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ABSTRACT
                In an analysis of the research literature on specific
teacher behaviors which focused on oral language or speaking, no
studies were found which could meet fully the criteria proposed for
inclusion. Sources of problems lay in (1) the absence of an explicit
theory of language underlying the study or series of propositions;
(2) the failure to get beyond gross descriptions of complex matters,
including behaviors, or, if the studies were focused narrowly, their
generalizations were considerably out of proportion to what actually
was done as a piece of work; (3) the lack of comparability among
studies which had other characteristics in common; and (4) the nature
and extent of the criteria as well as their relation to a few studies
which did attempt to outline, manipulate, and then evaluate specific
behaviors. Recommendations included a shift of subsequent attention
to search areas which would yield more appropriate descriptive
examples. Mentioned as especially promising was the relevance of the
situational context of teacher behavior in relation to children's
oral language and speaking with recent sociolinguistic research as a
pertinent source for this search area. (HS)

Research Review and Critique: Teacher Behavior and

Children's Oral Language/Speaking, 1966 - 1972

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No studies were found which could meet fully the criteria proposed

for inclusion in an analysis of the research literature on specific teacher

behaviors which focused on oral language or speaking. Of the several pos-

sible sources of difficulty in locating pertinent studies, four broad cat-

egories will be considered in this report.

Perhaps the most obvious--it could be said blatent--difficulty was

in most instances traceable to the absence of an explicit theory of

language underlying the study or series of propositions. If a theory did

emerge, in varying degrees of explicitness, it generally reflected either

a lack of information about how language is acquired and used, an abundance

of misinformation, or, on occasion, a bundle of vacuous, outdated prescriptions

about how to facilitate language development, all of which could be predicted

to cause more mischief than good. Where there was an expression of theory or

principle regarding language acquisition or use, it all too frequently was

indefensible in light of much work that has been conducted during the past

decade and a half. The mention of only a few studies should suffice to point

up sharply the extent of this situation.

Related to theories of language and language use, a second major inadequacy in the reports of several otherwise interesting studies was the failure to get beyond gross descriptions of complex matters including behaviors, or, if they were focused narrowly, as in a dissertation, their generalizations were considerably out of proportion to what actually was done as a piece of work.

A third area of difficulty became apparent in trying to disentangle studies which used what was cited as a handicapped population of some sort from one which used 'normal' subjects as the source of data. A good many studies under initial review yielded little, inasmuch as the findings, even if designated as significant in one manner or another, dealt, for example, with 'speech handicapped,' or 'culturally deprived,' or 'low achieving' pupils. There simply was no comparability among studies which had in common other characteristics.

A fourth area of difficulty may well be traceable to the nature and extent of the criteria as well as their relation to a few studies which did attempt to outline, manipulate and then evaluate specific behavior(s). It is just possible that a broader look at the notion of teacher and learner behavior(s) may well be in order.

Using as a general outline the four areas of difficulty as suggested above, this report reviews some studies and reports which were deemed to be relevant but mainly inadequate to the search criteria and concludes with some suggestions for possibly more fruitful areas of search as well as sources of better research and instructional strategies.

If all who conducted oral language-related studies took seriously the dictum of a linguist who recently claimed, "At the present time, there is

almost universal agreement that language is not a habit system, is not

teachable, and is not best described as being composed of completely inde-

pendent systems of sound and meaning" (Wardhaugh, 1971), there undoubtedly

would be much less reported. Even better, there would be much less con-

fusion, to say nothing of outright nonsense with which to contend. For

example, in an article titled 'Inquiry in Elementary English: A Rationale

and Means for Classroom Language Learning," Faix (1971) quickly moved

from apparently the best of intention and an obvious acquaintance with much

good work in what might be termed the elementary language arts area to a

position which may or may not enhance some children's demonstrated knowledge

about their language, but in all likelihood will have very little effect

on increasing their ability to use their language more effectively. In

fact his first footnote illustrated this point.

