    Efforts to change traditional methods of language teaching have brought
refinements in pedagogical thinking. one recent change being that concerning
teaching standard English as a second dialect. We must. the author urges. internalize
the fact that a divergent dialect represents a system of its own and is not simply an
accumulation of mistakes. We should capitalize on the overlap of standard and
divergent dialects and not be stampeded by the differences. (These are not so
profound that they should encourage teachers to form a foreign language frame of
reference--the student feels alien enough as it is.) In applying English as a second
language techniques to SESD (Speakers of English as a Second Dialect).
over-structuring is a constant danger. We should keep in mind that "standard English."
like "general American." is an abstraction of limited value. (A group of Michigan
teachers might have an attitude toward the "pin/pen" problem that is different from
the attitude of teachers in Florida.) Attempts to deal with target forms should not be
isolated from the learner's communication needs in other parts of the curriculum. The
teacher should take an honest look at (1) his students and their linguistic "status": (2)
his own objectives: (3) the distribution of his and the student's time: (4) the basic
types of course activities: and (5) his planning. (AMM)

Reading and the Oral Approach at the Secondary Level*

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Year after year, teachers of language-handicapped children, particularly teachers of children with a non-English-speaking background, struggled to teach language arts by teaching words. Words were the unit of learning on the oral level, and the measure of success was the size of the learner's speaking vocabulary. Words were the unit of learning on the reading level, and the measure of success was the size of the learner's sight vocabulary. Words were the unit of learning on the writing level, and the measure of success was the learner's spelling score. A few souls worried less about formal language instruction. They were sure that language would blossom in time if they exposed the learner to abundant school-oriented experiences. In either case, the process guaranteed that the students were not prepared to deal with the decoding skills in reading nor with the subject matter content of the elementary school, whether presented orally or in print. Those students durable enough to reach the secondary school were pretty well conditioned to the limitations of their elementary school success-tools, so the retardation process went on smoothly as the students were herded forward through the grades.

Like all good fairy tales, this one has its heroes as well as its villains. After World War II, our nation's effort to rebuild and develop the rest of the world carried with it the latest thinking in language teaching as well as in constructing schools and power plants. It was only a matter of time until the same thinking began to unsettle traditional modes of language teaching at home. Whether intentionally or by accident, "vocabulary" became a dirty word. Many students became proficient at responding to structural signals, even though they had little referential content to fill the slots in the substitution frames. As a student of Old English, I recall how pleased the professor was when the class responded well to his pattern practice on difficult case forms. He was less impressed when he found the only part of the next sentence we could respond to was the case ending. He concluded he might as well have used nonsense syllables.

Fortunately, in education the closing of the gap between theory and practice is a slow enough process that the "mim-mem" syndrome has done little serious damage except, perhaps, to distort the vital role of reading in

a well-balanced language arts program. Nevertheless, pattern practice, used when appropriate and with sufficient and relevant content, still holds promise of being one of the most efficient techniques for developing automatic control of language forms. Also fortunately, we have a much clearer picture now of the difference between English as a foreign language in non-English-speaking countries and the domestic needs in English as a second language. And even more recently, we began to face still another refinement in our thinking—that of teaching standard English as a second dialect, with all its pedagogical and linguistic implications.

Although recent studies of divergent dialects of English have tended to focus on speech in large urban poverty-pockets, there are inferences to be drawn from such studies and their by-products which do not limit themselves to the populations analyzed. *First,* we need to internalize the fact that a divergent dialect represents a system of its own and is not simply an accumulation of mistakes. Divergent dialects may differ from a standard dialect grammatically as well as phonologically and lexically, and in this respect may have some of the characteristics of a second language. If a teacher sets as a goal the teaching of a standard dialect as a second dialect, he must deal with many of the problems faced by the teacher of ESOL. The obvious application of ESOL techniques to oral SESD (Speakers of English as a Second Dialect) programs has been or is being made at various levels, from the pre-school through the high school and into college. There is considerable evidence to suggest that SESD programs are equally, if not more, relevant to the language-learning needs of thousands of children in the Great Southwest than the ESOL programs we have promoted so enthusiastically. Above and beyond the oral language benefits of ESOL-type approaches to SESD problems, there are other potential gains worthy of note. The work of Mac-Millan in Florida, which involved a strong though loosely structured oral language program, seemed to account for a consistent and longitudinally maintained increase in reading scores.[1] The work of San-su C. Lin at Claflin College also showed reading score increases as a by-product of the oral language development.[2]

