to sharpen and widen language skills; both listening and speaking."⁸

⁵ Project Head Start: Daily Program 1 (Washington, D.C.: Office of Economic Opportunity), p. 4.

⁶ Ibid., p. 5.

⁷ Ibid., p. 9

⁸ Ibid., p. 8.

With this short reference to the history and development of Project Head Start, it is evident why Head Start was chosen for this investigation of the speech of pre-school children, their parents and their teachers.

Availability of the Informants

During the summer of 1965, Project Head Start was in session for approximately six weeks from July 6th through August 20th. The first week of the class was one of organization for teachers, children and aides alike. The last week of the six-week session was one of culmination of activities and one in which the teachers were expected to complete the many reports for which they were responsible. This left a period of four weeks during which time this investigation of speech behavior could be conducted. The children were in the school from 9:00 to 12:00 noon. The teachers were in constant attendance as were the aids and the parents who assisted in many of the activities. Other parents were available for the study as they delivered their children to the school in the morning and were there to meet them at the close of the session at noon. This unusual organization of both the school and the home working together daily was unique in terms of the regular school year in which the parent and teacher would meet less often.

Scope of the Field Work

Selection of Schools.--Permission was obtained from Dr. Arthur Enzmann, Project Head Start Director for the Detroit Public Schools, to visit any of the one hundred and twenty-two public school centers which participated in the program. As this number of schools was such a large one, private and parochial school centers were not visited for this investigation. During the four-week visitation period, data were collected from forty-four of the schools which were part of this summer public pre-school project.

In order to be eligible for one or more of the Head Start classes, these schools were selected from those which had been designated as schools for the disadvantaged. Schools located in areas of the city which had been so labeled were called disadvantaged because of data obtained from the Census Tracts (1960).⁹

Recruiting was done primarily through the local schools with assistance from the Mayor's Committee for Total Action Against Poverty, Community Action Centers, the Welfare Department, and other public agencies. Ninety per cent of the children selected had to fall within a poverty income level as stated by the Office of Economic Opportunity.¹⁰

The statement above was taken from a 1966 Report of Head Start, but according to Enzmann, the criteria was the same for the 1965 program.

⁹ Arthur Enzmann, Unpublished Report of Head Start (Detroit, Michigan, Summer, 1966), p. 2.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 2-3.

The forty-four schools in the study represent a random sample of the one hundred and twenty-two schools in the total group. To visualize the geographic locations of the schools, one might think of the city of Detroit as being a wheel the center of which is the hub or inner-city area. The main arteries of the city divide the city. Woodward Avenue divides the city as to those areas which are East and West. The Detroit River, which divides Canada and the United States, is located at the "foot" of Woodward (as it is referred to by the natives) and is the southern-most point of the city. For purposes of easier communication, it can be imagined that the spokes of the wheel form the other main streets of the city. The inner-city area is referred to as that region of approximately two-miles in circumference jutting out from the hub section or downtown section of the city. The adjacent two-mile area also includes some of the schools designated as disadvantaged. Finally, the area just outside these four miles have a few disadvantaged schools which are also included in the sample. (See Appendix A for a map of Detroit and the selected schools included in the study.)

TABLE 2.--Geographic spread of the disadvantaged schools with Head Start informants included in the study.

Schools in Sample	Location of Schools	
Inner-city	19	(two-mile radius)
Adjacent to Inner-city	15	(two-mile radius) 7 east of inner-city 8 west of inner-city
Peripheral	10	(two-mile radius) 7 east of adj. area 3 west of adj. area
Total School Involvement in Sample: 44		

Both schools of large student and smaller student enrollment were included in the sample. Some of the schools had one Head Start class; others had as many as eight classes, however, the average number of classes in a center was four. Table 3 lists the schools included in the language behavior study.

Selection of Informants.--The informants in this language study were in three status-classifications:

1. the pre-school child in Head Start,
2. a parent (or parent-substitute) of the child interviewed, and
3. the teacher of the child interviewed.

The selection of the Head Start class which was visited in the school was by pure chance. If the principal or coordinator were in the building, the Interviewer was usually escorted to a room where a Head Start class was in session;

TABLE 3.--Schools included in the language study of pre-schoolers in Project Head Start, their parents and their teachers.

Inner-city Area Schools	Adjacent to the Inner-city Area Schools	Peripheral Area Schools
Breitmeyer	Bellevue	Carstens
Campbell	Berry	Howe
Edmonson	Bunch	Ives
Couzens	Field	Keating
Fairbanks	Holmes, A. L.	Krolik
Ferry	Jones	Lingemann
Franklin	Williams	St. Clair
George		Total East: 7
Goldberg		
Hancock	Angell	Beard
Woodward	Addams	Sherrill
Kennedy	Jamieson	Turner
Lincoln	Keidan	Total West: 3
Moore	McGraw	
Norvell	McKerrow	
Owen	Pattengil	
Palmer	Roosevelt	
Parke		
Thirkell		
	Total West: 8	
	Total: 19	
Total Number of Schools in Study: 44		

at other times, the Interviewer simply entered the room on her own and began the speech study.

The first of the three informants interviewed was usually the child. In most cases this was a self-selective procedure. The children simply indicated their interest by coming over and talking into the microphone. In other cases, the Interviewer approached a child or a small group of children and started a discussion.

The selection of the parent depended on the selection of the child for every child who was included in the study had a parent also included. In the few cases where children were living with grandparents or aunts or in foster homes, the adults closest to the children were also included in the sample. The adults were interviewed in the school when they brought their children to school or picked them up at the end of the school session. In the case of three parents, the Interviewer went to the child's home for the interview.

The selection of the teacher also depended on the selection of the child. Since many teachers taught more than one of the children interviewed for the investigation, the teachers are fewer in number than either the children or their parents. All teachers were interviewed in the school or the classroom itself.

Collection of the Linguistic Data

Method of Data Collection.--The method employed in the collection of the linguistic data was by means of

recording the speech of the Informants on a tape recorder. In this way the speech is retained for present and future study so that identification and description of the language is always possible. During this initial interview, twenty-three tapes were used to record the language data. Since each tape ran for three hours, the total hours of recorded speech of Detroit pre-schoolers, their parents, and their teachers, during this first interview, were sixty-nine.

Processing of Linguistic Data.--Selected portions of these tapes were transcribed phonetically and typewritten in traditional orthography. This was done so that patterns might be revealed in the following areas of language behavior:

1. Phonology
2. Vocabulary
3. Grammar

Selection of Items for Language Study.--In addition to the age differences among the three sets of informants (the pre-school children and the parent and teacher groups), the socio-economic levels of the informants had wide variation. It was necessary then to arrive at a list of common terms which would be of knowledge and experience to all individuals in the sample. The vocabulary selected to be used for a comparative study of the language behavior of the informants included concrete items, for the most part.

There is a lack of expectation of reward for performance and most tasks are 'motoric,' have a short time span, and are more likely to be related to concrete objects. Difficulty arises when they must move into conceptualization and abstract thinking. On the basis of Piaget's theory of the fixed nature of stages and on the premise that the initial schooling stage is the concrete stage, a curriculum should act upon this and offer many such concrete experiences.¹¹

The concrete items used to open the discussion between the interviewer and the informants were those items of high interest value to the individuals. In most cases, the pre-school children were interviewed before their parents and their teachers. During the first pre-schooler interviews it was determined which concrete items could be used to best elicit the response sought.

The vocabulary items selected include:

1. The toys and games the children were using in the Head Start classroom. In this case, the items present opened the talk but many children continued so that other toys and games enjoyed outside the classroom were mentioned.
2. Food, which was being eaten in the classroom as breakfast for the children (milk, cereal, juice, and graham crackers) was named. In the case of others, names for other foods were mentioned (i.e., eggs, bacon and so on).

¹¹Martin Deutsch, "The Disadvantaged Child and the Learning Process," Education in Depressed Areas, ed. A. Harry Passow (New York: Teachers College Press, 1963), pp. 163-164.

3. Pictures were used as a means of eliciting phonology, vocabulary knowledge and usage. The pictures were of family figures, peers, domestic animals and family-living experiences. (See Appendix B for a copy of the pictures used in the interview.)

The interviewer probed the child's knowledge as deeply as possible so that items were labeled wherever the terms were known. Initially the interviewer attempted to establish rapport with the child so that the speech was as natural as possible.

In his work with young children from disadvantaged homes, Deutsch stresses the verbal and perceptual skills needed for all types of communication. Many of these children come from homes where things are seldom referred to by name; a chair, a table, or a lamp is pointed at, but not identified. Deutsch stresses labeling in his approach, getting across the idea that everything has a name, a name to be seen and a name to be used. In training the child to offer oral responses, the teacher first discourages pointing and 'partial' language. Once the oral response is given, the teacher encourages the child to play with the word, or with a word like it, in a phrase, a sentence or a jingle. Deutsch combines the learning of concepts with perception and linguistics.¹²

The items for language study were those, therefore, which were of more common experience to the pre-schoolers than other more sophisticated vocabulary. The parents and

¹²Joseph O. Loretan and Shelley Umans, Teaching the Disadvantaged (New York: Teachers College Press, 1966), p. 45, as cited from Martin Deutsch, "The Role of Social Class in Language Development and Cognition," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry (January, 1965), pp. 78-88.

teachers alike were asked to react to these same items: their knowledge of the toys and games with which the children were playing in the clsssroom and the toys and experiences the children enjoyed outside the classroom; their knowledge and feelings about the food the children had both in the school and at home; and their reactions to the pictures the children were asked to discuss. In this manner the interviewer elicited phonology, vocabulary and usage from all three sets of informants for comparative language study.

Designation of Field Workers.--The field workers or interviewers, as they have been designated in this study, were three women. Because of time limitation the director of this study could not conduct the interviews alone and thus engaged two women to work with her in the collection of data for the sample. (As stated in Chapter I the Head Start classes were available for language study for a period of four weeks, five days a week, from 9:00 A.M. to noon.) The interviewers studied the publication by George Wilson,¹³ Instructions to Collectors of Dialect, and were in constant contact with one another during the four-week period. All three field workers held a Master's degree or better and all had had teaching experience in the Detroit Public Schools. Two of the field workers had majored in the field of English

¹³George P. Wilson, Instructions to Collectors of Dialect, No. 1 (Greensboro, N.C.: American Dialect Society, April, 1944), pp. 1-12.

and the third member of the team was supervisor in the area of language education and curriculum development, Detroit Public Schools.

Second Interviews

A follow-up interview was conducted with a number of the teachers who were included in the initial first interview of pre-schoolers, teachers and parents in the Head Start program during the summer of 1965. The second interview was conducted during a five-month period from January to May, 1967. The purpose of this interview was to determine teachers' concepts of the task, i.e., the language problems of pre-school children.

Selection of Informants

The total sample of the teachers interviewed in the first series of interviews numbered forty-three teachers. For this second interview, which was conducted by one field worker, thirty teachers were interviewed. The sampling was done by random digits using a table of randomly ordered digits. The teachers were listed randomly 1 to 43; the assigned numbers were thus eliminated: 37 - 1 - 27 - 38 - 33 - 25 - 39 - 18 - 15 - 6 - 30 - 17 and 16. The remaining names were re-numbered as Interviews #1 through #30 by which they will be known for the remainder of this study.¹⁴

¹⁴John H. Mueller and Karl F. Schuessler, Statistical Reasoning in Sociology (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961), p. 349; and Table IV, "Five Thousand Random Digits," abridged from Table 1.5.1 in G.W. Snedecor, Statistical Methods, 5th ed., (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1956).

Availability of the Informants

During the two-year interval between the first interviews which involved pre-schoolers, their parents and their teachers, and the second interviews which involved the teachers in the first interview, seven of the teachers had been transferred to other buildings in the Detroit area, one teacher had resigned, two had been transferred to higher level classes in the buildings in which they had taught the Head Start class; eight of these teachers were included in the random sample. One teacher who had been transferred to another building and one teacher who had been given a higher level class were not included in the second interviews. All of these teachers were interviewed in the public schools in which they taught with the exception of two teachers who were interviewed outside of school. The interviewing took place before or after school sessions, during free periods, or periods which the principal arranged as free for them, or during their lunch hours.

Scope of the Field Work

Included in the second interviews were teachers who teach in all areas of the disadvantaged schools in the Detroit Public Schools. By this is meant all areas were represented as was the case in the first interviews (see Table 4).

TABLE 4.--Schools included in the second interviews of
of teachers in Project Head Start.

Schools	Number
Inter-city Area Schools	
Breitmeyer	
Edmonson	
Ferry	
Moore	
Thirkell	5
Adjacent to the Inner-city Area Schools	
Bellevue	
Berry	
Bunche	
Field	
Holmes, A. L.	5 East
Angell	
Jamieson	
Keidan	
Roosevelt	5 West
Peripheral Area Schools	
Carstens	
Ives	
Keating	
Lingemann	4 East
Sherrill	
Turner	2 West
Total Number of Schools Included in Second Interviews	21

Collection of Linguistic Data

Method of Data Collection.--The method employed in the collection of the linguistic data was by means of recording the speech of the informants on a tape recorder in the same manner in which the first interviews were recorded. In this

way the speech is retained for future language study and determination of the teachers' concepts of their task. Each interview with each teacher ran from thirty to forty-five minutes depending on the teachers' responses which varied in length.

Selection of Items for Language Study.--During January of 1967 a letter was written to the principals of all the schools which had teachers on their staff who were included in the second interviews of this study. This letter informed the principal about the interview and asked permission to interview the selected teachers. Also included in this letter was a statement which listed the two major questions which the teachers would be asked to react to when the interview took place. These questions were:

1. What do you think are the major problems your children have with vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation?
2. In what ways does the language of the parents influence the children? What problems with vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation in the language of the parents are reflected in the problems of the child?

(See Appendix C for a copy of the letter to principals whose selected teachers were included in the second interviews.)

When the interview actually took place between one teacher and the interviewer, the teacher was given a statement listing the two questions just as they appeared in the principal's letter. In addition, five other questions were added to the interview in an attempt to elicit a larger sample of speech. These questions were:

1. Would you give me your opinion of the Head Start program as you experienced it?
2. What kinds of toys or materials did you use in the program?
3. Did the children have anything to eat during the session in school?
4. Would you name other foods the children might have had for breakfast at home, before they came to school for Head Start?
5. We'd like to improve our use of these cards. (See Appendix B for a sample of these picture cards.) Can you tell me how the children responded to them? Simply tell me in your own words what the children would have said in describing the pictures, using nouns and verbs particularly, please.

(See Appendix D for a copy of this statement which was given to the teachers before their interview.)

Single Interviewer.--Unlike the first interview which had three field workers who collected the linguistic data, the second interviews were conducted by a single interviewer. Appointments were made well in advance of the interview and the attempt was made to have the most casual and informative sessions. The field worker spoke to each teacher in private and in an atmosphere which was one of unhurried sharing of ideas.

Processing and Tabulation of Data.--After the thirty interviews were completed with the thirty teachers reacting to the questions proposed in terms of language behavior, the taped speech was typed. Once again biographical data was a major concern. The teachers gave information for the study which included (1) sex, (2) race, (3) highest grade reached in school, (4) their birthplace and (5) the birthplace of their parents and both of their maternal and paternal grandparents, (6) the informants' previous places of residence and approximate dates, (7) their travel history outside of the state, and (8) their occupation, which in this case was the same for all informants.

The tabulation of the data collected in this second interview will include the teachers' concepts of the task of the teacher in terms of language identification, description, and understanding. The teachers' reactions will be charted in terms of the language the teacher uses to describe the specific language problems of children. The

teachers' judgments of language behavior in the speech of their social concepts of the language of children will be listed in this study.

Summary

Within this chapter the research design was presented with reference to two sets of interviews. The First Interviews involved pre-schoolers, their parents and their teachers, in Project Head Start. The scope of the field work indicated the selection of schools, informants and the collection of the linguistic data. The data sought were the phonology, vocabulary and usage from the above named informants. The Second Interviews included the random sample of thirty teachers included in the First Interviews. The particular data sought at this time were the teachers' concepts of their language instruction and their students' language behavior.

Chapter III reports the population sample of both interviews. In the case of the first interview, biographical data were recorded for the three sets of informants: pre-schoolers, their parents, and their teachers in the Head Start Project during the summer of 1965. In the case of the second interview, biographical data were recorded for the one set of informants, the thirty teachers included in the random sample of the original forty-three teachers included in the first interview. The social implications in terms of dialect study will then be discussed.

Chapter IV reports the teacher's concept of the task of teaching the young in their job of communicating with their teachers and the world around them. Of particular interest will be the comparison of the teachers' concepts of the crucial tasks with the data presented by the child's actual speech.

Chapter V reports the language data of the investigation. Within this study the phonology, the vocabulary, and the grammar of the informants will be tabulated. Selected linguistic indices of social stratification identified in the Detroit Dialect Study will be noted in this corpus.

Chapter VI draws conclusions from this study of language behavior which can be of some importance and help to the classroom teacher at the elementary school level. The identification, description and understanding of the linguistic behavior of children serve as a basis for inservice training for the teacher. Curriculum revision is a necessary follow-up of this language understanding for with deeper insights into the language problems, the more instructional aids must be brought up-to-date in terms of this knowledge.

CHAPTER III

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Using the research techniques of the Linguistic Atlas Project, this study included the biographical data of its informants: the pre-schoolers in the 1965 Head Start Project, their parents and their teachers. This information was supplied to the interviewers during the first interview. Since the thirty teachers included in the second interview were those who were also included in the initial interview, the biographical data were known.

According to the systematic method used by the Linguistic Atlas, dialect geography is used to study regional differences in language patterns. Hans Kurath, the first director of the Atlas, used the methods of the European dialect geographers to provide the foundation for the study of urban American speech communities.¹ The informants' biographical data were tabulated: his age, his sex, his race, his academic experience, his birthplace, and the birthplace of his parents, paternal and maternal grandparents, his residences, his travel experiences and his occupation. The marital status of teachers was recorded as well, as this

¹Hans Kurath, Handbook of the Linguistic Geography of New England (Providence, R. I.: American Council of Learned Societies, 1939).

information was previously known about the other two sets of informants, i.e., the children and their parents. In a large urban area, such as the heterogeneous community which is Detroit, Michigan, the sample provides the study with social data of significance.

First Interviews

Each of the three interviewers asked the informants to supply biographical data. These data were recorded on 4" x 6" cards to be kept with their individually taped speech. A sample of the Biographical Interview card on which was recorded biographical data of informants included in the sample appears below:

Biographical Data

Interview # _____ Teacher _____ Child _____ Parent _____ Age _____

Sex _____ Race _____ Highest grade reached in school _____

State _____ County _____ Town or City _____

Birthplace _____

(town or city) (state)

Previous places of residence and approximate dates: _____

_____ Travel outside of state: _____

Birthplace of your	Birthplace of your
Father: _____	Paternal grandmother _____
	Paternal grandfather _____
Mother: _____	Maternal grandmother _____
	Maternal grandfather _____
Occupation: _____	Husband's occupation: _____

Population of Informants

The population of pre-schoolers, parents (or parent-substitutes), and teachers is as follows:

TABLE 5.--Population of informants.

Informants	Number
Children	156
Parents	155
Teachers	43

Among the children was one set of twins, thus accounting for one less parent in the sample. Among the parents there were two grandparents who were the legal guardians of the children and one foster parent who had raised the child from infancy. Within the population sample of teachers, the study included teachers who taught 3.6 children included in the study.

Sex of Informants

The tabulation of the data revealed a large percentage of females within each group of informants (see Table 6).

The large percentage of female parents and teachers included in the sample is possibly due to the fact that the primary grades are taught by female teachers, for the most part. The two men interviewed were not primary teachers during the regular school year. One man was waiting for

TABLE 6.--Sex of informants.

Informants	Females	Males	% Females	% Males
Children	99	57	63	37
Parents	147	8	95	5
Teachers	41	2	95	5

promotion to administration and sought experience working with the young child. The other man was a regular physical education teacher who had not taught below third grade before his pre-school teaching experience during the summer of 1965. The parents were mothers who ordinarily are in the home with small children and were therefore available for the interview when they came to school with their children. The children in the sample, interviewed and taped, were those who showed a willingness to talk to the field worker.

Race of the Informants

Both white and Negro informants were interviewed for the study (see Table 7).

The child who took part in the Head Start Project experience was from all nationality groups and races; in the city of Detroit the pre-school group included Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Negroes and whites, as well as many different ethnic groups. However, as the designation of "disadvantaged" had no reference to a racial or ethnic

TABLE 7.--Race of the informants.

Informants	Negro	Caucasian (white)
Children	141	15
Parents	140	15
Teachers	22	21

group, these data were not kept by the administration of the Project. The eligibility for attendance in the program was based solely on the environmental conditions under which the child resided. Through observation alone, on the part of the interviewers, however, there seemed to be a large proportion of Negro children in the program. The teacher-group was fairly evenly divided among both Negro and white teachers.

Age of the Informants

The one group of informants which was fairly constant was the youngest, the children. As the prerequisite for entry into the Project was that the child must be entering the kindergarten in September, 1965, all the children were between 4½ to 5 years of age. Obviously, the parents and teachers differed in age (see Table 8).

TABLE 8.--Age range of informants.

Informants	No.	Years			
		20-30	31-40	41-50	50+
Children	156	All between 4½ to 5 years of age			
Parents	155	68	58	27	2
Teachers	43	14	16	6	7

Research in the relationships of language and society has certain obligations to honesty in the treatment of variables. To compare the language of children, parents and adults, one must take into consideration the variable of age. This research must call attention to the evitable fact that parent and teacher speech also varies and that part of this variation stems from age differences.

Marital Status of Informants

This biographical item was not listed as such on the Interview Card as it was obvious in the case of the pre-schooler and the parents who were presently married at the time of the interview or had been married at a previous time. There was no specific statement, however, acknowledging the presence of the father in the home. In the case of the teachers, the marital status was known when the teacher was asked her husband's occupation. Of the 43 teachers interviewed 16 listed the occupation of husbands. A check was made and it was confirmed that 37% of the teachers, or 16 out of the original 43, were married; 63% were single.

Highest Grade Reached in School

Project Head Start was the first experience that the children had had in the school environment as they were $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 year old pre-schoolers. The other two informants differed greatly in their school experiences.

TABLE 9.--Academic background of parents and teachers.

Grade	Parents		Teachers	
	No.	%	No.	%
Grades 1-8	20	13		
Grades 8-12	111	72		
Grade 12 Graduate	16	11		
College 1-2 years	6	4		
B.A. or B.S. in Education			10	23
B.A. or B.S. in Education + study beyond			27	65
M.A. or M. in Education			6	12
TOTALS	155		43	

In Table 9 it will be noted that the higher percentage of parents are less than high school graduates: 131 of the parents, or 85% of the 145 parents included in the sample, have less than a twelfth grade education. In contrast to this, the higher percentage of teachers included in the sample reported study beyond the minimum expectation for the elementary school teacher. Of the 43 teachers included in the sample, 33 teachers had study beyond that of the bachelor's degree or 77% of the teacher-informants included in the sample. It

will be noted further that 6 of these teachers, or 12% of the total group, held the master's degree.