> The writer suggests that the term 'language arts'
> refers to a generalized area of study which may not
> be appropriate for use with modern concepts of lan-
> guage learning. Rather, since we seek disciplined
> knowledge into the structures and methods of in-
> quiry of the English language, of necessity the term
> 'English' or 'language learning' seems more in keeping
> with the new trends. Further, today we realize the need
> to look at language learning on a K-12 basis. It seems
> more feasible to regard language learning as the disci-
> pline of 'English' than to regard K-6 as 'language arts'
> and grades 7-12 as 'English' (Faix, 1971:50).

In an even more serious vein, Faix settled for too broad, and in this

instance an inaccurate, stereotype when appending another footnote:

> We are now aware that too often the culturally deprived
> child has not developed those natural gifts for inquiry
> into his language. ... (Faix, 1971:52).

By the last pages of this article, the author's main concern seemed to be

fairly clear: "Inductive teaching of grammar-usage poses special problems

in the elementary school ... (Faix, 1971:58). And there we have it, language
learning is taken to be grammar-usage--in the narrowest sense. In spite of
his earlier claim that "there is but scant research on the distinction be-
tween 'acquiring' and 'inquiring' language learning" (Faix, 1971:51), the
author in the main failed to keep clear the very distinction he presumably
wished to make.

To illustrate further the possible damage and certain mischief which
can stem from a confusion between teaching, learning, and using language,
with what should be a central and informed focus on facilitating children's
language use, an article addressed to the readers of Childhood Education
is cited. One might search out this article, heartened by the apparently
enlightened approach indicated by the title: "Too Much Shushing--Let Children
Talk" (Broman, 1969). A summary quotation without comment, however, should
adequately identify the problem here:

> Teaching language requires teachers to provide conditions
> that are conducive for children to talk. The following sug-
> gestions will aid the teacher in providing these conditions
> for language growth:
>
> - provide proper physical conditions for individual and
>   small group work
>
> - speak in an animated and pleasing voice
>
> - always use correct language
>
> - avoid speaking when children should be doing the talking
>
> - help children eleminate bad language habits
>
> - praise the children for correct language usage
>
> - avoid needless criticism
>
> - provide language opportunities that are purposeful,
>   accurate, and fulfill a language need

- check the children's use of language through listening
  as they talk to other adults, and as they talk to the
  teacher

- plan for an integrated language development program in
  all subject areas, as well as daily language skill class.
  (Broman, 1961:133-134).

This article is introduced with the following italicized subheading:

What inhibits language growth -- and what promotes it?
Here are some practical answers from ... (Broman, 1969:132).

An all to representative point of view is expressed in an article

which appeared in American Education, a journal published by HEW. Inasmuch

as the article was not dealing with speakers of a language other than

English, the title, 'Say it Right and They will Too" accurately portrayed

the sentiment and quite possibly the lack of seriousness with which some

problems are addressed. This report essentially was a piece of public re-

lations for a program intended as an "intensive education course for mothers

and fathers of preschool children," which has been funded, in the words of

the author, "for $280,000 because the idea sounded reasonable in 1967 to the

USOE ... a kind of a headstart on Headstart" (Lloyd, 1971:5). Lloyd straight-

forwardly related that

> the first classes were amateurish ... no significant teaching
> guides were available, no norms indicated how far a child should
> have progress in his speech at a certain age. Staff members dug
> the data out of library books; ...they used information gathered
> from their own class experiences" (Lloyd, 1971:5).

One example an instructor allegedly gave to the learning parents is

directly quoted:

> When your child makes mistakes, help him to do his
> own correcting by occasionally making mistakes in
> your own speech and casually correcting yourself.

Lloyd claimed that many parents came to see "the program as an idea for teaching every young child how to speak," and he provided the following example of an instructor's response to a mother who had complained in a session that her child wouldn't say the word <u>water</u>: "He may not necessarily have a speech problem -- could be emotional" (Lloyd, 1971:7). This sort of teacher behavior or comment may be sincere but it clearly is simplistic. To pay for it approaches the scandelous.

