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FOLLOWING
PAGES CONTAIN
CROOKED
TYPING AND IS
THE BEST
POSSIBLE IMAGE
AVAILABLE**

LANGUAGE PROBLEMS OF
CHILDREN FROM LOWER CLASS BACKGROUNDS

by 500

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A MASTER'S REPORT

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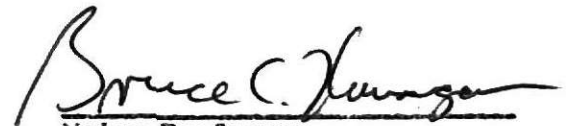
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper was to discuss language as a barrier to social and economic mobility for the lower class child and to indicate possible guidelines that may be used in devising a program for the remediation of this language barrier.

Lower class children include all races or nationalities who rely on public assistance; live in substandard or public housing; and whose parents have inadequate educations.

Problems with children from the lower class home are partly a reality, partly a myth. The reality startles middle class society because it is unpleasant and continually with society—in the newspaper, on television and radio, on the street, in the unemployment line and in the so-called "difficult" school. This reality affects the emotions of the middle class, the physical safety of the middle class and even more the taxation level of the middle class.

The myth, on the other hand, does not startle middle class society because it is something which is unthinkingly accepted. The lower class child is spoken of as being a "different breed." Intelligence tests, which were standardized on middle class children, yield an intelligence quotient of below normal for lower class children. Many middle class teachers feel, because intelligence tests have rated lower class children below normal, school experiences should be curtailed to their basic educational needs. The middle class teacher then, decides the curriculum for the lower class

child must be simplified and repetitive, if it is to be learned. After which the lower class child is labeled "culturally deprived," "poor," "needy," "underprivileged," or "disadvantaged." Then, during the time the lower class child spends in school he is expected to conform to middle class standards.

The lower class child (Ferman et al., 1965) has not experienced a logical pattern in life; things just happen. He has had little or no experiences in setting and working for goals and in evaluating or reviewing past actions as to whether or not they were worth the effort. As a result the lower class child comes to school with few of the skills and attitudes which one typically associates with accomplishment and success. Social skills (Cheyney, 1967) of the lower class child are different from those valued by the middle class teacher with respect to manner of dress, classroom conduct and oral language ability.

Language is fundamental to one's association with other humans. It is through language that one is able to convey thoughts. It is language (Tiedt, 1967) that relates one's deep emotional sense about friends, religion, community and life in general. It is language in a real sense that tells how well one lives or identifies one's culture. It is language that determines (Deutsch, 1967) one's intellectual development and social adaptability. And it is language that determines whether or not one can be upwardly mobile economically and socially in our middle class society. It is not difficult for the middle class teacher to accept or change the lower class child's manner of dress or classroom conduct, but it is very difficult for the middle class teacher to interpret or modify the lower class child's oral language efforts.

Assuming appropriate middle class dress and conduct, language is the most obvious handicap noted when observing the lower class child. Language

is not simply vocabulary, but an intricate and complex system of structured units in which sounds, words, and sentences are all arranged in meaningful wholes (Bloomer, 1959).

Middle class children have become accustomed to elaborate oral language codes before entering school. The reinforcement in the home and the acceptance by the teacher in the school setting have served as incentives for the middle class child's continued use of elaborated oral language. Lower class children, conversely, tend to utilize restricted oral language codes that are different from those accepted by the middle class teacher which leads to, on the part of the child, discouragement and a feeling of foreignness toward the school programs (Bernstein, 1959). The result is that the lower class child and the middle class teacher have difficulty communicating with each other.

The difference in the language of the lower class child and the middle class teacher must be accommodated in order for the lower class child to make satisfactory progress in school in the hope that one day he may, more fully contribute to and understand his society.

CHAPTER II

ORIGIN OF LANGUAGE DEPRIVATION

Home Environment

The laws of learning (Mueller, 1962) which apply to learning to drive a car or play an instrument also applies to the learning of a language. A response to a specific stimulus is likely to occur again under similar stimuli. The world around us, one's needs and desires are stimuli which prompt verbal responses. Evoking a great multitude of responses is therefore the most important first step in education. Conditions must be created which prompt a child to talk. His responses are then shaped gradually into the desirable form and reinforced. A number of reinforcements are needed to establish a response, to learn a vocabulary item, a grammatical form, or structure. Skinner (1957) estimated that during the school life of a child fifty thousand contingencies were needed to establish and maintain a response.

These observations may suggest why it is difficult for the lower class child to express himself like the middle class child, for the lower class home environment does not provide for verbal reinforcement. Forms of communication tend to consist mostly of gestures, sounds which are not words and so-called "local" words such as "aint," "git," and "jist." Lower class children do not understand the meaning of many standard English words because in their environment these words are not used or have a totally different meaning. The lower class child is not as skilled nor as practiced in verbal areas as the middle class child and, therefore, feels a certain amount of inadequacy in school situations when competing with middle class children.

The lower class child's most frequent reaction to language inadequacy in the school setting is to remain quiet or to try for middle class approval by being physically aggressive. The studies of Warner, Havighurst and Loeb (1944) and Davis (1948) indicated that the lower class child traditionally has been controlled not by verbalization but by action, and has had a higher premium placed upon physical rather than mental or verbal prowess.

Language or the lack of language originates in the home. The home must, because of its relationship to the child, be considered the predestinator of the child's verbal output. Ausubel (1964) considered the home as the first source which contributes to the area of language development and its degree of proficiency.