Birthplace of Informants

The majority of the younger informants, the pre-schoolers in the study, were native Detroiters; both of the adult groups, the parents and the teachers, had many in their groups who had migrated to Detroit from other parts of the country where they had been born (see Table 10).

It is of interest to note here that the younger the group of informants, the more native Detroiters and fewer persons born outside the United States. The following tables indicate the birthplaces of parents and grandparents of the informants. It follows here, too. There are fewer natives and more persons born outside the limits of the United States among grandparents than parents. In Table 11 it will be noted that the three sets of informants (the pre-schoolers, the parents and the teachers) will be considered as units of three for easy comparison in terms of parents' and grandparents' birthplace; each unit of three will be given an interview number for reference purposes (see Table 11).

The eleven units of three interviews are illustrative of the individually collected data which were concerned with the birthplaces of the informants, their parents and their grandparents. In all there were 155 interviews of parents, 156 interviews of pre-schoolers and 43 interviews

TABLE 10.--Birthplace of Informants.

Informants	Native Detroiters	Within United States	Outside United States
Children	134 (86%)	22 (14%)	0
		Alabama	5
		Georgia	3
		Illinois	3
		Mississippi	3
		Virginia	2
		Kentucky	2
		Ohio	1
		New Jersey	1
		Pennsylvania	1
		Florida	1
Total: 156			
Parents	34 (22%)	120 (65%)	1 (.64%) or less than 1%. Scotland
		Alabama	42
		Georgia	24
		Mississippi	22
		Tennessee	15
		Arkansas	9
		Ohio	5
		Kentucky	5
		North Carolina	5
		West Virginia	4
		South Carolina	4
		Missouri	4
		Louisiana	4
		Illinois	3
		Maryland	3
		Virginia	2
		Florida	2
		Pennsylvania	1
		California	1
Total: 155			
Teachers	22 (51%)	17 (40%)	4 (9%)
		Alabama	2
		Ohio	2
		Arkansas	1
		Illinois	1
		Indiana	1
		New York	1
		North Carolina	1
		North Dakota	1
		Pennsylvania	1
		South Carolina	1
		Tennessee	1
		Texas	1
		West Virginia	1
		Mississippi	1
		D.C.	1
Total: 43			Canada 2 Poland 1 British W. Indies 1

TABLE 11.--Birthplace of informants' parents and grandparents.

Interview #	Informant	Mother's Birthplace Father's Birthplace	Maternal Mother and Father (Grandparents)	Paternal Mother and Father (Grandparents)
1	Child: Detroit	Unknown (a foster child)	Unknown	Unknown
	Foster Parent: Georgia	M = Georgia F = Georgia	Unknown	Unknown
	Teacher: Illinois	M = Alabama F = Alabama	GM = Alabama GF = Alabama	GM = Alabama GF = Alabama
	Child: Detroit	M = Alabama F = Detroit	GM = Alabama GF = Alabama	GM = Detroit GF = Detroit
2	Parent: Alabama	M = Alabama F = Alabama	GM = Alabama GF = Alabama	GM = Louisiana GF = Louisiana
	Teacher: Texas	M = Texas F = Texas	GM = Texas GF = Texas	GM = Texas GF = Texas
	Child: Detroit	M = Detroit F = Detroit	GM = Detroit GF = Detroit	GM = Detroit GF = Detroit
	Parent: Detroit	M = Detroit F = Iowa	GM = Detroit GF = Detroit	GM = Iowa GF = Iowa
3	Teacher: Detroit	M = Michigan F = Michigan	GM = Ireland GF = Ireland	GM = England GF = England
	Child: Detroit	M = Detroit F = Detroit	GM = Italy GF = Italy	GM = Italy GF = Italy
	Parent: Detroit	M = Detroit F = Tennessee	GM = Poland GF = Poland	GM = Czechoslovakia GF = Czechoslovakia
	Children: Detroit (twins)	M = Alabama F = Tennessee	GM = New York GF = Virginia	GM = Tennessee GF = Tennessee
4	Parent: Alabama	M = New York F = Virginia	GM = New York GF = New York	GM = Virginia GF = Virginia
	Child: Detroit	M = Detroit F = Detroit	GM = Italy GF = Italy	GM = Italy GF = Italy
	Parent: Detroit	M = Italy F = Italy	GM = Italy GF = Italy	GM = Italy GF = Italy
	Teacher: Indiana	M = Poland F = Czechoslovakia	GM = Poland GF = Poland	GM = Czechoslovakia GF = Czechoslovakia
5	Child: Detroit	M = Detroit F = Detroit	GM = Italy GF = Italy	GM = Italy GF = Italy
	Parent: Detroit	M = Italy F = Italy	GM = Italy GF = Italy	GM = Italy GF = Italy
	Teacher: Indiana	M = Poland F = Czechoslovakia	GM = Poland GF = Poland	GM = Czechoslovakia GF = Czechoslovakia
	Children: Detroit (twins)	M = Alabama F = Tennessee	GM = New York GF = Virginia	GM = Tennessee GF = Tennessee
6	Parent: Alabama	M = New York F = Virginia	GM = New York GF = New York	GM = Virginia GF = Virginia
	Child: Detroit	M = Detroit F = Detroit	GM = Italy GF = Italy	GM = Italy GF = Italy
	Parent: Detroit	M = Detroit F = Tennessee	GM = Poland GF = Poland	GM = Czechoslovakia GF = Czechoslovakia
	Teacher: Indiana	M = Poland F = Czechoslovakia	GM = Poland GF = Poland	GM = Czechoslovakia GF = Czechoslovakia

Teacher: D.C.	M = Ohio F = Maryland	GM = Ohio GP = Ohio	GM = Maryland GP = Maryland
6	Child: Detroit Parent: Arkansas *Teacher: Detroit	M = Arkansas P = Arkansas M = Mississippi F = Mississippi M = Detroit P = New York	GM = Arkansas GP = Arkansas GM = Mississippi GP = Mississippi GM = Germany GP = Germany
7	Child: Detroit Parent: Detroit	M = Detroit P = Detroit M = Canada P = Canada	GM = Hungary GP = Hungary GM = Canada GP = Pennsylvania
8	Child: Detroit Parent: California	M = California P = Detroit M = Spain P = Spain	GM = Detroit GP = Italy GM = Spain GP = Spain
9	Child: Detroit Parent: Detroit *Teacher: Detroit	M = Detroit P = Detroit M = Ohio P = Italy M = Detroit P = Detroit	GM = Italy GP = Italy GM = Italy GP = Italy GM = Germany GP = England
10	Child: Detroit Parent: Alabama	M = Alabama P = Alabama M = Alabama P = Alabama	GM = Alabama GP = Alabama GM = Alabama GP = Alabama
11	Child: Detroit Parent: Detroit	M = Alabama P = Detroit M = Detroit P = Detroit	GM = Alabama GP = Alabama GM = Detroit GP = Detroit

*Teacher is the same informant for Interviews #6, 7, and 8.
 **Teacher is the same informant for Interviews #9, 10, and 11.



of teachers. These eleven units of three informants per unit were selected at random to illustrate the wide differences and some likenesses in the geographical-social environment of the informants. The remaining data not listed are available for study if they are so desired.

Residents of Informants

This paper has indicated that the informants differed greatly in their place of birth; this is also true of their number of residences. The pre-schoolers, 86% of whom were native Detroiters, had, in the main, no other place of residence other than their birth. Much of this is accounted for, of course, by their youth ($4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 years of age) and the fact that they were from disadvantaged homes. This latter fact accounted for their movement around the city from home to home, which was indicated by many mothers in the interview; but this movement did not extend to other residences outside of Detroit.

The parents, on the other hand, only 22% of whom were native Detroiters, indicated they had resided in states other than Michigan. Most of these residences were in the Southeastern states of the United States, specifically: Alabama, in which 35% of the parents once resided; Georgia, in which 20% of the parents had once lived and Mississippi, in which 18% of the parent-informants once lived. (See Appendix E for a map of the United States and the spotted area from which the greatest majority of parents migrated.)

Of the 43 teachers in the sample, 51% were native Detroiters and remained in Detroit during their entire lives, with short residences in other cities when they were in college. The 40% that listed their birthplace as somewhere other than Detroit added, for the most part, that they did not take up residency in Detroit until they were young adults who came to the city seeking a teaching position or traveled there with a husband whose work was in Detroit. This was unlike the parent-informants who indicated that they had been residents of Detroit for many years having moved to the city from other areas when their fathers came up to the North to work in the industrial plants.

Travel Experience of Informants

In agreement with the paragraphs just preceeding this, it was not too surprising that the pre-schoolers had little or no travel experiences in their young lives. Their parents did travel, but their trips were back to the same regions from which they came as children. The teachers, on the other hand, listed travel experiences which took them all over the United States, including Hawaii and Alaska, Canada, South America, Europe and the Orient. One teacher mentioned that she had just recently returned from a Leave of Absence during which she took a world-cruise which lasted for six months.

Occupations of Parents and Teachers
(and/or Their Husbands and Wives)

All parents and teachers did not respond to the question concerning the occupations of their husbands or wives, or even their own in the case of the working-wife parent, but a significant enough number of replies makes these data of interest to the social implication of this speech study.

Among the answers given by parents, the following occupations were listed:

Parents' Occupations

Factory Worker	10	Grocery Cashier	
Plant Protection		Press Operator	2
Key Punch Operator		Secretary	
Grocery Clerk		Dental Technician	
Grinder		Truck Driver	11
Welder		Gas Heat Worker	
Solderer		Construction Worker	6
Machine Operator	3	Painter	
Auto Wash Owner		Auto Wash Worker	4
Parking Lot Attendant		Tool Company Employee	
Railroad Switchman		Bartender	
Drug Company Employee		Caterer Employee	
Electrical Worker		City Employee	
Auto Worker		Bus Driver	2
Arc Welder	3	Boiler Operator	2
Laborer	2	Post Office Clerk	5
Michigan Gas Company		Machinist	2
Stamp Die Man		Musician	
Mechanic	5	Forger Operator	
Hammer Man		Chrysler Inspector	
Insurance Agent		Social Security Office	
Steel Maintenance		Worker	
Car Lott Manager		Boat Oiler	
U.S. Navy		Asst. Principal	
Unemployed	7	Metal Pourer	
Steel Worker		Student	
Beef-Boner		Heat Treater	
Factory Foreman		Pipe Fitter	
Ford Motor Company		Bump and Paint Man	
Worker		Medical Retiree	

The following occupations were listed by the teachers as those jobs held by their husbands or wives, as the case may be.

Occupations of Teachers' Husbands or Wives

Teacher	3
Auto Executive	
Crysler Accountant	
Jam Handy Writer	
(Advertising)	
Pharmacy Owner	
Press Operator	
Physical Therapist	
Cleaner and Presser	
Orchestra Leader	
Exports Executive	

Second Interviews

The second set of interviews included only one set of informants, the teachers included in the first interviews. As stated in Chapter II, thirty of the original forty-three teachers were selected by random digits using a table of randomly ordered digits. The population of the second interviews was quite different from the original informants and the information sought more the teacher's concept of her job than simply data concerned with language behavior of the three sets of informants.

Population of Sample

The teachers who were interviewed for the second time in this study of speech behavior were 30 in number or 70% of the teachers interviewed initially.

Sex of Informants

In the initial group of teachers interviewed, 41 of the informants were female and two were male. In the second set of interviews including 30 teachers, 29 teachers were female and one was male.

Race of Informants

In the initial group of teachers interviewed, 22 were Negro and 21 were Caucasian. In this second set of interviews including 30 teachers, 20 were Negro and 10 were white.

Age of Informants

The teachers in the second interviews were smaller in total number but exhibited a very wide range in age differences. The youngest teacher in the sample was 24 years of age and the chronologically oldest teacher was 58 years old.

Marital Status of Informants

Unlike the first sample which included within its number 37% of the teachers who were married and 63% of whom were single, this second interview included an exact 50% of the teachers who were single and 50% of whom were married, including one teacher who had been widowed.

At this point it is of interest to see a comparable biographical chart of the teachers included in the second interview. Each teacher is given an interview number (see Table 12).

TABLE 12.--Biographical data of teachers in second interviews.

Interview Number	Race	Age	Degree Held	Birthplace	Other Residence	Birthplaces M:F; M-GM:GF P-GM:GF	Occupation (husband-Wife)
1	W	57	M.A.	Ohio	Ohio (24 yrs.) Detroit (33 yrs.)	M:Ohio F:Ohio MGM: England MGP: England PGM: Penna. PGF: Penna.	Widow
2	W	25	B.S. in Ed.+	Detroit	None	M:Detroit F:Penna. MGM: Italy MGP: Detroit PGM: Ireland PGF: Ireland	Single
3	W	34	B.A.+	Indiana	Ind. (11 yrs.) Detroit (23 yrs.)	M:Poland F:Czechoslovakia MGM:Poland PGM:Czech. PGF:Czech.	Single
4	N	29	B.A. +	W.Virginia	W. Va. (5 yrs.) Detroit (24 yrs.)	M:Tennessee F:Virginia MGM:Tennessee MGP:Tennessee PGM:Virginia PGF:Virginia	Teacher
5	N	48	B.A.	Detroit	Detroit (1-18) Georgia (18-23) N.Y.C. (23-35) Calif.(35-41) Detroit (41-48 years)	M:Ireland F:Virginia MGM:Ireland MGP:Ireland PGM:Virginia PGF:Virginia	Auto Executive
6	N	52	M.Ed.	S.Carolina	S.C. (4 yrs.) Detroit (48 yrs.)	M:S. Carolina F:S. Carolina MGM:S.Carolina MGP:S.Carolina PGM:S.Carolina PGF:S.Carolina	Owns a Pharmacy
7	N	36	B.A. & M. Social Work	Penna.	Penna. (1 yr.) Illinois (2 yrs.) Detroit (33 yrs.)	M:Alabama F:Penna. MGM:Georgia MGP:Georgia PGM:Florida PGF:Georgia	Accountant
8	N	27	B.A.	Detroit	None	M:Georgia F:Georgia MGM:Georgia MGP:Georgia PGM:Georgia PGF:Georgia	Teacher
9	N	53	B.A.+	Illinois	Illinois (41 yrs.) Detroit (12 yrs.)	M:Illinois F:Tennessee MGM:Illinois MGP:Illinois PGM:Tennessee PGF:Tennessee	Single
10* Male Informant	W	29	M.Ed.	Detroit	None	M:New York F:Detroit MGM:New York MGP:Ireland PGM:Germany PGF:Germany	Wife is a Homemaker
11	N	58	R.N. M.Ed.	B.W.Indies	B.W.I.(11 yrs.) Detroit (47 yrs.)	M:Jamaica F:Cuba MGM:Jamaica MGP:Jamaica PGM:Cuba PGF:Cuba	Exports Business
12	N	44	B.S.+	N.Carolina	N.C. (20 yrs.) Detroit (24 yrs.)	M:N. Carolina F:N. Carolina MGM:N. Carolina MGP:N. Carolina PGM:N.Carolina PGF:N.Carolina	Bar tender
13	N	40	B.A.+	Detroit	Detroit (20 yrs.) N.C. (8 yrs.) Detroit (12 yrs.)	M:S. Carolina F:S. Carolina MGM:S. Carolina MGP:S. Carolina PGM:S.Carolina PGF:S.Carolina	Single
14	N	24	B.A.+	Detroit	Detroit (1 yr.) Ohio (20 yrs.) Detroit (3 yrs.)	M:Ohio F:Alabama MGM:Penna. MGP:W. Virginia PGM:Alabama PGF:Virginia	Single
15	N	53	B.A.	Detroit	None	M:Germany F:Detroit MGM:Germany MGP:Germany PGM:Not known PGF:Not known	Lawyer

TABLE 12.--Continued

Interview Number	Race	Age	Degree Held	Birthplace	Other Residence	Birthplaces M:F; M-GM:GF P-GM:GF	Occupation (husband-Wife)
16	W	30	M.Ed.	Detroit	None	M:Detroit F:Rumania MGM:Detroit MGF:Detroit PGM:Rumania PGF:Rumania	Single
17	N	40	B.A.	Detroit	None	M:Tennessee F:Tennessee MGM:Tennessee MGF:Tennessee PGM:Tennessee PGF:Tennessee	Auto Plant Office Employee
18	N	30	B.A.	Detroit	None	M:Georgia F:Mississippi MGM:Georgia MGF:Georgia PGM:Mississippi PGF:Mississippi	Single
19	N	31	M.Ed.	Alabama	Alabama (10 yrs.) Detroit (21 yrs.)	M:Alabama F:Alabama MGM:Alabama MGF:Alabama PGM:Alabama PGF:Alabama	Government Employee
20	N	38	B.A.	Detroit	None	M:Georgia F:Virginia MGM:Ireland MGF:Ireland PGM:Virginia PGF:Virginia	Single
21	N	36	B.A.	Alabama	Alabama (26 yrs.) Detroit (10 yrs.)	M:Alabama F:Alabama MGM:Alabama MGF:Alabama PGM:Alabama PGF:Alabama	Writer
22	W	47	M.Ed.	New York	New York(14 yrs.) Detroit (33 yrs.)	M:New York F:Italy MGM:Italy MGF:Italy PGM:Italy PGF:Italy	Cleaner and Presser
23	N	29	B.S.in Ed.+	Tennessee	Tennessee(2 yrs.) Missouri (4 yrs.) Ohio (15 yrs.) Detroit (8 yrs.)	M:Mississippi F:Tennessee MGM:Tennessee MGF:Mississippi PGM:Mississippi PGF:Mississippi	Single
24	W	26	B.A.+	Detroit	None	M:Michigan F:Detroit MGM:Michigan MGF:Ireland PGM:England PGF:Germany	Single
25	W	32	B.A.+	Detroit	None	M:Canada F:Missouri MGM:Canada MGF:Canada PGM:Canada PGF:Canada	Single
26	N	31	B.A.	Detroit	None	M:Alabama F:Arkansas MGM:Florida MGF:Florida PGM:Arkansas PGF:Arkansas	Single
27	W	37	B.A.+	N.Dakota	N.Dakota(14 yrs.) Detroit (23 yrs.)	M:S. Dakota F:Massachusetts MGM:Germany MGF:Germany PGM:Canada PGF:Canada	Single
28	N	24	B.Ed.	Detroit	None	M:Michigan F:Alabama MGM:Canada MGF:Canada PGM:Alabama PGF:Alabama	Single
29	W	37	M.S.	Detroit	None	M:Michigan F:Spain MGM:Massachusetts MGF:Massachusetts PGM:Spain PGF:Spain	Librarian
30	N	40	M.Ed.	Detroit	None	M:Mississippi F:Mississippi MGM:Mississippi MGF:Mississippi PGM:Mississippi PGF:Mississippi	Single

Summary

As was stated briefly in this chapter, the systematic method of using dialect geography was used to study differences in language patterns. The differences were many as can be studied in Tables 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 which were concerned with informants included in the first interviews of this study. The data reported in Table 12 were reports of the biographical data of informants of the second interviews.

Due to the fact that this was a study of the language behavior of the pre-school child, his teacher and his parent, the sample included a very large percentage of females among the adults, i.e., 95 per cent of the total group of both the parents and the teachers. This was probably a most natural sample, however, for the parent most likely to accompany a pre-schooler to the school would be the mother, for the father, as the financial partner in most marriages, would be at his daily work. The teacher of the pre-schooler, too, would most likely be a woman as the greater majority of primary teachers are women. In a comparative study of speech behavior it would be probably most natural to use the language of the mother and the female teacher for they are around the young child more often than is the male teacher or even the father, who may not reside in the home.

The race of the informants was heavily Negro within the children and parents' group, i.e., 141 Negro children and 15 Caucasian children; 140 Negro parents and 15 Caucasian

parents. This was probably due to the fact that the larger percentage of children in the Head Start Project in the Detroit Public Schools were Negro. The teachers were more evenly divided, i.e., 22 Negro teachers and 21 Caucasian teachers.

The age of the informants was very similar for the children for they all had to be pre-kindergarten age to be accepted in the Project. The parents were younger in age, as an average, than were the teachers. Between the ages of 41 to 50 years and above we found 39% of the teachers; only 12% of the parents fell in this same chronological bracket.

There was a wide difference of academic background reported among the parents and teachers who served as informants in this study. Seventy-two per cent of the parents reported that they had not finished high school; only 4% of the parents had any college experience at all, with no parents stating that they held a college degree. Naturally, on the other hand, all of the teachers stated that they held at least a bachelor's degree, with 65% of the teachers reporting that they had work beyond the four year bachelor's degree and 12% said they held a master's degree.

The children had done very little traveling outside of their home city of Detroit and their parents said they traveled between their native states, the majority of which were in the Southeastern United States, and their adopted city of Detroit. In contrast, the teachers reported having

traveled extensively in the United States and many reported having traveled to Europe and other parts of the world.

The pre-schoolers, too, held the highest per cent rate, among the informants, as native Detroiters, i.e., the children were 86% native Detroiters; the parents were 22% native Detroiters, and the teachers were 51% native Detroiters.

In terms of the birthplaces of parents and grandparents, we find the oldest generation reported were more likely to be born in other countries, i.e., England, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Ireland, Spain, and Canada. The parents and grandparents of the pre-schoolers' parents tended to be natives of the Southeastern region of our country.

Finally, the occupations reported by the parents and teachers differed. More occupations in the unskilled and semi-skilled classes were reported by the parents; occupations which are recognized as professions and businesses, or "white collar" kinds of work were reported by the teachers.

In conclusion, the biographical data of teachers included in the second interviews is presented in chart form indicating that which was previously reported as part of the data of the first interview as the teachers were the same in both parts of the study; the number is simply smaller.

Chapter IV presents an analysis of the teachers' concept of the language problem from their own observations and experiences with the pre-school child and his parent from disadvantaged areas in the city.

CHAPTER IV

TEACHERS' CONCEPT OF THE PROBLEM

The real worth of language knowledge in terms of curriculum development and revision depends greatly on the teachers' concept of the problem. With the simple recognition of the need to change, the teacher will normally seek data which describe the problem and propose possible solutions to it. The previous chapter described some of the speech characteristics of the pre-school child, his parent and his teacher. The second interviews in this study were directed solely to the teachers of the pre-schoolers in Project Head Start in an attempt to determine the teachers' concept of the language problems of her class.

Letter of Introduction to the Principals

To introduce the study to the principals whose teachers would take part in the second set of interviews, a letter was sent to the schools asking for permission to speak to the teachers who had participated in the Project. This letter stated that the study described and identified the speech of children and adults in Detroit for possible future in-service training and curriculum revision for teachers. It went on to say that the teachers would be

asked to react to questions concerned with their opinions of Detroit speech. The questions were then stated for the principals' information. (See Appendix D for a copy of the letter sent to the principals.)

