VERB USAGE IN THE SPEECH OF FIFTH GRADE GIRLS
IN MANHATTAN, KANSAS

by

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B. A., National Taiwan University, 1963

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requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

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Approved by:

[Signature]
Major Professor
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CHAO Tepen
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.0 A small part of a larger program examining the speech of children in the public schools of Manhattan, Kansas\(^1\), this study is an attempt to analyze, describe, and tabulate the verb phrases used by fifth-grade girls.

1.1 **Purpose.** The purpose here is two-fold: first, to analyze morphosyntactically, in the girls' spontaneous speech, their verb phrases and to learn something of their use of different verb patterns and verb expansions (Engler and Hannah 1966:8); and second, to make a contribution to the discipline of speech pathology, which is tremendous in scope and difficulty, ranging from the problems of speakers with mental disorders or incipient mental disorders to those resulting from some kind of trauma. At the same time this study may be of some help to English teachers in preparing more effective and efficient teaching materials. There seems to be wide agreement that the reading texts in current use in elementary schools have been produced with the use of little knowledge of the language capabilities of a child.

1.11 By use of transcriptions of speech, corpus analysis as done by Fries (1952) and Joos (1965) has been an accepted form of linguistic analysis for a number of decades. Paul Garvin (1964) suggested that such methods were of limited value, since any corpus (spoken or written) or any introspection might very likely fail to include some grammatically possible constructions, or fail to note some restrictions which systematic search might uncover; in other words, that inductively testing the mathematically possible combinations may uncover additional grammatically possible constructions or restrictions or
impossibilities that would otherwise be missed. His concept has yet to be
developed to completion.

1.12 From a theoretical point of view, it would be preferable to deter-
mine the child's linguistic competence, but practical ways of doing this are
still not available. Meanwhile, it is hoped that a description of the perform-
ance usage of 'normal' children will be useful as a basis for comparison with
the performance of 'non-normal' clients in the clinic, and that the contrast
will be useful as an additional dimension in the practical clinical business
of attempting to understand the client's problem and in devising therapy for
him. We note that such descriptive information will leave unexplained why
the client's performance in the clinic differs from the performance of the
'normal' children at school, and that clinicians using it will have to con-
tinue to be very careful about making assessments based on performance and
about the temptation to infer linguistic competence from performance.

1.2 Hypothesis. In the last forty years, linguists as well as communi-
cation workers (French, Carter and Koenig 1930:290-324) have noted that human
beings do not use individual words equally often, even in the long run. In-
stead, some words are used very frequently and others are used very infre-
quently. The observation is equally true for the use of any linguistic pat-
tern (Zipf 1935). As students mature, they tend to have more to express about
a subject; their sentences tend to get longer and their sentence structure
becomes more complicated. Based on these assumptions, the author expected
that fifth-grade girls would have a tendency to use more often some kinds of
structures with which they were familiar, and, at the same time, there would
be some expected structures they use less frequently or not at all.
1.21 A favorite generalization of one school of linguistics used to be that every normal child has complete control of his language by the age of five or six. Conclusions from a report by Strickland (1962) included the recognition that children learn at an early age basic language structure and that the oral language of children is 'far more advanced' than is the language of reading in textbooks. The hypothesis here is that while the language development of elementary school children is indeed far more advanced than the language used in their reading textbooks, their ability to use complex constructions has not developed at a uniform rate. It is further assumed that their performance for certain constructions will correlate highly with age and grade levels.

1.3 Scope. As indicated in paragraph 1.0 above, the data on which this study is based comes from the corpus gathered by Engler and Hannah at Kansas State University in 1964, and is concerned exclusively with Manuscript XII A, consisting of twenty-four pages of material transcribed from tape produced in interviews of fifth grade girls in the public schools of Manhattan, Kansas.

1.31 The corpus, which was recorded on tape, was not formal edited dialogue between two or three girls, but rather unorganized rambling, natural talking, and story-telling. What has been transcribed for this manuscript are the utterances of relatively distinct articulation.

1.32 This study deals mainly with the verbal constructions in the material examined. Hence, the structure of every verb phrase and its object(s) or complement(s), used in the girls' speech will be carefully examined.

1.40 Review of the literature concerning the language of children. There has been a great deal of investigation concerning children's acquisition
of language(s). Yet, most of it has dealt with the language of very small children, or with written language; part of it has been concerned with learning theory, and with factors causing differences in language learning ability. Underwood and Keppel (1962) found that learning is a gradual process. Spielberger and Levin's study (1962) supported the theory of a correct response. The *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior* contains many articles concerning language studies and *Elementary English* gives copious detailed information concerning the research programs conducted yearly. As mentioned before, most of those studies and reports dealt with written language. This has restricted, if not nullified, the usefulness of these studies in describing the spoken language of school children.