Second, we should capitalize on the overlap of standard and divergent dialects and not be stampeded by the differences. Although differences between a divergent dialect and a standard dialect may be so profound as to encourage some analysts to propose a special "grammar," they are not so profound that they should encourage teachers to form a foreign language frame of reference. The student feels alien enough as it is. The overlap in standard and non-standard systems is surely as great or greater than the divergence. Any analyst who behaves as though it weren't is potentially

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[1] An unpublished study carried out under the direction of Howard MacMillan in the Dade County Public Schools, Miami, Florida (1962–1965).

[2] San-su C. Lin, *Pattern Practice in the Teaching of Standard English to Students with a Non-Standard Dialect,* (Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1965).

fostering language arts programs which waste the learner's time and alienate him still further from the teacher and the instructional goals of the school. In applying ESOL techniques to SESD programs, over-structuring is a constant danger. For example, to maintain a rigid order of listening-speaking-reading-writing for language arts at the secondary level is to deny the linguistic resources the learner brings to the treatment of target features. Tight structuring under these conditions is of doubtful merit for many students in domestic ESOL programs and is unrealistic if not undesirable for students in programs in standard English as a second dialect. On the other hand, a linguistically loosely structured activity, such as motivated silent or oral reading, affords an important medium for guaranteeing the students common experiences on which to base controlled language practice. The differences between the non-standard and standard are, after all, finite in number, and lend themselves to sequencing as targets of direct and systematic instruction. Such instruction need not and should not deprive the learner of the opportunity to use the overlapping portion of his linguistic repertoire to full advantage.

Third, we should keep in mind that "standard English," like "general American," is an abstraction of limited value. The linguistic atlases show that what is called "standard English" in itself represents a range of dialects which are at least in part geographically determined. This suggests that the final selection of target features in a program of standard English as a second dialect should be locally determined. A group of high school teachers in one community who decide to focus on the usage *on King Street* as a priority target should come to that conclusion independently of their counterparts in an area where *in King Street* is the dominant sequence. Often the decision as to whether a teacher thinks a form is correct or incorrect is secondary to the decision as to what he thinks is most important to do with the time he has.

A group of Michigan teachers might also have an attitude toward the *pin-pen* problem that is different from the attitude of teachers in the cracker belt of Florida. Even though the two groups of teachers might come to the same conclusion, they should do so with full knowledge of whatever linguistic "facts" are available about their respective communities.

Fourth, our attempts to deal with target forms should not be isolated from the learner's communication needs in other parts of the curriculum. The "distance" of the divergent dialect from some standard dialect varies considerably from student to student in the same classroom. Even in large schools which divide and subdivide student populations into sections and tracks, the teacher will still find a range of differences wide enough to require individualization. Under these conditions, attempts in an SESD or an ESOL program to give directed language practice within a referential framework, which in itself is not intellectually stimulating and which has little curricular relevancy, limit the severely linguistically handicapped learner to meaningless or frivolous language manipulation. They also rob everyone in the class of

the opportunity to respond to challenges of substance which concern them during the rest of the school day.

Language arts teachers, including high school English teachers, have been too willing to accept failure with ESOL and SESD populations. Yet, to suggest that a teacher view the aforementioned inferences as solutions to the teaching of reading is to be superficial. Teachers are already plagued by platitudes and admonitions of the provide-an-oral-background type. What are, then, some practical applications for the innovative teacher?

First, the teacher could take an honest look at his students. What is their linguistic "status"? With the resources currently available, the teacher doesn't have to wait for a linguist to come and study his particular population. If he knows or suspects that non-standard forms in his classroom stem from interference from Spanish, he can make his own informal survey using an inventory he extracts and adapts from contrastive analyses such as those provided by the Puerto Rican Study in New York,[3] by that published by the Australian Commonwealth Office of Education,[4] and the work of Stockwell, Bowen, and Martin.[5] If he knows or suspects that non-standard forms stem from interference from any of several divergent dialects, he can again make his own survey using an inventory he extracts and adapts from studies such as those made by McDavid, Stewart, and others, as well as from local Pachuco studies.[6] The teacher can know precisely what his linguistic problems are. In our own work, we limit our primary concern to features that have grammatical significance, but we have included as well some with only social significance.

