THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MEN'S CLOTHING CONSTRUCTION
COURSE WITH AN EMPHASIS ON FIT

by

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to thank Dr. Theresa Perenich for advice during the writing of this report. Appreciation is also extended to Dr. Warren Prawl and Dean Ruth Hoeflin for being committee members.
THIS BOOK CONTAINS NUMEROUS PAGES WITH MULTIPLE PENCIL MARKS THROUGHOUT THE TEXT. THIS IS THE BEST IMAGE AVAILABLE.
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Many sources including The Clothes You Buy and Make by Caroline E. Wingo, Mary Brooks Picken's Modern Dressmaking Made Easy, and Simplicity's Simplicity Sewing Book Updated give instruction on women's clothing construction and fitting procedures but there are very few instructional materials on men's clothing construction and fitting procedures (9, 16, 19). This study focused on developing an outline and description of a men's clothing construction course, with the main emphasis focused on a unit for fitting men's garments.

According to Women's Wear Daily (14, p. 4) home sewing for all members of the family has increased and patterns for men have also increased in terms of numbers sold to customers. Many women are sewing men's clothing, not simply neckties but also suits and shirts. There are many reasons for the increase in sewing for men, some of which are: the development of easy-care double knit fabrics, a better fit, a savings of money, better quality for money spent, and husbands are "so appreciative" (3, p. 36).

Because men are shaped differently than women, women's fitting procedures will not work for men. Several books and articles give "pointers" on how to construct a certain part of a man's garment but many of the books do not give illustrated, detailed alteration procedures. Hazel M. Sear in The Sew-Easy Guide to Menswear (13) gives a definition of helpful sewing terms and also a list of equipment and findings needed for
a shirt, trousers, lined vest, tie, and sport jacket. However, very little information is given on fitting. Lengthening a pattern is the most often used alteration method. *How To Make Men's Clothes* by Jane Rhinehart (12) lists supplies that are used by professional tailors such as a pants board, clay chalk, and a tailor's thimble. The book describes how to draft a pair of man's pants, therefore no alterations for a commercial pattern are given because the pants should fit the person exactly. The books *Sewing Slacks for Men* by Helen K. Tews (18) and *Sewing Knits for Men* by the Singer Company (17) give detailed instructions on constructing men's garments. Taking of measurements is included in both books but neither relates to altering men's patterns.

From the above examples the author believes that a unit on fitting men's garments with illustrated alterations would be very helpful to the college student interested in this area of study. The illustrated alterations given in this study will show a man's silhouette in which the problem area is dotted. Reasons for the problem and how to correct the problem will be given.

The fitting unit will be designed for those person's who have had a course in Tailoring at the college level. A pair of muslin slacks and a tailored jacket will be the only items discussed and planned to be made in the course being developed.

It will be assumed that college students taking the course know how to do basic alterations. They should be familiar with sewing terms and a variety of fabrics. The illustrated alterations shown in this study will be for commercial patterns only. The terms trousers, slacks, and pants, meaning a garment for the lower portion of a man's body, will be used interchangeably.
Objectives

1. To develop an outline and description for a men's clothing construction course at the college level.
2. To examine the fitting problems of men's garments and the solutions of the problems through illustrations.

Need for Study

With increased interest in the construction of men's clothing it is important that men's clothing construction be taught to students. At this time at Kansas State University in the College of Home Economics only one clothing construction course out of 10 described in the Kansas State Bulletin even mentions men's clothing construction. The Advanced Clothing Construction course description includes the statement, "principles of constructing men's wear." One lecture in the course is specifically reserved for constructing men's garments. If a student wants to construct a garment for a man then the instructor will help that student individually. To further broaden the students knowledge of clothing construction a course in men's clothing construction at Kansas State University is needed.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Home sewing has become quite popular in the last few years. There are several reasons for this increase. Retailers in fabric shops believe that home sewing will increase as a result of higher and higher ready-to-wear clothes prices and the ever changing fashions of our time. Quality is another important factor, whether the consumer is buying fabric to sew at home or buying ready-to-wear. "Women who sew resent paying $100 or more for a dress with $18 worth of fabric and seams which are falling apart" (6, p. 4).