In contrast to Lloyd's report which barely specified the population, a study of Drdek (1970) suggested far more concretely what gains might be made by judiciously using such manipulanda as blocks, photographs, magnets, shapes and rhythm instruments to stimulate the oral expression of preschool children. Drdek's study also pointed up the need to take into account a number of enabling or prequisite bheaviors or understandings prior to, or at least concomitant with, concentrating on their language use. Some of what the author called "guided perceptual experiences" related, for example, to an understanding of what and how to look for, or at, the more specific facets such as part-whole distinctions. Though overly broad descriptions were the major content here, there nonetheless were a number of good suggestions for trial and refinement.

At the kindergarten level, a dissertation by Lesh (1968) on the development of standard stimuli to elicit specific oral responses revealed

> no [statistically] significant differences in sex, age,
> educational background of parents, or birth order between
> the group of children from whom the expected patterns were
> not elicited. Further study is recommended in which the
> stimuli are used with children from different socioeconomic
> neighborhoods and with younger children (Lesh, 1968).

Unfortunately, the last sentence cited is indicative of too many studies

of this sort. That is, the strategy seems to suggest that if one doesn't

succeed in finding significant differences as a result of using gross

demographic data and possibly even more gross measures with a so-called

normal population, one should try for significance by sampling a younger

as well as presumably less privileged group.

Two other representative dissertations which used third-grade pupils

as subjects can be criticized on a number of similar grounds. Felix (1969)

reported on her comparison of two methods of instruction on the spontaneous

speech habits of thirty third-grade disadvantaged New Orleans pupils. She

had hoped to show differential gains in pupil behavior by comparing what

she designated as a program of "Unified Language Experience Approach" with

one designated as "Teaching English as a Foreign Language," and both with a

control group program which was described as "subjects exposed to learning

tasks centered around the Scott, Foresman Basal Reading series assigned to

the third grade." Related to what for me remains as the global nature of

these three presumably different approaches, and the possible confusions

between what the author termed "spontaneous habits" and pupils' oral reading

performance, this study also used too broad a brush.

In his dissertation work on the effects of a systematic group language

development program with low-achieving regular class third grade pupils,

Cross (1968) cited as his major purpose the intent to "investigate the effect-

iveness of the Peabody Language Development Kit (Experimental Edition, Level

III) in enhancing verbal intelligence, achievement, and language ability?

(Cross, 1968). He used a number of standardized tests (Thorndike Intelligence

Test; Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Stanford Binet, Peabody Picture Vocabulary
Test) as well as a number of his own making which included mean length
response counts and type-token ratios taken from language samples elicited
while subjects watched a silent movie. Despite the more than conventional care
accorded such complex phenomena as language use, and the author's conclusions
that "a group language development program (PLDK) as taught by the regular
classroom teacher significantly enhanced verbal intelligence (SB, IQ & MA),
a number of responses, and even reading as measured by the ITBS, the absence
of specific teacher behaviors would leave many regular teachers unconvinced.

An illustration of the importance of recording teacher language use
is given by Zahonik (1970). From his study of elementary pupils' perception
of the teacher's verbal feedback, he concluded that "no hard and fast pre-
scriptions for teaching can be drawn from these pupils' perceptions, ...
they do generate some speculative suggestions for teachers' verbal feed-
back during the teaching-learning act" (Zahonik, 1970:113). He went on to
enumerate some general notions such as the importance of pupils' knowing
that an answer is correct or incorrect, and the reason why such is the
case. But, the point is that even in this reasonably controlled and care-
fully conducted study, and with as much specificity or as many operational
definitions as was provided by the author, still the results are general to
the point of being less than maximally helpful.

From a comprehensively designed study, McConnell (1969) presented
research findings from a language and sensory-perceptual training program.
The subjects were "100 2 - 5-year old culturally deprived Nashville,
Tennessee, children [from] two community day-care centers. ... Both language

input and output were the focus of instruction, which was carried out through face-to-face conversations between the child and teacher, with each child being required to use appropriate sentence structure, verb form, and word endings" (emphasis added; McConnell, 1969). Although McConnell reported that "in general, the experimental subjects made greater gains on the sensory-perceptual, linguistic, and readiness measures than did the control group," the unit of measure for 'linguistic gains' is questionable, given the rigidly narrow criteria of the tasks. In particular, such monitoring or manipulating of young children's productions such as "word endings" places far too much emphasis on the superficial and usually fleeting form, while risking a loss, or in the least, strongly discouraging the substantive participation one presumably wants.