1.41 The Development of the Language of Preschool Children. Miller and Ervin (1964), Brown and Frazer (1964), and Braine (1963a) used different terminology, but obtained very similar results. Each study discovered two basic classes of words in the speech of very young children, which were basically what Fries labeled 'function words' and 'form classes' (1952: 88, 62). The children learn the position of the form classes in relation to the function words in the sentence. Braine noted that the language grows structurally by adding to the latter and grows in vocabulary by adding to the former.

Berko studied the control of English morphology in the language of both first graders and preschool children. She found that 'the answers were not always right so far as English is concerned; but they were consistent and orderly and they demonstrated that there can be no doubt that children in this age group operate with clearly delimited morphological rules' (Berko 1958).

Menyuk also studied the language of preschool and first grade children, but she dealt with the structure of their language by means of
transformational grammar. She found that 'all the basic structures used by adults to generate their sentences were found in the grammar of the nursery school group. In comparing the number of children at the two age levels who used these structures, it was found that most of the structures were used at an early age and used consistently. Structures which were still in the process of being acquired by the nursery school group were also still in the process of being acquired by the first grade group (Menyuk 1963).

Albright and Albright were referring to very young children in their methodological article 'Application of Descriptive Linguistics to Child Language', but almost all of their statements are valid for older children as well. They emphasized the rapid changes which occur in children's language as compared to adult language and the uniqueness of each stage of development. The article discussed at some length techniques for the elicitation and segmentation of data. They concluded that 'In this struggle to maintain ... their own unique language ... for communication with others and, at the same time developing it through successive stages of increased complexity, lies what is probably the central problem of speech development in children. Careful descriptive studies should help to clarify this development' (Albright and Albright 1958).

1.42 Literature Related to Learning Theory. Although as early as 1958 Albright and Albright emphasized the importance of descriptive studies of children's language, much of the recent investigation of the language of children has ignored their theories in favor of an investigation of learning theory. After his article which dealt with the two main parts of speech, Braine (1963b) stated that he believed that 'grammar structure is acquired by "contextural generalization", a type of generalization which results from a
subject's learning the position of a unit in a sequence.' He later rejected this theory and decided that 'the place-contingency theory' - in which language structures are learned according to their positions in larger structures and contingency between the parts - can offer an alternative to this "transformer theory".

Mandler and Mandler (1964:195-202) also were concerned about the use of lists of unrelated words. They maintained that 'In contrast, the presence of grammatical structure in an English sentence will reveal some of the syntactic relations. Beyond the effect of structure, however, one can look at a serial "learning" task as an experiment in memory rather than learning'. In addition they found that 'Serial position curves for sentences differ markedly from those for unrelated words, and they may be said to reveal the core-memory unit of the sentence. What is correctly anticipated, i.e. remembered, frequently is in the major communicative message for the sentence'.

Fodor and Bever also conducted a study which supported the theory that structural units are thought groups and therefore different from word lists and nonsense languages. In their experiment they asked the subjects to locate subjectively clicks heard during speech. Their results indicated that '(a) clicks are attracted toward the nearest major segment boundaries in sentential material. (b) The number of correct responses is significantly higher in the case of clicks located at major segment boundaries than in the case of clicks located within segments. (c) These results are consistent with the view that the segments marked by formal constituent structure analysis in fact function as perceptual units and that the click displacement is an effect which insures the integrity of these units' (Fodor and Bever 1965:414-20).
1.43 Literature Related to the Acquisition of Specific Language Structures. Berko's study of small children's control of morphology might fall subject to this criticism since she used nonsense words to elicit the responses. However, she was dealing with very young children and wanted to insure that she was eliciting a productive morpheme and not a pattern learned previously as part of one English word accidently used as the stimulus. This study dealt with the inflected forms of nouns, verbs, and adjectives. It was found that most of the morphological inflections were present to some degree with the exception of the comparative and superlative forms of the adjectives.

In DiVesta's study (1966) of the modification slot, all morphologically inflected parts of speech were excluded. He tried to describe the fillers of the modification slot and the frequency of occurrence of these structures. His exclusion of inflected forms, however, renders his results difficult to relate to other studies. In another study of modifiers DiVesta stated that 'it appears the child's use of modifiers corresponds closely with those of the adult' (DiVesta 1964).

1.44 Literature Related to the Language of Older Children and/or Written Language. Bernstein worked with London boys from 15-18 years of age. He posited that members of the 'working class' would use a language much more predictable in structure and vocabulary than members of the 'middle class'. He tried to prove that there would be less 'verbal planning' (formulation of language units) in the former group and that this would be shown by shorter and fewer hesitations in speech. The results of his study supported this theory.

