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ABSTRACT

This review describes and evaluates the "Michigan Oral Language Series," a series which includes structured oral language lessons for preschool and kindergarten children learning English as a second language or standard English as a second dialect, and programs in testing and teacher training. With the exception of the "Spanish Guide," all the components of the Series are reviewed: "Bilingual Conceptual Development Guide, Preschool"; "English Guide, Kindergarten"; "Interdisciplinary Oral Language Guide, Primary One"; "Michigan Oral Language Productive Tests"; and "Developing Language Curricula: Programmed Exercises for Teachers." For the Series materials themselves, see ED 039 815 through ED 039 819 and ED 040 626-7. (A4)

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The Michigan Oral Language
Series: A Critical Review

by

Judith Lindfors

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INTRODUCTION

The Michigan Oral Language Series, produced under the direction of Ralph Robinett and Richard Benjamin, is a set of six self-contained programs :

Bilingual Conceptual Development Guide -- Preschool

English Guide -- Kindergarten

Spanish Guide -- Kindergarten

Interdisciplinary Oral Language Guide -- Primary One

Michigan Oral Language Productive Tests

Developing Language Curricula: Programed Exercises for Teachers

The series is basically "...structured oral language lessons for use with four, five and six year old children who need to learn English as a second language or standard English as a second dialect..." plus testing and teacher training programs ("Preface to the ACTFL Edition"). This review describes and evaluates all the programs of the series except the Spanish Guide.

DEVELOPING LANGUAGE CURRICULA: PROGRAMED EXERCISES FOR TEACHERS

This teacher training course is "programed" in that it is an orderly sequence, and it is a set of "exercises" in that it requires written responses of the teachers. The materials consist of six parts, each covering one language area briefly: "Part I: The Nature of Language," introduces language as "...an oral system of arbitrary symbols used for communication among human beings," (p. 12), a system composed of sound, structural, and lexical sub-systems, and conveying lexical, structural, and socio-cultural meanings; "Part II: Attitudes Toward Language," presents factors influencing language variation (place, time, status, age), places the "prescriptive" and "descriptive" attitudes in historical perspective, encouraging the adoption of a descriptive-ist position, and discusses the implications of language levels for the second language classroom; "Part III: The Vowel Sounds" presents the vowel phonemes of English and Spanish in contrast, and discusses the English vowel phonemes which are difficult for the Spanish speaker, "Part IV: The Consonant Sounds" presents the consonant phonemes of English and Spanish in contrast, discusses voicing and its importance in syntax (e.g., plural, past tense), and the English consonant phonemes and clusters which are difficult for the Spanish speaker; "Part V: Suprasegmentals: Stress, Pitch, Pause" describes the features of stress, pitch, pause, and rhythm in English, and points out areas of difficulty for the Spanish speaker, and "Part VI: The Order and Forms of Words" provides a set of exercises in which the teacher is required to identify the nature of the deviance in non-standard utterances, and to predict gram-

matical difficulties for the Spanish speaker based on contrastive data from the two languages.

This program presents a great deal of significant and relevant information in a clear, concise, well-organized, and quite interesting fashion. Each part (with the exception of Part VI) has two sections, first a written exercise in a multiple-choice test format, and second about five or ten pages of text. No suggestions accompany the materials as to specific procedures for their use. However, since the exercise precedes the text in each part, and since the exercise focuses sharply on the main points covered in the text, one effective procedure would be for the teachers first to read the exercise (thus focusing their attention on the important content items for that part), then to read the text, and then to go back and complete the exercise. No answers are provided for the exercises, presumably so that the teachers will check their written answers against the text (where they will actually find the answers), and/or so that the exercises might be used as bases for group discussions.

A number of features of this program deserve special comment. The content items included have been carefully selected and sequenced. The tight unity which exists within each part is impressive: each exercise focuses directly on the main points covered in the text that follows, and the text then elaborates on the items introduced in the exercise. The presentation of the content is clear and simple, without distorting the information. The tone of the writing is appropriate for teachers: the authors do not "talk down" to the teachers, nor do they talk above

their heads. And the presentation -- in both the exercises and the written texts -- is original and extremely interesting, including an abundance of pertinent concrete examples (e.g., the use of passages from Huckleberry Finn and To Kill a Mockingbird in which conversations between Huck and Jim, and between Jem and Calpurnia vividly demonstrate prevalent attitudes toward language). (Part II, pp. 14, 16).

My one strong criticism would be that some of the material on vowels and consonants (Parts III and IV) assumes substantial prior knowledge of linguistics. Without some linguistic background, a passage like the following would be frustrating:

The two vowel charts following are schematic representations of the vowel sounds of English and the vowel sounds of Spanish. The charts are not intended to show actual points of articulation. The squares in each vowel chart suggest the relative positions and ranges of the sounds in each language. We may see, then, in Spanish there is only one high front vowel while in English there are two. Thus the range of a Spanish speaker's high front vowel sound covers the range of both English vowel sounds... (p. 33)

The terms and phrases, "points of articulation," "relative positions and ranges of the sounds," "high front vowel" are not explained in any way here or elsewhere. Notions of sounds having positions and ranges in some spatial sense I think requires some explanation. Without guidance, teachers without a linguistic background would not, I think, associate "high front vowel" with any conscious fact of their experience in pronouncing the sounds /i/ and /i/. There are numerous references made to the positions of vowels without any explanation of vowel production being given: e.g., "The vowel sound in English bit is relatively low... Spanish /e/ may range fairly high..." (p. 35), "The vowel in English

bat is low and forward" (p. 35), "In some dialects of American English, the vowel sound of caught tends to be fronted..." (p. 37), "Spanish speakers when pronouncing their high back vowel sound may on occasion have a vowel sound as in English pool or they may make it somewhat lower..." (p. 38), "...the mid central vowel as in putt..." (p. 39). Explanation of terms like sibilant ("If the simple form of a word ends in a sibilant sound..." p. 48) and diphthong ("...the diphthongal quality of English /e/ as in bait..." p. 34) would be helpful.

Through its overriding emphasis on contrastive analysis, this course implies that contrastive analysis is both a necessary and sufficient basis for teaching English to the Spanish speaker. The teacher reading these materials might very well conclude that teaching and learning English as a second language is a matter of constant reference and matching between the first and second language. The implication is that, for example, in teaching English phonological features, one selects and drills only those features which cause the Spanish speaker pronunciation problems, i.e., those phonological points at which the phonology of the first language interferes with the phonology of the second language. I feel a need in these materials for greater emphasis on (or indeed just some recognition of) the separate, self-contained, systematic nature of each language within itself, for some discussion in which the teaching of English as a second language is regarded as a matter of teaching a language system complete in itself without constant reference to the first language system, for some discussion in which the teacher's main concern is the parts of the English language system primarily as they

relate to one another, not primarily as they relate to parts of another language system. Why not teach the phonology of English as a complete system, a total set of significant phonological contrasts, processes, and relationships? This would of course involve teaching not only the pronunciation "trouble spots," but all the parts of the system as they relate to one another, within the system of English, not with reference to Spanish.

Ronald Wardhaugh, in his 1970 TESOL Convention paper "Some Comments on the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis" makes a distinction between the strong and weak versions of the contrastive analysis hypothesis. He quotes Banathy, Trager and Waddle's statement of the strong version as follows:

...the change that has to take place in the language behavior of a foreign language student can be equated with the differences between the structure of the student's native language and culture and that of the target language and culture. The task of the linguist...is to identify these differences...the task of the foreign language teacher is to be aware of these differences and to be prepared to teach them; the task of the student is to learn them.¹

Adherents of the strong version of contrastive analysis seek to predict the areas of difficulty for the second language learner. Developing Language Curricula expounds such a view of second language teaching: "By comparing the two systems (i.e., English and Spanish), we can anticipate what the learner's problems will be." (p. 33). Parts III, IV, and V of the materials are essentially a contrastive analysis of the

¹Bela Banathy, Edith Crowell Trager, and Carl D. Waddle, "The Use of Contrastive Data in Foreign Language Course Development," Trends in Language Teaching, ed., A. Valdman, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1966, pp. 27-56

vowel, consonant, and supra-segmental systems of English and Spanish, and in Part VI the teacher is asked to predict areas of difficulty by contrasting structures from English and Spanish.

Wardhaugh discards the strong version (the predictive version) of contrastive analysis as "quite unrealistic and impracticable" (p. 2) since it "makes demands of linguistic theory and, therefore, of linguists, that they are in no position to meet" (p. 4) at this present stage in the development of linguistic theory. Wardhaugh prefers the weak version of contrastive analysis, which "...requires of the linguist only that he use the best linguistic knowledge available to him in order to account for observed difficulties in second language learning" (p. 7). In this version "...reference is made to the two systems (i.e., the first and second language in question) only in order to explain actually observed interference phenomena" (p. 7).

For the reasons put forward by Wardhaugh, and because of the self-contained and systematic nature of each language within itself, it would seem more appropriate to view contrastive analysis as a helpful tool in second language teaching, rather than to view it as the be-all and end-all of that teaching, the point of view implied in this teacher training program. My complaint is not that the program presents contrastive analysis, but that it does so to the exclusion of other linguistic considerations in second language teaching, the net result being that the significance of contrastive analysis in second language teaching is exaggerated.

THE BILINGUAL CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDE -- PRESCHOOL

General Description

The Bilingual Conceptual Development Guide -- Preschool (BCDG) is "A Bilingual Oral Language and Conceptual Development Program for Spanish Speaking Preschool Children" (heading for each page) consisting of 59 English lessons and 61 Spanish lessons (called "circles"). The lessons are grouped into eight units, each of the first seven emphasizing a certain type of conceptual and verbal skill: naming, describing, locating, counting, grouping (two units), sequencing, and the last unit devoted to review. The program includes an introductory description of the materials and their use, and a set of art materials to be used with the lessons. The goal of the program is to "...provide the child with the language and conceptual skills needed to benefit from a standard school setting. Specifically this means teaching the children to understand and discuss basic ideas about size, color, number, time and space, to be able to identify and describe familiar objects and relationships, and to ask questions in standard English."²

The lessons designed to meet this goal are a mixture of Spanish and English lessons, arranged so that "The Spanish lessons prepare the child in his first language for the content of the English lessons..." The lessons do not alternate in a patterned way, every other one an English Circle and every other one a Spanish Circle, but the authors attempt to assure that every conceptual content item dealt with in an English Circle has been dealt with in some previous Spanish Circle. The authors suggest

²There are no page numbers in this program, so the pages of quotations cannot be indicated for reference.

that these 120 15-minute lessons be taught at the rate of three per day for eight weeks.

Besides introducing conceptual content, the Spanish lessons are intended to help the child "...acquire standard alternates for certain non-standard features of his own dialect," i.e., to make the child's Spanish more standard. In the introductory remarks the authors insist that only standard Spanish be taught in the classroom; the teacher is not to accept the non-standard Spanish forms used by the children. The materials assume that there will be a Spanish speaking aide in the classroom, and that she will teach the Spanish lessons. If there is no aide (and the teacher is not bilingual), then the teacher should teach only the English lessons and teach them more slowly.

The lessons are to be regarded as "...an ordered sequence of suggestions to teachers." The authors encourage flexibility in the use of the lessons; recognizing that the lessons will be used in many different situations, they encourage the teachers to adapt the lessons accordingly. However, the authors recommend that the teacher keep the language goals ("linguistic focus") and concept goals ("conceptual focus") of the lessons in mind, and vary only the ways of attaining the goals, but not the goals themselves.

The authors claim that the materials are designed to teach "...items which will be useful in the real world of English and Spanish speakers," and they claim to use "natural language" -- contractions and short answers -- throughout.

The authors' description of the program, summarized above, raises two basic questions:

1. To what extent can you "prepare" the child in one language for the conceptual content of another language? Does conceptual content vary from one language to another? Or is there a certain body of conceptual content that exists apart from language, which we then can learn to express in Spanish or English or any other language?