The lower class home lacks toys, books, pictures, utensils and a variety of objects that require labeling and serve as referents for language acquisition. The syntactical models provided by the lower class parents are typically faulty. The lower class child suffers from the paucity of abstractions in the everyday vocabulary of the lower class adults in the home. The lower class child suffers from the rarity of stimulating conversation in the home. The lower class child suffers from the relative absence of books, magazines, newspapers, and the example of a reading adult in the family setting (Ausubel, 1964).

Studies of Bereiter and Engelmann (1966) indicated verbal communication in the lower class home was so restricted that it would appear that the cognitive uses of language were severely restricted, especially in communication between adults and children. Language in the lower class home was primarily used to control behavior, to express sentiments or emotions, to permit the vicarious sharing of experiences, and to keep the social machinery of the home running smoothly. These were important uses of language, but

what was lacking by comparison was the use of language to explain, to describe to instruct, to inquire, to hypothesize, to analyze, to compare, to deduce and to test. For these are the language uses that are necessary in this "language world" for academic success.

Willis (1964) compared the importance of language development in the lower class home and the middle class home.

Middle Class

The ability to communicate is carefully nurtured. Children are encouraged to speak in words, phrases and complete sentences: they have a repertoire of nursery rhymes, poems, stories and songs which have been taught by rote. Their curiosity is cultivated, and questions are answered by parents.

They learn to talk freely with parents, siblings, other children, relatives, neighbors, local shopkeepers, and friends of parents.

The shape, color, and relative size objects is pointed out to them, and they learn to discriminate.

Books, magazines and newspapers are part of the surroundings at home, as are pictures, music, and toys. Some of the books are their own, to be used whenever they wish to do so; others may be used with someone older and children are

Lower Class

The use of nicknames such as "sister" and "junior" for various members of the family is so prevalent that many children are not able to repeat their own names nor to recognize them when roll is called by their teacher. They do not know the names of common objects about school and community; no one has ever told them what they are. They do not talk in sentences; they are unable to ask questions or even to express what they want. Inarticulate sounds and pointing have often previously sufficed. Children's immature speech patterns continue to exist because no one at home realizes or recognizes that they are speaking incorrectly. Their repertoire of rhymes is limited to television commercials and jingles.

Children respond to unfamiliar adults with silence because of a distrust of strangers, and to other children with monosyllables or a shaking of the head.

Apparent lack of understanding of concepts or time, size and shape is a matter of unfamiliarity with any terms other than the most simple.

There are few books, magazines or newspapers in the home. Playtime, preferably outdoors as long as weather permits, extends until bedtime, without a period for stories. Seldom do they see anyone read, other than perhaps an older brother

taught to handle these carefully. They are read to, and see others read as a matter of course.

Not only do they have toys of their own, the toys have educational value, develops kinetic skills, and are designed to encourage creativity and imaginative play.

Crayons, pencils, paper, coloring books and toy chalkboards are readily available and their use is encouraged.

The busy schedule of both parents and children may sometimes preclude the opportunity and the right climate for a discussion by the children of things that are important to them.

Verbal communication of any sort between parents and children in lower class homes is limited and, of course, the large size of families, the frequent missing father in the home, the mother often working and the crowded conditions that force children out of doors and away from adult contacts all contribute toward limiting the lower class child's verbal output.

Adult Stimulus

In looking at the home as the predestinator of language development, one must consider the adult stimuli. According to the studies of John and Goldstein

or sisters doing a school assignment. These children often see the printed word only on the labels of cans or on the television screen and no one calls their attention to these symbols.

Commercial toys are few in number, and are generally limited in variety to a ball, an inexpensive doll, ten and twenty-five cent wind-up toys, most of which are short-lived. Wheeled toys which encourage big muscle activity are seldom available instead, the children develop power of imagination and improvise toys of their own. A grocery box may alternately be a doll bed, a hat or a bus.

Children must be taught how to hold these objects properly, how to stay within the limits of the paper and how to control small muscle movements. Their previous use of crayons and pencils has frequently been misdirected as landlords in these neighborhoods will verify.

In addition to being lost in the crowd at home, these children may be doorkey children with no one at home to meet them, to share in their triumphs or troubles, or to listen to an account of their day at school.

(1964) social interaction with verbally mature individuals, which affects language acquisition, begins with the occurrence of the infant's earliest vocal responses. The child's language development in the first two years of life is primarily in the nature of increasing comprehension of the speech of the persons in his environment. By age two, the child has developed a speaking vocabulary which may range from three to three hundred words. In the next years, the child shifts from using words exclusively as labels with single referents to the use of words which have multiple referents.

Deutsch et al., (1965) suggested that the process of acquiring and enlarging the use of labels could be sketched in general terms. At an elementary stage of language acquisition, before his first birthday, the child perceives a word as being one of a multitude of attributes of an object (size, shape, color or name). By the repeated association of seeing and touching the object, and hearing the name of the object, the child acquires a bond between word and referent. Usually, the source of auditory stimulation is the mother, but the relatives, teachers, neighbors, siblings and other children have a role in the child's communication interaction.

Irwin (1948) pinpointed the age at which environmental differences impinged on phonological development. Comparing the number of sound types produced by infants from birth to thirty months, Irwin found that the infants from higher status families had significantly higher scores for the last year of the period than did those from lower class families. In other words, until the age of eighteen months the lower class child had the same type of vocalization in preparation for language growth as the middle class child. But then, due to environmental difference in the homes and adult stimuli, the middle class child was able to surpass the lower class child by a much greater margin.

Passow (1963) and Silberman (1964) reported in a study of middle class and lower class homes that the mother was in most cases the only adult language stimulus in the lower class home. It was also reported that the lower class mother made more use of simple imperatives such as, "leave it alone;" "shut-up," and less use of explanations and statements in dealing with their children than did the middle class mothers.

