

**THE
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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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