2. Are the authors justified in attempting to teach a standard version of Spanish to a Spanish speaking, Michigan migrant child, to teach him the dialect of Spanish "generally considered to be representative of the Spanish spoken in most Spanish-speaking countries"? Is the authors' contention valid that "In order for their (the students') Spanish language ability to be of use (italics mine), they should be able to use the standard type"?

The Whole: Selection and Sequencing of Content

For each lesson the "Conceptual Focus" (the content to be presented) and the "Linguistic Focus" (the new language forms to be used) are indicated. It is the conceptual rather than the linguistic content that provides the basis for the selection and sequencing of what is taught in this program. The materials employ fairly simple sentence types in the presentation of the content, but the main purpose is clearly not to reveal the structure of the language system of English, but rather to present, in some reasonable sequence, basic concepts. Thus, there is a great proliferation of question types used throughout the lessons with little

apparent attempt at structural control of questions, and one encounters English lessons like English Circle 14 in which four different questions -- three of which the children have not heard before -- are used in teaching the children to classify crayons according to the colors red, blue, yellow, and green (yellow, green, and crayon are also new).³

An attempt has been made to select significant content: e.g., classifying objects by color, size, shape, function; arranging objects in progression of increasing size, quantity; relating objects in space and actions in time. These are certainly valid selections. Yet there is a need for greater emphasis on presenting the complete set of important relationships. In Spanish Circle 22, for example, the Conceptual Focus is "Spatial relations." Listed under Linguistic Focus (English translation) are the following sentences which include terms designating spatial relationships:

/	Inside	/	the	/	box	/
	Outside				table	
	etc.				etc.	
.						
	Put	/	it	/	under	/
			them		on	/
					etc	/
					the	/
					table	/
					etc.	

Certainly one wants to teach the relationships inside, outside, under, and on, as indicated above. But what do the "etc.s" include? Is it sufficient

³One of the three new questions is "what's that?" This should not cause much difficulty as the children have previously had "What's this?" (EC 2,3,5,6,9) and "That is a big cookie." (EC 12). The other two new questions are more problematic: "Are all of those cars red?" and "Are all of those crayons the same color?"

to leave the matter of which spatial relationships are taught to chance, to whichever ones the teacher happens to think of besides inside, outside, under, and on? Surely there is a specifiable set -- a system -- of significant spatial relations that one wants to present. Why not specify the total set of significant elements and relations and then proceed to teach the members of the set in some reasonable order?⁴ The present selection, while not haphazard, could be more systematic, i.e., aimed at presenting the system of spatial relationships, the system of time relationships, the system of classification, etc.

One area of content that especially needs more systematic treatment is the notion of sameness, the basis of classification. The notion is presented in the lessons basically as follows (SC=Spanish Circle, EC=English Circle):

- SC 9 Objects are grouped as being "the same/not the same color."
- EC 9 Two items are identified as being big or little. Then "They are the same." (The feature of sameness -- size -- is not specified.)
- EC 10 Like EC 9 but with two groups of objects. Groups of different-, as well as the same-sized objects are used. Again size is not specified. ("Those blocks are big. Those blocks are not big. They're little. They're not the same.")
- SC 10 Like SC9.
- EC 11 "Some of them are big. Some of them are little. They're not the same."
- EC 14 Crayons are grouped, and sameness for color specified: "Are all of those crayons the same color?"
- SC 12 "Are these cars the same color?"

⁴Will there be a problem here trying to teach a given body of conceptual content in two languages? Is the set of significant spatial relations the same from language to language? Is the adult Spanish speaker's system of spatial relations the same as that of the adult Anglo?

EC 16 "Are all of those the same color?"

EC 29 "Here is one block. Here is one block. Are they the same? Yes. They're the same." (The feature here is amount, but it is unspecified.)

EC 30,31 Like EC 29, but add "not the same."

SC 39 The children find something that "looks like this" (a circle). "This (a plate) looks like the circle. Why? Because they have the same shape."

SC 40 Like SC 39, but add "...doesn't have the same shape."

SC 43 "Why do they go together? Because they have the same shape."

EC 54 "Are they the same?" (referring to size).
"Are all of these the same color?"

Note the jump from SC 9 -- specified color sameness -- to EC9 and 10, the very next two lessons, in which sameness suddenly has to do with size, though the sameness dimension is not explicitly identified. The move back to sameness of color in EC 14 is not so sudden, as the property being considered is specified. But the jump at EC 29 is again startling; suddenly the sameness has to do with amount, though this is again left unspecified. The move to sameness of shape at SC 39 is not a sudden jump, but the vagueness of "looks like this" is unfortunate. There are other lessons in which items are to be grouped on the basis of a shared feature -- a sameness -- but the terms same/not the same are not used (e.g., SC 32 , EC 42, SC 44, 46).

It would seem that the starting point for planning the instructional sequence for the notion of sameness must be "What are the features according to which we categorize objects in English?" If it is decided that the significant defining features are, say, color, shape, size, function, amount, and kind, then why not present these singly (and

gradually in combinations), establishing same and not same for each specified feature: Are these the same color/, same shape/, same size? Do they have the same function? Is there the same amount of each? Are they the same kind? (Yes, they are all fruit/ toys/ animals, etc.)⁵ A reasonable sequence might be:

1. same/not the same color
2. same/not the same size
3. same/not the same color/size (Group for two features.)
4. same/not the same shape
5. same/not the same shape/color/size (Group for three features.)
6. same/not the same function
7. same/not the same function/color/size (Group for three features.)
8. same/not the same kind
9. same/not the same amount
10. same/not the same kind/amount (Group for two features.)
11. Children group according to any feature they select and tell "how they are the same" (Identify the defining feature for the category.)
12. Children group and then sub-group according to features they select and explain their grouping.

⁵Greenfield, Reich and Olver's work suggests that use of the higher level, more abstract terms "shape," "color," etc., enables children to group more variously than does the use only of the lower level terms "circle," "red," etc. This is another reason for explicitly specifying the sameness dimension. Patricia M. Greenfield, Lee C. Reich, and Rose R. Olver, "On Culture and Equivalence: II, Studies in Cognitive Growth, ed., J. Bruner, et. al., John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1967, pp. 270-318.

Granting that the main consideration is the teaching of concepts and not the teaching of the English language system, it would still be possible to control the language structures of the lessons in such a way that more of the system of the language would emerge. English Circles 13-16 all deal with the classification of objects by color. Instead of using eight different questions in presenting this content, why not use three or four -- perhaps a yes/no question with be as the main verb and using singular objects, a yes/no question with be as the main verb and using plural objects, and a what + noun question (e.g., What color is this?) Gradually, throughout the lessons, all question types would have been presented and the children's control of question structures would probably be greater, due to the more limited linguistic focus of each lesson, and the careful linguistic progression from lesson to lesson. The language structures used in each lesson are appropriate to the content. But many linguistic structures meet the criterion of appropriateness. The structures used could be more carefully controlled for number presented at one time, for type, and for order, and still be appropriate.

Part of the language problem in these lessons may stem from the fact that the linguistic focus lists as new items for the lesson only those structures that the children will actually speak. Structures that the children respond to are not listed. Thus it appears, from looking at the linguistic focus of a lesson, that very few structures are involved. But, in fact, the children are responding, in some cases, to a wide variety of structures. Listing only those structures which the children say obscures the linguistic variety which exists within the lesson.

EC 8 Linguistic Focus indicates that the new structures of the lesson are "No. Yes. It's big/little." (Big and little are new vocabulary items.) But these structures are spoken in response to two question types that the children have not heard before, question types which are quite different from one another: "Is this doll big?" and "Is this block big or little?" The Linguistic Focus of English Circle 22 indicates that the only new language structure is "I'm running/walking fast/slowly," with fast and slowly being new vocabulary items. But this response is given in answer to two quite different question types: "What are you doing?" and "Are you walking fast or slowly?" The linguistic content in these examples is considerably more difficult and more varied than the Linguistic Focus suggests.

The Parts: Lessons

The lessons in this program consist of activities which are generally varied, interesting, and fairly involving for the children. However, there is a looseness about the lessons which is unfortunate; a collection of activities -- even interesting activities -- isn't enough. A Conceptual and a Linguistic Focus are indicated for each lesson. The term focus is significant; the term objective is not used. Each lesson is a casual sort of exposure to a content area, rather than a careful sequence of activities moving the child toward the accomplishment of a specific skill. The Conceptual Focus for almost every single lesson is one or more of the following: Identification of Objects, Seriation, Classification, Spatial Relations, Temporal relations, Directions, Object permanency, Object constancy. With such a vague, general, all-encompassing "focus" (not

objective) for a lesson, how does a teacher know when a lesson has been successful? How does she know what it is that the children are to be able to do at the end of the lesson? A clear objective like, "The learner will be able to group yellow, green, blue, and red crayons by color" is more "teachable" and makes progress more easily evaluated than the Conceptual Focus "Classification;" the specific objective, "The learner will be able to arrange sets of one, two, three, four, five objects in order" is more helpful to the teacher than the Conceptual Focus, "Seriation."

The activities of each lesson are usually related to the Conceptual Focus of the lesson. But with the Conceptual Focus left so vague, the activities do form more of a "collection" than a design which moves in a definite direction. There are instances in which an activity zeroes in very clearly and effectively on a specific, significant content item, even though that item was not clearly specified in the Conceptual Focus (e.g., EC 3, SC 32 and 33, SC 38). But these cases are the exception rather than the rule. Generally, one feels a need for a clear presentation of a specific objective (e.g., circle/square; the same color/not the same color; this is a ____/these are ____+/s/, then ____+/əz/, then ____+/z/; set of one/two/three; right/left; he's going to + verb/ he's + verb + ing/he verb +/əd/, then verb +/t/, then verb +/d/; etc.), followed by a set of practice activities which move the children steadily toward more independent use of the content presented, and finally an evaluation activity in which the children respond to the content individually, without the teacher's help. (There are no evaluation activities in these lessons.)

From time to time, important new concept and language items slip in incidentally, with no conscious presentation. In SC 30, the teacher and children count the beads the teacher puts in a box, and then count and name the number of beads she gives to various children. Then the teacher asks questions about how many beads there are of various colors: "How many red beads are there? Four. How many blue beads are there? One. How many green beads are there? None." This is the only instance of none -- the set of no members -- in the materials. Surely the concept of the empty set requires more careful presentation than this. A good example of new linguistic content slipping in occurs in EC 24. In this lesson, the third person singular human subject is used for the first time. The teacher has children perform actions of walking up and jumping down, and then answer her questions about what they are doing: "Are you walking up or jumping down?" Then the class sings a 5-tone melody: "Robert's walking up, Robert's jumping down" (C-D-E-F-G; G-F-E-D-C). This is the first occurrence of is + verb-ing; prior to this the only occurrence of is was as the basic be form with it or that or that + noun as the subject (e.g., It's a crayon, It's green, That crayon is green). Previously, the children have had ample time to hear I + am + verb-ing and you + are + verb-ing, but name + is + verb-ing just suddenly appears and the children plunge in, trying to produce a structure they have not heard before. More care is needed in the specification and clear presentation of new items.

Procedures

The basic procedure used throughout the lessons is for the teacher to say the new language form once (sentence structure which is new or which includes a new lexical item), and then for the children to repeat it in chorus. Many structures are later spoken by groups of children and/or by individuals. This procedure raises three questions: (1) Is it sufficient for children to hear a new sentence structure only once before repeating it? (2) In a program that purports to teach concepts and prepare the children for problem solving, is the preponderance of mimicked responses and the paucity of responses requiring the children to make decisions about -- to react independently, thoughtfully to the conceptual content -- justified? (3) Is the heavy emphasis on group response helpful in moving the children toward the attainment of the conceptual and linguistic goals of the program? Anyone who would answer "No" to these questions, anyone who is not in sympathy with the basic procedure used will, of course, find the program procedurally inadequate.