Historically, both men and women have been involved in the construction of garments for commercial use. However, in home sewing, mainly women have been involved in sewing garments for their families, friends, etc. Recently though, men have become involved in this area and are learning to sew. In addition, pattern companies have developed more patterns for men. "Men's wear is building, slowly but surely, a sign, several people feel, that it is growing into a solid area of the business rather than being a flash-in-the-pan-fad area" (6, p. 4). "Men's wear is one of the fastest growing classifications both in rtw and home sewing," says Saul Stolbof, vice-president of product development at Vogue-Butterick. "We're making patterns available . . . in response to the hundreds of requests we've received from home sewers and retailers" (5).

As of September 1972 Vogue introduced men's patterns in the pattern books. The garments of fashion designers Pierre Cardin and Bill Blass are being
shown in the pattern books. The patterns of these designers included ties, sport and dress shirts, pants, suits and jackets (5).

According to Jane Evans, President of The Butterick Fashion Marketing Co., patterns for men are not just a sideline of the pattern industry but a growing segment of the business. Ms. Evans says, "one of our best selling Butterick patterns is #3208 a man's three-piece suit." This pattern "which is certainly no cinch to make ... proves that sewing has climbed out of its 'farm-women-in-the-Midwest' image" (14, pp. 4-5).

In addition to factors of economy and quality, there are several other reasons why home sewing has increased. The other factors include:

1. women are more skillful with a needle now than ever before,
2. women have more leisure time to sew,
3. it is a labor of love to sew for the man in their life,
4. men are beginning to sew for themselves (5),
5. the development of easy-care double knit fabric,
6. sew to fit better, and
7. it is part of the home sewing do-it-yourself trend (3, p. 36).

Fit is an important aspect in the construction of all types of garments. One of the reasons given above for an increase in home sewing is better fit. Simplicity's book Sewing For Men and Boys stresses the point that beautiful fabric, good construction techniques, and fashionable styling will never make a garment look its best if it does not fit (15, p. 12).

Lucille Rivers, a prominent television personality, is convinced that six times the sales in patterns and fabric could be done by holding fitting classes along with the regular sewing classes some companies teach. In a survey conducted by Homesewing Trade News women were asked what area
of sewing was most difficult for them and 90% said fitting was most difficult. In the same survey the women said they received most of their sewing knowledge from fabric stores or in sewing classes (7, p. 1). Therefore, retailers and pattern companies are now learning that if they teach women how to alter patterns to fit each person for whom they sew, the women will buy more fabric and patterns and be more satisfied with the clothes they make (1, p. 10). Pattern companies give fitting instructions in several ways. Simplicity includes fitting instructions in their home catalog. McCall's How To Fit Book explains the basics of fit. Vogue-Butterick's book The Vogue Sewing Book of Fitting, Adjustments, and Alterations and Burda Patterns both discuss fit (8, p. 13).

Many women in the clothing industry are concerned with fitting garments and have written books on the subject. A few of these are: Else' Tyroler's Sewing Pants For Women, Pants for Any Body by Pati Palmer, and Leona Rocha's Fashionetics Way to Perfect Pants (2, p. 12).

The books and ideas all discuss fitting for women, not for men. However, there are two books that discuss fitting for men. Dolores Edward's book Men's Jackets and Pants deals with the construction of men's jackets and pants and has some fitting procedures in it (4, pp. 19-23). Simplicity's Sewing For Men and Boys has some very clear pictures of fitting problems and how they are solved (15, pp. 18-24).

The available literature on home sewing for men is not as extensive as the literature available for sewing for women. Increased interest in fit, alteration, and construction of men's garments has been noticed by pattern and fabric companies. Because of this interest, it is necessary to have a detailed, informative guide to the sewing, fit, and alteration of a man's garment.
Chapter 3

PROCEDURE

Description of Course

The description of the course for Men's Clothing Construction was based on similar descriptions found in the Kansas State Bulletin. Students taking the class will be required to have Tailoring as a prerequisite. The course will be a graduate level course but seniors may take it also. Basic alteration techniques and sewing terms should already be familiar to the student. Alterations will be shown for commercial patterns only. Three hours of credit will be given for passing the course.