Hunt studied the written language of fourth, eighth and twelfth-graders by means of transformational grammar. Almost all the structures which he
examined were used by the youngest writers, but many of them were used with significantly greater frequency by the older students. In the great majority of instances the structures which increased were the very ones produced by sentence combining transformations (Hunt 1964:141). Therefore, 'the older student can incorporate and consolidate more grammatical structures into a single grammatically independent unit' (Hunt 1964:139). There was a slight increase in the frequency of usage of the verbal auxiliary, and a decrease in the frequency of usage of nonclause adverbs which were not produced by sentence combining transformations. He concluded that his study had identified and isolated some 'growth buds' (Hunt 1964:141).

Zigler, Jones, and Kafes's results (1964) indicated that written English was different from spoken English. In their study of the language acquisition of first, second, and third grade boys they sought to discover factors in language performance. They made every possible combination of any two of the factors: written language, pictures, and spoken language, to discover which factors were discriminated in language performance. The only tests which failed to satisfy their study included spoken language. All of the combinations of writing and pictures were considered to be discriminated adequately. The difference in discrimination indicates that speech and writing are different and should not be equated and compared as if they were the same.

1.45 Studies Utilizing Linguistically Oriented Methodology of Language Description. Linguists, such as Strickland, DeGraff, at Indiana University developed a system which is basically a description of slots, movable, and 'mazes'. Strickland used this system to investigate the relationship between the actual structures presented in children's readers. While the comparison is of little interest here, the description of the structure is. She
described several patterns of slots and movables which relate to the English basic sentence patterns. Yet only four of Engler's fourteen types and sub-types were shown by her system. She did describe the fillers of these slots and subordination in terms of the function of subordinated clauses and the slots which they filled. Yet, she did not describe these clauses in terms of the sentence patterns in which they were found.

Loban (1963) conducted a longitudinal study based on the same system that Strickland used. He studied the language of 334 children every year from kindergarten to the twelfth grade. In a supplementary study he investigated children some of whom had exceptionally high verbal ability and some exceptionally low verbal ability. He studied the differences between the two groups' speech patterns as well as their reading and writing practices. He admitted that 'clearly determined stages of development remain as yet un-marked' (Loban 1963:87). The most significant conclusion was that 'not basic sentence pattern, but what is done to achieve flexibility within pattern proves to be a measure of proficiency with language at this level' (Loban 1963:88).

DeGraff (1961) studied only the spoken language of first, third, and fifth grade boys. He used basically the same system as Strickland and Loban with the exception that in his study of concatenation, he classified sentences into 'simple, compound, compound-complex, and utterance (incomplete)'. The greater part of the study dealt with the description of mazes, movable elements, and concatenation based on the previously mentioned system for the description of sentences.

Engler and Hannah have also conducted an analysis of the speech of first, third, and fifth grade children in the hope of establishing methods for
determining norms of development. Several of Engler and Hannah's students have undertaken related studies of the Engler-Hannah corpus. Gardner (1966) studied the verb slot deviations of clinical 'language cases' and compared them to the development of normal children examined in the Engler-Hannah project. Hsu (1966) studied the order of fillers of the nominal modification slot and Campbell (1965) did a theoretical expansion of all the possible concatenation that could result from any two of the Engler basic sentence patterns.

1.5 Justification. A practical justification for this study is that if performance norms could be set up for children, then the speech patterns of children who come to speech clinics can be evaluated with reference to these normal patterns of development, and therapy devised for them to meet more specifically the individual client's deviations. This sort of information might also indicate a more productive order for lessons used in teaching English to speakers of other languages. It might be particularly helpful in developing an elementary school bilingual education program or program in standard English as a second dialect. The structure could be presented so that patterns being used by standard-speaking children at the age level in question would be emphasized in the lessons.
CHAPTER II

WORKING PROCEDURES

2.1 The Engler-Hannah Procedure. The investigators tape-recorded the speech of children in the public school system of Manhattan, Kansas. They found three elementary schools in the system which were representative of cross sections of the socio-economic strata of the community. At each school they had teachers choose eight boys and eight girls from each of three grades, first, third, and fifth, whom they considered 'normal', who ranged from 90 to 110 IQ on the Otis scale, and who had no record of identification for speech or hearing problems. At each school they used two separate rooms for recording, with hidden microphones. The first room, called the 'holding room', was equipped with a table and sets of plastic toys. The second, called the 'interview room', was equipped with a table, three chairs, and a set of pictures from the adult Thematic Apperception Test (Murray 1963). First, eight boys were brought from the first grade classroom to the holding room and allowed to play with the toys and to converse freely. Then two of these boys were taken to the interview room, leaving six to converse in the 'free field'. The two interviewees were shown the TAT pictures and asked to discuss them; the interviewer stayed out of the conversation as much as possible. After ten minutes, the interview was terminated and the boys returned to the holding room, and two more boys were interviewed by use of the same technique. When all the eight boys had been interviewed, the group was returned to the classroom and eight first grade girls were called to the holding room. The same process was repeated; then third grade boys were called, and so on. The result obtained was over thirty hours of tape of the speech of 144 children,
half in a free field and half in a structured interview situation.