Statement to the Teachers

Enclosed with the letter sent to the principals was a statement to the teachers which asked them to react to specific questions at the time of interview. (See Appendix E for a copy of the statement to the teachers.)

The first two questions in the statement were proposed to the teachers in an attempt to get the teachers to state their opinions concerning the language problems of children. These questions were:

1. What do you think are the major problems your children have with vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation?
2. In what ways does the language of the parents influence children in your class?
What problems with vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation in the language of the parent are reflected in the problems of the child?

The teacher was then asked to listen and react to a tape of the speech of children who were pre-schoolers in the Head Start program.

The final five questions were proposed to obtain further language data from the teachers rather than to

determine her concept of the problem. For that reason the data gathered from the last five questions were included in the evidence discussed in Chapter V on language data.

Teachers' Responses to Question 1

For purposes of anonymity, the thirty teachers in the study were given numbers 1 to 30 and will be referred to by these numbers throughout this chapter.

Vocabulary Problems of Children: Comments Most Often Used

Teachers' reaction to the question: What do you think are the major problems your children have with vocabulary . . . ?

Teacher Interview

Vocabulary

- | <u>#</u> | |
|----------|--|
| 1 | Their vocabulary is very small--for most of them. |
| 2 | Some had a vocabulary of about a hundred and some words, I'd say; no more than that. They got along fine with what they knew. They didn't have any trouble expressing themselves. They knew the important words for them to get along okay. Some could talk your foot off. I mean, they just knew everything. The quieter ones were the ones who didn't have a large vocabulary. The ones who were always talking had words that you wouldn't imagine a child that age having. They just knew a lot. |
| 3 | Generally, their vocabulary was very limited, but then they were very young, pre-school children. Their trouble was the use of dialect for they said <u>hal</u> for <u>how</u> . It was southern dialect among some of the children which caused them to use the wrong words. |
| 4 | In some cases I can't understand the children at all. Of course, sometimes the children won't talk at all, or else they speak in very low tones. The vocabulary is very limited. When we had free |

Teacher
Interview

#

Vocabulary

- discussions, I like to draw out the children and ask them questions. They would answer with one word, for instance; I suppose this is normal enough.
- 5 In the Head Start program, the children come with a very meager vocabulary, I would say. I think it's because of the background of the home and the lack of books at home, the lack of communication with the family, especially, if there are only one or two children in the family. Perhaps if there are more children in the family communication might be a bit better. They might have a few more words in their vocabulary.
- 6 They have a lack of vocabulary simply for the reason that they have not been encouraged to talk; they may just gesture for a doll. They would say, "Mrs. _____, I want that, you see, that there thing,—" So I feel it's a lack of speech, a lack of talking in the home, perhaps, or, maybe I've commented about this because I like to talk.
- 7 We have definite problems with vocabulary because the children haven't been exposed to many words. Just simple things that they just don't seem to understand.
- 8 They have a definite lack of vocabulary. I find that with middle-class children you can use more words and there isn't this problem of having to interpret for them because they pick up the words at home. I imagine they have trouble because their parents speak in one-syllable words and they don't even make sentences. I can't get them to make a sentence. Even if I have them repeat after me exactly, they don't do it. They repeat in sentences they are familiar with. They're not really sentences but fragments of sentences that are familiar to them, and they understand them. They don't realize that they aren't making a complete thought.
- 9 I think the children understand more than they speak. They learn things from TV. I don't think TV hurts them; they learn and learn but they don't use it.

Teacher
Interview

Vocabulary

- #
- 10 I limit their vocabulary, to a great extent, is very limited when you compare it to a middle-class child. They don't come in contact as often with these words. Their parents seem to have a very limited vocabulary and this affects their vocabulary. They use terms of their own, such as, mash the light, for turning off the light switch. They don't mash the light switch, they mash the light.
- 11 The vocabulary is definitely limited; they speak in single words, simple words, not sentences.
- 12 They only use those words to which they had been accustomed to hearing. And, of course, we try to enlarge upon that in various ways. I used a large amount of materials. We would play telephoning and the child had to answer in complete sentences to try to get him to enlarge his vocabulary in various manners.
- 13 They use one-syllable words. They are like children who have no training at home.
- 14 Most of them had, on the average, an extensive vocabulary. One or two might have had a vocabulary of say a second or third grader. They got their vocabulary from older brothers and sisters but not from their parents; this is the difference. Television was a great influence for most of them. For example, most of them knew the TV commercials, and, as soon as they would see a particular type of cereal for breakfast they would say, "We saw this on TV."
- 15 The vocabulary of the total group is very, very limited--yes--very, very, limited. This is why we must go into so many different explanations of a word.
- 16 If the vocabulary is something they have actually had experience with, then they know the word fairly well. If it's something they're not too familiar with, they will try and find a way of describing it, but they really won't come out with the exact word.

Teacher
InterviewVocabulary

- #
- 17 In the inner-city, the child's vocabulary is very limited. His experiences are very limited. If you say, "Tell me what you see," the child begins with "It is something." He really has no name for it. If you have a lawn mower, he could say, "It's something you cut the grass with," or "It's a grass cutter." He will give you what the machine would do rather than its name. There's very little identification. I feel that they don't question for they have very little vocabulary with which to question. You see, if they have no words with which to ask a question, they can't question. He sees nothing for his experiences are so limited. He takes no vacation, has had no exposure to a real farm. Consequently, when we teach, every single experience we present has to be backed up with all kinds of pictures, all kinds of details so the child really has some kind of mental picture as to what we're talking about. It's hard to relate to this kind of child because he has nothing to base it on. We read about, for example, rabbits. Last week we had a real, live rabbit in the room and the child got a chance to feel it and to see the fur. The child learns in this way--by seeing and doing. That which he sees and does--some of that he retains.
- 18 I haven't noticed their vocabulary very much. I only noticed that it is very limited.
- 19 I noticed that a couple of children wouldn't talk at all when they first came. After having something to talk about, if they were playing with a certain toy, they would find something to say about it. Soon they would tell about things they were doing at home.
- 20 They had a great deal of slang vocabulary. Otherwise they only used a few single words.
- 21 They point at things instead of saying the word for it. We have to work with them to get them to talk and converse with us, other leaders and even the children. If you let them continue doing it, they would go on pointing out things rather than saying their names.

Teacher
Interview

Vocabulary

- | | |
|----|---|
| # | |
| 22 | I don't think they can communicate because they can't really let us know what they're thinking and how they feel about things. You can hardly accomplish too much with a child unless you really know how they feel, how their mind works and how they're really thinking. |
| 23 | Some of them have very short vocabularies whereas others who have had more experiences have more extensive vocabularies. |
| 24 | In using descriptive words their vocabulary is very limited. They find it very difficult to describe things. What they do know they get from TV. It's the key to everything, especially words on "Batman" they know. |
| 25 | These children know only very simple little words at first. They improve a great deal as our days together go on to the kindergarten. |
| 26 | Few words are really known by the <u>Head Start</u> child, at least when they are speaking to the teacher or in school; they seem to get along all right when they are talking together. |
| 27 | To be perfectly honest about it, I have a very hard time trying to communicate with these children. Forgetting the social differences, the children are simply language-starved. |
| 28 | When the children are playing together they seem to understand each other, but the teacher is a different matter. It takes a long time of working together to be able to really talk with much sense. |
| 29 | Most of their answers are one-word answers. These children are almost foreign to words used by middle-class children their same age. |
| 30 | I think their vocabulary is quite limited because they have limited experiences in their environment --their home environment, that is, until they come to school. This is a new world for them. School words of teachers and books introduce completely new words to them--in great contrast to words they hear at home. |

Conclusions of the Teachers' Concept of the Child's

Vocabulary.--In brief review we find these statements often volunteered by teachers when they evaluate the child's vocabulary:

limited--very limited--definitely
 one-syllable words
 meager vocabulary
 lack of vocabulary
 they point
 they gesture
 not exposed to many words
 understand more than they speak
 don't know the names for things
 don't talk at all
 short vocabularies
 they haven't heard the words.

Strangely enough, however, a few teachers indicated that they felt the children had rather extensive vocabularies, but these teachers were fewer in number than those who felt the opposite.

Grammar Problems of Children:
Comments Most Often Used

Teachers' reaction to the question: What do you think are the major problems your children have with grammar . . . ?

Teacher
Interview

Grammar

- | # | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Their grammar is very, very different and it's limited and poor. |
| 2 | These children have no idea what a sentence is. I don't think they have ever really realized that we put our words in sentences. They talk in short, little phrases. I try to get them to say their thought in whole sentences but they don't understand what you're saying. Like they say one word or they say "Yah." |
| 3 | They say <u>seen</u> for <u>saw</u> , such as in "I seen him do this." |

Teacher
Interview

Grammar

- #
4 I have given them exercises in grammar, like distinguishing which verb to use with singular nouns, which verb to use with plural nouns for I don't think their grammar is up to par. This is the reason that I stress this so much in my own classroom.
- 5 I think the grammar has been very poor among these children, and there again, it's what they are used to hearing in the home.
- 6 Their grammar problems are many because they use substitutions, this for that. They use a personal pronoun after a name and leave off the s, as in "he see."
- 7 The biggest problem that I've had so far is "I'm gonna," "fishes" for "fish", "milks" for "milk" and "foods" for "food."
- 8 The grammar is so poor that I use some of the few brighter children in the class to kind of translate for them because there is a real communication difficulty. I have to translate everything into their own language and they don't always understand me and I don't understand them at all times. Then I have to use an interpreter.
- 9 They try to imitate the grammar--sometimes. They begin to try to help each other, too. I know one thing that "bugs" me. When I say "Where can I get a pencil?" they will answer, "Here it goes." It is hard for them to say "Here it is," but if I talk enough about it, they may change.
- 10 I would say their grammar is probably very poor. Where we would use a sentence to convey a thought, they are in the habit of maybe using a phrase or just a few words to try to convey the same thought which I would presume would affect their communication to a great extent.
- 11 These children cut words off: "could" would be "ould," such as in "Ould you like to do this?" Too, their "l's" were often missing. I really don't think it was because the child was unable to say the word; I would say it was just habit.

Teacher
InterviewGrammar

- #
- 12 I would say here it's an environmental thing. They had used only those things which they had heard in their immediate environment. Some of these children had not even been out of their homes. They had not been downtown. They had not been any farther than their family circle. You could tell right away if a child had been exposed to a wide vocabulary and good grammar. You could separate the children just by observation and listening.
- 13 I've been working here for a long time so I guess my ears are tuned to a great many of these forms of grammar--but I know they wouldn't be correct among friends of mine.
- 14 The majority of the children don't speak in complete sentences. They might give you a staccato answer of one or two words. In phrases they might say something like, "That's he ball," instead of "That's his ball."
- 15 To try to help their grammar I play games with the children. They have to supply the missing words or phrases, such as in, "Close the . . ." and they will say "door," or "window." They are very alert when you make it fun for them.
- 16 In grammar the children actually say one word instead of a complete sentence. We are working to have them say a complete sentence even though it's simple and short.
- 17 Their grammar is terrible. "Her hit me," "tie me shoe" are examples of how the inner-city child speaks. This is because there is very little communication between the child and the parent. Now with the era of television, even though it plays an important part as far as learning is concerned, the child does not have to listen. Mickey Mouse is there. The motions take the part of the real listening. Because there is no real honest communication between parent and child, the child isn't taught to listen. He doesn't hear; he doesn't enunciate, you see.



Teacher
Interview

Grammar

- #
- 18 I find with my little ones at school that they always seem to put "me" instead of "I" in the phrases they say. When they're speaking, instead of putting the other fellow first, they'll put themselves first. They'll say "me and my brother." I find this very frequently.
- 19 Very few talk in sentences. Most of them are one-word comments, "yes" and "no" become "uh-huh" and "uh-uh."
- 20 Some of them speak in full sentences, but they are only sentences of two or three words.
- 21 I introduce the verb to children as an action word showing them what they're doing and the noun as the name of the person or place. That helps them write and speak in a complete sentence. They usually use single words or a phrase rather than a complete sentence and sometimes they would throw in a single word to answer the question.
- 22 Disadvantaged children do not use complete sentences. Some of it, if I may say so and I'm reluctant to say so, does come from the home. If they don't hear a lot of good grammar they don't speak it--and they don't hear it at home.
- 23 I find all children love to hear stories--especially these children who haven't heard many of them in their homes. I read to them a great deal and hope they listen to good grammar, which they are not capable of when they come to us.
- 24 I often can't tell just how good their grammar is for they don't say much at first. I guess they are a little bit scared, I suppose. Their parents probably said, "When you get to school your teacher won't let you do that." That is quite common, you know.
- 25 I wouldn't mind if I heard pre-schoolers use the word "ain't" or misuse English for I just wish they would talk! Except for the very bright ones; I just wish they would express themselves in any way.

Teacher
InterviewGrammar

- #
- 26 The greatest faults that any pre-schoolers have with grammar is the use of me incorrectly, see for sees or the use of sentence parts.
- 27 Just get the children to talk, talk, talk, that's my big problem. I can teach them correct grammar if I can get them to feel at home in school.
- 28 I'm just sure they are never spoken to in their homes to any great extent, that is why these children do not know correct grammar. You don't know what you haven't heard.
- 29 The child's grammar is poor in terms of adult talk. It does get her to communicate with her little childhood friends, however.
- 30 The children try to answer as quickly as they can so they use words instead of sentences. They're not concerned about grammar or maybe speaking in complete sentences or even thinking in terms of saying right or wrong--if they do know right from wrong. They're just trying to say, as quickly as possible, the answer they think you want and then they shut-up.

Conclusions of the Teachers' Concept of the Child's

Grammar.--In brief review we find these statements often volunteered by teachers when they evaluate the child's grammar:

poor grammar
seen for saw
 words are spoken, not complete sentences
he see for he sees
 child cut off the ends of words
her hit me or tie me shoe is a common example
me for I often
 get children to talk to teach good grammar
 children's grammar is hard to determine for
 they don't speak much.

Pronunciation Problems of Children:
Comments Most Often Used

Teachers' reaction to the question: What do you think are the major problems your children have with pronunciation . . . ?

Teacher
Interview

Pronunciation

- | <u>#</u> | |
|----------|--|
| 1 | Most of them don't talk at all when they first come to school. We talked to them; we tried to find out things they were interested in. We read stories. [No definite comments about pronunciation.] |
| 2 | I would say on the whole their pronunciation of words was very poor. They leave off last sounds, leave off beginning sounds sometimes. But then I have that trouble now even with the older children. I keep saying to them to put in all the letters for that's why they're there. |
| 3 | Pronunciation is poor. Things like, "I wanna go," or "punkin" for "pumpkin and things like that. Their dialect is just hard to understand for most teachers. We were born and raised in the Midwest, for the most part. |
| 4 | In reading, my children are not able to distinguish beginning sounds very well and we stress this in first grade. This is what I stressed in <u>Head Start--phonics</u> is the answer. We do a lot of work in a play program with phonics daily. |
| 5 | Pronunciation is the main factor. The children seem to run the words together; they mumble and don't speak clearly. I had great difficulty understanding some children who were in the program, not many, just a few. |
| 6 | They leave off the endings of words; instead of "going" it's "goin." Also the <u>d</u> 's and <u>t</u> 's give them trouble. Even at the beginning of words you often cannot hear the beginning letter. |
| 7 | The hardest sounds for the boys and girls are the <u>c</u> , <u>s</u> , <u>ch</u> and <u>st</u> . I've been working on the phonics charts with them and then I send the word list home with them to practice. We listen for words on TV programs and these things have a lot of influence on them. |



Teacher
Interview

Pronunciation

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8 There is a definite problem of pronunciation and also the understanding of sounds, but the sounds are very difficult to pin-point. I know some of the other teachers have that same problem because I was called out of my classroom a few times to come and interpret for another teacher--and to think we are all speaking English.
- 9 I don't have any trouble making myself understood but some of the children withdraw when you can not make out what they are trying to say. Some of the words give them trouble, I'm sure, for they have never heard them spoken by many adults before they came to school.
- 10 Looking back I don't think I had trouble talking to, being understood or understanding of the children I taught. They do have trouble with the pronunciation of word endings. I think that they're in the habit of not saying the things as clearly as we do and they say a word such as "looking" by leaving the g off. They abbreviate to a certain extent.
- 11 I wasn't familiar with the Southern background of most of these children and so I wasn't accustomed to their type of speech. They cut off their words.
- 12 I would notice substitutions with regards to the initial consonants and at the ends of words. The dialect form, which I would gather they had from their parents and environment, was hard to understand, too.
- 13 I think their pronunciation errors are errors that most children make. An example is the word git. I worked on rhyming words to get them to see that it wasn't git-- or the word sing. They had a tendency to say sang. I think the high school girls were guilty of these errors, too. Together we made a few improvements in the speech of the Head Starters. We did lots of work with phonics.
- 14 Some of the children had problems with their consonants, particularly at the ends of words. We had two or three problems of children who couldn't speak at all.



Teacher
Interview

Pronunciation

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| 15 | Let's see; they don't usually pronounce the last part of a word or letter. They slur over everything. They just pick it up at home. |
| 16 | Many times they mispronounce because they do not know the sounds. |
| 17 | They leave off the ending sounds and beginning sounds. The child hasn't really been taught to listen. Consequently he comes and gives us part of the word. There is no ending and very seldom a beginning. The word "get" becomes "git" and it's hard. You try to get the child to see that you can rhyme--"let, met, set, and bet"--then when you get to the word "get" you still get "git." You see, it's a speech pattern that has been developed in the home, hearing the parents talk at home, brothers and sisters talk at home. They come with very little real listening. They hear no sounds at the beginning; they hear very few sounds at the end. I found this to be a problem. |
| 18 | I found much dropping of endings. Then they substitute a great deal. They say " <u>slip</u> " instead "Flip," a dog's name. This happens with the consonants a great deal of the time. |
| 19 | They omit sounds at the beginning; they substitute sounds and particularly at the end of words they leave off the end sound. The " <u>th</u> " sound seems to be a hard one for them. The " <u>ing</u> " sounds are usually left off, too. And also the " <u>s</u> " at the end of verbs gives them trouble. |
| 20 | For " <u>ask</u> " they say " <u>aks</u> ". They say " <u>messaging me</u> " or " <u>messaging with me</u> " which is poor grammar and slang and they don't even pronounce the " <u>g</u> " on " <u>ing</u> ." |
| 21 | They do have trouble with pronunciation for they fail to use their teeth and tongue and their lips. This is necessary for getting the correct sound. One boy's trouble was that he said "Gwadis" for "Gladys." Through showing him how to place his tongue he was able to say it. I used the mirror for him to see the placement of his tongue. |



Teacher
Interview

Pronunciation

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- 22 Many of them are still talking baby-talk at that age. They communicate with movements, with their arms and gestures. They cut off the ends of words but I think a lot of adults are guilty as well as bigger children of this, too. Children seem to understand one another without the use of words.
- 23 They have some problems with beginning consonant sounds and grammar which comes mainly from the home.
- 24 These children have trouble with "ing, d and t." We work with rhyming words and with beginning consonants and they just can't hear them. I keep repeating it and saying that a rhyming word is a word that sounds like the same word--sounds the same--and they just can't hear it.
- 25 I have one child who mispronounces almost every word, but they say he does not have a speech problem. All I have to say or do is to show the child how to pronounce a word and he'll say it right. You do have to deal with children differently but they just want a little warmth and attention from adults which they just don't get at home.
- 26 The children confuse the digraphs, for example: "th" and the "wh" too. They are not able to hear the sounds and other consonant blends.
- 27 I just do a great deal of work with the children and phonics games, particularly rhyming. This way they gradually seem to hear the difference in the sounds.
- 28 It gets very discouraging at times for I don't understand the children and I guess they don't understand me either. I work on phonics every day stressing the consonants, especially on the ends of words.
- 29 I think these children know they don't speak so that teachers can understand them and so they really don't speak much at all. When they do they say things in a hurry--cut off all their words and last letters.

Teacher
Interview

Pronunciation

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I don't think the children are aware of the fact that they drop the endings of words. They talk quickly and slur off endings without even being aware that they're wrong. This is something that teachers really have to start working on. Many teachers use phonics constantly and they need to drill to try to help children enunciate the way they should. The different vowel sounds can be taught to children this way.

Conclusions of the Teachers' Concept of the Child's

Pronunciation.--In brief review we find these statements often volunteered by teachers when they evaluate the child's pronunciation:

phonics is the answer--more and more phonics
and more drill in phonics
pronunciation is very poor
they can't distinguish between d's and t's
the ing at the end of words is cut to in
hardest sounds are c, s, ch and st
can't understand the children and the children
can't understand the teachers
git is pronounced for get
rhyming helps some children pronounce the letters
they substitute letters
trouble with beginning and ending consonants
trouble with the many different ways of pronouncing the vowels
they cut off words to get the talking over with
they talk quickly and slur.

Teachers' Responses to Question 2

At the same time that the teachers were asked to give their opinions about child speech in terms of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation, a two-part second question was asked. These answers are recorded as follows:



Reactions to Parents' Influence on
Child's Speech: Comments Most
Often Used

In what ways does the language of the parents influence children in your class? What problems with vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation in the language of the parent are reflected in the problems of the child?

Teacher

Interview Reaction to parents' influence on child speech

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- 1 The parents' grammar and vocabulary is just as bad as the child's. Even the high school graduate mother who worked with me in this program mispronounced words and her spelling wasn't good either. This mother said "feets," "was" for "were" and "these" for "those." Her child made the same mistakes. Most of my children have the same problems as their mothers.

- 2 One parent I know very well is going to college and she speaks well and so does her little boy. The other parents have many speech problems. I have found that if the child speaks well and has a large vocabulary, when the parent comes in, you can understand him right away. You can see the relationship between the child and the parent. I have one boy who has a severe speech problem. He can barely be understood and when his mother came in I noticed the same speech problem with her, too. I can hardly understand a word they say. I have to say to them, "Now slow down," and then it's a little better. They speak quickly and mispronounce everything. It's discouraging.

- 3 I definitely found that the parents spoke much as the child did. If the parents spoke with a decided accent, then the child came to school with a similar sound. I noticed this lazy pronunciation among parents as well as among the children. Their grammar and vocabulary was much the same, although parents try to say little to teachers. They seem a little afraid of the school atmosphere.

- 4 The language of the parents would naturally greatly influence the children in our classes because, of course, the children have been with parents some four or five years before they come to us. This

Teacher
Interview # Reaction to parents' influence on child speech

is a difficulty that all teachers have in trying to improve the language of the children. This poor language of the parents is exemplified during the parent-teacher conferences. I feel sometimes that the parents are afraid to speak out. Because of this fear they don't speak as well as they would otherwise. This is possible.

When children have limited vocabularies, the parents have limited ones. Even the "colorful" language of the home is sometimes spoken by the child--either slang or profanity, I mean.