Men's Clothing Construction

Introduction of principles applied in the construction of men's garments. Emphasis on fit, alteration of commercial patterns, and construction techniques specifically for a man's suit jacket and pants.

Course Outline

Objectives of the course include:

1. To provide the student with the skill needed to construct, alter, and fit a man's garment.
2. To assist the student in developing experience and techniques needed for an advanced construction course.
3. To develop an understanding of terms used, and tools and materials needed to construct a quality garment for men.
4. To learn to fit a suit jacket and pants for a man.
5. To learn alteration techniques for various fitting problems.

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The requirements of the course include constructing a muslin of a man's suit jacket and pants and constructing the suit jacket in a fashion fabric. A typical class schedule for lectures, labs, etc. has been developed and is presented in Appendix A.

This section of Procedures is subdivided as follows:
I. Measurements For Fitting
II. Fitting Problems and Solutions

I. Measurements For Fitting

Measurements are vital if a garment is to fit properly. An undershirt and lightweight trousers without a belt should be worn to measure a man. A flexible tape measure is used. When measuring the different areas of a person the tape measure should be pulled snugly but not too tightly. A string may be tied around the waist to determine the exact position of the waistline. The same style garment should be worn for the fitting procedure as the one being made. For example, if a man will be fitted for dress trousers, he should wear a pair of dress trousers so the inseam may be measured correctly (10, p. 385).

There are fifteen measurements that are taken to determine the size of pattern needed and the amount of alteration needed, if any. These measurements are shown on the following page.
To determine the following measurements, place the measuring tape:

1. Neck: Around the neck, adding 1/2" for wearing ease.
3. Waist: At string position.
4. High Hip: 2"-4" below string over top of hip bones. Record measurement and distance from waist.
5. Full Hip (Seat): Around fullest part of hips, usually about 8-1/2" below waist. Mark position with pins on undergarment. Measure from pins to waistline to establish distance from waist to full hip. Record measurement and distance from waist.
7. Arm Length: With arm slightly bent, measure from shoulder bone to elbow, then to wrist bone. Record each measurement.
8-9. Arm Circumference: Around fullest part of arm—about 1" below armpit and at wrist bone.

10. Trouser Side Length: Down outside of leg from waist to knee, then to desired trouser length. Record both measurements.


13. Shirt Sleeve Length: Slightly bend and raise arm. Measure across shoulder from base of neck around bend of elbow to wrist bone.


15. Crotch Length: Sit erect on a hard, flat chair. With a ruler measure from string to chair seat (11).

The measurements should be recorded for future reference.

II. Fitting Problems and Solutions

Knowing the correct way a pair of man's slacks or a suit jacket should fit is important before problems in fitting can be understood. Some correct fitting points for a man's suit jacket are:

1. Shoulders lie straight with no pull.

2. Collar fits low and close, 1/2" of shirt collar shows.

3. Lapels are rolled low to the middle button.

4. Waist is tapered smoothly at the body's natural waistline.

5. Lower edge hangs parallel to the floor, covers the seat.

Correct fitting points for a pair of man's slacks include:

1. Waist fits snugly, but allows breathing room.

2. Seat does not bag or pull and is comfortable when sitting, bending, or standing.

3. Crotch is not too short, not too long.
4. Width depends on the style. Legs fall straight with no twisting. Bells flare from the knee; flares are slim to knee, taper to the hem; baggies fall straight to the hem.


Because men are more angular in shape than women, most alterations are simply a matter of adding more where needed and cutting off where less is needed. Besides the man's measurements, a well-fitting pair of slacks and a suit jacket should be measured to help aid the person constructing the garment in choosing the correct pattern size.