Hess and Shipman (1965) studied four socioeconomic levels using the mothers as the language stimuli in the homes. This study included one hundred and sixty mothers and their four year old children. Group A were mothers and children from professional occupational level homes (Middle Class). Group B were mothers and children from skilled blue-collar occupational level homes (Upper Lower). Group C were mothers and children from unskilled or semi-skilled occupational level homes, with predominantly elementary school educations (Middle Lower). Group D were unskilled or semi-skilled occupational level homes, with fathers absent and the family supported by public assistance (Lower Lower).

Each mother was asked to teach her child certain tasks in an experimental situation. The lower the socioeconomic level of the group, the more at a loss the mothers seemed to be as to how to do the tasks. They could not give clear explanations or directions and they did not know how to motivate their children. The lower the class the more the mothers relied on simple imperatives devoid of instructive content. The wide range of individual group difference in the ability of the mothers to teach and the children to learn may be illustrated by excerpts from recordings. The task of the mother was to teach the child how to group or sort a small number of toys.

The first mother (Middle Class) outlines the task for the child, gives

sufficient help and explanation to permit the child to proceed on her own.

She says:

"All right, Susan, this board is the place where we put the little toys; first of all you're supposed to learn how to place them according to color. Can you do that? The things are all the same color you put in one section; in the second section you put another group of colors, and in the third section you put the last group of colors. Can you do that? Or would you like to see me do it first?"

Child: "I want to do it."

This mother has given explicit information about the task and what is expected of the child; she has offered support and help of various kinds; and she has made it clear that she expects the child to perform.

Another mother (Lower Class) introduced the task by saying:

"I've got some chairs and cars, do you want to play the game?"

the child does not respond. Mother continues:

"O. K. What's this?"

Child: "A wagon?"

Mother: "Hm?"

Child: "A wagon?"

Mother: "This is not a wagon." "What's this?"

The conversation between the mother and child continued in this fashion and it was clearly noted that the child was not provided with the essential information he needed to solve or to understand the problem. Yet there was obviously some expectation on the part of the mother for the child to perform, but the child had not been told what to do.

The lower class home and the middle class home are directly responsible for providing language stimuli for their children. But, the difference in the lower class home and middle class home is that in the lower class family

context, the nature of the control system which relates parent to child restricts the number and kind of alternatives for action that are opened to the child. Such restrictions prohibit a tendency for the child to reflect, to consider and to choose among alternatives for speech and action.

CHAPTER III

LANGUAGE OF LOWER CLASS CHILDREN

Description

The previous studies (John and Goldstein, 1964: Strodbeck, 1964), concluded that the language of the lower class child was limited in syntax and vocabulary. Bernstein (1959) suggested that the lower class child had a "public" language. The "public" language is generally a more spoken than a written language. The "public" language has ten characteristics.

1. Short, grammatically simple, often unfinished sentences, a poor syntactical construction with a verbal form stressing the active mood.
2. Simple and repetitive use of conjunctions (so, then, and because).
3. Frequent use of short commands and questions.
4. Rigid and limited use of adjectives and adverbs.
5. Infrequent use of impersonal pronouns as subjects.
6. Statements are formulated as implicit questions which set up a sympathetic circularity such as "just fancy," "I wouldn't have believed it."
7. A statement of fact is often used as both a reason and a conclusion are confounded to produce a category statement, "Do as I tell you;" "Hold on tight."
8. Individual selection from a group of idiomatic phrases will frequently be found.
9. Symbolism is of a low order of generality.
10. The individual qualification is implicit in the sentence structure therefore, it is a language of implicit meaning. It is believed that this fact determines the form of the language.

"Public" language is the language that many middle class children use in general conversation, but it is the total language spoken by the lower class child.

In another study Bernstein (1962) suggested that instead of looking at limited language development of the lower class child, one may be noting normal language development within two different systems of communication. The first system Bernstein labeled as a "restricted code." Restricted codes were stereotyped, limited and condensed, lacking in specificity and the exactness needed for precise conceptualization and differentiation. Sentences were short, simple and often unfinished. There was little use of subordinate clauses for elaborating the content of the sentence. The restricted code was a language of implicit meaning, easily understood, and commonly shared. It was the language form used in situations when the intent was to promote social solidarity or to reduce tension. The restricted code was a pattern of communication most frequently developed within a group situation in which members associated closely with one another and within which there were common experiences from which they had developed understandings which did not continually need to be explained and pointed out. The restricted code was characterized by certain linguistic patterns. Since it was based upon mutual understandings, it was not necessary to develop an elaborate structure to express oneself. "Git" brought the same reaction as "Go upstairs and go to bed." The second system was labeled "elaborate code." The elaborate code did not presuppose that the listener had the same background of shared understandings. Communication in the elaborate code situation had to be fully developed in order for the speaker to be clearly understood. Therefore, the complexity in structure was greater and one's choice of words more varied.

Robinson (1965) examined a group of lower class boys and compared them with a group of middle class boys in terms of vocabulary of recognition and vocabulary of usage and found no difference between the two groups in terms of recognition vocabulary as indicated by a standard, vocabulary type IQ test. When a cloze procedure examination was given to the two groups, however, it was found that the middle class boys made a greater variety of responses than did the lower class boys. For the most part, there was greater conformity of responses among the lower class subjects and it was noted that concordance in vocabulary for the two groups was greater for function words (the, and, to, etc.) than for the content words (nouns, verbs, adverbs). In other words, the lower class boys apparently had the elaborate pattern available for use, but needed practice in using it, particularly in speaking situations.