- 5 Children are like their parents, very definitely, not only in their grammar, spelling and pronunciation but also in their every-day habits and attitudes toward the school and teachers.

I think up to now parents have been afraid to come around to the school. With these new programs the parents are coming to the school more often and they realize that they have always wanted education for their children. They always felt that we were, many of us, a little standoffish from the home of the child from the disadvantaged area. Fathers very seldom come--if they are in the home at all; it's always the mother. Now that we are establishing a closer feeling between the school and the poorer home we may be able to help the parent communicate better herself. In fact one mother asked me where she could take an English course and I was very encouraged for she desperately needs it.

- 6 I feel that the home is one of the most important institutions in society and that actually the parents are using the same type of poor speech. So often we get the same pattern from the parent.

I find that the parents' vocabulary is very limited and they are shy about talking to other adults for they don't know the words to use in expressing their thoughts--just like their children.

This language problem and the poverty in which so many of them live that they just cannot rise above it is the cause of the lack of stimulation in the child.

Teacher
Interview Reaction to parents' influence on child speech

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- 7 The parents I know are not too cooperative with the school. It seems they pick on the children. When they speak to their children they curse whenever and wherever they feel like it. I had some who came to school and used words I wouldn't repeat.
- My children have many speech problems but if you were in their homes you wouldn't be surprised. The parents don't have many healthy experiences themselves and as the children aren't exposed to good language they just don't use it. Speech classes are helping some of my class; now if we could only send the mothers to class, too.
- 8 Parents have a great deal of influence on the speech of their children but so do their playmates and the people in the neighborhood that they're talking with all the time.
- I don't know if it's possible to teach the parents and the children. I don't like to call it standard or substandard for I think that they should learn one and it should be that used by the educated community in which they live. If that's standard, that's what both parents and children alike should learn.
- Parents have the great influence they do because the home is where the children learn in the first place, from the people they associate with. Maybe we should teach the children and then they could influence the parents, but I don't think we can have as much influence on the parents as the children. To get ahead in the world the children will have to communicate on a higher level than their disadvantaged home.
- 9 I think both the parents and the children have more influence on each other than they realize--and the TV influences them both. If only the child would come to school with some knowledge of words or some interest in speaking up, our job would be easier. When the parents mumble, the child mumbles. When the parents slur, the child does, too.
- 10 I would say that parental influence is probably 99% of the problem. I think I can see why the children have problems because the parents have the same type of problems.



Teacher
Interview Reaction to parents' influence on child speech

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I think I know what to expect when talking to a parent. I cut my own vocabulary down. I use only certain words and talk differently than I would to another teacher. During parent-teacher conferences I have to be aware of what word I am going to use here; you have to choose the right word in order for parents to understand you. The teacher has to put himself on the same speech level as the parent and I've learned how to do that.

- 11 My parents did a great deal of talking, but their Southern accents were hard to understand, just as it's hard to understand some of the children.

The speech of the parents and the children is so similiar that I feel it is rather difficult to change the child's pattern of speech in school. How can you change a child's pattern when they're returning to a different kind of speech in their homes. But somewhere along the way we have to give that child the ability and skills to make that change. But when?

In the limited vocabulary and bad grammar you can tell from the child just what type of education and what background the family has. The children who spoke more frequently and in better phrases or even sentences were those who had parents with a greater vocabulary.

- 12 Some of my parents had finished high school and could speak well but most of my parents didn't even finish grade school and you could tell the difference in their speech.

The parents had a very limited vocabulary and often substituted letters incorrectly in words as they spoke to me.

As far as grammar is concerned, I found that it was about "even-steven." Some of them used very good grammar and some did not. There were words which they did not know which they would try to use--just exactly as their children would do.

- 13 I think the influence of parents on children is possibly more than we could even imagine--especially the very young child. Most of the children spoke exactly as their parents did. We couldn't get to the parents very well so we decided that we would try to help the children

Teacher
Interview Reaction to parents' influence on child speech

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- with little games and say, "When you go home tonight, why don't you do this and do that." We were trying to get the parents interested and also to know what we were doing in school and yet not think we were "butting-in."
- 14 The children in my class were more influenced by the speech of their older brothers or sisters--more than their parents for their parents were too busy either working or taking care of their household duties to really take time to talk to the children.
- Most of the parents are quite cautious about talking to us until they gain confidence in us.
- Most of the speech problems of parents have to be dialect. Their grammar dealt mainly with singular and plural uses of verbs, such as: when to use "is" and "was" and these types of words."
- 15 The children are in contact with parents more than teachers so the influence of the home is greater than that of the school, in my opinion. Some of the children are deprived of talk with adults because there are so many children in the family. But then again, it's a group, too, in the family. What one says, the others follow. You know, it's a pattern that they follow and it's very hard to cope with. And it's very hard to change.
- 16 I think that the language of the parents does influence the children because they pick up things that the parents use, expressions or ways of saying things. The children and the parents reflect each other, at least when the children are small.
- If a parent would mispronounce a word, the child tends to mispronounce the same word by copying the parent. That's natural.
- 17 You can tell which is the child's parent when they both say things like, "den" for "then." It is true that a course in phonics could help both the parent and the child. They eliminate the "th" sound in most words, but in addition they mispronounce the d's and the t's. They say seen for saw. If both the parents and the children could learn to listen--to rhyme "big, wig, and fig with dig," they would be able to pronounce words more accurately.



Teacher
Interview

Reaction to parents' influence on child speech

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- 18 Now this is what I meant by more or less their range in vocabulary. If the parent's vocabulary is limited, this will limit the child's. I have one little boy and his father who often comes to the school. This father speaks better English than most of the other parents and the boy who is his son speaks well, too. I think the parents most definitely will influence the children's pattern of speech.
The child picks up what he's learned from home and carries this into the classroom.
- 19 I've talked with several parents of the children in my class and I've noticed the same kinds of things the children say. I've heard them come from the parents when I've talked to them.
- 20 I would say that there is a great similarity in the parent and child's speech. There is an obvious carry-over from the home to the school in almost everything, and this is particularly so in speech habits. The limited vocabulary of the parent was the reason why the child spoke so little in class or when he did his vocabulary was simple and his grammar was usually wrong.
- 21 I think parents affect the child's speech by ignoring it. I really believe this because whatever the child says, the parents accept it as correct. Maybe they know better, maybe they don't.
I do think there is communication in the home. I think there is quite a bit of communication with the children because a lot of them come into school bubbling over to talk. When we have talking time, they don't want to stop. Although I do have some who aren't participating as they should; they aren't talkers--but neither are their parents.
- 22 Mother's vocabulary, pronunciation--or lack of pronunciation, that is, dropping off endings, poor grammar, grammatical construction, are the same as the child's. They don't say "died" they both say "passed."
- 23 I think children speak the way their parents do. And this, of course, is foreign to some teachers' ears. We try, you know, to correct it in school. But we can't spend all of our time correcting it because then you never get the child to communicate. If only we could help the parents, but I guess that would be impossible.



Teacher
Interview

Reaction to parents' influence on child speech

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- 24 The pronunciation of words on the part of the parent are reflected in the words of the child. Definitely, they pick up speech habits as they do all kinds of habits before they ever come to school. If they have very much communication at all, it's with their immediate family. So if it's evident in their parents, naturally the children will adopt it because, you know, they learn speech from their parents originally.
- The main communication the children have at home is not with their parents but with their television sets. When you ask them to relate experiences at home as in "show-and-tell" they only know what they saw on TV the night before.
- 25 The influence parents have on children is terrific --for good or bad. Both parents and the children make bad grammatical errors--or slang expressions, I guess you would call them. They'll say, for instance, "He's messing around with me" or "I'm a fixin to crack you." I heard curse words in this class, too, and it's not the kind of language we use in school. It might be picked up in the neighborhood or in most cases probably the home-- they repeat what they often hear.
- 26 I make it a game to see if I can pick out the right parent for the right child and I'm not always right, but I often am. I just have to listen to their speech and if I know the children well, the association isn't hard to make. They cut off the same words and have the same dialect in their pronunciation of words.
- 27 When I hear parents speak for the first time, I think to myself, "Like mother, like daughter," for they sound so much alike. I don't know whether this is an argument for heredity or environment; I guess it's both. When the home doesn't communicate well in the sense that the parent can't talk comfortably with anyone outside their own home or circle of friends, this usually means he does not want to raise himself--or that he doesn't know how. We could just let children multiply this through the generations if we didn't try to raise the ambitions of the child.



Teacher
Interview Reaction to parents' influence on child speech

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 28 When children have trouble with the endings of words, so do their parents, it seems. Just being an observer of parents and their children, I would say their influence is great when the children are young, but as they grow older, their friends (other children) influence them more. When the influence of teachers occurs, I don't know.
- 29 The parents and children seem to be able to communicate their ideas between themselves and probably in their home; it's just when they get into a different environment as the school that they have problems. Yes, I would say the speech problems of the child are directly inherited from the parent.
- 30 Oh, yes, I think the child speaks very much like his parent does. And I think he speaks very much more so in this inner-city environment. I think the parents that have just come up from the South have a terrific southern accent which the children bring to class with them also. This is all they know so this is the way that they speak. Actually most parents just say "yes" or "no" and smile pretty--if they can possibly get away with it.

Conclusions of the Teachers' Concepts of the Parents'

Influence on Child Speech.--In brief review we find these statements often volunteered by teachers when they evaluate a parent's influence on child speech:

children speak the way their parents do
 pronunciation of parents' words are the same
 as those of their children
 slang and curse words of parents are repeated
 by child
 cutting off letters from words are habits of
 both
 teachers and children communicate among their
 family members, but not as satisfactorily
 with teachers
 grammatical errors are the same for the child
 and his parent

the same errors are found in parent and child speech, such as, trouble with t's, d's, ing or word beginnings
home influence on speech is great

Reactions to Child and Parent
Speech on Tape: Comments Most
Often Used

At this point in the interview the teachers were asked to listen to a tape of child and parent speech and to react to both (see Appendix F for transcript of child and parent speech to which the teachers were asked to react). Most of their reactions were facial expressions of the "I told you so" type or simply concentrated listening. The few representative remarks of some of the teachers are recorded here in the exact language of the teacher-informants:

<u>Teacher</u> <u>Interview</u>	<u>Language reactions of teachers who listened</u> <u>to tape of child and parent speech</u>
#	
1 (to children on tape)	Poor enunciation, very definitely. They run the words all together. That's why we try to enunciate so well for these children. They have trouble with verbs; they have trouble with plurals. They don't understand. Even the parents don't understand the <u>tense</u> of verbs--the past tense or the present tense. They don't understand how to use the pronoun "I." They say "me" and "us" when they ought to say "we." The children don't know the names for things, even the names of common farm animals. Sometimes it takes even a long time to teach the colors to these children. I do think they have a knowledge of God. A little boy had disobeyed the school rules and a little girl said to him, "God won't love you." They have an idea that God loves and that's good.



Teacher
Interview

Teachers' reactions to tapes

(to parents
on tape)

You see, they don't enunciate either, and their speech is limited; even the parent's speech is limited. They're hesitant. They're afraid to talk. They realize their speech is limited; their vocabulary is limited and sometimes it's hard to get the parents to talk to teachers at all.

2
(to children
on tape)

That child said, "My mama tooked her." That is an example of their trouble with verbs and mixed up tenses. That's the past tense, but there is no such word as "tooked." They are so hard to understand; it's just like the time I have when I meet a new class of children. You just have to get used to the sounds of their words for they are so different from our own. You see that child is trying to tell the other child how to do something. They don't know how to tell them. They know how to do it but when it comes to telling people orally, they don't know how to get it across. They have a lack of vocabulary because of their little experience, probably.

(to parents
on tape)

These parents talk just like the ones I know. Every other sentence they say "Cuz, ya know" or "yah." They keep doing this over and over. Did you hear that, "My daughter she" that's just the way the children speak, too. The child says, "my sister she went" or "my mother she." It was rather interesting but very wrong. The best thing about Head Start is that the children talk more and more as the time goes on. I noticed that about the parents who came to the school. Just like the parents on this tape. They seem to have a lot to say.

3
(to children
on tape)

That child said "I got me a bike." I think that is a typical pattern; we heard this grammatical error many, many times. This sounds just like the same speech I mentioned before, words such as "visitin, projeck, he see" are ways of shortening speech.

(to parents
on tape)

They drop the last letters on words, too. These mothers simply seem uninformed of the vocabulary for they seem to be searching for words that just don't come because they don't



Teacher
Interview
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Teachers' reactions to tapes

know them. It's strange though. They, the parents, that is, seem to get along very well with each other and have a lot to say. We're the outsiders when they get together for I surely can't understand them well enough to know what they're talking about.

4
(to children
on tape)

This is so typical of what I experienced; you know, I taught Head Start for two years. The type of answers the child gives and the teacher asking the question and not being able to really understand the answer is a perfect example of our class. The short, jagged words the child uses is a good example. They are not accustomed to listening to sounds, in fact, they are not accustomed to listening at all. This is the reason why I stress the beginning and ending sounds, and the middle of the word as well.

(to parents
on tape)

That mother did not use the correct verb form. They don't seem to understand the use of verbs at all. This tape proved that the parents' speech is just as bad as the child's speech.

5
(to children
on tape)

We had a lot of searching for words in our class just as these children are doing. They don't know the word for a particular article so they can't identify it. The only thing you hear a great deal about from these children, which surprised me, is God. They all go to Sunday School so they can tell you all about it on Monday. They must be allowed to talk there for they know the words and they really don't listen that well. They must discuss there.

(to parents
on tape)

This sounds typical of many of our parents in the program, not being able to express themselves. I think they might have the idea; they just don't know how to put it into words. It is very frustrating for them--and for us. They have trouble pronouncing the words they do know, too. Listen to that mother; she puts s's on words when they don't belong there. "This" becomes "dis."



Teacher
Interview

Teachers' reactions to tapes

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6</p> <p>(to children
on tape)</p> | <p>That child's struggling effort to explain in how her mother makes a cake is just that--a real struggle. She has probably seen it many times but she doesn't know the simple words that could explain it. "<u>That there thing</u>" or her use of the word "<u>stuff</u>" is very common among children in the inner-city area.</p> |
| <p>(to parents
on tape)</p> | <p>I can say the same things for these parents as I did for their children. They don't have words enough to speak comfortably to the teachers--but they do seem to be able to converse with each other, as they are doing, on this tape, that is.</p> |
| <p>7</p> <p>(to children
on tape)</p> | <p>"<u>My mamma tooked her,</u>" that's a good example of the speech of the child in <u>Head Start</u> in my class. "<u>I no gotta</u>" is another typical saying. Rather than "<u>I</u>" they say "<u>me</u>" and mix other pronouns.</p> |
| <p>(to parents
on tape)</p> | <p>These parents seem to get along better with each other than mine do. My parents seem shy with each other. These parents we're listening to have a hard time pronouncing words and even knowing enough words to say, but at least they are talking freely.</p> |
| <p>8</p> <p>(to children
on tape)</p> | <p>This sounds more like my classroom than a tape of someone else's children. What a terrible time these children have searching for words in their poor, very limited vocabulary. Their pronunciation is poor; they all sound like they are from the South.</p> |
| <p>(to parents
on tape)</p> | <p>These parents don't have words either, it sounds like. A lot of them don't have the experiences for one thing and then if they don't have the words, they can't really think about the experiences that they have had. They search for words but then I do, too, so that they can understand me.</p> |
| <p>9</p> <p>(to children
on tape)</p> | <p>That child is simply careless about what she says and how she says it. I think the parents just do not take enough time with their children to help them learn to speak well. This</p> |

Teacher
Interview

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Teachers' reactions to tapes

is just my theory. You have to encourage children to speak by telling them stories or talking to them. That's why these poor children just don't know the words of the English language.

- (to parents on tape) If children ever imitate these parents they won't be much farther ahead than it they didn't hear words at all. The parents don't know vocabulary either. You can't communicate without words, can you? How do they ever get any directions over to their children?
- 10
(to children on tape) They think they're really poking the words out, it seems out of their mouths. That ". . . got me a bike" is a good example of their misuse of the pronoun. They're really slow; they're trying to search for words. They don't know exactly what word to use.
- (to parents on tape) They run their words together just like their children on the tape before them, don't they? There's another one, "mornin"; both the parents and the children alike cut off the ends of their words.
- 11
(to children on tape) That "My mama tooked her"--isn't that typical though? At least it's a good picture of how the children in my class speak. And there is the word they use when they just don't know the correct word or name for a thing; they call it "stuff"; that seems to explain everything for them.
- (to parents on tape) That low-pitched voice of the mother is just like her child's that we just heard; you can't really understand either of them too well unless you make a study of it. They chew up their words.
- 12
(to children on tape) This is still an environment influence which makes these children speak so poorly. From an uneducated parent you can't get children who know much. You see how they chop the words off? How the entire pronunciation of a word just isn't there? They continually substitute, just as they are doing here. The home has a terrific impact upon the child's ability to use grammar correctly, to speak distinctly and pronounce his words right.

Teacher
Interview
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Teachers' reactions to tapes

- Listen to his, "I like God." That was correct. I don't know whether this is due to environment or a physical thing, or a combination of both.
- (to parents on tape) I really don't think this is too bad for parents. They used the double subject, "my daughter she," but they all say that. This mother says "children," and most of the parents I know would say "chilen."
- 13
(to children on tape) A very common one is what this child just said, "My mamma tooked her." And another one is "trainin wheels"; there is almost a complete omission of the g at the end of words. Their favorite word is "stuff" when they don't know the name of something. Do you think that tells us anything about vocabulary?
- (to parents on tape) I think there is a great deal of omission on the parent's part. They omit letters in words--beginning, middle and end, just as they did on this tape. They can't use pronouns correctly either.
- 14
(to children on tape) This child has lazy speech and has trouble with his beginning consonants. There is that word "stuff." I hear it from the children all day long for they just don't have enough words to use, I guess.
- (to parents on tape) Their dialect is so hard for me to understand. They say their letters in a completely different way--besides mixing up the letters themselves. Listen to that one mother; she says "fa" for the word "far." She would probably spell it right; she just says it differently than we do.
- 15
(to children on tape) The children have that southern "twang." You see, that is very prevalent around here, this same dialect. Sometimes it's very, very hard to understand them. They don't pronounce their n's very much. They don't know words. They talk with their hands--and you can't tape that. They take for granted that their hands are going to tell you what they mean.



Teacher
Interview

Teachers' reactions to tapes

- #
(to parents on tape) This mother's voice is as low as most of the voices of my mothers. It's as though if they can't be heard, they can't be blamed for making mistakes. If only they had a little confidence we might be able to teach them something about how to help their children. They first have to help themselves.
- 16
(to children on tape) The children have the same problems all over this area of the inner-city. They use pronouns incorrectly, "me" for "I." They don't know verb tense and they shorten many of the words they say by dropping off a letter or two. That isn't saying anything about their poor pronunciation of words.
- (to parents on tape) The parents are just plain strange to the school environment and certainly to teachers. Their English is poor and they know it. I would be cautious, too, if I had such a limited vocabulary as these parents know they have.
- 17
(to children on tape) Not only is this poor, immature speech of children but this is completely disadvantaged speech. I mean that the children have never heard better language; no wonder they speak the way they do. For example: "mamma tooked her," the word "stuff" which is supposed to stand for everything the child doesn't know by name.
- (to parents on tape) The mumble jumble of these parents is because they are afraid to speak up so that you would know they don't know good English. Even the words they do know are wrong. Just think of using, "she go," "my daughter she"; those are just a few of the things they say incorrectly.
- 18
(to children on tape) These children speak so low and mumble so much that I sometimes think they are talking to themselves. Yet in this case they seem to ask little questions, don't they? They surely don't know verbs or pronouns. They just seem to be in a hurry to be over with it. They can't describe things at all.
- (to parents on tape) These parents mumble the very same way. If I had any doubt if they influence the speech of their children, this would really convince me for they speak exactly alike.



Teacher
Interview

Teachers' reactions to tapes

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>#
19
(to children
on tapes)</p> | <p>The children in my class were just like these children. They talked very freely when they were talking about their toys, or their friends. The only trouble is they don't know enough words to really explain what they are thinking or feeling. The child here probably saw a cake or at least something being made at home, but she just couldn't talk about it in words.</p> |
| <p>(to parents
on tape)</p> | <p>This tape must have been made of the parents sometime after <u>Head Start</u> began because they sound at home in the school--even if their speech isn't too good. At least they are talking; they didn't when they first came to school with their children.</p> |
| <p>20
(to children
on tape)</p> | <p>This is just the kind of speech I hear all day long here in my school. The children seem to want to talk but it's a hard task for some of them because they just don't know the words to say. "<u>I'm gonna get me one</u>" shows in just that one sentence that their pronunciation, verb and pronoun understanding is not right.</p> |
| <p>(to parents
on tape)</p> | <p>You can see the carry-over here for the parent's English is as bad or worse than her child's. The parents themselves are groping for words; you can just hear them. There is a great similarity of parent and child speech on this tape.</p> |
| <p>21
(to children
on tape)</p> | <p>Yes, "<u>My mamma tooked her</u>" is the ordinary way a child from the inner-city would talk. They don't know the difference between present or past tense--or how to use the past tense. "<u>Got me a bike</u>" is the fast way to say something. They don't know pronouns either. They either put in two subjects right next to each other or they skip them altogether.</p> |
| <p>(to parents
on tape)</p> | <p>When I hear these parents talk, I'm more than ever convinced that the <u>Head Start</u> program is a worthwhile one. They certainly could not learn good language from parents such as these for their grammar is poor; you can't understand their pronunciation and their vocabulary is unbelievable.</p> |



Teacher
Interview

Teachers reactions to tapes

- #
- 22 (to children on tape) I think it's a good thing for children to get a socializing influence and this is what Head Start has done for these little ones. You can just hear how they are talking to each other--even if the grammar is bad.
- (to parents on tape) The poor mothers--you can tell they haven't been to school too much or know how to speak our language correctly. Yet, they seem to be able to speak to each other well, don't they?
- 23 (to children on tape) This first child is an example of all the wrong things to say. For example, "gonna," "gonna get me," the wrong use of the verbs, tense and the pronouns. They cut off all the endings of their words, too, which is very hard on the person trying to make out what they're saying.
- (to parents on tape) I've taught in two different kinds of schools. One in which I taught upper-middle class children and this school of the inner-city in which I taught disadvantaged children. I know why the little inner-city children have such problems with English; their parents do not have good grammar, pronunciation or adequate vocabulary either.
- 24 (to children on tape) These children are talking freely enough but they just don't know the words and how to say them--either in sound or usage, I think. The best thing to do with children like these is to give them another or a better way of saying something rather than constantly correcting them.
- (to parents on tape) The parents speaking here are making the same speech mistakes that my class of little children make all day long. They confuse verbs, pronouns and speak in a dialect I cannot understand.
- 25 (to children on tape) They do mispronounce an awful lot of words, don't they? I guess I forget sometimes for I've taught disadvantaged children so long that I've dropped to their level of speech. I hope I don't make those errors, cutting off the ends of words, running words together and so on, but I may even do that at times.