2.11 The tapes were transcribed in orthography, without any punctuation, but including "ums and ahs", lapses, and "noise". The manuscripts were coded to correspond with the tapes and to indicate holding or interview, boys or girls, and grade levels. Scanners then listened to the tapes again while watching the manuscripts, and marked the manuscripts at places corresponding to pauses occurring in the speech recorded on the tapes. The material between every two marks was called a segment, and corresponded roughly to a phrase, clause, or sentence. Each segment was transferred to a 4x6 card provided with blanks and labels corresponding to a linguistically oriented model for the grammar of English, based on slot-filler display. On the top of the card, spaces for identification purposes were provided.

2.2 The Chao Procedure. By use of the slot-filler idea, the author was able to identify the verb-base and its auxiliaries, complement(s) or object(s) in any position in a segment.

2.21 In the 24-page manuscript, there are 488 running lines of different length, some with several verb bases and some with none. The segments are indeed often strung together one after the other in longer utterances, and sometimes are found embedded one inside the other. After careful examination of the manuscript, the author found two kinds of questionable entries, to which special consideration has been given. First, there was the interviewer's speech giving instructions or advice in the opening or closing part of the interview, which were definitely not from the fifth grade girls' speech. This material was excluded from the corpus. Second, there were the repetition or false start parts of a complete utterance, such as 'we made - we made a
picture' (see line 98). In this case, only one verb was actually counted. In a complex sentence, the verb phrases were counted as many times as there were separate clauses. After these details were determined, the author transferred each segment onto a pre-printed card, and the identification blanks for 'page - ', 'line - ' and 'card - ' were filled in order according to the original entry in the manuscript. This information is very useful in locating a particular entry in its context in the corpus. A total of 339 cards were actually made for this study.

2.22 Verb Types. According to the modification made by Engler, fourteen verb types for English can be posited depending on the type of verb-base and fillers in the post verbal slot. Their structural description is illustrated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Structural Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I,a</td>
<td>Verb + Complement BE nominal (NP)  adjective(adj) adverbial (adv)</td>
<td>That's a good idea. (line 53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.b</td>
<td>Verb + Complement GET adj adv</td>
<td>He's getting mad at her. (line 122)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.c</td>
<td>Verb + Complement BECOME NP adj</td>
<td>No example found in the corpus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.d</td>
<td>Verb + Complement Comp-taking NP adj</td>
<td>He looks lazy. (line 204)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Structural Description</td>
<td>Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.e</td>
<td>Verb + Complement senses-adj</td>
<td>No example found in the corpus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.f</td>
<td>Verb + Complement middle NP (weigh,mean) adj</td>
<td>No example found in the corpus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>Verb +adv intransitive</td>
<td>They grow up. (line 19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>Verb object-taking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.a</td>
<td>Verb + Object transitive NP</td>
<td>She has a real problem. (line 14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.b</td>
<td>Verb + Object gerundive -ing form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.c</td>
<td>Verb + IO + DO/DO + to + IO</td>
<td>No example found in the corpus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.d</td>
<td>Verb + Obj1 + Obj2 factitive</td>
<td>No example found in the corpus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.e</td>
<td>Verb + Obj + PP causative</td>
<td>No example found in the corpus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>Concatenating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.a</td>
<td>Verb + Obj + base-form + Obj -ing form complement ground. (line 104)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.b</td>
<td>Verb + Obj + Infinitive + Obj Comp</td>
<td>No example found in the corpus.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.23 Types of Verbal Expansion. The Engler system of verbal expansion was derived from the formula 'te(M) (have +PP) (be +ing)' as employed by Joos (1965). Those verbs, which operate in the basic sentence types in base form, or with simple past tense or third person singular present tense inflections, are considered as the finite forms of the verb. According to Martin Joos
(1965:121), English has only two tenses, past and non-past. Other temporal aspects are indicated by means of verb expansion, such as 'be' plus '-ing' form for the continuous, 'have' plus past participle for the perfect, etc. Other expansions include all modals, modal equivalent phrases, and combinations of these complexes. Table 2 describes the Engler verbal expansion system.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>FinV (finite form)</td>
<td>goes/went</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>FinAux&lt;sub&gt;do&lt;/sub&gt; + base-formV</td>
<td>does/did go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>FinAux&lt;sub&gt;be&lt;/sub&gt; + ing-formV</td>
<td>is/was going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>FinAux&lt;sub&gt;have&lt;/sub&gt; + past participle</td>
<td>has/had gone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>FinAux&lt;sub&gt;have&lt;/sub&gt; + BEEN + ing-formV</td>
<td>has/had been going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>FinModal + base-formV</td>
<td>will go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>will</td>
<td>shall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>must</td>
<td>may</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dare</td>
<td>need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII.</td>
<td>FinModal + BE + ing-formV</td>
<td>will/would be going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII.</td>
<td>Fin Modal + HAVE + PP</td>
<td>will/would have gone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX.</td>
<td>FinModal + HAVE BEEN + ing-formV</td>
<td>will/would have been going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X.</td>
<td>FinAux&lt;sub&gt;quasi-aux&lt;/sub&gt; + base-formV</td>
<td>is to go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quasi-aux:</td>
<td>be to&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>seem to&lt;sup&gt;5&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be able to</td>
<td>like to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be made to</td>
<td>love to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be going to</td>
<td>need to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be about to</td>
<td>wish to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be supposed to</td>
<td>appear to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be in a position to</td>
<td>want to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Verbal Expansion System (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ask to(^4)</td>
<td>used to(^6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>try to</td>
<td>begin to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>have to</td>
<td>expect to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>long to</td>
<td>intend to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>turn to</td>
<td>forget to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>start to</td>
<td>attempt to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**XI.** FinModal + base-form QuasiAux + base-formV  
will be able to go