There are several very effective points in these lessons in which the children have heard and answered a particular question for several lessons, and then, after this substantial amount of listening to the question, they verbalize that question themselves. EC 6 and 17 are striking examples of this. However, EC 4,5,9 and 10 are typical of the far more frequent pattern of children mimicking the teacher's model after hearing it only once:

E C 4 Aide: (holding a truck) Is this a car?
 Teacher: (shaking head) No. It's not a car.
 Class: (with teacher and aide's help) No. It's
 not a car.

(This is the first occurrence of a yes/no question, as well as the first occurrence of the answer.)

- EC 5 T: Is this a doll?
 A: Yes. It's a doll
 C: (with teacher and aide's help) Yes. It's a doll.
 (Doll is new in this lesson but not in this activity.)
- EC 9 T: (pointing to the big car) That car is big.
 C: (with aide's help) That car is big.
 (This is the first occurrence of that and of the structure that + noun.)

After identifying two cars as big the teacher says and the children repeat (with aide's help) "They're the same."
 (This is the first occurrence of any plural subject, the pronoun they, the form 're, and the phrase the same.)

- EC 10 A: (pointing to the big blocks) Those blocks are big.
 They're the same.
 C: (with teacher's help, modeling each of the two sentences separately if the class has difficulty) Those blocks are big. They're the same.
 (The form those, the noun plural /s/, and the form are all occur for the first time here.)

I think it is naive to suppose that a child is able to accurately hear never mind say new structures after only one hearing.⁶

The emphasis on mimicry in this program gives rise to an inanity, an intellectual emptiness. Rarely are the children called upon to make an independent decision concerning a concept item in the lesson; they don't have to decide whether an object is on or in the box, whether an object is or is not a doll, whether two objects are or are not the same size, etc. They merely mimic the teacher's or aide's answer to the question posed, repeat a selected portion of the teacher's command, or else follow the teacher or aide as she answers with the children. The following examples are all too typical:

- EC 32 T: (to group of 3 or 4 pupils) Put one hand on the box.
 Where is your hand?
 A: (modeling answer) On the box.
 C: (with aide's help) On the box.

⁶The phrase "hearing accurately" I would define as categorizing and relating the units of the input (phonologically, syntactically, semantically) as the language in question does, i.e., according to its own rules. Accurate hearing in this sense requires a substantial amount of directed listening.

- EC 42 T: (pointing to toys) Some of those are boats.
 C: (with aide's help) Some of those are boats.
 T: (pointing to the toys) Some of those are bats.
 C: (with aide's help) Some of those are bats.
 T: (pointing to toys) All of those are toys.
 C: (with aide's help) All of those are toys.
- EC 57 (a review lesson!) T: (to class and doing the same activity herself) Put the papers in the box. Where are the papers?
 C: (putting papers in their own boxes and with aide's help if necessary) In the box.
 T: (to class and doing the same activity herself) Put the papers on the box. Where are the papers?
 C: (putting papers on their own boxes with aide's help, if necessary) On the box.

Like the mimicked response, the group response so basic to this program lessens the children's opportunities to react independently to the content item being taught. Besides having the teacher and aide to imitate or follow, the individual child usually has the whole or part of the class to follow. Further, group response (especially in a program like this in which children repeat items they have heard so few times) masks the individual child's errors. The teacher simply cannot hear the language errors of any individual. Thus, the children inevitably practice mistakes, since they are required to speak before they are ready, and then they receive no feedback -- on an individual basis -- when they make errors. But the strongest criticism of this emphasis on group rather than individual response must be the unnaturalness of the language that this procedure encourages. In the first place, native English speakers simply do not converse in chorus. To teach children to respond chorally is to teach them something other than conversational English. Secondly, it is inevitable that there will be problems with responses including "I."

Note the following:

- EC 20 Throughout the lesson there is only group action and group response to the question, "What are you doing?" The responses given are "I'm touching/shaking/pushing/pulling a truck," though in every case it is a group that is performing the action and answering the question.
- EC 20 The whole class walks or runs around in a circle, and in response to the aide's question, "What are you doing?" the entire class, following the teacher's model, answers, "I'm walking/running."
- EC 26 The entire class, and then groups of children, follow the teacher's commands and respond to her question, "What are you doing?" by saying in chorus, "I'm touching a block/the door."
- EC 55 The entire class, the teacher, the aide, and individual pupils answer the question, "What are you doing?" by saying, "I'm touching _____" or "I'm shaking my leg" or "I'm walking," etc.

It must be quite confusing that I sometimes refers to the entire class of children speaking, sometimes to the teacher or aide speaking, and sometimes to pairs or groups of children speaking.

Finally, the authors claim that they are teaching the children to use "natural language." In the Introduction, in answer to the question, "What is 'natural language' as it applies to the lessons?" the authors write:

Natural language is the way people normally speak, and not an exaggerated or stilted type of speech. Natural language in English uses more contractions and short answers than written language. The lessons are written for children to learn how to speak... Therefore, natural speech is used in the oral language lessons.

Many examples could be cited of lessons in which short answers and contracted forms are taught (e.g., EC 16, "What are you touching? A yellow car." EC 36, "What are you doing? Putting two cars on the box" and "How

many cars are on the box? Four." EC 40, "Are the balls inside or outside? Inside.").

But "naturalness" in language means more than just the use of short answers and contracted forms. The use of "Why not?" (English translation) in the following examples seems semantically unnatural:

- SC 6 T: Are all of these cars big?
 C: No. Not all of them are big.
 T: Why not?
 C: Some of them are little.
- SC 12 T: Are these cars the same color?
 C: No. They're not the same color.
 T: Why not?
 P: Because one is green and the other is yellow.

Essentially the logic in these sequences is, not all of these cars are big because not all of these cars are big, and these cars are not the same color because they are not the same color. Why has something to do with cause, but these sequences do not have anything to do with cause; they merely ask for paraphrases.

There is little evidence of concern for use of natural language in a situation in EC 22. The teacher tells the class to "Run fast" around a table, and while they are running she keeps asking them what they are doing:

- T: Run fast. What are you doing?
 C: I'm running fast.
 T: Run fast. What are you doing?
 C: I'm running fast.
 T: Run fast. What are you doing?
 C: I'm running fast
 T: Stop.

The native English speaker does not use English in this way.

EC 45-52 focus on temporal relations (conceptual focus) expressed in simple present tense structures (linguistic focus). This entire set of eight lessons is full of sequences like the following:

- 46 T: (to aide) First put the doll on the box. Then, put the block on the box. Put the car on the box last.
 T&C: (to aide) What do you do first?
 A: (putting doll on box) First, I put the doll on the box.
 T&C: (to aide) Then, what do you do?
 A: (putting block on box) Then, I put the block on the box.
 T: (to aide) What do you do last?
 C: (with teacher's help) What do you do last?
 A: (putting car on box) Last, I put the car on the box.

- EC 48 T&C:(to a pupil) First, touch your head. Then, touch your hand. Touch your foot last.
 A&G.(pointing to pupil) He's Robert. What does he do first?
 C: (with teacher's help) First he touches his head.
 A&G: (to class) Then, what does he do?
 C:(with teacher's help) Then, he touches his hand.
 A&G:(to class) What does he do last?
 C:(with teacher's help) Last, he touches his foot.

This is a very specialized use of the simple present tense, it is the only use taught, and it is taught for eight straight English lessons. In materials intended to emphasize useful concepts and language, I find this difficult to justify. Why not teach the simple present tense (linguistic focus) in the more natural situation of repeated actions (what the child does each day, in the morning, every afternoon; what he eats for lunch, etc.) and teach temporal relations (conceptual focus) using descriptions in the past tense of completed series of actions performed: What did he do first? Then what did he do? What did he do next/last? etc.

But by far the most serious and pervasive problem with the "naturalness" of the language is the basic command-question-answer pattern used repeatedly throughout the lessons. Again and again, children are told to do something, and then asked about what they are doing:

- EC 24 A: (to pupil and with teacher's help) Walk up.
 T: (to pupil) Are you walking up or down?
 Pl: (with aide's help) I'm walking up.
- EC 26 A&C: (to group) Touch the door.
 A: (to group) What are you doing?
 Gl: (touching door and with teacher's help if necessary) I'm touching the door.
- EC 32 T: (to class) Put one hand up. How many hands do you have up?
 C: (with aide's help) One.
- EC 42 T: (to pupil) Put the bat in front of Robert. Is the bat in front or in back of Robert?
 Pl: (with aide's help) In front of Robert.⁷

Asking questions is absolutely crucial to one's learning. One asks a question -- in real life -- either to gain information he does not already have, or else to verify information which he does have. But in these lessons the basic pattern is for questioning to be nothing more than the drilling of forms; the questions asked are generally meaningless and inane, as the questioner knows the answer with certainty before posing the question. Not all of the inane questions are part of the command-question-answer pattern.

- EC 46 T: (placing toys in front of the pupil and to class) Are the toys in front of Robert?
 C: (with aide's help) Yes, they are. They're in front of Robert.
 T: (leaving toys in front of the same pupil and to class) Are the toys in back of Robert?
 C: (with aide's help) No, they're not. They're not in back of Robert.

Who, having received an affirmative answer to the first question, would proceed to ask the second question? (Apparently, a teacher of Spanish

⁷These examples raise other problems mentioned above, e.g., plural referent for I, and the whole class saying they have one hand up.

speaking children would.) The teacher who should above all else be a living example of the expert questioner emerges as being rather silly.

Earlier introduction of the third person singular subject would help make the language more natural. The aide could then whisper a command to a child, and then the teacher could ask a second child about the action being performed by the first. Thus the command-question-answer sequences listed above would be:

- EC 24 A: (whispering to P₁) Walk up.
 T: John, is he walking up or down?
 P₂: He's walking up.
- EC 26 A: (whispering to P₁) Touch the door.
 T: Mary, what's he doing?
 P₂: Touching the door.
- EC 32 A: (whispering to P₁) Put one hand up.
 T: Susan, how many hands does he have up?
 P₂: One.
- EC 42 A: (whispering to P₁) Put the bat in front of Robert.
 T: Frank, is the bat in front or in back of Robert?
 P₂: In front of Robert.

There are a few lessons that are as noteworthy for their successful creation of situations in which real questions are asked, as the lessons cited above are for their lack of realistic question situations. In EC 25, one activity involves the aide stepping out of sight and putting her hand up or down. The children then ask her, "Is your hand up/down?" Here they're asking a question in order to gain information they don't have. This is a real question, the only kind of question worth teaching.

Summary

In summary, The Bilingual Conceptual Development Guide -- Preschool includes many wise selections of content, some activities which are directly

focused on attaining a significant goal, and some activities which are interesting and involving. But the program suffers from a lack of systematic presentation, from a lack of tightness within the lessons (clearly specified behavioral objectives, and carefully sequenced activities moving toward and evaluating the attainment of those objectives), from over-use of a procedure involving too little listening, too much mimicry and group response, and from a paucity of realistic situations in which natural language is used.

ENGLISH GUIDE -- KINDERGARTEN (ESOL-SESD GUIDE)

General Description

The English Guide (EG) consists of 135 lessons to be taught in one year. The author states the purpose of the Guide as follows:

The lessons are designed to support language arts programs in teaching English to speakers of other languages (ESOL), and in teaching standard English as a second dialect (SESD)...Children whose native language is not English, and children who speak non-standard dialects of English both need ordered, intensive practice of basic sentence patterns and sounds of English(p.i).

The "Language Learning Practice" sheet accompanying these materials presents in schematic form the pattern practice technique used, a technique which the author describes as consisting of three levels:

The initial level consists of a teacher-modeled linguistic structure. The second level involves conscious choice with the correct response elicited by a cue which the teacher gives. When the child reaches level three, he is then expected to automatically choose an appropriate response to a particular situation (p.i).