Teacher
Interview

Teachers' reactions to tapes

- #
(to parents on tape) Parents make the same grammatical errors as their children. Now that I've listened to both tapes, I'm sure the children get their speech errors from hearing their parents speak. I guess I haven't changed so much in my English or I wouldn't have noticed such glaring mistakes. My ears are just tuned to different dialects, I think.
- 26
(to children on tape) Oh, "My mamma tooked her" is a glaring mistake when we're listening to the tape, but actually this is not too unusual. I heard similar remarks hundreds of times during the years of teaching disadvantaged children. They have the language of the streets and grammar is the least thing that disturbs them--young or old.
- (to parents on tape) Do you see what I mean now? The parents we've just listened to are very careless about their speech, too. When they want to make a point they use facial expressions, their arms, hands or any other part of their body which will show pleasure or displeasure. The use of nouns and verbs is unimportant, and they seem to convey ideas to their own people.
- 27
(to children on tape) It is hard to understand these children on tape, but then it is just as bad in the classroom. They mumble their words so much and run on and on that it is almost impossible to understand what they say. I notice that they speak more clearly about their church on Sunday; they have little art lessons that they like, so maybe that's why they talk about it so much.
- (to parents on tape) Most of the parents of our children in this program are the same. They have good will but are almost illiterate, in my opinion. Only years of education and understanding will help these adults to help their children.

Teacher
Interview

Teachers' reactions to tapes

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>#
28
(to children
on tape)</p> | <p>Yes, that sounds just like our little ones. "Mamma she" and "tooked her" are very typical examples of the speech we listen to in this program and try to upgrade. I don't know how it's to be done, but an awareness of the situation should count for something.</p> |
| <p>(to parents
on tape)</p> | <p>Most of these parents never finished elementary school, I'm sure, for they have come up to Detroit when they were just children themselves. They married young and had a flock of children and were too busy to worry about how they spoke or how they affected others. Verbs, pronouns, endings of words are just a few of their problems.</p> |
| <p>29
(to children
on tape)</p> | <p>These children speak so poorly because they have not had the chance to learn the correct use of their language. That first little girl sounds as though she is talking to herself when she mumbling like that because she's probably doesn't have anyone at home that talks to her and draws her out.</p> |
| <p>(to parents
on tape)</p> | <p>Maybe what I say about the children could be said about these parents of theirs, too. They seem almost afraid of the words they are saying. I think they really know they are not speaking like others, the teachers in the school, for example.</p> |
| <p>30
(to children
on tape)</p> | <p>I know these children are grammatically wrong in their speech but I am encouraged to hear them talking at all, at least so freely. These little children come to us with almost no experience with oral English and we have to start from scratch. I can teach them if only they respond.</p> |
| <p>(to parents
on tape)</p> | <p>I don't think these parents are even aware of the fact that they are speaking so quickly and slurs slip in, too. The parents here are chopping off their words and so do their children.</p> |



Conclusions of Teachers' Reactions to Tapes.--In brief review we find these statements often volunteered by teachers when they evaluate the taped speech of the child and his parent:

speech is hard to understand
 children and parents sound just alike
 they both make the same grammatical errors
 they talk too quickly and mumble their words
 both the child and parent are afraid to
 speak in a new situation, especially in
 the school
 the speech problems of the child and the
 parents are foreign to the teacher who
 does not have these problems

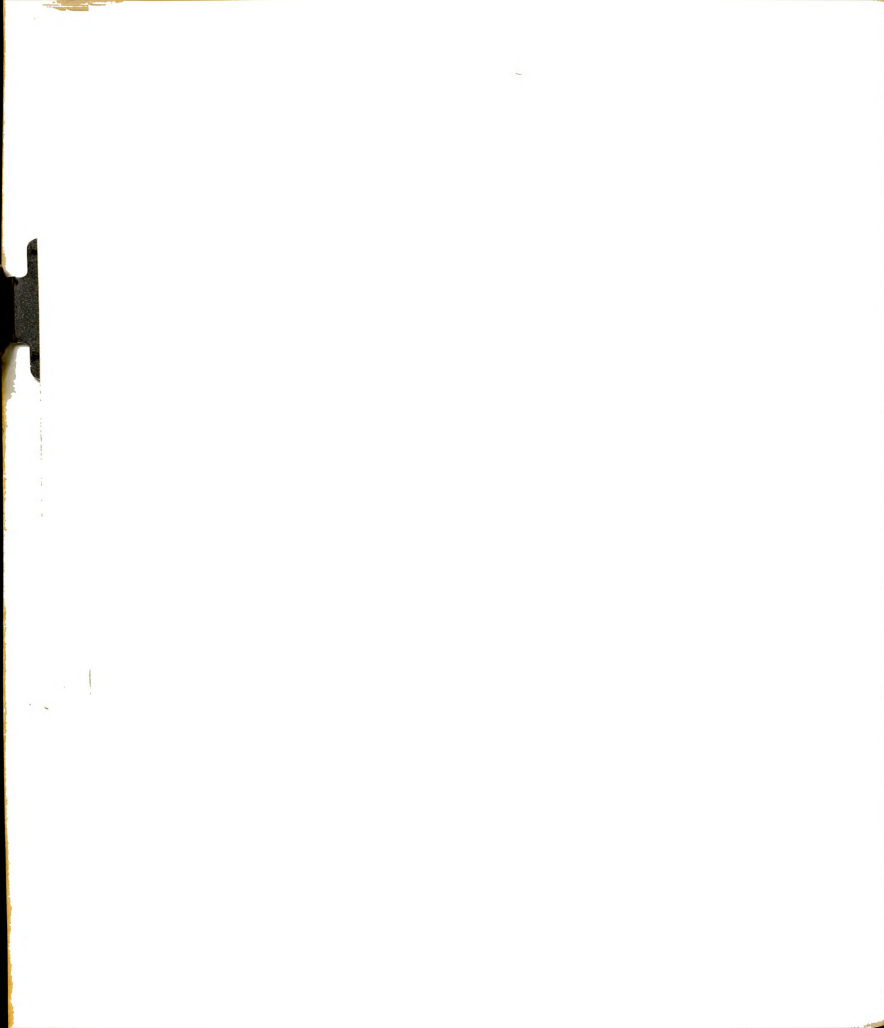
Teachers Characterize the Speech
 of the Disadvantaged

Finally, the interviews were closed by the interviewer who asked each of the teachers if she or he could characterize the speech of the disadvantaged. These were the simple replies they made:

Teachers

Comments

1. They don't talk much at all.
2. They slur words together.
3. Their trouble is just lazy speech.
4. These people cannot distinguish between sounds.
5. Pronunciation is the main speech problem they have.
6. Their problems are communication and expression.
7. Vocabulary is the biggest problem.
8. The problem is just simple communication.
9. Just getting them to talk is the biggest challenge.
10. They mumble their words.



TeacherComments

11. Their background is the biggest trouble.
12. The substitution of sounds is a concern.
13. Dialect is the problem with these children.
14. Just to get children to converse with each other is hard.
15. They talk so fast they stutter.
16. The major speech problem is pronouncing words.
17. The biggest problem is that the child learned to talk from hearing his parents talk.
18. The major problem besides their limited vocabulary is the dropping of endings.
19. They omit sounds at the beginning; they substitute sounds, and leave off sound endings.
20. Their pronunciation is bad.
21. They point at things rather than say words.
22. Their main ways of communicating are by movements of the arms and other gestures.
23. The biggest problem is the grammar of the language.
24. The misuse of the pronouns is the most obvious trouble.
25. The hardest thing is to express their thoughts in complete sentences.
26. A limited vocabulary is the biggest problem.
27. They need to know more and more words.
28. They speak so quickly they often stutter.
29. They mumble their words.
30. Their speech is just very careless and lazy.

Summary

Individually taped teacher-interviews of the teachers' concept of the problem is noted in the reactions to the questions proposed in this chapter. In summary, the teachers' answers are tabulated to the following questions:

1. Is it true that there is a difference between the language of the children and the teachers?

YES: 30

NO: 0

2. Is it true that there is a difference between the language of the parents and the teachers?

YES: 30

NO: 0

It was mentioned by two of the teachers that they noticed that a few of their parents were high school graduates and some attended college and that the language of these parents was of superior quality to other parents in the program. The implication here is that the teacher felt that these parents could communicate with the teachers on a higher level of speech due to the more formal education enjoyed by these parents.

3. Is it true that there is a difference between the language of the parents and their children?

YES: 0

NO: 30

The teachers also mentioned the influence of television, the neighborhood, their peers, the church and older brothers



and sisters on the speech of the pre-schoolers, but every teacher said she thought parents were a great influence on the child's language.

4. Is it true that the teachers feel that the language problems of children are due to their disadvantaged social status?

YES: 30

NO: 0

Every teacher mentioned that she felt that the disadvantaged social status of the children, and the parents as well, was the main cause for their language problems. A listening to a tape of child and parent language reinforced this belief and their estimate of the influence of parents on child speech.

5. Is it true that the teachers acknowledged that disadvantaged children do have a language system within their sub group language?

YES: 0

NO: 27

PERHAPS: 3

Three of the teachers (#11, 15 and 21) implied that there was some type of communication system the disadvantaged children use whereby they communicate with their families, friends, and neighborhood. This was not called a language system as such by any one of the teachers.

The teachers seemed to feel that the majority of the pre-schoolers have definite speech problems in the areas of

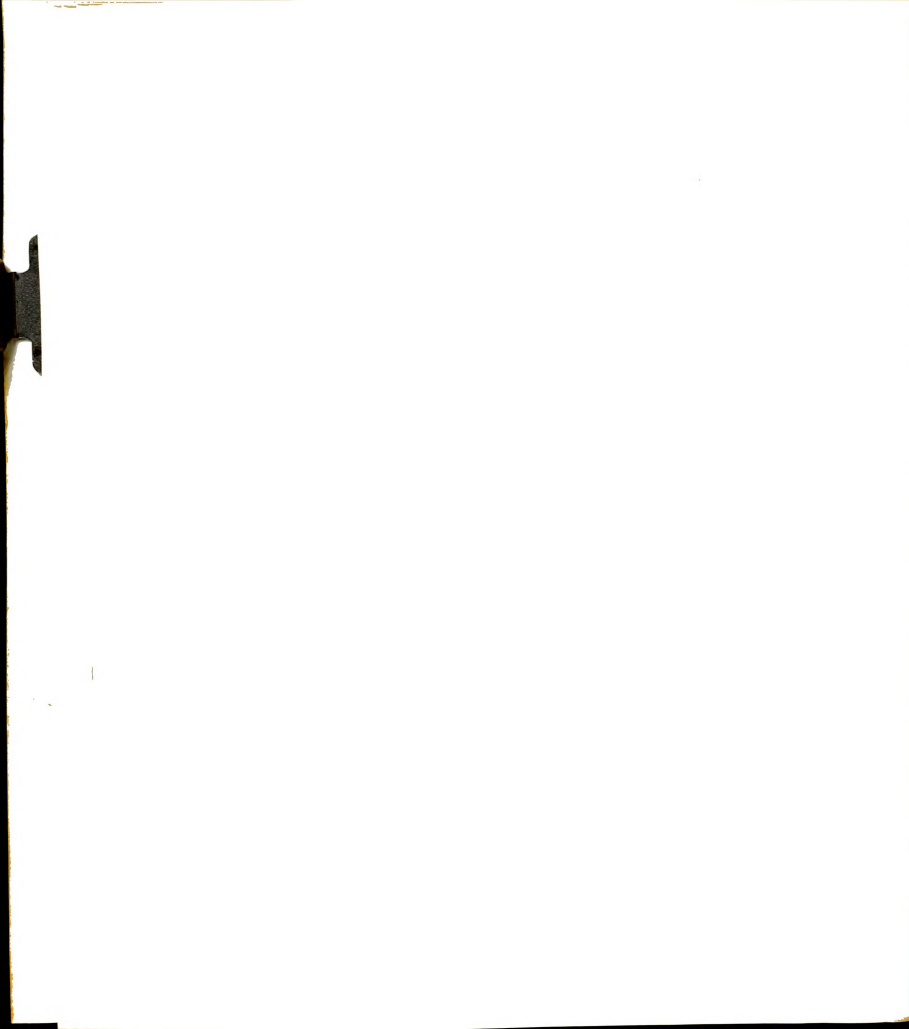


pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. In particular, pronunciation gave them the most concern. The teachers referred to their repeated use of phonic drills and word games in an effort to up-grade the child's pronunciation skills. This also helped the limited vocabulary that was considered a serious problem as well. The teachers used the phonic practice within the context of words, phrases and short sentences to insure language understanding and in an effort to help children identify sound differences.

6. Is there a way that teachers can instruct children in the acquisition of standard English skills?

This question was not asked directly of the thirty teachers interviewed, but all of them indicated that they felt that the Head Start program was a worthwhile experience for disadvantaged children who have been deprived of certain basic language experiences that the middle-class child normally enjoys. Some of the teachers said that they used word games, phonic drills and rhyming stories with the children to perfect their listening skills and to encourage oral discussion. An identification and description of the language problems and a proposed solution to the situation were sought by the teachers involved.

Chapter V presents an analysis of the Language Data and the Investigation in terms of the phonology, grammar and vocabulary of the pre-schooler, his parent and his teacher.



CHAPTER V

SOME INDICES OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION IN DETROIT

The speech of the informants of this investigation was tape recorded so that the language behavior of the pre-school child, his parent and his teacher could be described. The phonology, grammar and vocabulary of the participants was tabulated for individual and group study. In particular, the child informant was of first importance because of his status in terms of educational implication.

The Child's Language Behavior

In the search of the data and in line with the concern voiced by the teachers, as noted in Chapter IV, certain phonological indices were suggested. The tabulation of this data produced a social stratification¹ of language performance in the various areas of speech study.

Some Aspects of the Child's Phonological System

To study the speech behavior of the 156 children informants in the investigation each child was given a

¹Stratification means the separation of sets of characteristics into distinct levels; a second-order structure. See Labov, The Social Stratification of English in New York City (Washington, D. C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1966), p. 581.



number 1 to 156; beginning with 1, every third child was chosen for the sample up to 50 children, all of whom were included in this sample. The following phonological occurrences were noted:

The Deletion of the Stop Consonant /t/.--Of the 93 potential occurrences of final /t/ in the speech of Head Start children, there were 74 deletions and 19 realized occurrences. This is a 79% deletion of /t/ and 21% realized occurrences.

The following are examples of these deletions:

don't	9 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per 7 informants, 2 per 2 informants.
faint	1 occurrence
thought	1 occurrence
coat	2 occurrences 1 per informant
carrot	5 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
eight	8 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
oat	1 occurrence
hurt	1 occurrence
hot	9 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
right	1 occurrence
toothpaste	1 occurrence
toast	1 occurrence
basket	1 occurrence



dessert	1 occurrence
can't	1 occurrence
twist	1 occurrence
west	1 occurrence
light	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
cat	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
fort	1 occurrence
peanut	1 occurrence
point	1 occurrence
out	1 occurrence
paint	1 occurrence
<u>ate</u>	1 occurrence
<u>elephant</u>	2 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
<u>chocolate</u>	1 occurrence
<u>white</u>	7 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
<u>hot</u> (dog)	1 occurrence
heart	1 occurrence
<u>breakfast</u>	1 occurrence

The Head Start children in this investigation were pre-kindergarten age, approximately 5 years of age. The children in the speech sample of the Detroit Dialect Study were ages 9 to 12. The speech data of the language of older children in this same geographical and socio-economic group are the following: children from 9 to 12 years of age,



in the language research of the Detroit Dialect Study, delete the stop consonant /t/ in the final position 46% of the time, modify the final /t/ to a glottal² stop 28% of the time, and realized the final /t/ stop 26% of the time.³

It must be said here that the speech sample of the Head Start children counted potential deletions of the final stop consonant /t/ and the realized occurrences of the deletions; the Detroit Dialect Study considered the glottal stops in addition.⁴ In addition, in the larger investigation of the speech of Detroit, the Detroit Dialect Study discovered that all deletions of the stop consonant /t/ in the final position occurred before fronted vowels, such as in this example of lenis articulation:

There is a mosquito; hit it.⁵

Though there is little research published in the area of the stop consonant /t/ in the medial position, this study attempted to note examples of this in the speech of Head Start children. Of the 171 potential occurrences of

² A glottal stop is produced when the vocal chords or folds are brought together sufficiently to obstruct the passage of air, but not to produce voice. See H. A. Gleason, Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston Company, 1955), p. 21.

³ David Rickard (staff member of the Detroit Dialect Study), "A Progress Report of the Detroit Dialect Study" (an unpublished master's thesis, "Sociological Correlation of the Allophonic Variations of Alveolar Stops in the Speech of Highland Park School Children," Michigan State University, 1967).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

medial /t/ in the speech of these children, there were 35 deletions and 136 realized occurrences. This is a 20% deletion of medial /t/ and 80% realized occurrences.

The following are examples of these deletions:

1. Simple /t/ deletion:

a. /t/ → ∅ before vowel, as in

potato <u>e</u> s	2 occurrences of the deletion 1 per informant
Santa	1 occurrence
wa <u>t</u> er	5 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
bu <u>t</u> ter	2 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
bu <u>t</u> terfly	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
co <u>t</u> ton	1 occurrence
skate <u>s</u>	1 occurrence

b. /t/ → ∅ before b:

footba <u>l</u>	2 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
-----------------	---

c. /t/ → ∅ before l:

ba <u>tt</u> le	1 occurrence
-----------------	--------------

2. /t/ deletion in consonant clusters:

a. /nt/ → /n/, as in:

paint <u>nt</u> g	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
Flint <u>nt</u> stones-TV	1 occurrence
pa <u>nt</u> s	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant

b. /rt/ → /r/, as in:

turt <u>l</u> e	1 occurrence
short <u>s</u>	1 occurrence
dirty <u>ng</u>	1 occurrence

c. /st/ → /s/, as in:

sist <u>e</u> r	1 occurrence
must <u>a</u> rd	4 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
st <u>o</u> re	1 occurrence

d. /kt/ → /k/, as in:

doct <u>o</u> r	1 occurrence
-----------------	--------------

On the basis of final stop consonant /t/ evidence, it can be predicted that a similar phonemic deletion might occur in the instance of the medial position /t/, but the task is a difficult one to prove conclusively because of the slurred situation in the speech.

The Deletion of the Stop Consonant /d/.--Of the 102 potential occurrences of final /d/ in the speech of Head Start children, there were 52 deletions and 50 realized occurrences. This is a 50.8% deletion of /d/ and 49.2% realized occurrences.

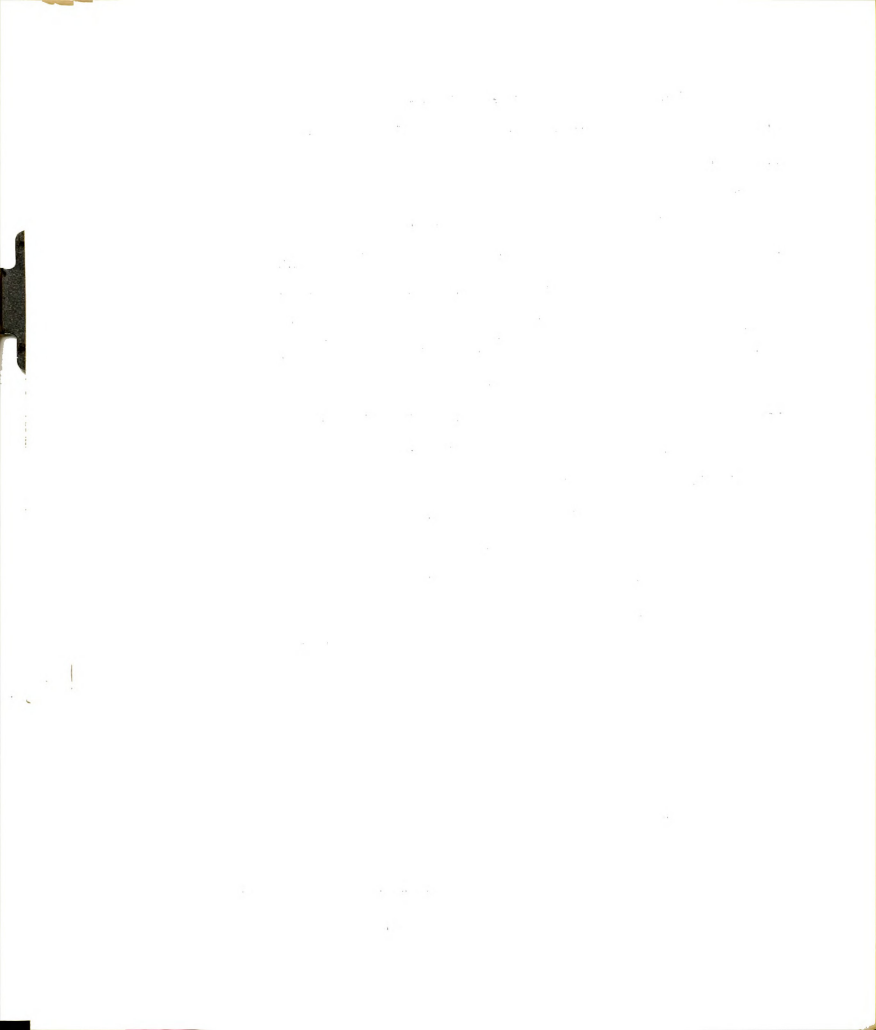
The following are examples of these deletions:

bird	6 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
red	15 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
playground	2 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant



found	1 occurrence
Donald <u>d</u> (Duck)	1 occurrence
bed	2 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
cold	5 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
old	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
head	1 occurrence
food	4 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
salad	1 occurrence
mustard	2 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
friend	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
wood	1 occurrence
dad	1 occurrence
bad	2 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
good	1 occurrence
record	1 occurrence

According to the data of the Detroit Dialect Study, children ages 9 to 12 in the lower socio-economic class delete the stop consonant simple /d/ in the final position if the next word has a consonant in the initial position. Twenty-four per cent of all final /d/'s are substituted with /t/, in the speech of the lower socio-economic class and only in 5% of all final /d/'s in the speech of the upper socio-economic group. The past tense [D₁] whether



it is realized as /t/ or /d/ phonemically as in walked, is deleted by the disadvantaged 30% before vowels, 36% before consonants, and substituted for 3% before vowels and 9% before consonants.⁶

Though there is little research published in the area of the stop consonant /d/ in the medial position, this study attempted to note examples of this in the speech of Head Start children. Of the 58 potential occurrences of medial /d/ in the speech of these children, there were 19 deletions and 39 realized occurrences. This is a 33% deletion of medial /d/ and 67% realized occurrences.