**XII.** FinModal + base-form QuasiAux + base-formV + base-formV  
will have to be able to go

3.3 In addition to the verb types and verb expansions, the author was interested in the proportion of occurrences of past and non-past usage by the fifth grade girls. He was also interested in the percentage of use of negative expressions; however, this use was limited to the conspicuous use of NOT or NO in the verb phrase only. When the coding procedure was determined, a 6-digit code was planned. The first two digits were used for verb types. The third and fourth digits were used for verb expansions. The fifth digit was used for negative (1) or non-negative (blank) and the sixth digit was used for past (p) and non-past (n) countings.

3.4 After the coding had been done on the original 4x6 card, all the coded information was then keypunched onto a standard IBM card, each corresponding to one original card entry. In addition to the coded information, the card identification number was also keypunched for reference on the IBM card. This serial number was found very useful in the spotting of a particular data card needed for cross-checking purposes.
3.5 With the use of a specially written program, the sorting and tabulation could have been done completely and automatically by a computer. Because of time and budget limitations, the author sorted the keypunched cards by using a sorting machine, which was available in the computer center. The sorted material was then entered on a blank form specially designed for revealing the distribution, and the frequency of each sub-category of the verb phrase used by the fifth grade girls.
CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

3.10 This chapter is concerned for the most part with the distribution of verb types and verb expansions in each relevant category and with the frequency of uses in other related aspects of the verb constructions used by the fifth grade girls in two hours of their spontaneous speech. These uses will be described by use of numerical figures calculated through tabulation of the material examined. For comparison, a general comprehensive table of all the information sought and obtained in this study is shown in Table 3.

3.11 In addition to the detailed quantitative analysis which will be given later, some general characteristics of the fifth grade girls' speech have been observed in this study. The data reveal that some patterns are used more often than others. The frequency trend moves from the simple to the more complex, an indication of the developmental nature of sentence patterns. From a very few basic sentence patterns a child may evolve many variations. Some are identical with those of the adult world, and some are not the pattern per se, but a transition phenomenon of language development. It was also found that child speech used during explanation was characterized by significantly more hesitations and pauses, repetitions and reduced rate than speech used during description. Spontaneous explanations were more fluent than those elicited by the investigators.

3.12 According to the Engler verb analysis, the verb slot may be filled by any of fourteen types of verbs, each one of which may be expanded in twelve different ways. This situation indicates that there are at least $12 \times 14$ or 168 possible minimum fillers of the verb slot. In some cases these expansions
Table 3

Distribution of Verb Types and Expansions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expansion</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>VI</th>
<th>VII</th>
<th>VIII</th>
<th>IX</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>XI</th>
<th>XII</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I (30%)</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>.a</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>.b</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>.c</td>
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<tr>
<td>.d</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>II (20%)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>III (46%)</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>.a</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>.b</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>.c</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.e</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV (4%)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.a</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.b</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
may be combined. In the corpus, some of these fillers rarely occurred and others not at all. From the material examined in the corpus (see Appendix), 339 verb phrases have been collected, classified and studied for this paper. As revealed in Table 3, the analysis of verb types may be presented as follows:

3.20 The Verb Types. In the total 339 verb constructions, 94 (30%) of them fall in the copulative (from Type I.a to I.f) category; 77 (20%) of them belong to the intransitive (Type II); 158 (46%) of them are classified in the object-taking groups (from Type III.a to III.e); only 10 (4%) of them are in the concatenating family (Type IV.a and IV.b). Perhaps it should be pointed out that there were no examples from the sub-categories of I.c, I.e and I.f found in the whole corpus. There was only one (1) example each found in sub-category III.b and III.d. The small number of occurrences of the other types makes individual generalization unreliable or statistically insignificant. These rarely occurring verb types do not appear to be hard to use. It is very probable that there was simply no adequate opportunity to use them in the situation in which the corpus was gathered.