Language Usage

The lower class child's pronunciation, word variety, sentence length and use of grammatical and syntactical structures resembles that of middle class children of a younger age. Lower class children have difficulty in using language as a means of carrying on a dialogue with themselves, a skill necessary for independent thinking and problem solving (Raph, 1965). The lower class child lacks the use of language as a means of getting and dealing with incoming verbal cues. But, even more so, the lower class child lacks the language usage that serves as a means of social distinction and gives one an opportunity for mobility in middle class society.

Bereiter and Engelmann (1966) observed eighty lower class Negro children and noted that the speech patterns of these children consisted of indistinct words of whole phrases or sentences that function like "giant" words. Giant

words cannot be transformed from statement to question nor from imperatives to declaratives. Instead of saying, "He's a big dog" the lower class child says, "He bih daw." Instead of saying, "I ain't got no juice," the lower class child says, "Uai- ga- na-ju."

Fraser and Brown (1964) studied the grammar of pre-school middle class children and noted what was lacking in the language usage of these children was the smaller connectives (a, and, for, etc.) and structure words (adverbs, adjectives, pronouns). Fraser and Brown also noted that the older lower class child's language usage resembled the younger middle class child's language usage. The difference was that the pre-school middle class child used a reduced grammar. The middle class pre-school child left out words that were not familiar and formed sentences out of words that were familiar. Even though the middle class child's sentences consisted of only two or three words, the words were distinct and could be re-combined to form other sentences because the middle class child's words existed as independent units. Lower class children on the other hand, often blended the words together with noises that took the place of words and inflections they did not know, so that all of the words tended to have fused into a whole. This left no distinctive units that could be re-combined to generate new sentences.

Osser (1966) compared five-year-old children from lower class environments with five-year-old middle class children. It was noted in this study that in the lower class child's language certain syntactical structures did not appear. The lower class child used more content words and omitted function words such as: auxiliary verbs, articles, prepositions and conjunctions. The lack of function-type words in the older lower class child's vocabulary made his speech resemble that of a younger middle class child.

Thomas (1962) reported that children from lower class families tended

to use nouns and verbs predominantly. There was limited and rigid usage of a few adjectives and adverbs. Also a lack of differentiation of referents appeared frequently.

To illustrate, the word "thing" was used in place of more specific designations of object names. "You" referred to all persons other than self, with proper names seldom appearing in spontaneous conversations. The label of "house" is applied to any type of building or room. Sentences were largely incomplete, short, made up of simple clauses, or of a string of simple clauses with or without the conjunction joining them together.

A group of one hundred teachers of lower class children in New York City listed five items pertaining to the language usage of the lower class child (Riessman, 1964).

1. Language is limited to concrete situations rather than used conceptually.
2. Restricted vocabulary.
3. Utilization of poor grammar.
4. Excessive use of slang and idiomatic expressions.
5. Inability to adequately report experiences to classmates.

Lower class children's pronunciations, words varieties, sentence lengths and use of grammatical and syntactical structures resemble that of middle class children at a younger age. The lower class child lacks the use of language as a means of getting and dealing with incoming verbal cues. Even more critical the lower class child lacks the language usage that serves as a means of social distinction, which can limit opportunities for mobility in a society and have a profound influence on later learning (1965).

CHAPTER IV

PRE-SCHOOL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS FOR LOWER CLASS CHILDREN

The lower class child does have a language. There is a certain similarity between the language of the lower class child and middle class child's language (Bernstein, 1962; Robinson, 1965). Now and then the understanding of word meaning between the lower class child's verbal language and the middle class child verbal language does come through, but comprehension is not frequent or precise enough to lead to fruitful communication. Who, then, is responsible for helping to remediate the lower class and middle class language difference and when should language training for the lower class child begin? Or should society continue to produce language deficient adults to replace language deficient children.

A language program begins in the home. The moment the mother speaks or sings to her baby and receives a gurgle, a smile, a cry, or even a swing of the baby's fist, communication has started. Children, except in extraordinary circumstances, are exposed to early communication, at least for the first few months of their lives. During the early period of a child's life motor skills, language skills, concepts of time, and concepts of objects start to develop.

The child from the lower class home often has more contact with his mother in the first few months of life than a child from the middle class home (Crow and Murray, 1966). In the home of the lower class, there are no maids, nurses or sitters to relieve the mother of the care of the baby. Sometimes grandmothers, older sisters or brothers care for the lower class

child when he grows older. Therefore, the lower class child starts life with the advantage of close mother contact; but his contact is soon over, for usually the mother must go out to work or younger children are born into the family and the mother's attention must be shifted to the new infant. The lower class child by the age of three or four spends most of his time in the company of other children, who have had the same paucity of verbal stimuli.

Ferman (1965) studied the language of children and found that in order for a child to handle multiple attributes of words and to associate words with their proper referents, a great deal of exposure to language must be presupposed. Such exposure involved training, experimenting with and identifying objects, and having corrective adult language usage for reinforcement.

Since the lower class home does not offer the conditions necessary for providing good language stimuli, the lower class child must rely on programs offered by the school and community to help remediate his language difference in middle class society.

Language programs for children from lower class backgrounds should be started as early as possible to reach both the lower class child and his parents. Hebb (1949), a neurophysiologist, suggested that early curiosity of the child which influences him to notice, take in and explore experiences through the sensory channels serve to construct neural models in the brain, primary learning which form the basis for the development of perceptual ability.

Studies (Bereiter and Engelmann, 1966; Gordon and Wilkerson, 1966) found that the pre-school for the lower class child was necessary to compensate for the difference in background experiences the lower class child brings to school. By the age three or four, lower class children were

seriously behind middle class children in the development of aptitudes necessary for success in school.