The teacher is cautioned to teach for the linguistic objectives provided, and to teach those objectives in the order given as"...children are introduced to sentence patterns and vocabulary systematically and...one lesson is built on the preceding one."(p. ii) However, the teacher is encouraged to adapt the lessons as she deems appropriate, skipping patterns her children already know, substituting or adding relevant vocabulary, motivating her children in ways that work for her, etc.

EG is an impressive program. It is, as the author claims, an ordered sequence of patterns. A careful attempt has been made to present the core of the system of English, and, while it's not easy to see the steady progression through the three levels described above, it is undeniable that the child moving through these lessons goes from the controlled manipulation

of specific structures toward a flexible, more communicative use of English. The child who completes this course should have a solid grasp of the basic syntactic system of English including information, yes/no, and or questions with be, have, transitive and intransitive verbs; structures using present continuous, simple present, and past tense forms; various noun phrases including the set of subject pronouns; negative structures; comparative and superlative adjective forms; place and time expressions. This is a commendable accomplishment for 135 kindergarten lessons.

The Whole: Selection and Sequencing of Content

The first thirteen lessons include the numbers 1-10, rhymes, and a proliferation of questions of various patterns that the children respond to, e.g., What's your name? Do you have some sticks for me--How many sticks does (name) see? How old are you? How many bounces did you hear? Are you five? Are you five years old? Where do you live? What street do you live on? What school are you in? What grade are you in? What's his/her name? Is (name) right?, etc. But from Lesson 14 on, careful linguistic selection and sequencing is apparent:

Lessons 14-38 focus on be as a main verb (include most subject pronouns, affirmative and negative statements, yes/no, what, and what + noun questions).

Lessons 39-61 focus on be + verb + ing (present continuous) forms (include affirmative and negative statements, adverbs of location and manner, yes/no, what-doing, which one, and who-subject questions).

Lessons 62-79 focus on place expressions and noun phrase expansions in structures with be as main verb, and with be + verb + ing with transitive and intransitive verbs (include yes/no, where, who-

subject, what-doing, and what-direct object questions).

Lessons 80-103 focus on simple present tense with transitive and intransitive verbs, and on time expressions (include affirmative and negative statements, infinitive phrases as direct objects, complex sentences, and yes/no, how many, what - do, what-direct object, when and who-subject questions).

Lessons 104-119 focus on simple past tense (include yes/no, what else, when, who-subject, who-direct object, which + noun, where questions, and complex sentences).

Lessons 120-135 focus on past + be as main verb and past + be + verb + ing and on comparative and superlative adjectival forms (include affirmative and negative statements, there was/there were structures, complex sentences, and yes/no, why, what-doing, who-subject, and how many questions).

The author has selected significant syntactic structures and forms to teach, and she has arranged them in a reasonable sequence. Besides providing a careful over-all sequence, the author has, at many points, exercised considerable care in the sequencing of objectives within a section; e.g., lessons 104-106 teach the /t/ past tense ending, lessons 107-109 teach the /d/ past tense ending, lessons 110-114 teach the separate syllable /əd/ past tense ending, and lessons 116-120 teach irregular past tense forms.

Granting that the material included in this program is in the main well-selected and sequenced, I would raise four questions about the content. First, why not control the structures in lessons 1-14 as carefully as those in succeeding lessons? To the extent that many of the sentences the children verbalize in these lessons include some form of the main verb be, there is control; however, many of the questions and statements used constitute a structural hodge-podge. When one has only 135 lessons in which to teach the basic system of English, maximum efficiency is impor-

tant. Efficiency in the teaching of the English language system is lost in the first thirteen lessons. The second question also concerns efficiency: Is the amount of time spent learning rhymes justified? I think not, Approximately half of the lessons include rhymes which may be entertaining, but do not contribute to the teaching of English structure. In most instances, the rhymes are in some way related to the lesson (e.g., in Lesson 38 the giant and elf poem comes after a lesson in which tall and short are first used), but in some cases the relation is hard to find (e.g., the Thumbkin song in Lesson 45). But in any case, it's hard, I think, to justify either type on the basis of structural teaching: the deleted sentence form, "One giant step and I'm over a wall!" and the two-clause sentence, "Now I'm a little, short, short elf, who can take good care of himself!" are not structures we would teach at this point, nor are sentences like "Dance, Thumbkin, dance, Dance ye merrymen, everyone," and sentences with modals like, "But Littleman, he can't dance alone" (note "Littleman, he..."). I think the rhymes presented are delightful, and I wouldn't recommend a kindergarten curriculum that was devoid of rhymes; however, I would not include them in the language lessons, simply because this is not the most efficient way of accomplishing a huge task to which a very limited time has been allotted.

A third question concerns the teaching of the phonological system of English: Is it sufficient to provide practice on pronunciation items that will be difficult for the learner, without any attempt to present the phonological system of the language? The lack of systematic phonology teaching stands in striking contrast to the careful presentation of the syntactic system of English in this program. The time spent in teaching rhymes would be more profitably spent presenting and having the children respond to and eventually imitate the significant phonologically contrasting

features of English -- e.g., voicing and voicelessness, points of articulation, manners of articulation, permitted phoneme combinations, syllable types, suprasegmentals, etc. The approach to phonology teaching taken in this program seems rooted in the "strong version" of contrastive analysis, working as it does to eradicate anticipated pronunciation errors, and selecting phonological content on the basis of anticipated pronunciation problems, rather than on the basis of the underlying structure of the phonological system.

My final question about the content of this program concerns the wisdom of using what-doing and what-direct object questions together (e.g., Lesson 73, 105) without clearly focusing on the contrast between these two types of what questions. The first activity of Lesson 73 uses both questions as if -- because they can have the same type of answer -- they are the same type of question:

C: (with the teacher's help) Pick up the _____, name.

G1: What's (name) doing?

G2: (with the teacher's help) She's picking up the _____.

.....

C: (with the teacher's help) Carry the / _____, name.

G1: What's (name) carrying?

G2: He's carrying the _____.

.....

The third activity in the same lesson includes the dialogue:

P1: What's the man doing?

P2: (with the teacher's help) He's painting the house.

P1: (showing two men painting) What are they painting?

P2: They're painting the house.

The difference between the two what questions (questioning the entire verb phrase and the other questioning only the object) would be made clear if the deleted answer forms were used: _____ doing? Painting the house. What's he painting (as if not heard directly)? The house.

As it now stands, the full answer responses, being the same for both questions, obscure the differences between them. This important distinction should be clearly drawn.

The Parts: Lessons

The individual lessons of this program are much tighter than those in the BCDG. The objectives of each lesson are the structures and lexical items that the children will say in that lesson for the first time; these are listed under "Linguistic Focus: New." Structures listed under "Linguistic Focus: Review" include items occurring in that lesson which the children have recently verbalized for the first time. The activities of the lesson generally use mainly the linguistic structures which are the objectives of that lesson, and tend to move from group responses in teacher-controlled question-answer sequences, to individual responses between pupils in game type activities. Every lesson is written in a clear, useable format; new and review linguistic focus and materials listed at the top of the page, and each of the four or five activities of the lesson described in a simple, clear, short paragraph with sample dialogue indicated. Each lesson takes one page.

One sometimes feels a need in these lessons for a more sharply focused initial presentation of the objective. In some lessons, new syntactic items just slip in with no presentation at all, and in others, the new items are presented in a way that does not make their meaning and/or use clear. In Lesson 60, the new items puppy and kitten are not introduced in any way. The lesson begins with an individual student saying "This is a dog and that's a puppy," and with a second individual student saying, "This is

a cat and that's a kitten," though theoretically the children have never had the lexical items puppy and kitten. In the last activity of Lesson 61, transitive verbs are used for the first time in an incidental way; they are not indicated as part of the objective. In Lesson 70, the subject pronoun we just suddenly appears when, in answer to the teacher's question, "What are you doing?" two children are to say, "We're swimming," though again this is not listed under the Linguistic Focus: New. Similarly, indirect objects suddenly appear in an activity in Lesson 87, and was is used for the first time in Lesson 114 when an individual student is to ask, "Was it a zoo animal or a pet?" Lesson 129, on the other hand, offers a striking example of a lesson beginning with a very deliberate presentation of the new item (comparative adjectives with -er). The teacher begins the lesson by giving several very clear demonstrations of big and bigger objects before the children are asked to verbalize the big-bigger distinction.

The lessons with be + verb + ing forms offer the best examples of new items presented in ways that do not make their meaning and use clear. Present continuous verbs indicate actions in progress. But the activities in Lesson 39 in which this verb form first occurs do not "zero-in" on this meaning: The first activity involves saying hop while in the process of hopping, the second involves hopping while saying a rhyme that includes only the form hop, the third involves identifying pictures of actions in progress using the present continuous forms, the fourth involves hearing and responding to phonological differences between /h/ and /n/, and the fifth involves reciting the rhyme Jack Be Nimble in which a child jumps (once presumably) and the teacher then asks, "What's he/she doing?" and

the class answers, "He/she's jumping." Not once does this lessor demonstrate clearly the special meaning and use of the be + verb + ing form. Later lessons do nothing to clarify matters:

- Lesson 59 The teacher shows a picture of a dog sitting and asks, "What's the dog doing?" The class answers, "He's sitting." Then the teacher barks and asks, "Now what's the dog doing?" and the class answers, "Now he's barking" (though no barking is going on at that time).
- Lesson 60 Each of several children holds a picture showing an activity in progress so that only he can see it. When his picture is called (e.g., "Who's eating?") he replies, "I am" (though of course he is doing no such thing).
- Lesson 74 Several children carry out the teacher's whispered commands, and before they are through the teacher says, "Stop," and the children "freeze." While they are frozen, one child asks another, "What's (name) doing?" and the second child replies, "She's carrying the truck." (Be + verb + ing forms do not refer to a "freeze.")

In several lessons contrast is used effectively in the presentation of an objective. In Lesson 34, square and round are introduced together, thus focusing attention clearly on the particular feature of shape; in Lesson 43 fast and slowly are introduced together, thus focusing attention clearly on the feature of speed; in Lesson 93 simple present and present continuous sentences are presented in contrasting pairs, and in Lesson 107 present simple, present continuous, and simple past tense sentences are presented in contrasting triplets, thus focusing attention clearly on the special meaning of each tense; in Lesson 122 are and were are presented in contrasting pairs of sentences, thus focusing attention clearly on the special meaning of each be form. The program would be stronger if greater use were made of contrast in the presentation of objectives. For example, the new notion "the same color" would be more clear if it were introduced along with "not

the same color" ("This is blue and that is blue. This is the same color as that. This is red and that is red. This is the same color as that. This is red and that is blue. This is not the same color as that, etc.)

Lesson

116 is the first of a group of lessons introducing some irregular past tense verb forms. But the present and past tense forms are not always presented together. The first occurrence of lost and found are in the dialogue:

T: I put a penny in my pocket.

C: Charlie lost the penny. kalph found the penny.

The students will not have the forms lose and find until the next day. Will they assume that los and foun are the present forms which, according to the regular past tense rules, add /t/ and /d/ respectively? By presenting the past tense forms alone, the whole objective -- the irregularity of these particular past tense forms -- is lost.

Perhaps the most impressive element of this quite impressive program is the activities used throughout the lessons. It would be impossible to imagine a more varied, imaginative, actively involving set of activities than those used in this program -- guessing games, contests, hiding activities, role-playing situations, matchings, imitations, surprises pulled out of sacks, charades, memory games, follow-the-leader games, puppets, pretending activities -- the list is endless. The author has used this delightful variety in the service of teaching her carefully selected and sequenced objectives; rarely do her fun activities become ends in themselves. This set of activities could serve as a tremendous resource for any teacher.