The following are examples of these deletions:

1. Simple /d/ deletion:

/d/ → ∅ before vowel, as in:

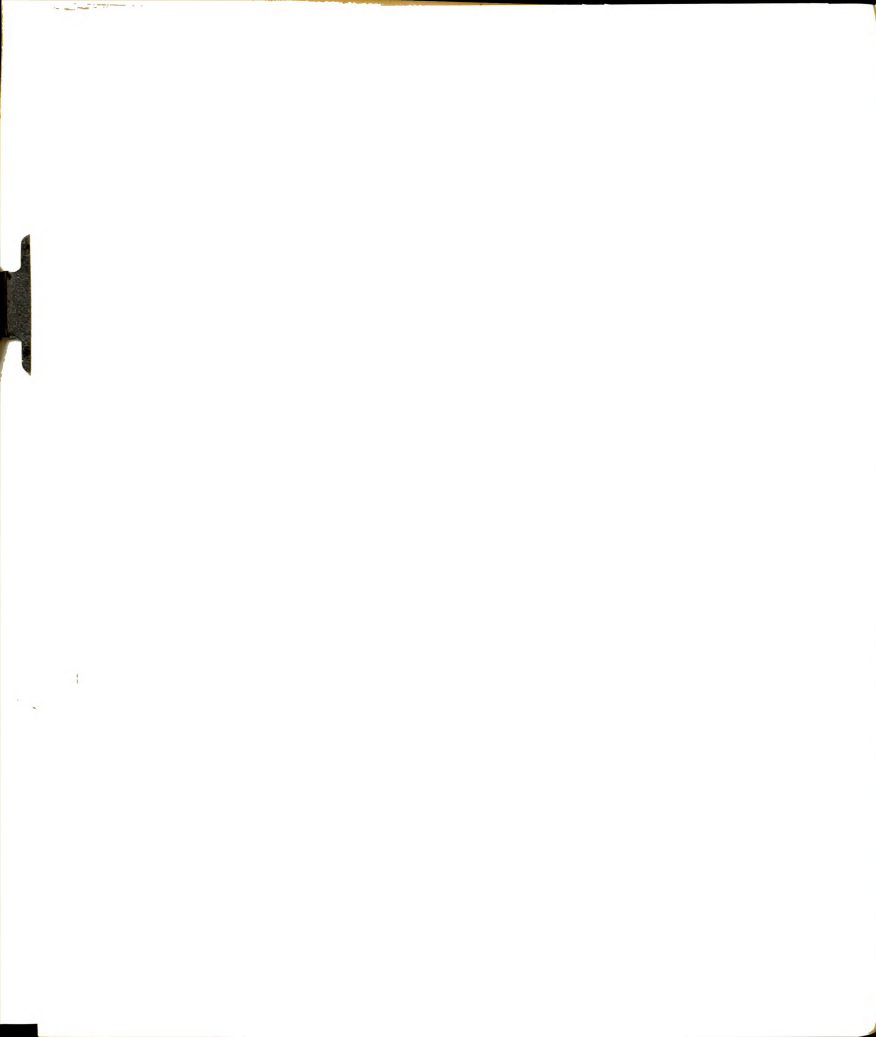
<u>model</u>	1 occurrence
<u>sidewalk</u>	1 occurrence
<u>nobody</u>	1 occurrence
<u>candy</u>	2 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
<u>Cadillac</u>	1 occurrence

2. /d/ deletion in two consonant clusters:

a. /nd/ → /d/, as in:

<u>friends</u>	1 occurrence
<u>sandwich</u>	7 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
<u>Monday</u>	1 occurrence

⁶Ibid.



- b. /db/ → /b/, as in:
 goodu-bye 1 occurrence
- c. /dm/ → /m/, as in:
 Godmother 1 occurrence
- 3. /d/ deletion in three consonant clusters:
 - a. /ldr/ → /l/, as in:
 childuren 1 occurrence
 - b. /ndm/ → /l/, as in:
 granduma 1 occurrence

According to the findings of the Detroit Dialect Study, /d/ cluster is deleted in the consonant cluster in the speech of the disadvantaged in 34% of the potential occurrences, and is glottalized or the /t/ consonant is used in substitution 4% of the potential occurrences in the speech of the lower socio-economic class.⁷

As in the studies of Labov in his work with the disadvantaged of New York City, the frequent occurrences of /t/ and /d/ consonant stop deletion might be expected.

The same consonant stops were identified in the Detroit Dialect Study as well:

It is a general characteristic of the lower socio-economic class that there is at least lenis (lightly articulated) pronunciation for most consonants of all kinds so that you get complete deletion of

⁷Ibid.



stops, nasal consonants and fricatives.⁸ In many cases these are grammatical markers such as the -t, -d, and ng, which are phonologically conditioned not grammatically. Lenis pronunciation has worked its way down to deletion.⁹

The Substitution of /n/ for /ŋ/.--Of the 81 potential occurrences of /ŋ/ in the speech of Head Start children, there was 66 substitutions and 15 realized occurrences. This is an 83% substitution and 17% occurrences in which /ŋ/ was realized.

The following are examples of these deletions:

1. -ing morpheme:

running	2 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
skating	6 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
batting	2 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
cooking	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
riding	2 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
climbing	2 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
shopping	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
falling	1 occurrence
looking	1 occurrence

⁸ A fricative is a narrowly constructed consonant characterized by a continuous hissing or scraping noise, produced by turbulent motion induced in the air stream; the initial consonants of fin, vim, etc., and medial consonant of pleasure. See Labov, The Social Stratification of English in New York City (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1966), p. 579.

⁹ William Riley (staff member of the Detroit Dialect Study), "Phonological Indices of Social Stratification" (unpublished master's thesis, Michigan State University, 1967).



going	5 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
talking	2 occurrences of the deletion 1 per informant
playing	2 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
doing	1 occurrence
sitting	1 occurrence
buying	1 occurrence
waving	1 occurrence
singing	2 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
happening	1 occurrence
juggling	1 occurrence
reading	1 occurrence
painting	2 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
making	1 occurrence
having	1 occurrence
fishing	1 occurrence
catching	1 occurrence
swimming	1 occurrence
bathing	1 occurrence
flying	1 occurrence
standing	1 occurrence
taking	1 occurrence
laying	1 occurrence
placing	1 occurrence
stopping	1 occurrence

doing	1 occurrence
getting	1 occurrence
barbecuing	6 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant

2. monomorphemic -ing:

nothing	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
something	1 occurrence

In most speech, nasal consonants are deleted at times; this is not necessarily a social marker, according to the findings of the Detroit Dialect Study. The deletion of the /m/ occurs far less frequently; only lower class socio-economic groups have this nasal consonant as a speech marker, as in them or home.

Some Aspects of the Child's
Grammar System

Specific items of grammatical usage occurred frequently to thus form an obvious speech pattern among the pre-school informants.

The "s" inflection.---Three kinds of data are noted here:

1. Noun plurals:

he didn't have no food <u>s</u>	1 occurrence
he done broke his ankle <u>s</u> (ankles-meaning one)	1 occurrence

2. Verb 3rd singular:

my mamma got <u>s</u>	1 occurrence
she say_ it	1 occurrence

I's scared	1 occurrence
my sister got runs over	1 occurrence
you know whats this	1 occurrence
anything woulda's happened to me	1 occurrence
my army mens gots stolen	1 occurrence
that_ what my fathor do's	1 occurrence
he see_ it	1 occurrence

3. Pronominal forms:

playing by his self	1 occurrence
my's cousins	1 occurrence

Pronoun Redundancy Following the Subject of the

Clause--In a count of the instances of pronoun redundancy, it was noted that all six examples of this aspect of the child's grammar system included all the potential occurrences; the child only used this form when referring to his family and when the personal possessive adjective was used before the subject. Examples of this aspect of the child's grammar system are as follows:

1. my cousin <u>she</u> came	1 occurrence
2. my sister <u>she</u> wants	1 occurrence
3. my mother <u>she</u> goes	1 occurrence
4. our baby <u>he</u> cries	1 occurrence
5. my brother <u>he</u> tries	1 occurrence
6. my mamma <u>she</u> buys	1 occurrence



The often repeated use of the pronoun after the familiar name seemed to give the speaker the assurance that in this way the listener would be sure to understand the communication; the reinforcement was an attempt to assure this happening, in the opinion of the investigator.

The Use of the Double Negative.--Of the 39 potential occurrences of double negative in the speech of Head Start children, there were 23 examples of its use and 16 realized occurrences. This is an example of use of the double negative among 58% of the informants in contrast to 42% of the informants who did not use this form.

Examples of the use of the double negative in the speech of the children are as follows (1 occurrence per 1 informant is the frequency count):

1. he doesn't have no pockets
2. we don't have no more
3. that ain't no puppy
4. that ain't no dog
5. he didn't say nothing
6. we don't have no grits
7. I don't got me none
8. there ain't no tractors
9. they didn't bake no cake
10. I don't have no skates
11. Mamma don't buy me none
12. We don't have no corn flakes
13. I don't need no help



14. I didn't have no birthday.
15. don't run no more
16. he ain't gonna do no work
17. he didn't have no foods
18. I ain't goin' to do nothing
19. he ain't no good
20. I ain't got no shoes on
21. I ain't goin' put his shoes no where
22. Mamma ain't goin' buy me no skates
23. they don't got no more money

The Detroit Dialect Study investigated this aspect of the child's grammar in the speech of disadvantaged children 10 to 12 years of age. The totals of actual double negation in relation to potential occurrences were given for each informant, arranged in the order of descending social rank. The following percentages were given, beginning with the lower socio-economic (or disadvantaged) children to the highest socio-economic group of children in the sample:

Actual occurrences:

55.0% Lower socio-economic group

43.5%

6.9%

0 % Highest socio-economic group¹⁰

¹⁰Walter A. Wolfram (staff member of the Detroit Dialect Study), "Multiple Negation and Social Stratification" (unpublished progress report of the Detroit Dialect Study, July, 1967).



The frequent use of the double negative is a mark of the less academically educated member of the society, a member of the lower socio-economic class, whose lack of academic experience allows him the freedom of grammatical usage, unhampered by rules of the language. It is not surprising, then, how this less language-restricted social class uses the double negative freely in oral communication.

The "done" Perfective Auxiliary.--The following uses of done were noted in the speech of the Head Start children:

1. Deletion of 3rd singular "s" inflection

The following uses of done were noted in the speech of the Head Start children (1 occurrence per 1 informant):

that's what my father do
my mamma do that

2. Auxiliary

my brother done gone
he done got a Cadillac
I done go to the other yard
he done take his shoes off
Mamma done gone for a barbecue
I done had corn flakes
I done seen a cow
I done seen a horse
she done seen a pig
he done sat down



Vocabulary of the Child

As can be noted in the teachers' concept of the language problems of the disadvantaged pre-schooler (see Chapter IV), the vocabulary of this child is extremely limited, even in comparison with his peer group, at the middle-class social level.

Although admittedly a representative study of the language problems of the informants rather than an exhaustive one, it is obvious to the investigator that the vocabulary of the participants in the study is different. The difference lies in lexical items just as is any importation from any other part of the country, and many of the informants are natives of the Southeastern region of the United States (see Chapter III for biographical data of the informants). There are no immediately striking differences among the people in the sample. All persons can describe and narrate that which needs description and narration, in terms of their age group and academic experience. It has been said that some of the best language innovators are found in the lower socio-economic level of the population for they are not literarily restricted.

Language Data of the Parents

One of the concerns of this study was the language of the pre-schooler's parent. The mother of the child in the Head Start project was of prime interest because of the usual closeness of the mother and a child of pre-kindergarten



age. Because of this, the mother served as a language informant and her speech was recorded for descriptive study of her phonology, grammar and vocabulary. In a very few cases the father of the family served as the parent-informant, but these were rare. For the manner of parent-selection, see page 116 of this chapter for parents were chosen for the sample just as their children were.

Some Aspects of the Parents' Phonological System

The Deletion of the Stop Consonant /t/.--Of the 141 potential occurrences of final /t/ in the speech of the Head Start parents, there were 113 deletions and 28 realized occurrences. This is an 80% deletion of /t/ and 20% realized occurrences. The following are examples of the parents' speech:

couldn't	8 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
start	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
important	4 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
dentist	2 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
just	2 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
won't	1 occurrence
quite	1 occurrence
don't	7 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
met	1 occurrence
different	4 occurrence of the deletion; 1 per informant



cutest	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
can't	6 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
breakfast	4 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
paint	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
most	5 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
eight	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
benefit	1 occurrence
hot	5 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
right	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
toast	2 occurrences of the deletion; the same informant
set	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
taste	2 occurrences of the deletion; the same informant
parent	8 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
select	2 occurrences of the deletion; the same informant
carrot	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
cat	2 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
saint	3 occurrences of the deletion; the same informant
elephant	4 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
west	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant

east	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
<u>white</u>	2 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
<u>bite</u>	1 occurrence
tint	3 occurrences of the deletion; the same informant
must	4 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
let	2 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant

The Detroit Dialect Study found that the adults from the lower socio-economic level deleted final /t/ 62% of the time when followed by a consonant; they glottalized the final /t/ 31% of the time, and in only 9% of the cases are the final /t/'s realized occurrences.¹¹

Of the 137 potential occurrences of medial /t/ in the speech of the Head Start parents, there were 42 deletions and 95 realized occurrences. This is 31% deletions of the medial /t/ and 69% realized occurrences.

1. Simple /t/ deletion:

a. /t/ + Ø before vowel, as in:

yesterday	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
<u>letter</u>	4 occurrences of the deletion; 2 per 2 informants
masterpiece	1 occurrence
interested	5 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant

¹⁰Rickard, op. cit.

stars 2 occurrences of the deletion;
the same informant

poverty 3 occurrences of the deletion;
1 per informant

/t/ → ∅ before m, as in:

resentment 1 occurrence

/t/ → ∅ before l, as in:

little 4 occurrences of the deletion;
1 per informant

2. /t/ deletion in consonant clusters:

/nt/ → /n/, as in:

fainting 3 occurrences of the deletion;
1 per informant

painting 2 occurrences of the deletion;
1 per informant

/st/ → /s/, as in:

mister 4 occurrences of the deletion;
1 per informant

mustard 7 occurrences of the deletion;
1 per informant

sister 3 occurrences of the deletion;
1 per informant

The Deletion of the Stop Consonant /d/.--Of the 138 potential occurrences of final /d/ stop consonant in the speech of the Head Start parents, there were 84 deletions and 94 realized occurrences. This is a 61% deletion of /d/ and 39% realized occurrences. The following examples are from the parents' speech:

crippled	1 occurrence
blind	1 occurrence
find	4 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
cried	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
enjoyed	7 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
scared	9 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
helped	11 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
pretend	1 occurrence
did	2 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
attend	1 occurrence
remind	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
forward	4 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
robbed	5 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
bed	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
tired	1 occurrence
child	4 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
dread	1 occurrence
kind	1 occurrence
friend	1 occurrence
<u>ride</u>	1 occurrence
asked	10 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant

respond	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
changed	7 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant

As has been said, the Detroit Dialect Study found that with both child and adult speech of the disadvantaged lower socio-economic group the final stop consonant /d/ is often substituted with the stop consonant /t/.

Of the potential occurrences of medial position /d/, there were found to be 66 in this particular speech of the adult. There were 26 deletions and 40 realized occurrences. This is 39% and 61% realized occurrences.

1. Simple /d/ deletion:

a. /d/ → Ø before vowel, as in:

bol <u>d</u> er	1 occurrence
kind <u>er</u> garten	8 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
every <u>b</u> ody	1 occurrence
read <u>ing</u>	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
rid <u>e</u> s	1 occurrence
med <u>i</u> cal	1 occurrence
read <u>y</u>	1 occurrence
old <u>e</u> r	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant

b. /d/ → Ø before l, as in:

bundle	1 occurrence
--------	--------------

2. /d/ in consonant clusters:

a. /nd/ → /n/, as in:

friends	1 occurrence
---------	--------------

wonderful	1 occurrence
-----------	--------------

b. /dr/ → /r/, as in:

bedrooms	1 occurrence
----------	--------------

c. /ds/ → /s/, as in:

Edsel	1 occurrence
-------	--------------

d. /ldr/ → /l/, as in:

children	2 occurrences of the deletion;
	1 per informant

The Substitution of /n/ for /ŋ/.--Of the 61 potential occurrences of /ŋ/ in -ing morpheme of the speech of Head Start children, there were 48 substitutions of the /n/ for /ŋ/ and 13 realized occurrences. This is 79% substitution of /n/ for /ŋ/ and 21% occurrences of realized /ŋ/. The following are examples found in the parents' speech:

painting	2 occurrences of the deletion;
	1 per informant

singing	2 occurrences of the deletion;
	1 per informant

counting	4 occurrences of the deletion;
	1 per informant

drawing	2 occurrences of the deletion;
	1 per informant

complaining	1 occurrence
-------------	--------------

babying	1 occurrence
---------	--------------

telling	2 occurrences of the deletion;
	1 per informant



picking	2 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
talking	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
showing	1 occurrence
morning	2 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
fighting	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
skating	4 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
going	2 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
ending	1 occurrence
coloring	1 occurrence
eating	6 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
coming	2 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
being	1 occurrence
making	1 occurrence
wearing	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
asking	1 occurrence
playing	1 occurrence

As with the children, the Detroit Dialect Study found that the deletion of /y/ is not necessarily a social marker and occurs in the speech of all groups at times.

Some Aspects of the Parents'
Grammatical System

Specific items of grammatical usage occurred frequently to thus form an obvious speech pattern among the parents of pre-school informants.

The "s" Inflection.--

1. Noun plurals:

I go everydays 1 occurrence

2. Verb 3rd singular:

my child enjoy_s it 1 occurrence

I likes books 1 occurrence

I tells him 1 occurrence

he say_s 1 occurrence

they gots the
same teacher 1 occurrence

makes sure that
I reads it 1 occurrence

I says 1 occurrence

he say_s no 1 occurrence

he tell_s me 1 occurrence

teacher get_s mad 1 occurrence

she see_s them 1 occurrence

she do_s it 1 occurrence

what teacher say_s 1 occurrence

people talks 1 occurrence

I can works 1 occurrence

I starts 1 occurrence

she like_s it 1 occurrence

she say_ 4 occurrences of the deletion;
 1 per informant

he say_ 7 occurrences of the deletion;
 1 per informant

Pronoun Redundancy Following the Subject of the Clause.--In a count of the instances of pronoun redundancy, it was noted that all seven examples of this aspect of the parent's speech included all the potential occurrences; the parent used this form when referring to his family and when the personal possessive adjective or proper noun was used before the redundancy. Examples of this aspect of grammar are as follows:

the teacher she says
my kids they go
Carolyn she is five
my daughter she cried
my mother she says
my little girl she
my son he is happy

The Use of the Double Negative.--According to the Detroit Dialect Study, the double negative is a distinctively social marker in grammar:

In the first place, there is one group of speakers for whom the "multiple negative realizations" are always absent. The chart indicates that these speakers consistently evidence higher social rankings (i.e., lower social index scores) than those speakers who use the multiple negative.¹²

¹²Wolfram, op. cit.



The Detroit Dialect Study found that the percentage of double negatives were found in these percentages among their adult informants:

74.6% Lowest socio-economic group of adults
 (of all potential occurrences)
 35.2%
 19.1%
 0 % Highest socio-economic group of adults

This was found to be true, too, in the class of this study of adults, parents of the disadvantaged pre-schoolers: 78% of the adults in the sample used the double negative at least once as in contrast to 22% who did not.

The "done" Perfective Auxiliary.--The following uses of done were noted in the speech of the Head Start children:

he done it	3 occurrences of the deletion; 1 per informant
I done it before	1 occurrence
she do it	1 occurrence
Carolyn done it	1 occurrence

Vocabulary of the Parent

It must be said of the parent as it was said of the child; many of the parents with admittedly very little academic experience or travel experience throughout their lives have extremely limited vocabularies. Many of the questions proposed by the teacher or Interviewer were

answered by one word answers and many of these answers were either "yes" or "no," or words of a simple nature.

Language of the Teacher

The language of the teacher was tape recorded as was that of the other two informants, however, the results were not as fruitful. Whereas the pre-schooler and his parent were not as standard in the use of language as was the teacher, the pre-schooler and parent speech was of a casual nature. The teacher was much more on guard with the use of her language. It was noted that the teachers' speech, on the whole, was a careful and guarded language. The vocabulary was of an extended type, as one might expect. The grammar was traditionally correct, as a rule. The phonology was something else, however. As can be noted, a number of the teachers were not native Detroiters and had the regional phonology of their birthplaces (see Chapter III for the biographical data of the teacher-informants).

Summary

1. The teachers' concepts of the language problems of the children were correct in some instances and incorrect in others. They identified the deletion of the final consonant stops /d/ and /t/ correctly.
2. The deletion of the nasal consonants /ng/ was also identified as part of the phonology of the disadvantaged child in Head Start. This is a true identification,

however, it was not understood that in most speech nasal consonants are deleted at times and that this deletion is not considered a social class marker.

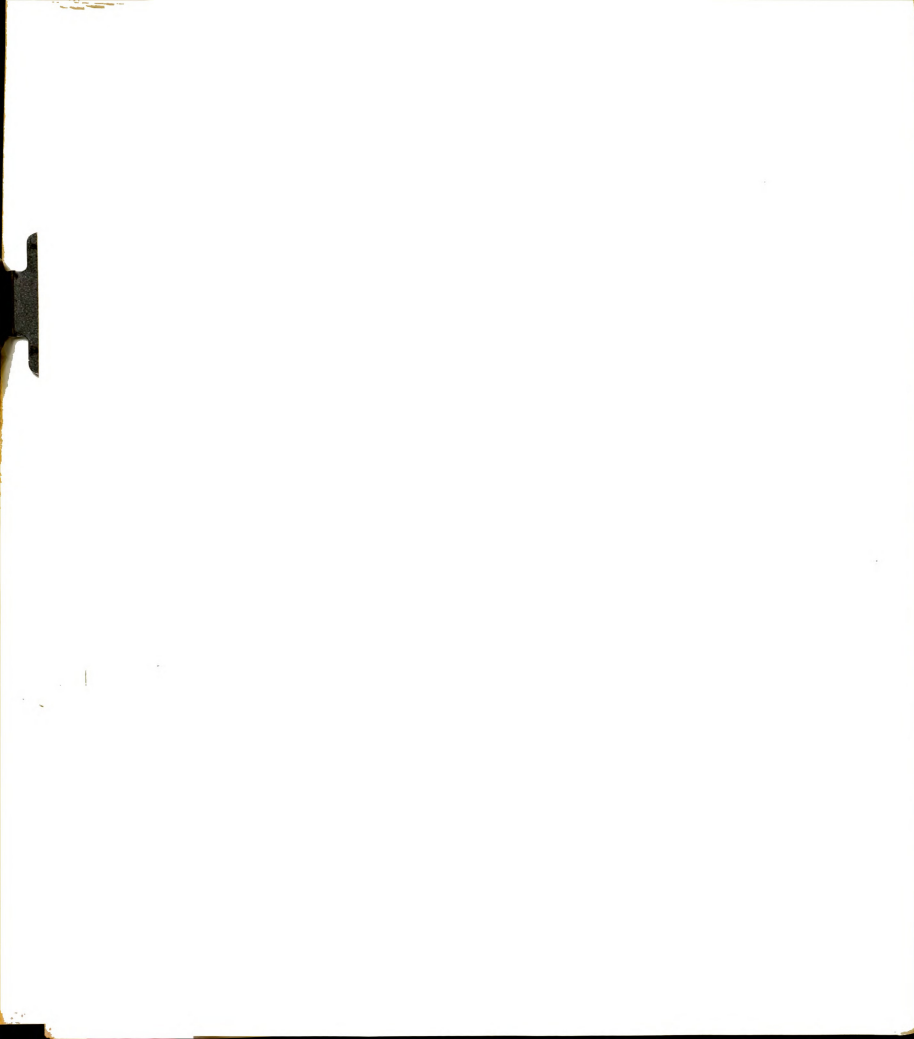
3. The grammatical identification of the use of the past participle "seen" for the simple present tense form of "see," or the use of the participle without the auxiliary, was made by many teachers. This may be a phonological problem rather than a grammatical one. The only positive way one could be sure would be if the auxiliary were used in its complete rather than contracted form, i.e., "I have seen him."