The following illustrations will explain fitting problems, solutions, and alterations of a man's suit jacket and pants.
TO SHORTEN SLEEVES

Alteration:

Two shortening lines (A, B) are found in long sleeve patterns. An adjustment of 1 inch or less is made at the shortening line nearest to the wrist. If the sleeve needs to be altered more than 1 inch make half the adjustment at each shortening line. Make the same alteration on both pieces of a two-piece sleeve (15, p. 18).
TO LENGTHEN SLEEVE

Alteration:

Two lengthening lines (A, B) are found in long sleeve patterns. An adjustment of 1 inch or less is made at the lengthening line nearest to the wrist. If the sleeve needs to be altered more than 1 inch make half the adjustment at each lengthening line. Make the same alteration on both pieces of a two-piece sleeve (15, p. 18).
Alteration:

Measure up from the shortening line (A) the amount to be shortened as indicated by the measurements taken. Draw a line across the pattern parallel to the shortening line. Fold pattern on shortening line; bring fold up to the drawn line. Pin or tape the fold flat. Draw a new cutting line as shown (15, p. 18).
TO LENGTHEN JACKET BODY

Alteration:

Cut the pattern apart on the lengthening line (A). Place paper under the two edges and spread the pattern the distance indicated by your measurements. Additional adjustments may be made when fitting the muslin and then transferred to the pattern pieces. Keep cut edges parallel; pin or tape pattern to paper. Complete the dart, cutting lines, or seam as shown (15, p. 18).
COLLAR TOO LARGE

Problem:

Collar stands away from the neck.

Solution:

The shoulder seam needs to be cut off some at the neck edge tapering to nothing at the armhole seam line. The center back of the collar will need to be shortened.

Alteration:

On the pattern piece slash from neck edge to armhole about 1 inch down from shoulder line (A). Fold out amount needed, tapering to nothing at armhole (B). Pin or tape to hold. Fold out the same amount at center back of collar (C), (4, p. 21).
COLLAR HUGS NECK

Problem:

Collar hugs the neck too snugly.

Solution:

More fabric is needed in the shoulder area and at the center back of the collar.

Alteration:

On the pattern piece slash from the neck edge to the armhole about 1 inch down from the shoulder line (A). Spread the pattern the amount needed at the neck edge tapering to nothing at the armhole (B). Put paper in slashed area and pin or tape in place. Add same amount to center back of collar (C), (4, p. 22).
FOR A SHORT NECK

Problem:

Wrinkles appear all around neck edge under the collar.

Solution:

The neck edge in front and back needs to be lowered so the collar is in proportion to neck. The collar will need alteration also.

Alteration:

Cut neck edge out amount needed for collar to fit correctly (A). On the back the amount will be the same all the way across. On the front the amount will taper to nothing at the lapel roll line (B). Enlarge center back of the collar the same amount as the neck edge was cut away (C), (4, p. 23).
ARMHOLES TOO TIGHT

Problem:

Armholes feel too tight when tried on for fitting.

Alteration:

Add extra amount needed at the underarm side seam, tapering to nothing at the waist. For a two-piece sleeve add half the added amount to each piece of the sleeve (4, p. 19).
FOR SQUARE SHOULDERS

Problem:

Wrinkles appear just below the collar, and pull toward shoulder.

Solution:

To correct this remove collar and open shoulder seams. Lower collar up to 3/8 inch. Taper shoulder seam to seam at shoulder edge. You may find it helpful to remove some of the shoulder padding.

Alteration:

Redraw neckline and shoulder seam on back pattern piece as shown (15, p. 19).
FOR ROUND SHOULDERS

Problem:

Jacket back hemline is pulled up.

Solution:

Slash across the back of the muslin about 4 inches below neckline (A), starting at center and going out to armhole seams. Spread allowing hemline to hang straight (B).

Alteration:

Slash back pattern piece from center back to armhole seam line (A). Spread edges the amount needed (B), (15, p. 19).
FOR SLOPING SHOULDERS

Problem:

Diagonal wrinkles appear around the armhole.

Solution:

If only a slight irregularity, this may be corrected by adding more shoulder padding. Extra fullness can be pinned out at shoulder edge tapering to neckline edge.

Alteration:

On back and front pattern pieces draw new shoulder line as pinned on muslin (A). Lower the underarm the same amount removed at shoulder edge (B), (15, p. 19).
FOR VERY ERECT BACK

Problem:

Extra length between neck and waist prevents jacket back from hanging smoothly.

Solution:

Take a tuck wide enough to take out extra length, tapering to nothing at armhole seam line.