Israel, facing a similar problem to the United States' in working with lower class cultures, established pre-kindergarten schools several years ago. The Israel program began on the prenatal level. Social workers visited future parents to discuss with them the importance of playing with, singing to and talking to the newborn baby. The social workers supplied records, books to read and songs to sing for the lower class homes. Toys were loaned to lower class families by the government until the child was ready to enter nursery school. The Israelis were convinced by the results of their program that anyone given the proper preparatory background and subsequent appropriate instruction, could be taught to function in an educated society (Loretan and Umans, 1966).

Unfortunately, a program comparable to that of Israel has not emerged in the United States. In the United States many of the larger cities have started pre-school programs for lower class children.

In the curriculum of these pre-school programs, language had priority over many of the daily activities. Language was mostly based upon structural linguistics. The lower class child learned through imitation. By presenting common language patterns and having the lower class child to repeat and manipulate these patterns, the teacher instilled in the child the concept of a sentence. No matter how depressed the background of the children, they were able to learn to speak simple sentences. Language patterns using structural linguistics fall into four sentence patterns (Loretan and Umans, 1966).

1. N + V

The man come.

2. N + V + N

The man bought a book.

3. N + linking verb + Adjective The man is good.
4. N + linking verb + Noun The man is my friend.

The Philadelphia Public Schools' language program (Loretan and Umans, 1966) urged the children to play with words in patterns, jingles, simple poems, and nonsense poems. Gradually, the children achieved an awareness, not only of sentence form and manipulation, but of sounds and of the fact that letters represent sounds. In this program the teacher first taught words of "orthodox" spellings, such as: hat, fat, cat; cat, cap, cab; cat, cot, cut. After listening to the teacher and saying the words themselves the lower class children were encouraged to discuss the words and to find additional words that could be brought into the word pattern by substituting either individual vowels or consonants. By teaching language in this fashion the children began to realize that every word was not completely different from every other word, but rather that there was order and a system to English. A unique feature in this program was that the teachers tried to make language realistic to the lower class children by working within familiar content. A mother looked like as much as possible the child's mother (race distinction). A home looked like the lower class child's home. A neighborhood resembled the lower class child's neighborhood.

The Wilmington, Delaware Experimental Project on Schools in Changing Neighborhoods (Loretan and Umans, 1966) focused its language program on developing language skills through planned experience units which would help lower class children grow in human relations sensitivities, skills, knowledge, and information. These units were taught through role playing aloud or in pantomime. Role playing gave the child an opportunity to express himself as middle class children do. Through gestures, words, or a combination of both the lower class child was given a ready-made "safe" identity.

An identity the lower class child chose and yet, it opened doors into other people's lives and into their own.

The Willow Manor Oral Language Project in Oakland, California (Crow, et al., 1966) was specifically developed for the encouragement of language usage. Teachers were encouraged to examine the curriculum for situations that might require speech from the lower class children, regardless of the specific subject matter involved. Storytelling, dramatics and singing were extensively used. Special listening tapes were developed to give the lower class children more opportunity to hear speech as well as to make recordings of their own voices.

Gray and Klaus (1965), through an intensive program with lower class children and weekly visits to their homes, focused on the development of attitudes and aptitudes conducive to school achievement. Language development was stimulated through reading to the children several times a day dramatic plays, nursery rhymes, and a large amount of individual attention from adults interacting verbally.

Bereiter and Engelmann (1966) developed a language program around the importance of teaching the lower class child to reason and to use logical thinking as a means of processing information. Direct instruction was given with the goal of helping the child to master a formal language which would replace the lower class child's initial language, at least in the school setting. The sequence was first instruction in a formal, structured situation, and then deliberate extension of the language pattern into less structured social situations.

The basic teaching method was called "pattern drill," similar to that used in the teaching of a foreign language. This teaching method was based on three requirements. Whether it was phrased in standard English, or used

in a series of non-verbal symbols, the minimum language taught must: 1) be capable of representing reality, of naming or pointing out things and creating a symbolic equivalent of what is observable in physical reality—"This is a ball." "The ball is on the table."; 2) have provisions for indicating truth and falsity in a relatively unambiguous way—"This is a ball." "This is not a ball."; 3) be shared by the teacher and the child. If the child does not understand the code, the child obviously will fail to appreciate how reality is being represented and he will not benefit from feedback that is designed to bring him closer to the concept.

This language program (Bereiter and Engelmann, 1966) listed some tangible goals necessary for language development in the lower class child.

1. Ability to use both affirmative and not statements in reply to the question "What is this?" "This is a ball." "This is not a book."
2. Ability to use both affirmative and not statements in response to the command "Tell me about this _____ (ball, pencil, etc.)." "This pencil is red." "This pencil is not blue."
3. Ability to handle polar opposites ("If it is not _____, it must be _____.") for at least four concept pairs, e.g., big-little, up-down, long-short, fat-skinny.
4. Ability to use the following prepositions correctly in statements describing arrangements of objects: on, in, under, over, between. "Where is the pencil?" "The pencil is under the book."
5. Ability to name positive and negative instances for at least four classes, such as tools, weapons, pieces of furniture, wild animals, farm animals, and vehicles. "Tell me something that is a weapon." "A gun is a weapon." "Tell me something that is a farm animal." "A cow is a farm animal." "Tell me something that is not a weapon." "A cow is not a weapon." The child should also be able to apply these concepts to nouns with which he is familiar, e.g., "Is a crayon a piece of furniture?" "No, a crayon is not a piece of furniture. A crayon is something to write with."