Procedures

The basic procedure used throughout this program would have to be labeled "pattern practice," though, as the author accurately claims in the Introduction, it is in this program "...not mere mimicry or repetition." (p.i) New structures are introduced in controlled dialogues in which the students participate with substantial teacher help. In most lessons the activities gradually move toward less controlled language situations in which the children participate on their own.

The practice in these lessons is generally effective. However, the program would gain much by building in more opportunity for listening. In some cases more listening is required in order for the children to grasp the objective of the lesson, the new structure, before they are asked to produce it; and in other cases more listening is necessary simply for procedural reasons, in order to adequately reveal the procedure that the children are to follow in a new activity. Though the first of these (listening for structure) is more important than the second (listening for procedure), inattention to the second can cause unnecessary confusion in a lesson. The following are a few of many examples in which more listening for structure would help: (Underlining indicates the items the children are hearing or producing for the first time.)

Lesson 26 T: (referring to one object) What's this/that?
 C: It's a book.
 T: (referring to several objects) What are these/those?
 C: (with the teacher's help) 8 They're books.

Lesson 87 P1: (whispering) Give him two balls.
 P2: (gives John two balls)
 P3: Thank you.
 P2: You're welcome.
 (The children have not had structures including indirect objects, nor have they had object pronoun forms.)

⁸"With the teacher's help" is to be understood as spoken after the teacher's model, we are told in the Introduction (p. ii).

- Lesson 98 P₁: (hiding a picture of toast)
 C: What does Joe eat every morning?
 P₂: He eats toast.
 P₁: (showing a picture of toast)
 C: Yes, he eats toast.
 P₁: I like to eat toast every morning.
 (No teacher's model is indicated for this new structure.)
- Lesson 101 T: (showing a picture of cake)
 C: (with the teacher's help) Do you always have cake for breakfast?
 P₁: (with the teacher's help) No, I never do.
 (Goes on to use sometimes, which is also new.)
- Lesson 104 T: Wally, hop.
 C: (after the action is done, and with the teacher's help) Wally hopped.
 P₁: I hopped.
- Lesson 106 G₁: What did your mother do last night, Henry?
 P₁: (looking at a "bake" picture) She baked a cake last night.
 G₂: (with the teacher's help) Henry's mother baked a cake last night.

And these are a few examples of activities requiring more listening in order (at least) to establish the procedure:

- Lesson 56 T: (showing two pictures) Which one's playing?
 C: The boy's playing.
 (The question structure is new, includes new vocabulary, and requires an answer in which the third person noun + be is new in the present continuous structure, and in which the vocabulary items play and boy are also new. Asked this question, which they have not heard before, how do the children know what kind of answer they are to give? In fact, how do they know what they have been asked?)
- Lesson 61 In the second activity ("Either") the picture shown is intended to indicate what the students are not doing. But in previous lessons (and in the activity immediately following this one) the picture shown is intended to indicate what the students are doing. This sudden change in procedure needs to be established through demonstration.
- Lesson 132 T: How much is this lollipop?
 C: It's ten cents.
 T: How much is that lollipop?
 G₁: It's one dollar.
 G₂: (with the teacher's help) That lollipop is expensive.
 P₁: (with the teacher's help) This lollipop is more expensive than that one.

(This is a complicated dialogue involving teacher, whole class, groups, and an individual pupil.)

A puppet demonstration dialogue repeated several times, with the children just listening would be one way to provide the needed opportunity for listening in most of the above examples.⁹

The author has very skillfully, very imaginatively devised situations in which the language practice is natural and appropriate. There is much less group and much more individual response (which is bound to add to the naturalness of the language situation.) than is the case in the BCDG. Most of the questions asked are "real" questions -- questions asked to gain or confirm information (though some drillish ones occasionally slip in, as in Lesson 78, "By.") In Lesson 13, after a child counts a given number of circles, the teacher asks for confirmation, "Is Mary right?"; in Lesson 35, while the children hide their eyes, one pupil hides two of a familiar object, and then individuals question him in an attempt to guess what he hid: "Are they long?" "Are they orange?" "Are they square?" "Are they books?"; in Lesson 41 a child performs an action (e.g., skipping) while the other children close their eyes and try to guess the action from the sound they hear: "What's Mary doing?"; in Lesson 98, volunteers sit in the "Question Chair" and ask classmates a when question of their own choosing. These are questions asked for valid reasons, purposeful questions, not just silly drills. Besides learning how to ask certain types of questions, the students are learning what questioning is.

⁹This procedure is used throughout the bilingual program: Robert Wilson, et. al., A Bilingual Academic Curriculum for Navajo Beginners, Consultants in Teaching English, 1081 Gayley Avenue, Los Angeles, Calif. 90024, 1968.

Summary

This English language program for kindergarten children teaches the basic syntactic core of English in a reasonable and effective sequence. Lessons are generally composed of activities that focus on a specific syntactic objective, and move the child from carefully controlled toward more free use of the syntactic structure being learned. The activities of the lessons show remarkable variety and involvement. For the most part, the children practice new language patterns in natural and realistic situations. This program would be strengthened by the inclusion of more opportunities for listening to new structures and new procedures before being required to use them. The EG teaches the children to ask, as well as to answer, questions. In short, the children who are taught this program will learn a great deal of English in a systematic way. What's more, they will enjoy the learning process.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ORAL LANGUAGE GUIDE -- PRIMARY ONE, PART ONE

General Description

This set of forty lessons is "...an oral language program for use with primary age Spanish-background children who have limited control of standard English..." The lessons are designed "...to help provide these children with the oral language they need for the school setting." It is exposure to and practice -- rather than mastery -- of selected oral language structures expressing certain conceptual content, that is, presently the goal of this program:

It should not be assumed...that the use of these lessons will guarantee mastery of either the conceptual or the linguistic content. Much additional practice of both will usually be necessary.

The content of this program is drawn from social studies, science, and math.

Basic concepts and processes from these areas are integrated with linguistic features identified through a contrastive analysis of Spanish and English.¹⁰

As in the BCDG, it is a concern for conceptual development that is basic in the selection of content; the main purpose is not to teach the English language systematically, but rather to teach concepts and the expression of them, trying to hit the language "trouble spots" as you go. The treatment of language in this program is based on the strong version of contrastive analysis.

The lessons are written in a very clear format. Each lesson is prefaced by a page of information for the teacher concerning the lesson: the review and new linguistic focus items, a "Linguistic Commentary" which calls the teacher's attention to language problems that are likely to occur in the lesson, the review and new conceptual focus items, a "Conceptual Commentary" which notes conceptual difficulties that may arise, and a list of

¹⁰The quotations in this paragraph occur on p.1 of the "Foreword."

materials needed for each activity. On the facing page, the activities of the lesson are described in simple, brief paragraphs with accompanying sample dialogues.

Each lesson begins with a ten minute "Spanish Support Activity." These activities are intended to serve two purposes: they present ...key concepts in science, social science, and mathematics which the pupils will encounter in the corresponding English ORAL LANGUAGE LESSONS. Presenting each of the Spanish activities before implementing each of the corresponding English ORAL LANGUAGE LESSONS will ensure that the concepts are familiar to the learner before they are practiced in the new language (p. 2).

and they also

...reassure the pupil that his home language is a valuable asset which is respected as a legitimate means of dealing with intellectual tasks (p. 2).

The Spanish support activity of each lesson is followed by three oral language activities. The authors claim that one of the first two of these activities will contain new vocabulary, and the other new structure, but that neither will include new vocabulary and new structure. (This claim is not borne out by the lessons.) "The third activity is primarily a review of the structures and vocabulary contained in the first two activities...(p. 3)" "Take-Off Ideas" -- suggestions for reinforcing activities to be used at other times -- accompany each lesson.

The material is divided into four units of ten lessons each, with the fifth lesson of each unit a review lesson, and the tenth lesson of each unit a review-evaluation lesson. An introductory overview sheet summarizes the linguistic, conceptual, science, math, and social studies material in each unit. Unfortunately, though this plan appears to be a somewhat careful one in outline form, it is not very successfully implemented in the lessons themselves.

This program, like the BCDG, makes the assumption that concepts are not language-specific culture, that they can be expressed in various languages; it assumes that a concept can be learned in one language (the first language) and then that same concept can be expressed in another language (the second language). The problems listed under linguistic commentary for the lessons are "...language problems that Spanish-speakers typically have with...English...;" they are viewed as resulting from the interference of the first language system on the second. But the problems listed under conceptual commentary are "...conceptual problems that any first grader might have (p.3);" they are not viewed as the result of the interference of one language-culture conceptual system with another. The assumption that there are various language systems, but only one conceptual system which any of those languages can express, is open to question. (See especially Lesson 11 in which the Spanish support activity "prepares the children" for the English spatial terms in and on , and the linguistic commentary cites as a problem the substitution of Spanish en -- which can mean on or inside -- for English in and on. Is this a pronunciation problem, or has the Spanish support activity encouraged the children to believe that en refers to a non-language-specific spatial category, which he then has difficulty splitting into the two mutually exclusive English spatial categories in and on? Has he been led to expect a single reality in the matter of dividing space, where in fact Spanish and English divide space differently? Might it not be wise to teach the Spanish spatial system and English spatial system separately, rather than as a single system with two sets of labels?)

The Whole: Selection and Sequencing of Content

By attempting to accomplish too much, this program accomplishes too little. The five-way focus of this program (linguistic, conceptual, math, science, social studies) results in a conglomeration of material, rather than in a careful design which has selected and organized the significant underlying units of structure in each input area. The term "interdisciplinary" used in the title of this program suggests that the intention was to integrate, to relate basic concepts and processes across five areas (linguistic, conceptual, and three content areas). However, this integration, a valid objective certainly, has not been accomplished. The program generally proceeds from lesson to lesson, each one either focusing on one subject matter area, or else including a little of this and a little of that, one activity focusing on social studies perhaps, the next on math, the next on categorizing objects. But does this qualify the lesson as "interdisciplinary" in any sense? Each content area deserves systematic treatment, an organized presentation of the basic concepts and processes operative in that area. Interdisciplinary integration is a noble goal, but that too requires systematic presentation. A more effective procedure might have been to focus on a single content area during any one lesson (social studies, science, math), to sequence the lessons within each subject area, and then to periodically include lessons whose objective was to integrate across content areas. This would mean designing activities in which concepts and/or processes from more than one area were used simultaneously, not (as is generally done in this program) providing lessons which included one activity using concepts from one content area, and another activity using concepts from a different area.

The introductory overview sheet indicates that the material in each unit is drawn from five areas. But note that the three "inputs," social studies, math, and science, are subject matter areas, whereas the linguistic and conceptual contributions are tools for dealing with any type of subject matter. The only distinction made on the overview sheet between these two very different types of "input" ("content" vs. "tool") is the lack of the word "input" in the conceptual and linguistic titles. In the lessons themselves, "Conceptual Focus" includes subject matter and conceptual (i.e., "tool") objectives. Presumably, every activity will have some kind of linguistic "input" (e.g., it will include verbalization), and some kind of conceptual "input" (e.g., it will include the use of some cognitive process -- categorizing, identifying, discriminating, ordering), but the use of cognitive processes and linguistic structures hardly qualifies an activity as "interdisciplinary." The overview sheet outlining the "inputs" in each unit reveals another problem with the five areas: the "Conceptual" description is generally the same as the "Science input" description:

Unit II - Lessons 11-20

...

CONCEPTUAL: Discriminating the spatial relationships of persons and objects, and their movement both individually and with help...

SCIENCE INPUT: Discriminating spatial relations, position and movement of persons and objects...

Unit III - Lessons 21-30

...

CONCEPTUAL: Discriminating and classifying objects and sets of objects by their attributes of number, color, size, shape and use.

SCIENCE INPUT: Discriminating and classifying by attributes of number, size, shape, utility and color.