Alteration:

On pattern cut across back just to the armhole seam lines (A). Lap the cut edges the amount needed to shorten; pin or tape in place. Straighten center back line as shown (B), (15, p. 19).
FOR BROAD SHOULDERS

Problem:

The jacket will pull across chest, back and top of sleeves.

Solution:

Your shoulder length measurement is a good indication of how much to alter shoulder length on back and front patterns before cutting muslin. If muslin is not correct, remove sleeve and pin new fitting line out toward edge of shoulder (A).

Alteration:

Starting at middle of shoulder line, draw a line down about 7 inches. Continue line horizontally to armhole seam line (A). Cut the pattern on this line. Separate edges at shoulder line the needed amount. Pin or tape to paper (B). Draw a new cutting line between neckline and armhole (15, p. 20).
FOR NARROW SHOULDERS

Problem:

Sleeve seams will appear to fall off shoulders.

Solution:

Your shoulder length measurement is a good indication of how much to alter shoulder length on pattern before cutting muslin. If muslin is not correct remove sleeve and pin new fitting line over from shoulder edge.

Alteration:

Starting at middle of shoulder line draw a line down about 7 inches. Continue line horizontally to armhole seam line (A). Cut the pattern on this line. Lap out extra width at shoulder line the needed amount (B). Pin or tape to paper. Draw a new cutting line between neckline and armhole (15, p. 20).
FOR BODY CONTOUR CHANGES

Problem:

Person has gained or lost weight and jacket is too tight or too loose.

Solution:

Waistline and hipline adjustments are made at the side seams. Check your measurement chart for an indication of the amount to take in or let out. Test the amount on your muslin and pin or let out at side seams starting 3-4 inches above the jacket waistline. Remember that your fabric may need more ease than the muslin.

Alteration:

Make an adjustment of 1/4 the total amount at each of the four side seams, starting about 3-4 inches above the jacket waistline (A). This means you will be adjusting each seam line 1/8 of the total amount. For instance, a total amount of 2 inches would mean a 1/4 inch adjustment at each seam line (15, p. 20).
LAPEL DROOPS

Problem:
The lapel hangs forward in front causing a drooped look.

Alteration:
Take a slight tuck in the front neck edge near roll line so lapel lays flat (4, p. 25).
TO SHORTEN CROTCH

Alteration:

Measure up from the shortening line (A) the amount to be shortened. Draw a line across the pattern (B). Fold pattern on the printed line; bring fold up to the drawn line, keeping grainline straight. Pin or tape the fold flat (C). Treat front and back in the same manner. Mark new fly placement (15, p. 21).

TO LENGTHEN CROTCH

Alteration:

Cut pattern apart on the alteration line (A). Place paper under the two cut edges, and spread them the needed amount (B). Keep the grainline straight and the cut edges parallel. Pin or tape pattern to paper. Treat front and back in the same manner. Mark new fly placement (15, p. 21).
TO ADJUST OUTSEAM

Alteration:

Measure at the side seam of pattern from the waistline seam line to lower edge. Compare this measurement with your own measurement plus the hem depth. The difference is the amount to be lengthened or shortened.

Lengthen or shorten on the printed line of the pattern between the crotch and lower edge of front and back. Follow the same procedure as given for lengthening and shortening the crotch (15, p. 21).
FOR CIRCUMFERENCE

Alteration:

If too loose or too tight, adjust at center back seam by taking in (A) or letting out (B). The pattern has an extra wide seam allowance at center back for this purpose. This is one alteration that may easily be made in a completed pair of pants if a man loses or gains weight (15, p. 22).
TO ADJUST BUTTOCKS

Problem:

Figure may have too much (A) or not enough (B) fullness in buttocks area.

Alteration:

Add or eliminate fabric to back seam by cutting across pattern to side seam. Spread edges if more fabric is needed (A). Overlap edges to eliminate extra fabric (B). Place paper under cut edges and pin or tape in place. Redraw cutting lines (15, p. 22).
FOR PROTRUDING ABDOMEN

Problem:

The figure will not have enough fabric around stomach, causing side seams to pull forward.