4. Vocabulary was of major concern to the teacher yet no mention was made that this is an importation from another region of the country and is not in and of itself good or bad for that reason. Vocabulary differences are in degree. For example: the word "grits" is used by persons of various races and ethnic backgrounds; it is a word imported from the South of the United States.

5. The words of the language are the items that seem to bother teachers most, but there are other aspects of language as important or more important for educational purposes.

Structural things are the really crucial problems of language, not the most obvious problems which are the words themselves. There is a folksy feeling that lexicon is language, but that is just one facet of the more complex study.¹³

¹³Riley, op. cit.



6. It is important to know that social classes determine language. Speech is determined by the social community of which the individual is a member, not the race or ethnic group in which he is born, as proven in the studies of Labov.¹⁴

Chapter VI discusses the proposal that a standard English be taught to the child, to accompany the dialect that he uses easily with his peers. Bilingualism, it is suggested, will permit the child to retain his natural position in the family and peer group which speaks the sub-group language, while equipping him to meet the demands of a society which accepts standard speech as that which the educated man speaks with ease and confidence. This chapter considers the evidence of language behavior in terms of the actual data of the investigation and the teachers' concepts of the language problem. Recommendations include suggestions to the teacher who would be expected to remedy language differences. These include proposals for pre-service and in-service training of teachers and curriculum revision in terms of the needs of children.

¹⁴ Labov, op. cit.



CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This investigation studies the question of the language differences which exist in the speech of the pre-school child in Head Start, his parent and his teacher. The project involved the taping of the speech of these three types of informants in a first interview in the school. Some aspects of the informants' language behavior were analyzed and described in this manner. The description of this speech is discussed in detail in Chapter V.

A second interview was conducted with a sample of the teachers who served as informants in the first interview as well. The purpose of the second interview was to determine the teachers' concepts of the language problems of the pre-schoolers and their parents. Their reactions to the speech of the children and their parents, both from their personal classroom experiences and from listening to a tape of the children and their parents, have been described in Chapter IV.

How Pre-School Children in Head Start and Their
Parents Differ in Some Aspects of Language
Behavior and the Teachers' Concepts of
the Problem

The language data of this investigation suggest that there are differences in the language behavior of the informants. Some of these differences and the teachers' concepts of the problem, both before and after she had listened to the taped speech, are shown on the following page.

It must be said that the teachers were not specific about their comments concerning the pronunciation of the children and their parents, but all of the teachers acknowledged in some way that there was definitely a pronunciation problem in the speech of the disadvantaged pre-schooler. Even after listening to a tape of child and parent speech, which included some aspects of the phonological (and grammatical) system of the informants, very little comment of a specific nature was added to the data already known of the teacher's concept of the informants' speech. The implications of this data are discussed later in this chapter.

Data of this investigation proved, too, that the teacher was correct in her estimate of the parent's speech problem being similar to that of the child. The very young child, such as the pre-schooler in the Head Start program, apparently has not had the time to have had the peer influence on his language in a phonological way. Instead, the evidence indicates similar deletions in the phonological patterns presented in this chapter.

SOME ASPECTS OF THE PHONOLOGICAL SYSTEM

In the Child's Speech	In the Parent's Speech	In the Teacher's Initial Concept	The Teacher's Perceptions After Tape
Deletion of the stop consonant /t/: In final phonological position			
Potential occurrences=93	Potential occurrences=141	(In terms of Child-Speech) Teacher #6: "They leave off endings; the d's and t's give them trouble." Teacher #24: These children have trouble with 'ing, -d, and -t." The remaining 28 teachers did not mention the stop consonant /t/ in any way. Eleven of the 28 made general statements about these children "cutting off" or "leaving off sound endings. These teachers were: numbers 2, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 22, and 30. The seventeen other teachers did not mention deletion of final /t/.	(Examples of /t/-final deletion--on tape of speech in these words: that and got) Teacher #23: "They cut off all the endings of their words." Teacher #25: "Those errors . . . cutting off the ends of words." Only these 2 teachers said anything about the "cutting off of words"; none of the other teachers mentioned deletion of sounds, and these two teachers did not mention specific sounds or what they meant by "cutting off words or sounds."
Deletions = 74	Deletions = 113		
Realized occurrences=19	Realized occurrences=23		
this is a	this is a		
Deletion of = 79%	Deletion of = 80%		
and of	and of		
Realized occurrences=21%	Realized occurrences=20%	(In terms of Parent-speech) Teacher #17: "They mispronounce the d's and t's." (But she did not say in which position.) #22 and #24 generalized; the other 27 teachers made no remark about this deletion.	
Deletion of stop consonant /t/: In medial position			
Potential occurrences=171	Potential occurrences=137	None of the teachers in the sample noted the deletion of /t/ in the medial position other than to make remarks such as: "they slur . . ."; "just lazy speech"; "they mumble"; "substitution of sounds is a concern"; "they talk so fast they stutter"; "the major speech problem is pronouncing words."	(Examples of /t/-medial deletion--on tape of child-speech in these words: sister and yesterday) None of the 30 teachers in the sample mentioned the medial deletion of /t/ in the speech of the children after listening to a tape of child speech in which there were two deletions. (Example of /t/-medial deletion--on tape of parent-speech in the word: kindergarten.) Teacher #13: "They omit letters in words--beginning, middle and end. . ."; 29 others mentioned nothing about the deletion and none of the 30 re-marked about /t/medial deletion specifically.
Deletions = 35	Deletions = 35		
Realized occurrences=136	Realized occurrences=95		
this is a	this is a		
Deletion of 20%	Deletion of 31%		
and of	and of		
Realized occurrences=80%	Realized occurrences=69%		

Deletion of the stop consonant /d/: In final phonological position

Potential occurrences=102	Potential occurrences=138	(In terms of child-speech) Teacher #6: "They leave off endings--the d's and t's." Teacher #24: "These children have trouble with -ing, -d and -t." Eleven teachers spoke of cutting off the sounds and endings; 17 other teachers said nothing about this phenomenon. (In terms of parent-speech) Teacher #17: "They mispronounce d't and t's." Two made general comments; 27 others said nothing.	(Examples of d/d-final position deletion--on tape of child-speech in these words: red- and - and.) Teachers #23 and #25 generalized about the speech problem of children dropping and cutting off letters from the ends of words. Twenty-five teachers did not comment on this problem. (Example of /d/-final position deletion--on tape of parent-speech in the word - and.) Teachers #3, 4, 10, 12, and 16 made general comments about deletions; 25 teachers did not comment on this problem.
Deletions = 52	Deletions = 84		
Realized occurrences=50	Realized occurrences=50		
this is a	this is a		
Deletion of 50.8%	Deletion of 16%		
and of	and of		
Realized occurrences = 49.2%	Realized occurrences=39%		
Deletion of the stop consonant /d/: In medial position			
Potential occurrences=58	Potential occurrences=66	None of the teachers in the sample note the deletion of/d/ in the medial position other than to refer to the pronunciation of both the child and adult informant as that which is "slurrer," "mumbled," "lazy" or that "they substitute one sound for another," "don't pronounce consonants."	(Example of /d/-medial position deletion--on tape of child-speech in these words: hundreds.) None of the 30 teachers mentioned the deletion of medial /d/. (Example of d/d-medial position deletion--on tape of parent-speech in the words: wonderful and children.) Teacher #13: "They omit letters in . . . the middle" None of the other 29 in the sample remarked about the deletion.
Deletions = 19	Deletions = 19		
Realized occurrences=39	Realized occurrences=40		
this is a	this is a		
Deletion of 33%	Deletion of 39%		
and of	and of		
Realized occurrences = 67%	Realized occurrences = 67%		
Substitution of /n/ for /n/			
Potential occurrences=81	Potential occurrences=61	(In terms of child-speech) Teacher #6: "Instead of going, it's goin'." Teacher #10: "They say a word such as 'look-ing' by leaving the g off." Teacher #19: "The 'ing' sounds are usually left off." Teacher #20: "They don't even pronounce the g on 'ing.'" Twenty-five other teachers did not mention this phonological item. (In terms of parent-speech) None of the teachers mentioned the substitution of the /n/ for /n/ on the part of parent speech.	(Examples of /n/ for /n/--on the tape of child-speech in these words: telling and singing.) Teachers #3, 13, 20, and 23 mentioned, in general, the dropping of sounds, but did not mention particular words or endings; 26 other teachers did not mention the deletion. (Examples of /n/ for /n/--on the tape of parent-speech in these words: visiting and morning.) Teacher #10 specifically remarked on the deletion of /n/ in morning. Teacher #20 spoke in general of /n/ deletion. The other 28 teachers did not mention the deletion.
Deletions = 66	Deletions = 48		
Realized occurrences=15	Realized occurrences=13		
this is a	this is a		
Deletion of 83%	Deletion of 79%		
and of	and of		
Realized occurrences = 17%	Realized occurrences = 21%		

SOME ASPECTS OF THE GRAMMATICAL SYSTEM

In the Child's Speech	In the Parent's Speech	In the Teacher's Initial Concept	The Teacher's Perceptions After Tape
The "s" Inflection			
Evidence of language data in the use of:	Evidence of language data in the use of:	(In terms of the child-speech)	(Examples of the "x" inflection--on the tape of child-speech were: "that wrong - and - I likes.")
1. Noun plurals	1. Noun plurals	Teacher #4: "They can't tell which verb to use."	Teacher #3: "... he see are ways of shortening verbs," such as that made by Teacher #10, could be attributed to the use of s inflection, but this was not specifically named as the problem.
2. Verb 3rd singular	2. Verb 3rd singular	Teacher #6: "They leave off the s, as in 'he see'."	All other 28 teachers did not mention the s inflection as a speech problem of children.
3. Pronominal forms		Teacher #14: "They would say 'that's he ball, instead of 'that's his ball'."	(Examples of the "s" inflection--on the tape of parent-speech were: she come with them, she not afraid, she love to talke, then she know.)
		Teacher #26: "They say 'see' for 'sees'."	Not one of the 30 teachers mentioned the "s" inflection in the parent speech, yet there were four examples, at least, counted in the parent speech which the teachers listened to in the study.
		Teacher #1: "This mother said 'feets', 'was' for 'were' and 'these' for 'those'."	
		The other 29 teachers did not mention the s inflection in parent-speech.	
Pronoun Redundancy			
Evidence of the language data in the use of:	Evidence of the language data in the use of:	(In terms of the child-speech)	(Examples of the pronoun redundancy--on the tape of child-speech were: my mamma she, and my sister she.)
My cousin she	The teacher she	Teacher #6: "They use a personal pronoun after a noun. . . ."	Teacher #28: "That sounds typical 'mama she'..."
My sister she	My kids they	None of the other 29 teachers remarked about pronoun redundancy in the speech of the child.	Teacher 21: "They put in two subjects right next to each other." Twenty-eight other teachers made no comment on this grammatical aspect of the child's speech.
My mother she	Carolyn she	All 30 of the teachers neglected to mention it in terms of parent-speech.	(Examples of the pronoun redundancy--on the tape of parent-speech were: my daughter she, and Carolyn she.)
Our baby he	My daughter she		Teacher #2: "My daughter she. . . that's just the way the children speak, too."
My brother he	My mother she		Teacher #12: "They used the double subject, 'my daughter she', but they all say that."
My mamma she	My little girl she		Teacher #17: "... 'my daughter she,' those are just a few of the things they say incorrectly."
	My son he		The remaining 27 teachers did not mention the two cases of pronoun redundancy heard on the tape of parent speech.

Use of the Double Negative

Potential occurrences=39	None of the 30 teachers in the sample mentioned that the double negative was an aspect of the grammatical system of either the child and/or his parent.	(Example of the double negative--on the tape of child's speech was: I don't have no things.)
Deletions = 23		
Realized occurrences=16		
this is a		
Deletion of 58%		
and of		
Realized occurrences = 42%		

The 'done' perfective auxiliary

Evidence of use in these of the auxiliary	No mention of this grammatical aspect was made in the sample. The child and/or his parent.	(Example of child's speech--on the tape of child's speech was: I don't have no things.)
For example:		
he done it		
Mamma done it		

SOME ASPECTS OF THE VOCABULARY SYSTEM

Some of the children spoke freely and with enthusiasm when they were speaking to their peers or in a play-situation.	Very nearly all of the 30 teachers referred to the very limited vocabularies of both the child and the parent. Teacher #19: "I heard him say: 'I don't have no things.' Teacher #24: 'These children are talking freely enough but they just don't know the words and how to say them.' Teacher #30: '... I am encouraged to these remarks at all, after the vocabulary in either specific or general terms. (Examples of the parent's vocabulary on tape elicited these remarks from the teachers: Teacher #2: 'They seem to have a lot to say.' Teacher #3: 'They think the parents, that is, seem to be doing very well in the school. They don't seem to have a lot to say.' Teacher #6: 'They don't have words enough to speak comfortably to the teachers, but they do seem to be able to converse with each other, as they are doing on this tape.' Teacher #10: 'These parents are talking to their children in a very simple way, using to have hard times, pointing word and over knowing enough words to say, but at least they are talking freely.' The other 26 teachers in the sample made no mention of how the parents were or were not conversing with each other or the teaching staff.
Some parents were very quiet and said little to say.	
Some parents refused to speak at all.	
Some of the children spoke using short phrases or sentence fragments.	
Many of the children spoke freely and with enthusiasm when they were speaking to their peers or in a play-situation.	

The language data reveals that both the pre-school children and their parents do have a language which they use freely when they are in the company of peers or those with whom they are familiar. The teachers, as a group, failed to recognize the fact that the children and adults of the lower socio-economic level group speak a systematic social-dialect rather than the more normative language of the school. It is a language system, nevertheless, that permits communication between children and their parents. An observation of the inter-action of individuals of the lower socio-economic level group will reveal this; this is an important observation that every teacher should strive to make for the implications this knowledge holds for the teaching-learning process.

The Language of the Teacher

The language behavior of the teacher in this speech study was of a very careful and cautious nature. Because of this, both the phonological and grammatical evidence secured was not evaluated in terms of its meaning to the investigation as was the speech of the pre-schooler and his parent. It will suffice to say that the teacher very carefully avoids some aspects of the phonological and grammatical systems of the child and his parent, such as: the deletion of final consonants and the substitution of word endings; the "s" inflection, the use of the double negative, the pronoun redundancy, or the "done" perfective auxiliary--if

they ever did exist in the speech of the teacher.

According to previous studies in both New York and Detroit (which have been referred to many times in this investigation), there is proof that these aspects of phonology or grammatical usage exist in smaller quantities or not at all in the speech of the middle socio-economic group to which most teachers belong. The biographical data of this study indicate that the teacher is the recipient of more formal academic education and travel opportunities both of which are social indices of language usage. The teacher, therefore, is more apt to be the possessor of a form of standardized English. Finally, her training in the language arts in her preparation to teach the elementary grades has prepared her for her unique awareness of the value of enunciation in the use of the language.

In this concluding chapter of the language study, the attempt was made to specifically identify and describe some aspects of the language behavior of the disadvantaged pre-schooler and their parents and the teachers' concepts of this language, both initially and after listening to a tape of child-parent speech. The question now arises: After the identification and description of the language have been made, what can the teacher do about the gap which exists between the English of the pre-schooler from the disadvantaged home and the more standardized language of the school and the society in which the child will seek to live and to work in eventually?

Implications of this Language Study

The typical elementary language arts classroom throughout the nation today uses the integrated language arts approach to the teaching of the skills and appreciations of the language, but does not concern itself with just how we communicate and how language works. At the pre-school and primary level there is some emphasis on the oral approach to language, but not nearly enough. In the work of Kohl, it was discovered that the disadvantaged child, in particular, can talk and write freely, but often determines not to because of the hostile reception he fears.¹ Traditionally, too, the teacher's approach to the teaching of the language arts is a negative or corrective one. In such an atmosphere, the child from the disadvantaged home, which does not usually possess the use of the normative school language, does not try to communicate with the teacher.

The implications of this study are evident, as seen in the language data of the investigation and the teachers' initial and current perceptions of the language problem:

1. re-education of the teacher is imperative, and
2. curriculum revision essential.

The teacher most certainly should learn more about the nature of language and the particular needs of the disadvantaged child.

¹Herbert T. Kohl, Teaching the 'Unteachable' (New York: New York Review, 1967).

Even though the teacher was asked to specifically identify the language problems of the disadvantaged child, most of them failed to do so. The majority imagined that the child could not or would not communicate because he lacked "words." A few others suggested, however, that they, the children and parents, did speak freely with each other--though they lacked adequate vocabulary. What the teacher failed to see was that the child and parent did communicate with and without the use of words, but that their means of communication was simply not understood by the school staff. The teachers spoke a different level of language and did not recognize the language system of the lower socio-economic level speaker.

As evidence of the need for in-service re-education of teachers, the statements of the teachers themselves should be considered. At the conclusion of the second interview with the teachers, they were asked to give their opinions of the language behavior of the disadvantaged children whom they were teaching. It will be noted that many of these expressions of concern are moralistic judgments on people rather than on the language. Many teachers are misinformed. They evidence the insecurity of the pedagogical stereotype. The following statements from the teachers are powerful arguments for the need for more in-service education of teachers in the fields of language and the psychological and social needs of the disadvantaged child.

<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Reactions of the Investigator</u>
#1: They don't talk much at all.	An empty jargon-like statement which is disproved by the studies of Kohl.
#2: They slur words together.	Naturally they do; this is the way language works.
#3: Their trouble is just lazy speech.	This is a moral judgment.
#4: These people cannot distinguish between sounds.	This is a very broad statement. If it means that the disadvantaged speaker cannot distinguish "pig" from "big," this is a nonsense.
#5: Pronunciation is the main speech problem they have.	This is much too broad to be meaningful and is probably wrong.
#6: Their problems are communication and expression.	This is not true, unless communication is defined as communication with the teacher.
#7: Vocabulary is the biggest problem.	This is probably the smallest problem.
#8: The problem is just simple communication.	Once again, as stated in reaction to #6, this is not true.
#9: Just getting them to talk is the biggest challenge.	The greater problem for the teacher is getting children to learn.
#10: They mumble their words.	This may be a problem of enunciation which the teacher may teach or a hearing problem on the part of the listeners.
#11: Their background is the biggest trouble.	The statement is too vague to be of use.
#12: The substitution of sounds is a concern.	Unless the sound substitutions can be identified and described, this statement is meaningless.
#13: Dialect is the problem with these children.	We all have a dialect.

TeachersReactions of the Investigator

- | | |
|---|--|
| #14: Just to get children to converse with each other is hard. | This is entirely wrong, as can be proved if the listener will observe the disadvantaged at play or in a relaxed and familiar setting. |
| #15: They talk so fast they stutter. | A remark such as this is psychologically erroneous and linguistically naive. |
| #16: The major speech problem is pronouncing words. | Once more, this statement is false. |
| #17: The biggest problem is that the child learned to talk from hearing his parents talk. | We all do; how else? |
| #18: The major problem besides their limited vocabulary is the dropping of endings. | What is meant by this? The endings of what? Which ones? Are all of them dropped? |
| #19: They omit sounds at the beginning; they substitute. | This probably means morphemes, such as re-, de-, and the like. |
| #20: Their pronunciation is bad. | By whose standard is the pronunciation bad? |
| #21: They point at things rather than say words. | This is a cultural bias. Don't we all use gestures to communicate an idea at times? |
| #22: Their main ways of communicating are by movements of the arms and other gestures. | If we would feel intimidated, as the disadvantaged often do, we would do the same. |
| #23: The biggest problem is the grammar of the language. | Much too broad a statement to have any real meaning or to be of much use. |
| #24: The misuse of the pronouns is the most obvious trouble. | Does this teacher mean <u>they</u> for <u>I</u> ? <u>We</u> for <u>you</u> ? This is probably not the meaning intended, but the teacher is still not descriptive enough. |

<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Reactions of the Investigator</u>
#25: The hardest thing is to express their thoughts in complete sentences.	Not to be philosophical, but what's a thought? What's complete? What's a sentence?
#26: A limited vocabulary is the biggest problem.	Certainly not the biggest.
#27: They need to know more and more words.	This is not necessarily so.
#28: They speak so quickly they often stutter.	As was stated in the reaction to #15, this statement is erroneous and naive.
#29: They mumble their words.	As was stated in the reaction to #10, this statement may be a problem of hearing.
#30: Their speech is just very careless and lazy.	This is a moralistic judgment.

This list suggests to the investigator tremendously naive attitudes toward language and lack of understanding of the disadvantaged. It reveals a need for workshop education of teachers in:

1. Cultural relativity--learning to respect different social systems; learning to respect other cultural groups, other racial and ethnic groups--without forming moral judgments of different peoples.
2. The nature of language--learning to describe language problems first in order to do something about them later (for an illustration of this point see statement of Teacher #18); learning what kinds of problems are most crucial (for an illustration of

this point see statement of Teacher #7).

Teachers should learn to describe language in terms of: (a) Phonetics; (b) Grammar; (c) Syntax.

Suggestions for Implementation of Language
Data Findings in Terms of the Classroom

There is a contrast between the language data discoveries of this investigation and those of the Detroit Dialect Study which suggest a type of age-oriented pedagogical implication.

1. What differences in age-grading suggest differences in language arts sequencing?

The use of the multiple negative suggests that the five year old pre-schooler from the disadvantaged home uses the double negative 58% of the time; the ten year old, according to the Detroit Dialect Study, uses the multiple negative 55% of the time; this is only a 3% difference yet the ten year old has five more years of academic experience than the five year old pre-schooler. This calls for a concentrated effort on the part of the teacher to teach this aspect of the child's grammatical system with more meaning and more consistency and at an earlier stage in the child's academic experience.