The basic principle for the selection of content in this program seems to be "What lessons can we think of that will include some science, social studies, and math?" The guiding principle apparently was not (as I feel it should have been) "What are the basic concepts and processes of science, of social studies, and of math?" Would a 40-lesson program that was intent on presenting the fundamental concepts and processes in these subject areas include objectives like "Identifying and distinguishing walking and running" (Lesson 13), or "Demonstrating that resources (i.e., classroom supplies) can be moved by people to other people and places" (Lesson 14)? The attempt to focus on all areas results in none receiving maximally systematic treatment.

The selected objectives are bunched more than sequenced. There is no apparent reason for the grouping of the conceptual focus items within most lessons (other than to include something from more than one subject area).¹¹ Lesson 16 lists three conceptual focus items to be introduced:

Lesson 16 Using triangular shapes to construct houses and kites
Using a circular shape to construct a face
Recalling past needs, wants, and actions

The third item seems to have been included as an excuse for reviewing past tense forms; in no way does it relate to or integrate with the other two.

Lesson 22 lists these conceptual focus items to be introduced:

Lesson 22 Identifying a set of six as containing six objects...a set of ten as containing ten objects
Demonstrating that money is used to purchase goods which satisfy our wants
Demonstrating that resources are scarce and that we cannot satisfy all our wants
Demonstrating that scarce resources are sometimes shared
Matching equivalent sets one to one

¹¹The terms "objective" and "conceptual focus item" are being used interchangeably here. The program at no point uses the term "objective." What is to be taught (new) in a lesson is listed under the heading, "Conceptual Focus, Introduce."

The second objective has apparently been included as a way of getting more mileage out of the one-to-one matching activity that involves buying beads for one penny each. And items three and four seem to be preachy afterthoughts (See activity #3 "Sharing the Balloons"), derived from a chosen activity. Thus, the middle three objectives have apparently followed from the activities -- the means -- to be used in the teaching. This is cart before horse; surely one decides what his goals are and then what means he shall employ for their effective attainment.

As there is often little apparent reason for the grouping of objectives within a lesson, so there is generally little apparent reason for the movement of objectives from one lesson to the next. The conceptual focus items to be introduced in Lessons 16 through 19 are:

Lesson 16 (cited earlier) Using triangular shapes to construct houses and kites
Using a circular shape to construct a face
Recalling past needs, wants, and actions

Lesson 17 Demonstrating that resources may be used up in performing classroom activities
Recalling symbols representing objects

Lesson 18 Recalling past events
Demonstrating that people can go to and from places safely to avoid injury to themselves or others
Demonstrating that walking is slower than running and that distances can be covered more quickly by running

Lesson 19 Demonstrating that people and objects help in getting to and from places.
Demonstrating that one and one more is two..., seven and one more is eight

There is no clear sense of progression here, no feeling of building; the feeling is more one of jumping from thing to thing. Neither the selection nor the sequencing of content in this program reflects a concern for presenting the underlying structure of three subject areas in a systematic way.

The Parts: Lessons

Like the BCDG lessons, the lessons of this interdisciplinary program are loosely structured and lacking in direction. At the outset of every unit the linguistic and conceptual goals of the unit are stated in this nebulous way:

Linguistic Focus: Unit X contains...structures...which deal with...

Conceptual Focus: Unit X contains activities which are basically designed to help the first grade child with...

or
...to help the first grade child understand...¹²

These statements are accurate as descriptions of the lessons: the lessons are groups of activities including verbalization, which "deal with" -- i.e., which have something to do with -- size, shape, helpers and their roles, etc. But the lessons need to do more than that. They need to provide objectives which designate the significant features (and relations between them) of size, shape, helpers and their roles, and indicate how the child will be able to respond to these significant features and relationships. Some of the lesson objectives (i.e., conceptual focus items) are specific and behaviorally stated:

- Lesson 1 Identifying self and others by name
- Lesson 4 Ordering the numbers one-ten by rote counting
- Lesson 12 Identifying and distinguishing in front of, in back of, and beside positions.
- Lesson 21 Identifying a set of one as containing one object...a set of five as containing five objects
- Lesson 38 Identifying and discriminating circles and triangles

But the majority of lesson objectives are either left vague, or else they are descriptions of the activities of the lesson rather than a specification of the goals of the lesson. (Perhaps, as suggested in the previous section, the latter problem is the result of the activities often being the goals of the lesson.) Some vague objectives follow:

¹²Emphasis mine.

- Lesson 6 Identifying classroom resources that one has and does not have
- Lesson 11 Obtaining and using resources
- Lesson 21 Distinguishing one kind of object from other kinds of objects by attributes
- Lesson 31 Distinguishing actions
- Lesson 36 Identifying an attribute of shapes by counting points

Here are examples of objectives which are activity descriptions:

- Lesson 7 Demonstrating how to exchange resources
- Lesson 14 Demonstrating that resources can be moved by people to other people and places
- Lesson 16 Using triangular shapes to construct houses and kites
Using a circular shape to construct a face
- Lesson 32 Demonstrating school workers at work and at rest
- Lesson 37 Making shapes from classroom resources as a group

Clearly stated behavioral objectives would help to assure mastery of content, rather than casual exposure to it.

These lessons, like those of the BCDG often fail to give a clear presentation of the content item being taught. The point being made in the second activity of Lesson 23 is the relativity of big and little, that whether an object is big or little depends on the size of the object it's being compared to. But this is done in a confusing way. First, a puppet designates a ball seen in isolation as big, then a bigger ball is uncovered and the class identifies that ball as big, and finally the puppet returns to the first ball and describes it as little. Why not focus clearly on the relativity of size by having the puppet deliberately uncover the second ball before he answers the question about the first ball: "Is that ball big?" The message would be that one can't determine the relative size of one object until he knows the size of the object to which it is being compared. The first activity of Lesson 37 is intended to demonstrate the meaning of sharing. Pairs of children are given a crayon and a piece of paper with three dots on it. While one child holds the paper, the other connects two

dots with a crayon, following the example of two puppets. Meanwhile, the puppets and children answer the teacher's question "What are you sharing?" But the meaning of sharing -- the purpose of this activity -- is not clear from this presentation. How is the situation different from one in which the appropriate question would be "What are you using?" The special meaning of sharing, using materials together, is not apparent. A simple contrast between children who were sharing (i.e. using materials together) and those who were not sharing (i.e., using the same materials in the performance of the same task, but working separately, each with his own set of materials) would make the point.

The linguistic commentary and the conceptual commentary of many lessons cite important problems that are likely to occur in the teaching of those particular lessons. But it is interesting that little is done to teach those points. The conceptual commentary of lesson 13 cites as a problem the understanding of go away from as not meaning going to a specific place. This lack of goal specification is certainly a crucial aspect of the meaning of the expression go away from. But even though this is important to the meaning of the item being taught, and even though it is recognized as a point that is not easy, one that needs to be made, nothing is done in the lesson to teach it. Why not focus sharply on the contrast between the unspecified goal in go away from and the specific goal in go to, by a puppet demonstration in which the puppet wanders aimlessly away from an object in response to the command, "Go away from the _____," but makes a beeline directly to a goal when commanded to "Go to the _____." The point is one that could easily and effectively be made through simple, dramatic contrast demonstrations. Lesson 31 "deals with" school workers and their

jobs. The conceptual commentary cites the "...understanding that school workers perform specific tasks, but that they also perform some similar tasks" as a problem. Now here is an important notion, the notion of overlapping categories. Workers are defined by the total set of tasks they perform, but different workers' sets may include some of the same tasks. Yet, though this is an important point, and though it is recognized as one that is not automatically grasped, it is not specifically taught. Why not set up an activity designed to make this point, an activity in which the children sort the pictures accompanying the lesson in two ways: first by worker (e.g., all the teacher pictures together, all the office worker pictures together, all the custodian pictures together) and then by the action pictured (e.g., all the dusting pictures together, all the desk-fixing pictures together, all the resting pictures together). Lessons 9 and 19 cite linguistic problems that deal with major points of the language system, but nothing is done to teach them. The problem of differentiating between the third person singular verb form (e.g., needs) and the form used for other persons in the present tense (e.g., need) could be easily focused on in a simple activity involving the contrast of these two forms: "I want a _____, but he wants a _____," "I need a _____, but she needs a _____." The him/her distinction, cited as a problem in Lesson 19, is not taught. The teacher is told to "Guide the class to use him and her correctly." But the problem could be solved with a simple activity in which boys and girls are separated and various boy-girl pairs act as the "receivers" as the teacher has a puppet and then pupils give objects "to him" or "to her." Why not teach basic notions, instead of listing them as potential difficulties?

Procedures

The activities of this program generally require the children to mimic the new language patterns after the teacher's model, and -- sometimes as a class, sometimes in groups, sometimes individually -- to ask and answer questions. Like the BCDG, this program is flawed by too little listening before speaking, and too much mimicking, group response, and use of unnatural language and situations.

Children learning a second language should have time to accurately process what they hear (semantically, syntactically, phonologically) before they are asked to produce it. This will require hearing the new structure more than once before attempting to verbalize it. The usual procedure in this program, however, is for the children to repeat a new structure after hearing it only once. Examples of inadequate listening before verbalizing new structures include the following (These are a few of many possible such examples.):

Lesson 11 B: (a puppet, repeatedly asking question and looking around) Where's the car?
 W: (another puppet, pointing to car) It's on the box.
 B: (to class) Where's the car?
 W&C: It's on the box.
 (This is the first occurrence of on which is an objective of the lesson.)

Lesson 12 B: (to teacher) Where's (John)?
 T: Beside the chair.
 C: Beside the chair.
 (This is the first occurrence of beside, which is an objective of the lesson.)

Lesson 16 T: (holding up paste) Paste. (Bill) wants to paste.
 What does (he) need?
 C: (with teacher's help) (He) needs paste.
 . . .
 T: (to Pupil 1) You wanted to paste. (to class) What did (Bill) want to do?
 C: (with teacher's help) (He) wanted to paste.

T: (to Pupil 1) You needed paste. (to class) What did (Bill) need?
 C: (with teacher's help) (He) needed paste.
 (This is the first occurrence of past tense in this program.)

Lesson 19 T: Take Blink to the store.
 C: (with teacher's help) Take Blink to the store.
 T: (after helper takes Blink to store) (He) took Blink to the store. What did (he) do?
 C: (with teacher's help) (He) took Blink to the store. (This is the first occurrence of took.)

Perhaps even more striking are the test situations in which the children are required to respond individually to structures they have not heard:

Lesson 10 T: (to Pupil 1 with ball, while indicating next pupil in line) Ask him how old he is.
 P1: (to Pupil 2) How old are you?
 P2: I am (six) years old.
 (The teacher's direction is a structure that has not occurred previously.)

Lesson 20 T: (to Pupil 2, pointing to far side of table) (Joe), take the paste there. (to pupil 3) (Mary), ask Blink what (Joe) did.
 P3: (to Pupil 1, who is Blink) What did (Joe) do?
 B: He took the paste there. (to pupil 4) (Juan), ask Blink if (Joe) drew on the paper.
 P4: Did (Joe) draw on the paper?
 B: No. He didn't draw on the paper.
 (The direction "Ask _____ what _____ did" is new. Also the sentence "Ask _____ if _____ drew on the paper" is new and the child must produce it with no model at all, and the next child must respond to it. Note the difficult, untaught, transformation required in going from indirect to direct speech here.)

Less crucial, but still important, is the need for ample listening (and watching) time to grasp the procedure for complicated activities before starting to use that procedure. The first activity of Lesson 8 involves the setting up of a "supply office" (a table) with pictures on one side and objects and a "supply man" on the other. The teacher is instructed to:

Have a pupil go to the "supply office," select a picture illustrating the object he wishes to use, and tell what he wants to do and what he needs. Tell what he needs, and have the class repeat. Then have the "supply man" exchange the picture for an appropriate object.

P₁: (to "Supply man," selecting a picture of a child reading) I want to read. I need a book.