3.3 The Verb Expansions. As revealed by the tables, not all the verb expansions that are available in the model appeared in the corpus. The first expansion is the base form of the verb plus person-tense markers. This expansion was by far the principal one for the fifth grade girls, and is probably also for all English speakers. The percentage was up to 68%. The second most frequent choice was expansion III, the be + ing-form verb. Expansion II was the third in popularity because most of the negative verb phrases, don't/ didn't + verb-base, were classified in the group. Actually, the emphatic DO,
DOES or DID rarely occurred in the affirmative form. Only one example was
found in the corpus (see line 294). Expansion IV, have + past participle, and
expansion V, have + been + ing-form verb, were used eight and four times, re-
spectively. These uses indicated their presence as a pattern capable of de-
velopment, but rarely chosen. There was not a single example found of expan-
sion VII, IX, XI and XIII. There was one (1) entered under expansion VIII; it
was later found to be a contracted form of the standard construction (see
line 44 and card 24).

3.4 Other Findings. In addition to the main objectives of this study,
the author also found that the proportion of past and non-past occurrences was
90 (27%) to 249 (73%), and the ratio of negative and affirmative occurrences
was 38 (11%) to 301 (89%).
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

4.1 As a result of the findings of this study, the statistical figures reveal that there are some rather complicated structures, such as expansions VII, IX, XI, and XII, which fifth grade girls used seldom or did not use at all in the test situation. The result might be influenced, as suggested by Paul Garvin, by the static situation of the pictures used as the elicitation stimulus, which gave little variation in action. But it is tempting to surmise that the fifth grade girls are not accustomed to using those longer and more complicated expansions or that they just cannot use those constructions at all. As Chomsky's syntactic competence model predicted, some linguistic patterns such as passive may take more time to develop than more basic constructions, and this author concludes that fifth grade girls do have trouble in using more complicated language patterns, such as the high-numbered verb expansions described in this paper.
APPENDIX

(The Corpus Used for the Study)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Card Number</th>
<th>Syntax</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Line Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>reminds me kinda</td>
<td>3c01 n</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>when we were up at Turtle Creek</td>
<td>1a01 p</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>we had a picnic</td>
<td>3a01 p</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>he's goin' up the empire state building</td>
<td>2003 n</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>looks like</td>
<td>1d01 n</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>it is up stairs</td>
<td>1a01 n</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>look like</td>
<td>1d01 n</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>she has a real problem</td>
<td>3a01 n</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>she likes</td>
<td>3a01 n</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>she is married</td>
<td>1a01 n</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>she's thinkin' about</td>
<td>2003 n</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>they grow up</td>
<td>2001 n</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>she's wondering what --</td>
<td>3a03 n</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>what they are doing</td>
<td>3a03 n</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>she's got a smile on her face</td>
<td>3a04 n</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I think</td>
<td>2a01 n</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I want the chair over there</td>
<td>3a01 n</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>boys chase us</td>
<td>3a01 n</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>boys play kickball</td>
<td>3a01 n</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>we can't wait to be in the</td>
<td>20061n</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>we are going to have a party</td>
<td>3a10 n</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>we're all going to dance too</td>
<td>2010 n</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>she told us to be there</td>
<td>3a01 p</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>I wouldn't a told you</td>
<td>3a08lp</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>that's a good idea</td>
<td>1a01 n</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
26. that's interesting
27. we didn't think --
28. we was going to get to do it
29. we just thought
30. David said
31. we got to do
32. the other said
33. they thought they --
34. they were big shots
35. oh I see
36. mostly we eat
37. we do at school
38. they can't
39. don't let my teacher know --
40. I'm - here
41. we were
42. made all kind of things
43. we didn't make candles
44. they did
45. we made our own kind
46. everybody got
47. she just cut it up
48. she said one year that
49. one of the girls split paint on her dress
50. you know and
51. they used come off real nice
52. take it
53. you know
54. they called us stupid
55. my grandmother collects irons
56. she'll love antiques
57. we took a newspaper
58. we put that in
59. we took all kinds of crayon shavings
60. and set in the newspaper
61. we took crayon
62. sprinkled it all over
63. she had newspaper
64. we took an iron
65. we had heated up
66. we just pushed it
67. we made a picture
68. it's just
69. we cut it out
70. they were pasting 'em together
71. we made two of each picture
72. we pasted it together
73. it looks real pretty
74. I don't know what to think
75. what do you think's going on
76. he looks like
77. the woman's scared
78. he's gettin' mad at her or somethin'
79. that man is asking her a question
80. looks like spring
81. that looks like
82. reminds me
83. that looks like
84. that reminds me
85. I guess
86. it does
87. she's going to school
88. really doesn't look too old
89. let's see
90. I don't know
91. this could be anything
92. people looks
93. they're sleeping
94. after they work
95. I guess so
96. he's trying to wake 'em up
97. you know all around
98. she is trying to think
99. don't have anything to do
100. I'm sorry
101. go out and play
102. play kickball
103. I don't know
104. I just like to sit around and talk
105. we just play basketball
106. we have to play
107. we play
108. I like to do they all
109. we just had a new one
110. we have six
111. she'll be a year old in
112. I have a little girl
113. I have a sister
114. that's in 3rd grade
115. that's in high school
116. I read books
117. we walk around
118. usually talk to each other
119. all we do is walk around
120. I had never heard of this record
121. our teacher has lots of
122. my teacher has some
123. we use 'em think
124. there is four or five of them
125. we didn't
126. we are going to recess
127. we just came back from the library
128. not that I know of
129. looks like a lady
130. close the window