Even more directly related to speech problems was Applebaum's (1970) report on rating the speech behavior change of elementary and secondary students in which he concluded that "judges' measurements were reliable indices of communicative behavior," and then extended his findings to "any classroom, industry or organizational structure where behavior is the object of measurement" (Applebaum, 1970), a situation hardly in keeping with a number of other studies which would refute such claims. For example, a well-controlled study by Muma (1967) suggested the need for caveats in a wide range of investigations into child language acquisition and use. Until rather recently, much misinformation has been noticeable in the speech pathology literature, and this situation had been exacerbated by the more general concern for such things as dialect problems and the like. Muma's dissertation focused on a comparison of certain aspects of productivity and grammar in speech samples of fluent and nonfluent four-year-old children. He used a transformational

generative grammar model, reporting his cverall finding that "fluent and
nonfluent children were

> similar in speech performance except that communication
> units were shorter and morphological errors were more in-
> frequent for the fluent children than the nonfluent children.
> <u>The findings indicate that speech pathologists should not
> consider linguistic skill as an explanatory factor in fluency
> differences in young children</u> (Muma, 1967; emphasis added).

By 1971, Hopper's article in <u>Speech Teacher</u> provided an insightful
balance to both the seeming unawareness of modern child language investigations
as well as the excessive claims--informed or otherwise--of one particular
school of linguistic theory. Titled "Expanding the notion of competence:
implications for elementary speech programs," the article began by noting
the "substantial discussion recently about implications of psycholinguistics
for instructional programs in speech and oral language for elementary school
children" (Hopper, 1971:29), referring here especially to an article by Wood
(1968). He quickly moved on to deal with the importance of what is now con-
ventionally acknowledged: the distinction between competence and performance,
but his italicized qualification in this regard is most important:

> along with acquisition of basic grammatical and semantic
> structures, the child is acquiring an ability to apply his
> linguistic knowledge in a functionally appropriate and
> predictable manner in many different communication stituations
> (Hopper, 1971:31).

Quoting a paper by Slobin (1968) entitled "Questions of Language Development
in Cross-Cultural Perspective," Hopper continued:

> not only [must we] account for <u>linguistic competence</u> (the
> rules of grammar) but also what might be called a <u>pragmatic</u>
> aspect of competence (the rules of social interaction).

As a source of data for his views, Hopper included some discussion of his own dissertation entitled "Communicative Development and the Children's Responses to Questions," and his findings are relevant to this review. In one experiment, he evaluated the responses of three and four-year-old children according to what he termed their "grammatical appropriateness (message form and code)" and found no difference in their responses. He did, however find that four-year-old pupils did significantly better than their three-year-old counterparts when it came to evaluating correct answers--what he called "topic." In an interesting manipulation of context (present, absent, or interference conditions), he also discovered some differences. For example, using the prompt, "What do you do with a ball?" while showing the child a ball (context present), or while keeping the ball out of view (context absent), or while showing a pencil (interference context), he found no differences among the different conditions for four-year-old children. The three-year-old pupils, however, did very poorly with the context absent condition and even worse with the interference condition. Hopper suggested that emphasis should be placed on "not how much grammar the child knows but the ways he can put to use what he knows in a functionally appropriate manner?" (Hopper, 1971:34).

In brief, Hopper argued for greater weight to be placed upon the situational aspects of language learning and use, surely a point applicable to classroom instruction, and one which has received increasingly strong attention by major contributors to the field such as Cazden, John & Hymes, 1972 .