T&C: He wants to read. He needs a book.

(The "supply man" takes the picture and hands Pupil 1 a book.)

A simple demonstration, repeated several times, with the aide as "supply man" and a puppet as P₁, would clarify the procedure to be used. (Lesson 12 "The Circle Game" and Lesson 19 "The Bus Driver" offer further examples.) Activities move more smoothly if, instead of helping children muddle through procedures, we provide a demonstration that enables them to perform with sureness.

The excessive use of mimicry results in an emptiness in some activities similar to that of the BCDG program. The children sometimes seem to be just saying things, rather than verbally responding to the concepts being taught:

Lesson 25 (a review lesson)

T: (taping one circle on wall) This is a set of one.

P₁: (pointing with teacher's help) What's that?

T&C: It's a set of one.

T: (taping two circles on wall) This is a set of two.

P₂: (pointing to two circles) What's that?

C: It's a set of two.

etc.

In the second activity of Lesson 36, two pupils sit at a table with a sheet on which are outlines of a square, a triangle, a rectangle, and a star. These children are the "counters," as they will be counting the points on the figures on their sheets of paper. Beside each "counter" stands a "helper," a child who is to "help" the "counter" count the points. The teacher's instructions and the dialogue are as follows:

Pointing to the seated "counters," help Group 1 ask Group 2, "What are they doing?" Have Wink (a puppet) model the response for Group 2.

T&G₁: (pointing to seated "counters") What are they doing?

W: They're learning to count points.

W&G₂: They're learning to count points.

Continue, pointing to the "helpers." Use They're helping.

Help Group 2 ask the "counters" and "helpers," "What are you doing?"
Take Wink to each group of "responders" to help them say, "We're learning to count," or "We're helping."

The items we, they, you (plural), help, count, learn, and points are all newly introduced in this lesson. What meaning is there for the children as they parrot "They're learning to count points," spoken of two children who are simply sitting at a table with pieces of paper in front of them? The same emptiness occurs in the second activity of Lesson 37. The lexical item together occurs in this activity for the first time. As the girls put their chairs in a line, this dialogue is used:

T: (to Blink, a puppet, pointing to girls) What are they doing?
B: They're working together.
T: (to boys, pointing to girls) What are they doing?
Bs: They're working together.

This is empty repetition of meaningless phrases. How do the children know what working together means, since it has not been presented in any way (e.g., through a contrast demonstration of working together and working separately)? How do the children know they're not simply saying, "They're moving their chairs"?

In some of the instances in which the children are just "saying things" and not actively responding to the content items being taught, mimicry is not the culprit. For example, mimicry is not to blame in "Is It There?" in Lesson 20:

T: (pointing to a truck in back of the table) Is the truck in back of the table?
P1: Yes. It's in back of the table.
T: (pointing to a doll beside chair) Is the doll in front of the chair? No. It...
P2: No. It's not in front of the chair.

The item being evaluated here (This is a review-evaluation lesson) is the child's ability to respond correctly to various spatial expressions. But the activity does not require the child to respond to these items at all. If the teacher gives no cue after her question, the child answers affirmatively; if after her question she gives him the cue, "No. It..." he answers negatively. But this only demonstrates that he has grasped the procedure, not that he has internalized the spatial divisions and the expression of them.

Group response occurs less in this program than in the BCDG; however, in many instances its use causes trouble. In Lesson 17 the new linguistic items include the use of an with eraser, the verbs erase and use in their uninflected and past tense forms, and the past tense forms drew and wrote. The linguistic commentary lists the following as "typical language problems":

... omission of -ed ending;...pronunciation of -ed ending; substitution of "drawed" for drew, "writed" for wrote; a for an with eraser...

Yet all the children's responses in this lesson except for one are spoken in groups, so the teacher cannot possibly hear the very problems that she is told to listen for with these new linguistic items. And, as in the BCDG, group use of I is bound to result in confusion (See Lesson 6 "Answer Game" and Lesson 33 "The Fixers.").

The naturalness of the language used in this program is both the program's strength and its weakness. In some of the unnatural situations the children mimic the teacher's incorrect statements (i.e., statements which are deliberately contrary to fact), and in others the language is simply not used as the native speaker would use it:

Lesson 8 T: (referring to P₁, with truck) (Mary), car
 C: (with teacher's help) (Mary) has a car.
 Pupil J shakes her head no.
 T: (Mary), truck
 C: (Mary) has a truck.
 P₁: (shaking her head yes) I have a truck.

- Lesson 17 G₁: (after volunteer draws a square, with teacher's help)
 What did he do?
 G₂: (with teacher's help) He wrote a one.
 G₁: No.
 G₂: He drew a box.
 G₁: Yes
- Lesson 11 B: (to Wink and modeling for class) Where's the ball?
 B&C: (to Wink again) Where's the ball?
 B: (as Wink looks on table) It's not on the table.
 B&C: It's not on the table.
 B: (as Wink looks on floor) It's not on the floor.
 B&C: It's not on the floor.
 B: (helping Wink) It's in the box.
 B&C: It's in the box.
 W: (looking in the box) It is in the box.
 (holding up the ball) One.
 C: One.
- Lesson 34 B: (to Wink pointing to "teacher") Does (she) teach the class?
 G₁: (with teacher's help) Does (she) teach the class?
 W: Yes, (she) does. (She) teaches the class.
 G₂: Yes, (she) does. (She) teaches the class.
 B: (to "teacher") Do you teach the class?
 P: (with Wink's help) Yes, I do. I teach the class.
- Lesson 38 T: (pointing to triangle) That's a triangle.
 B: What's that?
 T&C: That's a triangle.
 T: (counting sides) One, two, three. It has three sides.
 C: (with teacher's help) One, two, three, It has three sides.

However, just as many examples could be cited of language used quite naturally in interesting activities. Questions are used very effectively in many lessons; real questions are asked to find out something which is not already known, or to confirm that which is suspected. In Lesson 10, a review-evaluation lesson, the children "interview" a visitor from an upper grade, asking him questions of their own choosing. In Lesson 30, also a review-evaluation lesson, the teacher has objects hidden in paper sacks, and the children ask her questions about the color, size and shape of the objects in an attempt to guess what is in each sack. In Lesson 33 the children ask

questions about a child's pantomime in order to guess which school worker he is dramatizing. And in Lesson 35 the children again ask questions to find out what school worker a child is thinking himself to be ("Do you teach the class?" "No, I don't" "Do you fix chairs?" "Yes, I do." "I fix chairs." "He's the custodian."). The importance of questions of this kind cannot be overemphasized, I think, for in learning to question, the child is learning to learn.

Summary

The IOLG is not a systematic presentation of carefully selected and sequenced material. Its main purpose is apparently to include material from several content areas in the one program. The program does, indeed, include material from social studies, math, and science. However, justice is not done to any one of these content areas, nor to their integration one with another. The program ends up being a set of activities (sometimes quite interesting ones) for children, having to do with social studies, math, and science, but not presenting the basic concepts and processes from these areas or the relationships that hold across these areas, in a systematic way.

The focus and sequencing of activities within lessons is, at best, loose. This may be the inevitable result of not having mastery as the goal. The children are exposed to a conglomeration of content items, and the teacher is told that more practice will be necessary for mastery. Even given that mastery is not the goal, one would hope for at least systematic exposure -- exposure to the underlying set of concepts and processes in some

reasonable sequence -- and for sharper focus within the lessons on the items the children are to be exposed to.

Procedurally, the program often errs on the side of too little listening before speaking, and too much mimicry and group response. The greatest strength of the program is the practice it provides the children in asking meaningful questions in realistic situations.

ORAL LANGUAGE PRODUCTION TEST

Two different language goals are possible as the basis for second language teaching and test materials: (1) that the learner produce accurately particular phonological features, lexical forms, and sentence patterns, or (2) that the learner internalize the system of phonological, lexical, and syntactic units and processes operative in the language. The former goal leans heavily on memorization; the latter leans heavily on a grasp of the relationships and processes -- the system -- which make possible the production of grammatical sentences. Crucial to the first goal is the ability to say standard learned sentences; crucial to the second goal is the ability to create "new" sentences (i.e., sentences not previously drilled) in accordance with the regular processes of sentence formation in the second language. The Michigan language materials teach for the first goal, the accurate production of a set of forms and sentence patterns. Appropriately enough, then, the Oral Language Production Test assesses "...the child's ability to produce standard grammatical and phonological features when he speaks." (p.1). The "standard grammatical features" tested are those syntactic forms which the materials have specifically drilled. The phonological features tested are those which are assumed to cause difficulty for the Spanish speaker, features the teacher training materials and/or the linguistic commentary preceding the Interdisciplinary Oral Language lessons have cautioned the teacher to watch for, and, presumably, correct.

Very clear, complete directions are given for the administration of the test. The OLPT consists of 43 items to be tested with an individual child in 15 minutes. The tester can score as he goes. The OLPT items are divided

into eleven categories: A) Uses of Be, B) Comparison, C) Uses of Do, D) Double Negative, E) Uses of Have (including four items, two of which involve have / regular past participle forms), F) Past Tense, G) Past Participle, H) Plural, I) Possessive, J) Pronunciation, K) Subject-Verb Agreement.

Three pictures are used in the test. For each item the tester presents the "Standard Stimulus," i.e., he shows the appropriate picture and gives an utterance referring to some part of the picture, and so structured"... that the child will give a Response (R) containing a particular feature of grammar or pronunciation." (p.1). For example, to present test item #2 on the regular /z/ plural ending, the tester shows a picture including trees, and points to the trees as he says, "Let's count these, (child's name). One two, three what?" The standard Response (R) is, of course, "trees" with the final s pronounced /z/, though other non-standard responses are possible for this item (e.g., "trees" with the s pronounced /s/, "tree," "treezez.") Both the standard and the likely non-standard responses are listed for each item (also the catch-all "other"). The tester records the number of the child's response for each item. Thus the test provides not only a score for the child's standard and non-standard responses, but also a record of the particular type of non-standard (and standard) responses the child gave. It is suggested that the teacher give the OLPT to five pupils picked at random every six weeks (i.e., 15 minutes a day, one pupil a day, every sixth week). We are told that "...the value of the Structured Response test is its [sic] ability to give the teacher a quick overview of her students' language needs." (p.5).

That the test is a check on the child's ability to recall and produce specific memorized forms is clear from the preponderance of irregular

grammatical items tested. Of the 43 items, four concern the use of be and six are pronunciation items. Of the remaining 33 items, nine -- almost one-third -- test irregular forms:

- #5 tests the irregular past participle form gone. (The regular form would be goed.)
- #9 tests the irregular past participle form made. (The regular form would be maked.)
- #14 tests the irregular superlative form most fun. (The regular pattern for this one-syllable adjective would be funnest.)
- #15 tests the irregular third person singular form has. (The regular form would be haves.)
- #18 tests the irregular past tense form had. (The regular form would be haved.)
- #23 tests the irregular plural form feet. (The regular form would be foots.)
- #28 tests the irregular past participle form seen. (The regular form would be seed.)
- #32 tests the irregular past tense form went. (The regular form would be goed.)
- #40 tests the irregular comparative form bctter. (The regular form would be gooder.)

Clearly the test is designed to indicate to what extent the child has memorized particular forms, rather than to what extent he has internalized regular grammatical processes. The test goes to great lengths to test irregular forms: all three of the past participles tested are irregular (though two of the test items categorized under "Uses of Have" require the child to provide regular past participle forms); #15 tests one of only three irregular third person singular verb forms existing in the English language, not including be (say and do being the other two irregular third person singular verbs). The regular pattern for past participle forms in English is for th-

past participle to be the same form as the past tense form (e.g., I walked, I have walked). Thus items #5 and #28 actually involve two irregularities: (1) an irregular past tense form (went, saw), (2) a past participle form which is different from the past tense form (gone, seen).