131. that's awake

132. they're having a argument

133. man is real tough

134. she's going to school

135. they are plowing the field

136. leaves are probably turning color

137. the water's probably real cold

138. it froze

139. looks like

140. wouldn't be surprised

141. she is walking to cemetery

142. they got different clothes

143. we got this time too

144. she is probably watching somebody

145. she is going to do

146. she is gonna go

147. that's possible

148. girls play jump rope

149. cars go

150. she's sitting on the floor

151. she's on a chair

152. she's sittin' down

153. this is the door back

154. she is sittin' on steps

155. you can tell

156. she is this way
157. I like to play basketball
158. I was thinking what --
159. what is tether ball anyway
160. there's only two plays
161. you draw a line
162. you hit the ball
163. it takes --
164. you can see 'em playing it on the ground
165. I got to feed our cows
166. hum got rabbits and chickens
167. I do part of all
168. my mother helps me
169. I think --
170. it's milo and corn
171. we have to feed 'em
172. we have a little house
173. he fixed a --
174. you dump the feed in there
175. he does ride on the school bus
176. I live across the viaduct
177. we're going to get a horse this spring
178. we've been havin' bad luck
179. it was green
180. our cows ate it
181. let's see
182. three of 'em died
183. we only have two
184. our dad said
185. we keep --
186. they had died
187. that is too bad
188. where are the stockyard
189. I saw some horses there one time
190. there used to be a bunch of horses
191. they took 'em out
192. they were fighting
193. they only left one in
194. what did they do with the horse
195. they took them up to
196. they put them up
197. that is probably better
198. they were riding horses
199. they were still wild
200. they weren't tamed yet
201. they are not real wild
202. they didn't tame 'em yet
203. I was just thinking about something
204. he looks lazy
205. I don't know
206. he's the main one
207. he does too
208. I don't know
209. he's got that needle
210. looks like
211. I could do that
212. it's pretty
213. I'm curious
214. I forgot
215. are you tape recording what --
216. what we're saying
217. we talk about people
218. we're mad at somebody
219. we just stick our nose up at 'em
220. we talk about 'em
221. they have a certain dress on
222. we don't like 'em
223. we talk about work
224. we'll talk about them
225. they did too much work
226. it looks like a girl
227. there is a pond
228. it could be her father
229. it looks more like a father
230. I know
231. I don't think -
232. he'd be that
233. she's standing there
234. she is watching him
235. I don't know
236. she's got her eyes closed
237. I think --
238. the girl's the main part in it
239. she's the closest to the standing out
240. she's going to school
241. she has more features
242. this one doesn't have an outline for
243. she's cut off from the rest of the scene
244. it's standing up
245. you really look at it
246. this is standing up
247. I can't go like this
248. that's a clock
249. it's been doing it all day
250. look kinda funny
251. it looks to me like the steps on the
252. are there steps around there
253. if you don't rock across the thing
254. they're steps
255. that go to the end
256. you walk clear across
257. it's just quicker
258. I hate to go down those steps usually
259. we use them
260. that looks to me like a little girl
261. I first saw part of it 3a01 p 410.
262. hum could be 1a06 p 411.
263. I don't know 3a021n 412.
264. it's a little bit too small for an old lady 1a01 n 412.
265. she is thinking 2003 n 417.
266. she looks like concentratin' on something 3b01 n 418.
267. I don't know 3a021n 419.
268. she's sitting on a pillow 2003 n 419.
269. he is threatnin' her 3a03 n 421.
270. she is leaning 2003 n 423.
271. you know nut 3a01 n 427.
272. are all these drawn by the same people 3e01 n 428.
273. it shows action in it 3a01 n 430.
274. I mean 2001 n 431.
275. she's just sitting there 2003 n 432.
276. you can see 'em moving 4a06 n 434.
277. some pictures are like that 1a01 n 435.
278. some aren't 1a011n 435.
279. I don't know 3a021n 435.
280. her hair is raised up 2001 n 436.
281. you can see more of his head 3a06 n 437.
282. I don't know 3a021n 441.
283. it seems kinda funny 1d01 n 442.
284. they always seem like 1d01 n 443.
285. they get somebody older 1b01 n 443.
286. I know some girls 3a01 n 447.
287. girls that was in there
288. her name's Christine
289. she has a friend named Mary
290. she like the boy
291. I think in third grade now
292. it's not all that way
293. I mean they
294. it's kinda
295. I know
296. the boys like a lot of girls
297. that not older than they are
298. I bet
299. I know this one boy
300. he is in the sixth grade
301. his name is John Duff
302. he like this girl
303. that isn't even in school
304. he likes
305. I guess
306. he did like a girl
307. that's in the sixth grade
308. he got mad at her today
309. you know --
310. Roy hit her today
311. boys're thinking they
312. the girls will slap the boys
313. a boy slapped a girl
314. but he didn’t slap her
315. he kicked her
316. they’re going to fix his fingerprints
317. but I don’t know
318. you know I
319. I also noticed that
320. there are about one or two in there
321. the boys’l take ‘em out to basketball
322. yes he does
323. he goes with Bill
324. I mean
325. they don’t sit together
326. they ride together
327. no they don’t (ride)
328. they went to this movie
329. they went by themselves
330. that doesn’t matter
331. I don’t think they should
332. I think it’s all right
333. it’s all right
334. it was at night
335. that would be all different
336. if it was at night
337. I don’t think that they should
338. we’ve had what fifth grade girls
339. we’re going to go back
FOOTNOTES