Second, the teacher could take an honest look at his objectives. Are they so vague that he can never know if he has accomplished them or not? Are they traditional or self-imposed requirements designed for a different population? If the teacher's objectives are inconsistent with the ESOL and SESD students' immediate communication needs in the curriculum, the net result of efforts based on these objectives is little more than frustration for both the student and the teacher. On the other hand, the teacher might gear his objectives to keep the student segregated from the mainstream curriculum, and the result would be equally unsatisfactory. The language arts teacher

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[3] Board of Education of the City of New York, *Teaching English to Puerto Rican Pupils in the Secondary School,* Language Guide Series, 1957.

[4] "Some Likely Areas of Difficulty for Spanish Students of English," reprinted in Harold B. Allen, ed., *Teaching English as a Second Language* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965) pp. 135–153.

[5] R. P. Stockwell, J. Donald Bowen, John W. Martin, *The Grammatical Structures of English and Spanish* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965); Robert P. Stockwell and J. Donald Bowen, *The Sounds of English and Spanish* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965).

[6] Raven McDavid, "A Checklist of Significant Features for Discriminating Sound Dialects," in Alva B. Davis, *A Manual of Social Dialects,* Illinois Institute of Technology (in preparation); William Stewart, *Non-Standard Speech and the Teaching of English* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1964); George C. Barker, *Pachuco: An American-Spanish Argot and Its Social Functions in Tucson, Arizona,* University of Arizona Bulletin, Social Science Bulletin No. 18, Vol. XXI, No. 1 (January, 1950).

can establish target priorities from his informal survey, thus identifying a minimum number of linguistic behaviors which he can aspire to modify as a result of systematic instruction. Hopefully, he can interest his colleagues in making the effort longitudinal.

Third, the teacher could take an honest look at the distribution of his and the students' time. Does the placement of effort reflect the priorities which have been established? If the English class is heavily reading-oriented, the teacher can increase the time for oral language development based on reading. If the reading is heavily literature-oriented, the teacher can increase the time for subject matter reading and vocabulary development. If the reading is predominantly silent reading, the teacher can increase the time for oral reading to reinforce the learner's grasp of the structural units and specifically the sequence signals which unite extended passages.

Fourth, the teacher could take an honest look at the basic types of activities he uses to approach the content of his course. Do the teacher's activities reflect an understanding of the interdependence in the language arts? Does he use all of the language arts to get at his instructional goals? As a minimum, the teacher of an ESOL or SESD program should provide four types of listening-speaking experiences.[7]

Guided Discussion	to motivate the students to provide common experiences to develop grammatical generalizations to integrate reading with experiences to provide unstructured language practice
Pattern Practice	to develop new language habits to provide structured language practice to reinforce understanding of content
Oral Exercises	to provide structured language practice to provide for rereading to provide for vocabulary building
Oral Composition	to provide for creative use of language to provide for free use of target features to reinforce organizational skills

He should provide abundant oral as well as silent reading.

Oral Reading	to provide common experiences to focus attention on linguistic content to focus attention on referential content
Silent Reading	to provide common experiences to develop comprehension skills to develop interpretation skills

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[7] Paul W. Bell and Ralph F. Robinett, *English: Target 1,* Teachers Edition (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968).

And he should provide writing experiences which include:

	to reinforce oral language learning
	to provide basis for grammatical analysis
Written Exercises	to provide for vocabulary building
	to provide practice on mechanics of writing
	to check reading comprehension
	to provide for creative use of writing
	to provide for free use of target features
Written Composition	to reinforce organizational skills
	to provide integrated use of writing skills

For the teachers of most secondary ESOL and SESD programs there need be no rigid sequence to these basic types of activities. Certainly they do not have to follow the pattern of a baby learning at his mother's knee. The different activities often can be woven throughout the reading lessons which, whether literature- or subject-matter-oriented, provide a referential baseline from which the other language arts activities generate.

And last, the teacher could take an honest look at his planning. Does he spend as much time "setting up" the referential content as he does "setting up" the linguistic features he hopes to elicit? Does he use appropriate social studies and science concepts as he projects language reinforcement? It's no secret that the linguistically handicapped student is often the student who is behind in other areas of the curriculum. If we English teachers do not incorporate the substance of the content areas into our planning, we can never hope to give the learner the boost he needs to put him into the mainstream where he belongs.