Hopper cited several recent works which this reviewer also believes warrant careful attention as good sources for classroom facilitation of oral language development and use. For example, he included Labov's (1970)

analysis of the logic of nonstandard English, a technical yet readable account
of dramatic differences in language production induced by situational changes.
Hopper also included reference to the work of Hymes (1971), perhaps not that
well known to teachers but one whose work should be known, particularly his
long but eminently readable introduction to the book he co-edited with Cazden
and John (1972). The work of one of Hymes' other   agues, Goffman (1963) on
behavior and relations (1971) in public places, though at first mention perhaps
not immediately recognizeable by many teachers, should be consulted for possibly
some very rich clues to understanding different ways of using language. Hopper
managed to include as well the relevance of Lois Bloom's (1970) work on early
language development and the relation between form and function in emerging
grammars. A good introduction to her point of view, and the potential relevance
of her work, can be found in her predominantly negative review of Menyuk's (1969)
Sentences Children Use. Menyuk is one of the best known individuals identified
with child language research during the past decade, but one of Bloom's points
is telling in its emphasis on current concerns. Bloom acknowledges Menyuk's
awareness of the 'limitations inherent in studies of children's utterances and
points out, for example, the need for studies that take the context of utterances
into account (emphasis added; Bloom, 1970:184).

One potentially very rewarding area which deserves much more attention
than it apparently has been given is the relation between oral language
development and reading, but with particular emphasis on enhanced reading skills
as facilitators of oral language development, rather than the other way
around. In this regard, C. Chomsky's (1972) exploratory work should be notable
interest, considering the strong correlation she found between a number of

her reading exposure measures and language development. Similarly, as reported by M. Macken (1972) in a recent Linguistic Reporter, Moskowitz' (1972) examination of the "psychological reality of the Chomsky and Halle vowel shift..." by using nonsense forms [from which he] concluded that it is knowledge of orthography rather than verbal phonologies that teaches children much of the vowel shift phenomena (Macken, 1972:6) is provocatively related.

One study which stood alone in being almost as conceptually sophisticated as it seemed to be field-relevant was Drumheller's (1970) treatment of verbal and nonverbal knowledge in curriculum development and teaching. In it, Drumheller achieved some success in bringing together the insights, for example, of Bloom, et al. (1956), Fllfeldt, et al. (1958), Guilford (1967), Metraux (1969) and Witkin et al. (1962). There are no data in the usual sense here, but there are several careful considerations and, importantly, suggestions which would seem to be most pertinent to oral language classroom instruction.

In concluding this review, several general references should be cited, most of them because they should serve as introductory pieces--places where teachers can, and this reviewer believes should, start (Dingwall, 1971; Fleming, 1972). As is obvious to many readers, this reviewer is convinced that much recent sociolinguistic research points the way toward improved research into oral language instruction strategies. In what might have appropriately begun this paper is a brief citation from an introduction to a chapter on socio-linguistics; for me it would suffice as an overall goal for much of language arts instruction:

> The ability to use one's language correctly in a variety of socially determined situations is as much and as central a part of linguistic 'competence' as the ability to produce grammatically well-formed sentences (Pride, 1970:287).

A not dissimilar utterance by Labov (n.d.:43) speaks at greater length and more eloquently to the same point:

> ... in the past fifteen years, there has been a noticeable movement away from the extreme asocial position in theoretical work towards a view of linguistic structure and evolution which includes the evidence of every-day speech outside of the university community. This movement has been motivated primarily by the desire to find a sounder empirical base for linguistic theory, and by a conviction that social factors play a larger role in the evolution of language than most linguists have been willing to admit. The movement towards a socially realistic base in research was also a response to the feeling that linguistic knowledge should be applied, if possible, to the urgent social problems of the inner cities. This program requires an enlargement of our notion of langue or the 'competence' of the native speaker, to include skill in the use of language--what Hymes has called 'communicative competence.' It has been necessary to break down the institutionalized barrier between language and speech, and make everyday speech available as evidence for linguistic theory; this in turn has required the removal of the barrier between the linguist and the human being (Labov, n.d.:43).

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ABSTRACT

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inclusion in an analysis of the research literature on specific teacher
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