1 Leo Engler and Elaine Hannah, 'Toward Norms for the Speech of Children' Kansas State University Research Project 1964-65. These investigators tape recorded the speech of first, third and fifth grade boys and girls in three public schools in Manhattan, Kansas. The tapes were transcribed in standard orthography without punctuation to provide the basic data for the study.

2 Mazes consist of false starts, corrections, and involuted, uncompleted structures.

3 These take expansions I, IV, VI, VIII, and with certain restrictions, X.

4 These take expansions I-IX and some, X.

5 These take expansions I, II, IV, VI, VIII and some, XI.

6 These take expansion I only.
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VERB USAGE IN THE SPEECH OF FIFTH GRADE GIRLS
IN MANHATTAN, KANSAS

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

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ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to describe the verb usage in the speech of a select group of fifth-grade girls. In 1964-65, in a study of the spontaneous conversational speech performance of public school children in Manhattan, Kansas, some thirty-six hours of tape recordings were produced, transcribed, and subjected to linguistic analysis. This report is concerned exclusively with Manuscript XIII-A of that transcript, a twenty-four page corpus of the speech of fifth-grade girls.

From the transcript, the verb phrases were identified by techniques of descriptive linguistics. Each verb phrase was transferred to a card pre-printed with the morpho-syntactic labels adopted for the purpose of classifying the verbs for type and degree of expansion, and the analysis of the verb phrase on each card carried out. By means of a coding system devised specifically for the purpose, the results of the analysis were punched on IBM cards for statistical work with the aid of a computer.

The corpus contained a total of 339 verb phrases. Of the verbs in these 339 verb phrases, 94 (30%) fall in the copulative or linking-verb category; 77 (20%) are classified as intransitive; 158 (46%) are object-taking verbs; only 10 (4%) are in the concatenating or conjoining category. As for degree of expansion, the favorite was Expansion I (verb base plus person/tense marker), used more than six times as frequently as any other degree of expansion. The more complicated the degree of expansion, the lower was its frequency in the corpus, until among the higher-numbered expansions, e.g., Modal plus perfective, there was no occurrence at all in the corpus. The proportion of past- to non-past tense marker occurrence
was 90 (27%) to 249 (73%), and the ratio of negative to affirmative polarity was 38 (11%) to 301 (89%).

The author concludes that the classification system devised for the study is eminently workable, and that the findings of the study seem compatible with other reports from related fields. Noting the inverse ratio of frequency to degree of complexity, he is tempted to conclude further that fifth-grade girls have not yet really completed acquisition of control of the patterns of their language, and that normative information by age and grade levels could be provided by extensions of this study that would be helpful to such practitioners as the speech clinician and the English teacher.