6. Ability to perform simple if-then deductions. The child is presented a diagram containing big squares and little squares. All the big squares are red, but the little squares are of various other colors. "If the square is big, what do you know about it?" "It is red."
7. Ability to use not in deductions. "If the square is little, then it is not red. What else do you know about it?" "It's blue or yellow."
8. Ability to use or in simple deductions. "If the square is little, then it is not red. What else do you know about it?" "It's blue or yellow."
9. Ability to name the basic colors, blue, white, black, and brown.
10. Ability to recognize and name the vowels and at least 15 consonants.
11. Ability to distinguish printed words from pictures.
12. Ability to rhyme in some fashion to produce a word that rhymes with a given word, to tell whether two words do or do not rhyme, or to complete unfamiliar rhyming jingles like "I had a dog, and his name was Abel; I found him hiding under the _____."
13. A sight-reading vocabulary of at least four words in addition to proper names, with evidence that the printed word has the same meaning for them as the corresponding spoken word. "What word is this?" "Cat." "Is this a thing that goes 'Woof-Woof'?" "No, it goes 'Meow!'"

The content of the lessons were built around four levels of difficulty.

1. Demonstrate understanding of concepts non-verbally, "Show me which line is short."
2. Answer with one word, yes or no a question about the concept, "Is this line short?"
3. Repeat the basic statement as an answer—"Tell me is this line shorter than this? Give me the whole answer." "Yes, this line is shorter."
4. Identify the relationship by producing the approximate statement without the support of direction—"Tell me about this line."

Deutsch (1965) stressed, in the Enrichment Program for the Institute for Developmental Studies, the verbal and perceptual skills needed for all types of communication. Labeling was stressed in this program approach, getting across the idea that everything has a name. In training the children to give oral responses, the teacher first discouraged pointing and "partial" language. Once the oral response was given, the teacher encouraged the child to play with the word, or with a word like it, in a phrase, a sentence, or a jingle. This program combined the learning of concept with perception and linguistics.

Another aspect of this program was to combat the lower class child's habit of closing out sounds, especially those sounds frequently heard in school. Once the lower class child learned to listen, instead of disregarding, the sounds heard in school, a communication skill was learned that would be very valuable for later learning. To teach listening skills (Deutsch, 1965) a series of tapes were developed. On these tapes background noises were used to mask important sounds. The volume of the background noise was gradually increased to sharpen the child's sense of discrimination. With practice, it was hoped that the lower class child would be able to train himself to identify the important sound and listen to it regardless of the volume of external noises.

The Baltimore, Maryland, Early School Admission Project (Loretan and Umans, 1966) emphasized sense acuity in a language program for the lower class child. Activities were centered on the five senses.

Sense: Seeing

Observe traffic near the school to observe kinds of vehicles, size, shape, color of vehicles, and response to traffic controls. Observe demolition of buildings in school neighborhood to note procedures involved, machinery used, necessary personnel, and necessary safety precautions. Visit a pet store to purchase a

pet. Note variety of animals available, and care given pets. Learn about one means by which a pet is acquired. Identify objects by sight, using size, shape and color to assist identification. Note details of an object. Compare objects (size, shape, color, function). Note gross differences in similar objects. Note fine differences in similar objects. Note gross and fine differences in a series of objects.

Sense: Hearing

Children who live in crowded, noisy quarters often learn to "close out" sound. Learning to listen is important. Listen to sounds in the environment and identify their source. Describe them. Listen to sounds made by familiar object (ball bouncing, scissors, egg beaters, etc.). Relate source to sound after sound is produced behind a screen. Identify familiar songs as a result of hearing part of the melody. With eyes closed, listen to a classmate's voice. Identify the speaker. Identify differences in rhythm, pitch and tempo in familiar songs and music. Listen to tape recordings of familiar voices and identify the speaker.

Sense: Touching

Touch articles; learn to describe "feel" of surface texture. Compare textures. Classify objects according to texture. After many experiences, begin to relate characteristics with certain materials (plastic, wood, marble, metal, etc.).

Sense: Smelling

Learn to relate odor to its source (fruits, vegetables, smoke, etc.). Learn to note similarities and differences in odors.

Sense: Tasting

Learn to relate taste to its source (fruit, jelly, vegetables, etc.).

Perhaps the most structured approach to the teaching of language to pre-school lower class children was that of Omar K. Moore (Loretan and Umans, 1966). This approach to teaching language used the typewriter. The "talking typewriter" developed by the Thomas Edison Research Laboratories, taught reading by programming the machine. After allowing the child to press the keys at random for a while, the program gradually became more structured. *As the child struck a key, the letter would appear on a sheet of paper in the typewriter and was spoken by a recorded voice.* After two or three

sessions, the recorded voice assumed more authority; instead of repeating letters as they were struck, the voice started to dictate the letters to the child. At this point, all the keys on the typewriter locked except the demanded letter, so the child had no choice but to strike the correct letter. In the next step, the recorded voice dictated whole words and gradually sentences to the child. The child was expected to respond by typing the words and sentences on the machine. The keys on the typewriter were color coded in eight colors and the child's fingernails were also painted in corresponding colors.

Montessori (1964), although her work was with slum children in Rome, introduced to American culture a pre-school program that considered each child on an individual basis. A unique program was established for every lower class child in the program, whether it be language manipulative skills or social skills. Each child was taken in small steps from one level to another, always being allowed to rest on a plateau until the child was ready to go on to another area. Although Montessori's method was established for lower class children, in America this method has been used primarily in pre-school programs for the middle and upper classes.