Alteration:

Add fabric to front area by cutting across pattern to side seam about 2 inches below waistline seam (A). Place paper under cut edges and spread them the needed amount (B). Pin or tape to paper. Draw new cutting line as shown. Make new markings for fly (15, p. 22).
Chapter 4

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To broaden the educational knowledge of the students at Kansas State University there is a need for a men's clothing construction course. At this time at Kansas State University in the College of Home Economics no course offered instructs the student in the area of fitting, alteration, and construction of menswear.

Fitting a garment is an important aspect of clothing construction whether for women or men. Even if a garment is constructed well and made of a beautiful fabric it will lack quality if the fit is incorrect.

Several sources inform the reader how to construct a garment for a man but few tell how to successfully fit a garment. Two books the author would recommend to use for fitting are Dolores Edward's *Men's Jackets and Pants* and Simplicity's *Sewing For Men and Boys*. These two books give illustrations and explanations on how a garment should fit as well as solutions for problems if the garment does not fit.
REFERENCES CITED


11. Obtained from Everything About Sewing Menswear.


APPENDIX
APPENDIX A

Week

1. a. Lecture--Introduction, course requirements, discuss course outline, discuss classroom facilities and equipment needed

   b. Lecture--demonstrate how to measure, discuss fabrics to be used, findings needed, preshrinking procedures

   Lab--take measurements of person for whom the garment is being made

2. a. Lecture--demonstrate fitting and alterations needed for fitting problems

   Lab--bring pattern, measure a good fitting jacket and pants against the measurements taken and the pattern measurements

   b. Lecture--discuss muslin fitting

   Lab--make necessary alterations on pattern, bring muslin, cut and mark muslin

3. a. Lab--begin construction of muslin, have fashion fabric approved

   b. Lecture--layout, cutting, and marking of fabric

   Lab--finish and alter muslin

4. a. Lecture--discuss tailoring techniques, pad stitching, taping of lapels, interfacing

   Lab--finish muslin, hand muslin pants in for grade

   b. Lab--begin layout, cutting, and marking fabric

5. a. Lab--finish layout, cutting, and marking fabric, cut and mark interfacing and other findings

   b. Lecture--various pockets used in tailoring pants and jackets

   Lab--work on pocket samples

6. a. Lab--work on pocket samples

   b. Lab--finish pocket samples, begin interfacing, pocket samples due

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Week

7. a. Lab--construct darts and begin pad stitching
   b. Lab--continue pad stitching

8. a. Lecture--buttons and buttonholes
    Lab--finish pad stitching
   b. EXAM #1

9. a. Lecture--review of pocket types
    Lab--begin work on pockets in jacket
   b. Lab--continue to work on pockets

10. a. Lecture--collar application
    Lab--finish pockets, begin work on collar
   b. Lab--work on collar

11. a. Lecture--lining and facing, inside pocket
    Lab--finish collar, cut out lining and facing
   b. Lecture--sleeves
    Lab--work on lining, facing, and inside pocket

12. a. Lab--finish inside pocket, begin sleeves
   b. Lecture--hems
    Lab--finish sleeves, begin insertion of lining

13. a. Lab--continue working
   b. Lab--continue working

14. a. Lab--continue working, hand in for first grading
   b. Lecture--finishing details
    Lab--continue working

15. a. Lab--complete details
   b. Lab--modeling of garments, projects due

16. FINALS
VITA

Ann Shirley Moore was born October 2, 1953 in Wichita, Kansas. The author received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1975 in General Home Economics from Harding College, Searcy, Arkansas. While attending Kansas State University from 1975-1977 as a graduate student in Clothing, Textiles, and Interior Design the author was a teaching assistant. Job objectives include Home Economist work, and teaching at the college level. A permanent address for contacting the author is: 9100 Tejon #157
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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Clothing, Textiles, and Interior Design

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas
1977
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to develop a course description, outline, and a series of fitting procedures for a men's clothing construction course. A pair of muslin pants and a suit jacket in muslin and fashion fabric are discussed and sewn in the course. Several books and other references discuss how to construct men's garments but few show how to fit a garment giving illustrated explanations. Twenty-two different fitting problems and solutions relating to men's wear have been illustrated in detail in this study.