For the person who views second language learning as a process of internalizing the grammatical system of English, more is to be learned from certain non-standard responses, than from standard responses, to the irregular test items listed above. Looking at item #5, the teacher who is seeking evidence of ability to use regular grammatical processes in the formation of sentences would be more gratified by the child's choice of non-standard response #8 ("...goed to this river to fish?") than with his choice of any other response including the standard response. If the child gives the standard response "...gone to this river to fish?" the teacher knows only that the child knows that gone goes with have. But if the child gives the response "...goed to this river to fish?" the teacher knows that the child is not simply producing a pattern he has memorized from the language classroom (presumably the pattern have goed has not been presented), but that he is using the regular process for past participle in English. His use of this non-standard form would suggest to the teacher that the child knows (1) that have requires a special verb form, not the infinitive form, (2) that the special form is the same as the past tense form, (3) that the past tense marker for go would add /d/. That's quite a bit of knowing! And, from one point of view at least, it is more significant "knowing" than the "knowing" (i.e., memorization) of the irregular past participle form gone. At this early stage in the second language learning process, the teacher might be more pleased to know that her students were

learning and applying regular processes, than to know that her students were memorizing exceptional forms. But since this test assesses the child's progress in teaching materials based on the premise that the memorization of specific forms is important, teachers are certainly looking for standard responses. (And of course the teacher does have a record of the child's non-standard responses and can interpret them as she sees fit.)

One's evaluation of the OLPT will finally be determined by his evaluation of the goal of the test. It must be concluded that the OLPT very adequately does what it sets out to do: it assesses the child's ability to produce particular learned standard forms. It is a very careful and "giveable" test which provides the teacher with a clear record of the child's language learning "problems" and the class' progress. But if one does not hold with the view that memorization of forms (words and sentences) is the primary goal of the early stage of second language instruction (as I do not), then he must necessarily regard this test to be of limited value, as it evaluates a goal which is of secondary importance at this stage in second language learning.

CONCEPTUAL ORAL LANGUAGE TEST

"The COLT was designed to assess the pupil's ability to solve problems and think in terms of basic concepts in math, science, and social studies. The pupil indicates his answers in two ways: a) non-verbally, by pointing to the picture of his choice; and, b) verbally, by explaining his answer in standard English. Thus, a measure of the pupil's understanding is obtained which is relatively free from the effects of dialect or language differences from the examiner. At the same time, the discrepancy between the non-verbal and verbal score indicates the degree of the pupil's handicap in oral production of standard English." (p. 1). Thus the COLT evaluates three dimensions: content (the areas of math, science, and social studies), process (the four cognitive skills of differentiation, classification, seriation, and analogy), and method (verbal and non-verbal). The test is designed to indicate the child's level of verbal and non-verbal functioning in the performance of four types of cognitive tasks involving three areas of subject matter.

The COLT is divided into four parts, called "formats," each requiring the child to use one type of cognitive skill or "process." For each test item in Format 1, differentiation, the child selects the one picture out of four that doesn't belong; for each item in Format 2, classification, he selects the one picture out of four that "goes with" a fifth picture; for each item in Format 3, seriation, he selects the one picture out of three that completes a 4-picture series; and for each item in Format 4, analogy, he selects one picture out of three that completes a pair relationship analogous to a given pair. Each format includes 15 items: two demonstration or practice items to teach the procedure of responding for the given format,

three math items (including number sets, number series, addition and subtraction, proportions), five science items (including physical dimensions of size and shape, spatial dimension of distance, direction, and position, and temporal-spatial relations), and five social studies items (personal-social relations involving characteristics like age and sex, social roles like teacher or mailman, and resources like home, school, community) (p. 5 "Technical Report"). The child responds to each test item in two ways: first he selects the appropriate picture (non-verbal), and then he tells the reason for his choice (verbal). The test is well-designed and potentially very helpful as it gives a considerable amount of information about a child's intellectual functioning. "Part-scores can be obtained in the three content areas as an indication of the pupil's relative strengths in these subjects. In addition, part-scores can be obtained in each of the four basic processes as an indication of the pupil's conceptual ability to solve problems in certain ways." (p.1). However, as the test at present is still in the developmental stage, it must be called "potentially" useful. Careful research, clearly described in the "Technical Report" section of the test packet, has indicated several problems with the test, the most serious of which is the low part-score reliabilities in the four processes and three content areas, reliabilities too low to permit diagnosis of particular weaknesses in the child's cognitive functioning. Efforts to improve reliability are under way. (The "Technical Report" doesn't mention checking for examiner scoring reliability, though this would seem to be warranted.)

I see the scoring of verbal responses as a second major problem with the test at present (and the authors note that "Comments from the examiners

after the testing had been completed indicated that there was some difficulty in discriminating one- and two-point responses for many items" (p. 21)). The examiner scores each verbal response as a two-, one-, or zero-point answer on the basis of two criteria: "...the generality of the concept; and, the appropriateness of the response in standard, 'classroom' English." If both the concept level and the language level are judged as 2, then the verbal response gets a score of two points. If either or both of the concept and language features are judged as 1, then the verbal response gets a score of 1. And if either or both of the concept and language features are judged 0, then the verbal response score is 0. This poses the problems of (1) differentiating between "generality of concept" and language, and (2) establishing levels within each of these areas. Regarding the first of these problems, the distinction being made seems to be between two features of the child's expression, namely, between the words used (abstraction level, precision, explicitness, inclusiveness, relevance of reference) and the level of sentence well-formedness. (It's difficult to determine exactly what distinction is intended here, as the description given is confusing and inexplicit. One has to do quite a bit of surmising from the description given to come up with an explicit definition of the categories being delimited.) The term "expression" is used in descriptions of 2-, 1-, and 0-level responses for both the "generality of concept" criterion (lexicon) and the language (syntactic) criterion: 1-point "generality of concept" scores include somewhat "imprecise expressions (words?) for the criterion dimension...", 0-point "generality of concept" scores include "...irrelevant expressions (words?) of description or sequence...", and 2-point language scores include "...concise, well-constructed expression

(sentences?) of the concept." Apparently it is two dimensions of the child's expression that are being evaluated; it is evidently not a content/ expression distinction that is being drawn.

There is further evidence that these two dimensions are lexicon and syntax. Concerning the "generality^{of} concept" side, we are told that "The extent to which the child does, in fact, use more generalized, conceptual words is precisely what the verbal scale is intended to measure" (p.5-6); and concerning the language side, we are told that "The verbal responses must be expressed in standard English; however, minor deviations in grammar or pronunciation may appear in acceptable answers (e.g., subject-verb disagreement)." (p.7). The description of the 2-, 1-, and 0-point levels within each category bear out this lexicon/syntax distinction. For the "generality of the concept," a 2-point answer includes "...abstract, categorical words ...," a 1-point answer includes "Descriptive or functional words..." and a 0-point answer includes "Idiosyncratic, simple labels..." for the "appropriateness of the response in standard, 'classroom' English, a 2-point answer is a "...concise, well-constructed expression..." which "...should be a complete sentence," a 1-point answer is "Grammatically acceptable..." and a 0-point answer includes "one-word labels or broken phrases" (i.e., non-sentences). I think the lexicon/syntax distinction is a valid one to make and that it can be made. However, I would recommend that the two categories be more clearly and explicitly defined.

The next scoring problem is defining three separate levels in each category (since the final score for an item will be the combined lexical and syntactic scores). While this problem may not be insurmountable, at present the level descriptions provided are so vague and overlapping as to

be of little help. I would think that levels would have to be more precisely characterized to insure inter- and intra-examiner scoring reliability.

In an attempt to help characterize the levels for the prospective examiner, the author has provided several examples of 0-point ("insufficient" or "irrelevant"), 1-point ("descriptive"), and 2-point ("categorical" or "abstract") answers on the page facing each test item. Using the author's criteria for 2-point answers, I would assign each of the following 2-point examples less than a 2-point score, since they do not meet the 2-point syntactic criterion level, and a 2-point response must be at a 2-point syntactic and 2-point lexical level. (Remember that a 2-point syntactic item "should be a complete sentence" in response to the examiner's question "Why did you choose that one?"):

- #3 Has more.
- #5 half, not half
- #8 This is food, others aren't
- #23 The same size.
- #28 Needs chalk to write.
- #30 Same amount of money. Both five cents.
- #36 Has to touch 3rd.
- #44 Goes faster than that.
- #45 Have to buy food before you cook it.
- #53 Bottom ones are faster.
- #56 Girl goes with old lady. Bottom ones are younger.
- #59 (the second item numbered 59; there is a misnumbering) shoe goes on foot. You wear shoe on your foot.

Some other examples are puzzling for the "generality of concept" level that the assigned final score implies. For example, in #41 the child explains his selection of the one picture (from among a boy, a young woman, a girl) that completes the 4-picture series baby boy, _____, young man, old man.

- ...1-descriptive: He's getting bigger...
- 2-categorical: He's older than the baby (younger than the man).

The 1-point explanation indicates a grasp of the defining feature of the series (growth progression) and therefore would seem to be a higher level response than the 2-point answer that relates the selection to only one item in the series. Suffice it to say that response levels are not clearly drawn, though it may prove possible and useful to define such levels. This is an area for further work.

In the "Administration Manual" (p. 5) the author says, "Particular care must be given to scoring only the level of the words the child uses, not the concept implied by the words." Apparently an incorrect selection is scored as an incorrect non-verbal response, and the child's verbal explanation of his incorrect choice is not "down-scored" for failing to characterize the correct defining feature; his response is judged only in terms of how adequately it characterizes the feature he has (rightly or wrongly) selected. For example, in #3 the child explains his selection of the one picture that doesn't belong (from among three pictures of 3-car trains and one picture of a 5-car train):

... 1-descriptive: Has five (three) cars. It's bigger (smaller).
 2-categorical: Has more (less). It's longer (shorter).

It is only the expression of the selected reason given that is scored.

That the choice described may be opposite to the correct one is of no consequence. In #10 the child explains his selection of the one picture that doesn't belong (from among rain, a rock, a shoe, a desk):

...2-categorical: ...Those are all man-made.

The high-level (general) concept expressed in "man-made" doesn't in fact identify a sameness in the three pictures that constitute the group not chosen, for a rock is clearly not man-made. However, the expression itself is at a high concept level. In #18 the child explains his selection of the

one picture that "goes with" the picture of a right-side up (i.e., house-shaped) pentagon (from among a hexagon, a triangle, a parallelogram, and an "upside down" pentagon):

...2-categorical: It's upside down...

The expression here identifies a feature of difference -- a totally irrelevant feature -- in the task of identifying sameness. Again the validity of the explanation, the correspondence of the explanation to the actual situation, has not been taken into account.

The determining of two preliminary scores poses problems. But once the two scores are merged, following the simple procedure established, another problem arises. Granting that you can assign one "low, medium, or high" preliminary score to an utterance for its lexical level and another for its syntactic level, what do you know when you "blend" these two scores into a composite? If a child scores one point on an item, you know that either his lexical level or his syntactic level or both were "medium" for that item. If he scores zero on an item, you know that either his lexical level or his syntactic level or both were "low." The recording of two separate scores would seem necessary here in order to know what, in fact, were the child's verbal strengths and weaknesses.

The COLT, then, has problems remaining to be worked out in some areas, especially in establishing reliability (part-score reliability and, I suggest, examiner reliability) and in scoring (defining verbal response criterion categories, establishing levels within each category, working out an informative final score procedure). But the test is innovative in its design and skillful in its execution. The research reported on the test has been

objective and careful and has pinpointed problem areas for further study. The COLT has the potential for being an effective instrument for diagnosing and evaluating several important areas of a student's intellectual functioning: his knowledge of basic mathematical, scientific, and sociological concepts; his skill in the cognitive processes of differentiation, classification, seriation, and analogy; and his lexical and syntactic levels of verbal expression.