Juniper Gardens Children's Project, (1965), located in Kansas City, Kansas, contributed some unique research in language development for lower class pre-school children. Behavioral Modification techniques were stressed in this program. Verbal responses were reinforced with a food snack or teacher praise. Vocabulary building and syntactical arrangement were encouraged in this program with the use of materials used in Headstart programs. Another feature of this program was that it was staffed by the lower class mothers of the children who attended. The mothers supervised language activities, conducted language group sessions, and gave the children

individual language tutoring. The professional staff provided a short training session in language teaching for the mothers. The professional staff had frequent question and answer sessions and periodically observed the mothers while they were working with the children.

The materials and methodology mentions in these language programs could be adapted in many ways and in many settings. Whatever the approach to teaching the lower class child language, it was hoped that eventually the lower class child would take on an acceptable middle class language pattern. McDavis (1964, page 206) stated, "The lower class child is thus introduced to the values of the dominant cultural."

If the school is to be effective, and if lower class children are not to become part of the nation's group of unemployed, then meaningful, expressive and receptive language training must become a conscious part of curriculum organization. Inability to speak and understand the culture's language makes class mobility most difficult.

CHAPTER V

SUGGESTED LANGUAGE PROGRAM GUIDELINES

In the past ten years there have been a number of pre-school programs designed to develop in lower class children those specific skills with which middle class children come already equipped to kindergarten. Many of these programs include as a part of their curriculum, techniques for developing oral language skills. Other programs, such as the ones reviewed in the preceding chapter, were designed specifically to improve the language usage of the lower class child. Although each of those programs mentioned have contributed toward improving the language ability of the lower class child, like other educational problems for this child, these programs have not solved the problem of how and what to do or use to help remediate the language differences that exist. There are several goals that differ in the language program mentioned which could suggest possible guidelines for bridging language differences between the lower and middle class.

Acceptance of Present Language Usage

There are two reasons for accepting the lower class child's speech as it is during his early language education. First it gives the child the advantage of bringing something of his home and neighborhood environment into the school. If one begins to immediately set a model of behavior in language for the lower class child, in effect one is rejecting his language and saying, "Your way of speaking is wrong. We will not accept you unless you learn our middle class way of speaking." This of course is never verbalized, either by teachers or by curriculum guides, but the rejection is implicit in much

that is done. The second reason for accepting the lower class child's initial language is that a language program should not be intended to completely change the child's language, but to provide the lower class child with the necessary tools for communicating with other classes of people.

Teacher Selection

It is a known fact that too many teachers in the United States have a middle class background and too few have had experiences in slum areas. Therefore, ideally, we need to discover lower class persons, who given adequate education, can master the fundamentals of learning and the skills necessary to guide the learning process of other lower class persons.

Basically, the teacher in a language program for the lower class child should a) have some understanding and knowledge of the child's culture, b) have interest in children and enthusiasm for teaching them, c) have a background in linguistics, English or Speech Pathology, d) be creative enough to meet the needs of each child, e) have self-confidence enough to frankly believe that within limits, children can be made to do what you want them to do and f) be a good language model.

Child-Parent-Teacher Coordination

Parent participation is vital if the lower class child is to start his school life with middle class skills and language usage. Lower class parents, contrary to many of our beliefs, are willing to work in many programs (Juniper Gardens, 1965) which include their children. Teachers training parents to teach their child middle class language patterns is an effective way of helping lower class parents to become better speech models, thus being able to give reinforcement for language outside of the classroom situation.

Auditory Discrimination Training

A common weakness in language usage of lower class children stems from poor training in listening. The result is that the child is unable to discriminate auditory stimuli. To the lower class child, words are but a kind of noise, and he tends to become inattentive to what is being said in his presence. Ferman (1959) reported that sixty to eighty percent of any sustained communication must be heard before knowledge of the context and of the syntactical regularities of a language make correct completion and comprehension of the speech sequence possible.

Poor auditory discrimination affects language adversely. Included among the listening disabilities of the lower class child are (Crow et al., 1966, p. 124): a) Inability to recognize identical sounds. b) Inability to identify sounds in a variety of environments. c) Inability to discriminate between different sounds. d) Inability to enunciate and articulate sounds correctly. e) Inability to follow directions. f) Inability to overcome poor language patterns. g) Inability to distinguish between voiced and voiceless sounds.

Specific suggestion for improving auditory discrimination are offered by the Baltimore, Maryland Early School Admission Project (Loretan and Umans, 1966, p. 49).

"Teach lower class children to listen to sounds in their environment and identify their source. Describe them. Listen to sounds made by familiar objects (ball bouncing, scissors, egg beaters, etc.). Relate source to sound after sound is produced behind a screen. Identify familiar songs as a result of hearing part of the melody. With eyes closed, listen to a classmate's voice. Identify the speaker. Identify differences in rhythm, pitch and tempo in familiar songs and music. Listen to tape recordings of familiar voices and identify the speakers."

Material Selection

As a starting point, lower class children should work within familiar content. Context that is real, observable and interesting. A mother should look like the lower class child's mother, not in actual appearance, but in racial similarities. A home like the lower class child's home. A neighborhood like the neighborhood like the lower class child's neighborhood.

Language Enrichment

Language enrichment is a necessary guide in every language class or program for the lower class child. The lower class child should be surrounded with meaningful experiences. There should be a period for storytelling, dramatic play and role playing with emphasis on encouraging the lower class child to talk, elicit verbal answers to questions, and expecting the child to use words in seeking to obtain desired responses from others. Raph (1965) viewed storytelling, dramatic play and role playing as the threads from which are spun the fabric of communication.

The classroom should have a number of books, pictures, and toys for the lower class child to look at and play with giving him the awareness of other means of obtaining language.

Perceptual differences should be taught to give the lower class child an awareness of size, shapes, texture and color difference.