2. How much interference can we expect from parents speech?

The pre-schooler speaks with much the same phonological and grammatical aspects of language behavior as does his parent: In the case of the multiple negative, the parents

of the pre-schooler from the disadvantaged home used this grammatical index 78% of the time; in the investigation of the Detroit Dialect Study, the parents of the older children used the multiple negative 74.6% of the time. In both studies indications are that there is much interference from parent speech in the speech of children 5 to 12 years of age. In the studies of Labov this is diminishing percentage depending on the age and academic skills of the child.

3. What different phonological and grammatical forms can be expected from disadvantaged children?

Although this was not an exhaustive study of the phonological and grammatical systems of the disadvantaged child, the language data of the investigation revealed some aspects of the language behavior of the child from the lower socio-economic level group in Detroit:

a. Some expectations which can be anticipated in the phonological system of the disadvantages pre-schooler:

- (1) deletion of the stop consonant /t/ in the final phonological position (79% of the time).
- (2) deletion of the stop consonant /t/ in the medial position (20% of the time).
- (3) deletion of the stop consonant /d/ in the final phonological position (50.8% of the time).

It is further suggested that in this aspect of phonology, the /d/ stop may be substituted for the /t/ stop in the final position. However, whether /d/ is realized as /t/ or /d/ phonemically, as in "walked," it is deleted by the disadvantaged:

30% before vowels
 36% before consonants, and substituted for
 3% before vowels and
 9% before consonants.

- (4) deletion of stop consonant /d/ in the medial position (33% of the time).
- (5) substitution of /n/ for /n/ (83% of the time).

b. Some expectations which can be anticipated in the grammatical system of the disadvantaged pre-schooler:

- (1) the "s" inflection: in the noun plurals (such as, no foods, fishes); and in the verb 3rd singular (such as, she say it, he see it); and in pronominal forms (such as, his self, my's cousins).
- (2) the pronoun redundancy: such as in my cousin she; our baby he
- (3) use of the double negative: such as in we don't have no more; I don't have no skates; that ain't no dog
- (3) the "done" perfective auxiliary: such as in my brother done gone; Mamma done gone to the barbecue.

4. How should these forms of phonological and grammatical behavior be treated in the classroom?

a. As item drills: The conventional approach to the teaching of language skills is the item drill in which each phonological and grammatical item is taught in isolation and drilled on consistently and periodically. There is a question as to the value of this method of language teaching in terms of its transfer to practical and meaningful use in other contexts.

b. As pattern practice drills: This method advocates the teaching of language usage and phonological learning by presenting the language patterns in

oral practice in the classroom. There is no identification or description of the language proceeding this practice and the transfer of this language behavior has not yet been proved in research for the pre-schooler or primary child.

The pattern practice drill has been proved to be legitimate language teaching when working with youth of high school age who are motivated to learn the use of the normative school language when school success and preparation for college and work opportunities are part of the intrinsic motivation.

- c. As switching devices:² This is the method of teaching the prestige dialect in such a way that the child learns that there are linguistic choices that each individual must make for himself and that this choice depends upon the circumstances in which the person finds himself. Identification and the description of the language preceeds this method of language instruction and is, therefore, the method this investigation suggests in the teaching of language behavior to the disadvantaged.

Roger W. Shuy, director of the Detroit Dialect

²Switching devices are the rules by which a speaker of one social dialect can convert to another social dialect. Such rules have been illustrated earlier (see Chapter V, for example, /d/→/t/ (/d/ realized as /t/)). These rules are also reversible so a person whose realization is /t/ might convert to /d/. (Statement by Roger W. Shuy, personal interview, July, 1967.)

Study, suggests that locating the switching devices of oral language is no simple task:

Our task is not to erradicate the social dialects which are inappropriate in the classroom. On one hand it is uneconomical of our time to approach our job as a classroom manifestations of the Al Capone syndrome; on the other hand it is dangerous to deprive our students of a channel (perhaps the only channel) of communication with people with whom they live. Perhaps no other profession has spent as much time on negatives (spelling demons, jargon, triteness and seven deadly grammatical sins) and as little time on positives (alternate styles, alternate appropriate social dialects) than the profession of English. It has seldom occurred to English teachers that their customers may want or need to switch from schoolroom English to playground English as well as from playground to schoolroom. The switching devices may be more appropriate identifiers of the substance of our teaching. The ultimate choice of when to use these switching devices and when not to use them will have to be made by the speaker. We can't legislate virtue, no matter how we define it. But we can, and must, provide the linguistic alternatives.³

5. What linguistic differences in racial or ethnic groups should be treated in the classroom?

Involved here is the issue of whether Negroes should be encouraged to talk like whites or the Polish should talk like other white Detroiters, for example.

This investigation included in its sample only representatives of the Negro and Caucasian groups, but the Negro children were greatly in the majority; there were 141 Negro children and 15 Caucasians. Regardless of the numbers, however, the issue here is whether or not children should be taught a prestige dialect which is different from that of their disadvantaged home. All groups should be allowed to

³Roger W. Shuy, Locating the Switching Devices of Oral Language (Sacramento, California: NCTE Institute, April 19, 1967), pp. 12-13.

retain their cultural heritage with the knowledge and use of the prestige dialect which will help them to be adequately functioning individuals in the society in which they must live. As suggested in our discussion of locating switching devices, all school children should be provided the skills which will help them to do this, if and when they so choose.

Recommendations of this Language Study

The recommendations of this study must consider the first implementer of curriculum change and development, the classroom teacher herself. The teacher must become positive rather than negative in her approach to the teaching of language behavior. Through the data discovered in our investigation, it was found that the teacher approached the language problem in the Head Start program with sympathy and resignation, but little outward hope of teaching success in this area. Knowledge is confidence and only with a knowledge of language and children can the teacher hope to be successful in her instructional efforts.

Pre-service Education of Teachers

This investigation of language behavior strongly recommends a closer working relationship be established between the public schools and teacher education institutions. In particular, special preparation should be provided for those students who will teach the disadvantaged. Experiences should be provided those students who come from a culture of the middle-class level but who will be expected to

identify with the deprived child.

It would seem to me a valuable thing for teachers to face the kind of dys-functionalities and ambiguities and problems in teaching children who come from homes where parents are missing, children who arrive in school from children's shelters, children who do not fit into our classical lockstep in the public school; in working with families where answers are not so simple and clean and direct or with families who may not know of Harvard or the best school in the West or any of the other kinds of status symbols we all live with. It seems to me that involving a person deeply in this for a long period of time is an absolute prerequisite if teacher education is going to move in the direction of genuinely attempting to help people through the classroom situation.⁴

Fortunately, for children of the nation, more and more of the teacher education institutions now require language courses for the elementary teacher in-training. A few of the institutions provide courses in the history and the nature of language, phonetics, and lexicography. With the growth of such courses, the elementary teacher, always considered a generalist in the field of language, would be better prepared to understand and work with the child who needs training in the use of his language; the disadvantaged child needs this language skill in particular.

In-service Education of Teachers

The most difficult and unpredictable element of curriculum change or revision is that which involves the human being. In a large urban school system of over 10,000 teachers, such as is the Detroit Public School System, teacher

⁴Vernon Haubrich, Conference Report: Remaking the World of the Career Teacher (Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, 1966), p. 49.

acceptance is essential, but difficult to achieve because of size if nothing else. Among a group of professionals of this number there are those who are not interested in altering or unwilling to change the habits of their teaching-lifetimes, whether that experience means five years, twenty or more. These individuals must be convinced that the curriculum change is needed, that it is a move in the right direction and that the development is both practical and workable in the classroom.

The in-service education programs for teachers in the Detroit Public Schools are continually conducted for the instructors by means of workshops. These workshops are conducted during the school day when released time is provided, after-school, Saturdays and summers. This investigation suggests that a number of different specialists be invited to conduct these workshops or serve as resource persons to individuals who direct these sessions. These specialists should include anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, and linguists in particular. The competence which these other disciplines provide would give the teachers the knowledge and understanding they need to work with the disadvantaged children. Educators on the staffs of colleges and universities should be invited to sit down with the teachers to discuss particular problems of learning, and methods of teaching the skills and literary appreciations which are such an integral part of the education of the elementary teacher.

Additionally, curriculum guides and bulletins can provide teachers with the materials they need to teach language skills and appreciations. These materials should include lesson plans for the teachers, the theory and practical application of the area under study and other instructional suggestions to help the in-service education program for teachers. The curriculum materials, used with the commercially produced aids, can be the vehicles whereby the teacher adds to her knowledge of both the nature of language and the necessary knowledge of children with particular needs:

Increased effort should be made to provide teachers, and special assistants for teachers, with background and the preparation to equip them more adequately with the skills and understandings to work with children in the disadvantaged areas.⁵

⁵"A Report of the Investigation: Detroit, Michigan," A Study of Barriers to Equal Educational Opportunity in a Large City (Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, 1967).

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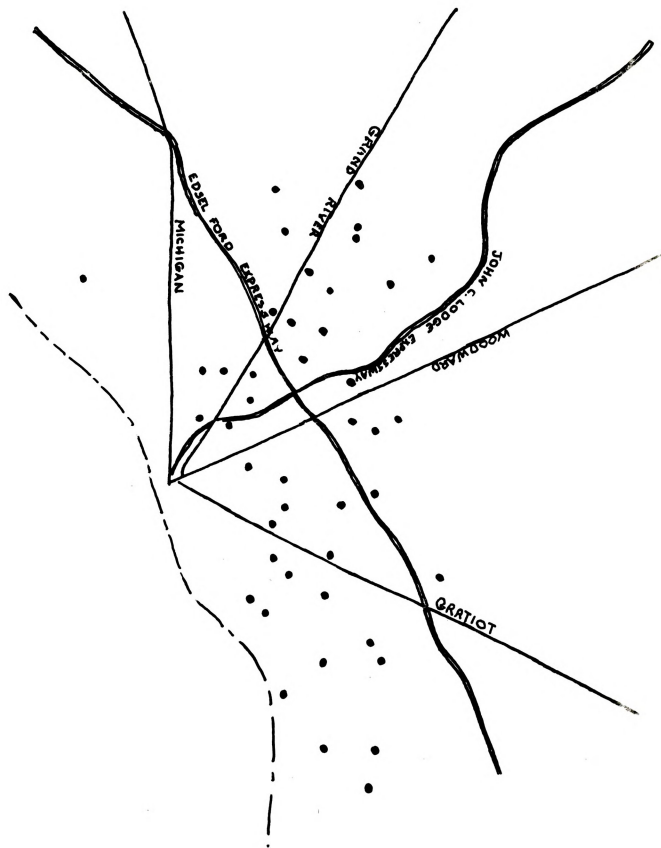
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

MAP OF THE CITY OF DETROIT
INDICATING SELECTED SCHOOLS INCLUDED IN THE SAMPLE



APPENDIX B

THE EIGHT PICTURES INCLUDED IN THE FIRST INTERVIEWS
TO ELICIT THE LANGUAGE OF THE INFORMANTS



Jimmy



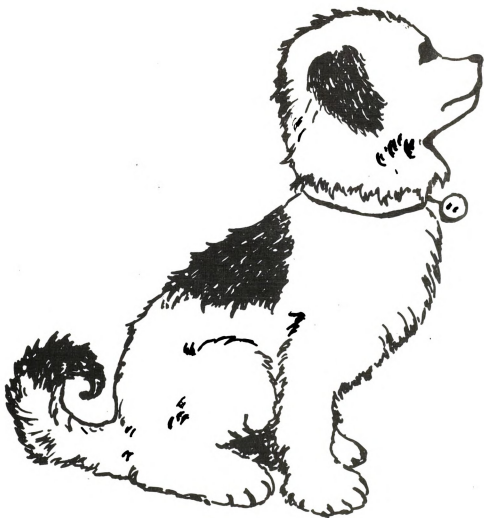
Debbie



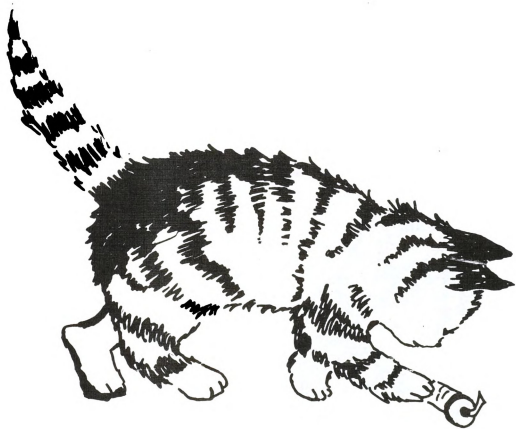
Larry



David



Wiggles



Kitty



Mother



APPENDIX C

LETTER TO PRINCIPALS
WHOSE TEACHERS WERE INCLUDED AMONG
THE SPEECH INFORMANTS

Michigan State University
701 Cherry Lane, Apt. 101
East Lansing, Mich. 48823
January, 1967

Dear _____, Principal
_____ School

During the summer of 1965 and 1966, studies took place through the courtesy and interest of the Detroit Public Schools. These studies attempted to identify and describe the speech of children and adults in Detroit for possible future in-service training and curriculum revision for teachers.

At the present time I am on leave from my responsibilities as elementary language arts supervisor for the Detroit Public Schools and am working at Michigan State University. It is my purpose to complete the analysis of the 1965 studies which taped the speech of pre-schoolers, their parents, and their teachers in the Head Start program.

With your kind permission, I would like to speak with the teacher or teachers on your staff whose names are listed below:

My discussion with the teacher will again be taped and will be concerned with the teacher's reactions to and opinions of Detroit speech. The teacher will be asked to respond to the following questions:

1. What do you think are the major problems your children have with vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation?
2. In what ways does the language of the parents influence the children? What problems with vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation in the language of the parents are reflected in the problems of the child?

The teacher will then be asked to listen and react to a five minute tape of the speech of children who were pre-schoolers in the Head Start program.

I shall contact you by phone in the near future so that an appointment can be arranged for me to meet with the teacher, at the convenience of both the school and the teacher or teachers involved.

Cordially yours,

Anne E. Hughes

APPENDIX D

STATEMENT TO TEACHERS
WHO SERVED AS INFORMANTS
FOR THE SECOND INTERVIEWS

PROJECT: HEAD START Teachers will be asked to react to the following questions:

1. What do you think are the major problems your children have with vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation?
2. In what ways does the language of the parents influence children in your class? What problems with vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation in the language of the parent are reflected in the problems of the child?

The teacher will then be asked to listen and react to a five minute tape of the speech of children who were pre-schoolers in the Head Start program.

After the teacher's reactions to these questions are taped, the teacher will be asked to respond to these questions:

1. Would you give me your opinion of the Head Start program as you experienced it?
2. What kinds of toys or materials did you use in the program?
3. Did the children have anything to eat during the session in school?
4. Would you name other foods the children might have had for breakfast at home, before they came to school for Head Start?
5. We'd like to improve our use of these cards. Can you tell me how the children responded to them? Simply tell me in your own words what the children would have said in describing the pictures, using nouns and verbs particularly, please.

APPENDIX E

MAP OF UNITED STATES

INDICATING THE BIRTHPLACES OF THE MAJORITY OF PARENT-
INFORMANTS





Birthplaces of Parent-Informants:	
Alabama	35%
Georgia	20%
Mississippi	18%
Total	<u>73%</u>
Remainder of US	26.36%
Birthplaces Less than 1% born outside US	<u>.64%</u>
Total	100.00%

APPENDIX F

TRANSCRIPT OF CHILD AND PARENT SPEECH
TO WHICH THE SECOND-INTERVIEW TEACHERS REACTED

SPEECH OF CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS

HEAD START Program: Detroit Public Schools

I = Interviewer; C(1), C(2), etc., = Child;
P(1), P(2), etc., = Parent

I: Come over here, children. You just came in, didn't you? How did you get to school, Kenny?

C(1): Walked.

I: Your sister went with the other children to the picnic. How did she get to the bus?

C(1): My mamma she tooked her.

I: Are you making a cake, Carolyn?

C(2): Yah.

I: How do you make a cake anyway? Tell me.

C(2): You take that there thing and you put the stuff in here - and then you - then you - put some more stuff in there.

I: That sounds good, Carolyn. Why are you playing, Honey?

C(3): I don't have no things to play with there.

I: What would you like to play with?

C(3): A bike.

I: Do you have a bike at home?

C(3): No.

C(1): I done got me a bike. My sister she got a bike.

C(2): I'm gonna get me one.

I: Where did you go yesterday, children?

C(2): To church.

I: What do you do in church? Anyone of you tell me.

C(1): Singing and telling stories.

I: Don't you pray to God, too, children?

C(2): Sometimes.

C(3): I like God.

I: Can anyone of you count to ten?

C(1): I can.

C(3): Me too.

C(2): I can count to ten hundreds.

I: Let's hear you. Carolyn, you go first.

C(2): One - two - three - four - five - six - seven - eight -
nine - ten hundreds.

C(1): That wrong.

I: Let's hear you tell me all the colors you know, Kenny,
can you?

C(1): Red - green - blue - yellow.

I: What's your favorite color, Madeline?

C(3): Red.

I: Why is that your favorite color?

C(3): 'Cause it's pretty.

I: Children, what are your favorite toys to play with
here at school?

C(3): Dolls and doll houses.

C(1): Trucks and cars and sometimes blocks.

C(2): I likes dolls and doll buggy.

I: Does your child come to school alone, Mrs. _____?

P(1): I feel that Kenny - ah - could come alone but he
sometimes walks with the other kids.

I: What about your child, Mrs. _____?



P(2): Well, my daughter she - well - I have other kids in school and she come with them every morning. But she - I know - could come alone 'cause she visited the school quite often before. She not afraid of anyone and she done wanna cross the street and everything, you know.

I: Do the children enjoy Head Start, would you say?

P(1): I think he enjoys it. They talk about it all day when they come home from school. They even play school after they get home.

P(2): I think Carolyn she really loves it. Even though I think they should not call this school for the deprived. My child she's not deprived. But - ah - some of the children are on our block.

I: Do you think that all mothers feel this way about the program.

P(2): No, some send their kids just to get rid of them - get them out of the house.

P(1): I enjoy my kids. I don't want to get rid of them. Sometimes I go running around with them. Some days we don't do nothing but go visiting.

P(2): This project is a good thing - a really wonderful thing for 'em - you know - . During the days before - noon after noon, you know - they always take a nap - but now I know where they are. They're at school at least.

I: What exactly do you think this program does for your children?

P(2): I think some children are not quite ready for kindergarten. My son wasn't and - ah - the ones that are are shy or can't get along with other children. They don't have no kids their own age at home.

P(1): I think they learn more in the Kindergarten and the fifth grades than any other.

I: Do you find that the children like the books at all? Do they talk about stories at home after school?

P(2): Well, Carolyn she does like stories. If the teacher read any story in school she talks about it all the day. And she love to talk about it and I talk along with her about it - and - ah - I get to know the story.

I: Does she ever talk about reading a story?

P(2): She loves reading books and going to the library and everything. She tries to hide from me 'cause she talks to the pictures - and she really thinks that reading, you know.

I: Do you ever go to the library with her, Mrs. _____?

P(2): Oh, yes. I really enjoy the library part. I read some of the books and then Carolyn she tells me the story.

P(1): I always take my boy to the library. He gets a lot of books sometimes.

I: Do you ever bring home a book for yourself, Mrs. _____?

P(1): No, but I help Kenny when he wants to read a story.

P(2): We always bring all the books home for the kids. I don't have time to read what with the kids and the house to keep.

I: Do you remember any of their favorite stories?

P(2): Well now, this morning, you know. I get him ready for school - my big boy and his sister. Carolyn she say she read a story about three bears that come from the library. She was showing me the mamma bear, father bear and baby bear. She was showing me the mamma bear - no, how did she do it? Oh - how the little girl ate the baby bear's porridge. So she ask me what's that? I explain it's like cereal, so then she know.

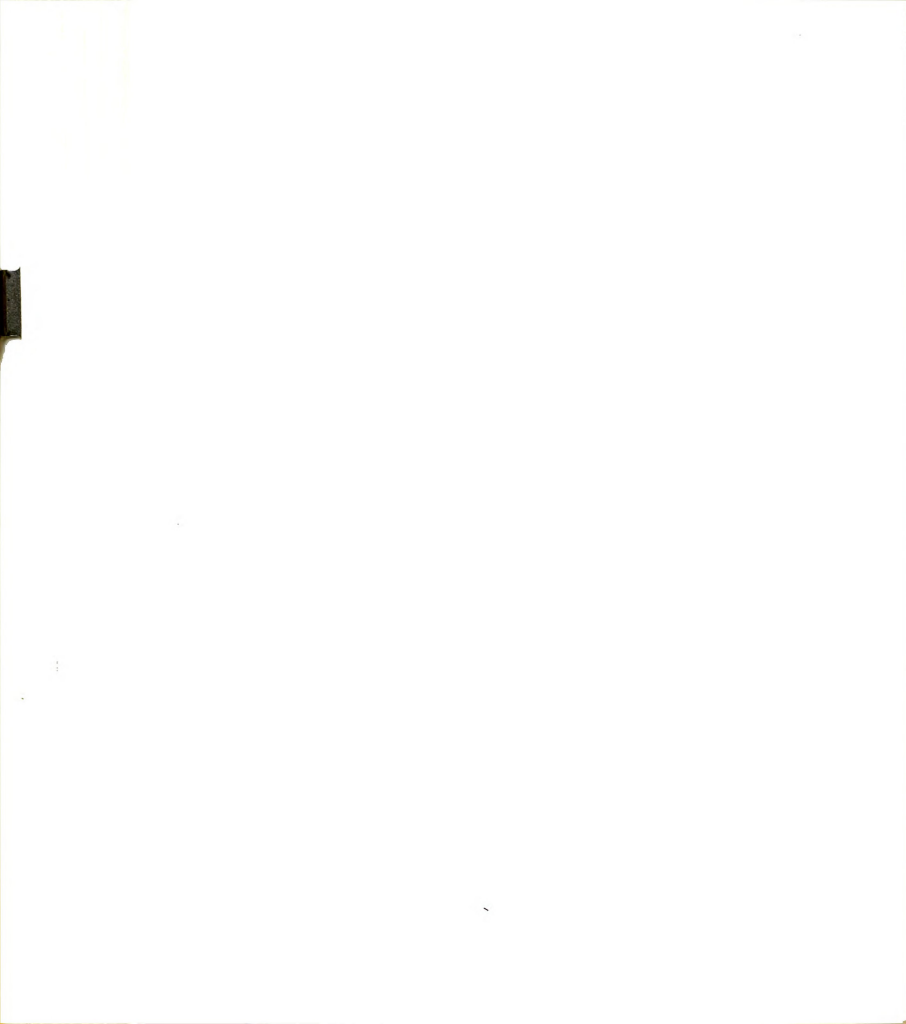












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