Reward System

Because the lower class child is not experienced in associating rewards with mastering new concepts, and because the lower class child is not strongly motivated to work for praise, it is very difficult to reach him through the standard motivational channels. Therefore, a motivational bridge must be built. The lower class child must be rewarded initially in terms that are

meaningful to him. If the teacher's warning of punishment is followed by punishment, her warning will soon become meaningful. The same is true of praise, if praise is followed with some proof of good will, it will soon signify something of value.

For the child from the lower class background verbal praise is rewarding, but tangible rewards such as candy, a toy, cookies are more meaningful. In attempting to establish appropriate verbal behavior (Bereiter and Engelman, 1966): a) The child who tries should be rewarded. The primary criterion should not be whether the child performs but whether he tries. b) Try to avoid rewarding undesirable behavior. c) Avoid shaming or coaxing the child. Tell the child what to do, don't have the child wondering. Instead of saying, "Bobby, can't you talk louder?" Say things in a positive manner. "Speak up, Bobby. I can't hear you." d) Provide the child with a realistic definition of success and failure. Tell the child positively and specifically what is adequate and what is failure.

It was hoped that these guidelines would introduce orderliness of sentence structure and the use of grammatically accurate word variety to the lower class child so that he could be able to understand the language of his middle class teachers and peers upon entering school.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

The concern of this paper was to discuss language as a barrier to social and economic mobility for the lower class child and to indicate guidelines which may be used in devising a language program for the remediation of that language barrier.

The home environment and adult stimulation were regarded as primary sources of language development in both the middle and lower class homes. Lack of toys, books, pictures, magazines, newspapers, utensils and a variety of objects that require and serve as referents for language acquisition differentiated the lower class home. The mother in the lower class home was regarded as the primary source of adult language stimulation, but due to outside work, numerous household responsibilities, and other children to care for, the parent-child communication was more limited than in the middle class homes.

The analytic discussion of the language of lower and middle class children suggested that two different systems are operating, rather than quantitative differences within a single system. The first system was labeled the restricted code. The restricted code was described as a language system which used short, grammatically simple and often unfinished sentences. Language usage in the restricted code consisted of mostly nouns and verbs with limited and rigid use of a few adjectives and adverbs. The restricted code was the language form used when the intent was to promote social solidarity or to reduce tension. The assumption was made that the users of the

restricted language code were associated closely with one another and shared common experiences which developed understandings that did not require explanation. The second system discussed was labeled the elaborate code. The elaborate code did not presuppose that the listeners shared backgrounds and understandings with the speaker, and communication in this system had to be fully developed in order for the speaker to be understood. The complexity of sentence structure in the elaborate code was much greater and choice of words was more varied. Comparison of the restricted code with the elaborate code suggested that the middle class child had access to and used both codes appropriately. The lower class child, even though the elaborate code may have been available to him, did not use this language code.

Studies were cited which indicated that the lower class child by the age of three or four was seriously behind the middle class child in language acquisition and the aptitudes necessary for success in school. Therefore, to give the lower class child the opportunity to enter school with the same language ability and aptitudes as his middle class counterpart, programs should be started as early as possible to reach both the child and his parents. Pre-school language programs were reviewed with respect to methodology. These pre-school programs have met with varying degrees of success in providing lower class children with the necessary language readiness for school. The language programs used the approaches of structural linguistics; language enrichment through storytelling, dramatic play and perceptual differences; auditory training through listening to tapes; parents as language teachers of their children; and sense acuity, encouraging language development through the use of the five senses (seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, and tasting).

Seven guidelines were suggested which could be useful in devising a remediation program in language for the lower class pre-schooler:

1. Acceptance of lower class child's present language usage
2. Teacher selection
3. Material selection
4. Language enrichment
5. Child-parent-teacher coordination
6. Auditory discrimination training
7. A reward system

It was suggested that the utilization of these guidelines when planning pre-school programs would more efficiently introduce the lower class child to the language of the middle class society, thus giving him the language skills necessary for academic and social success upon entering school.

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LANGUAGE PROBLEMS OF
CHILDREN FROM LOWER CLASS BACKGROUNDS

by

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The concern of this paper was to discuss language as a barrier to social and economic mobility for the lower class child and to indicate guidelines which may be used in devising a language program for the remediation of that language barrier.

The home environment and adult stimulation were regarded as primary sources of language development in both the middle and lower class homes. Lack of toys, books, pictures, magazines, newspapers, utensils and a variety of objects that require and serve as referents for language acquisition differentiated the lower class home. The mother in the lower class home was regarded as the primary source of adult language stimulation, but due to outside work, numerous household responsibilities, and other children to care for, the parent-child communication was more limited than in the middle class homes.

The analytic discussion of the language of lower and middle class children suggested that two different systems are operating, rather than quantitative differences within a single system. The first system was labeled the restricted code. The restricted code was described as a language system which used short, grammatically simple and often unfinished sentences. Language usage in the restricted code consisted of mostly nouns and verbs with limited and rigid use of a few adjectives and adverbs. The restricted code was the language form used when the intent was to promote social solidarity or to reduce tension. The assumption was made that the users of the restricted language code were associated closely with one another and shared common experiences which developed understandings that did not require explanation. The second system discussed was labeled the elaborate code. The elaborate code did not presuppose that the listeners shared backgrounds and understandings with the speaker, and communication in this system had to be fully

developed in order for the speaker to be understood. The complexity of sentence structure in the elaborate code was much greater and choice of words was more varied. Comparison of the restricted code with the elaborate code suggested that the middle class child had access to and used both codes appropriately. The lower class child, even though the elaborate code may have been available to him, did not use this language code.

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