

FACTORS INVOLVED IN DEVELOPING A SENSITIVITY
TO CORRECTNESS IN ENGLISH USAGE

BY

JOHN D. SHIVELY

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master of Education degree
in the Department of Education
Montana State College
August, 1961

PSM
Sh69

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Procedure	3
Purpose of the Study	3
II. ROLE OF COMPOSITION IN DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS	4
Motivation in the Composition Program	7
III. IMPORTANCE OF READING IN THE ENGLISH PROGRAM	14
A Suggested Reading Program	16
IV. RELATIONSHIP OF SPEECH AND LISTENING SKILLS TO IMPROVEMENT OF ENGLISH EFFECTIVENESS	20
Listening	20
Listening Skills	21
Skill Development	22
Speech Skills	24
V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	26
Summary.	26
Conclusions	27
BIBLIOGRAPHY	28

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

During the past decade, many industrial leaders, educators, and citizens have expressed considerable alarm at the deterioration of English skills in use by this country's young people. Another eyewitness, the National Council of Teachers of English, has advised that over 10 million dollars will be spent during the 1960-61 school year on salaries for instructors of remedial English on the college level.¹ The General Electric Company has even prepared a special brochure to aid Vocational Guidance personnel in convincing young people that "the ability to express ideas in writing and in speaking heads the list of requirements for success."²

The writer, during the past 10 years, has been associated with two business organizations of somewhat select personnel in that both groups employed only college graduates. The first group displayed excellent English usage while the second was a considerable problem to management insofar as language skills were concerned. The only noticeable common difference was that management placed extreme attention upon precision in verbal and written expression in the superior group. Both groups wrote extended reports, but the poorer group wrote much less frequently, and there was little emphasis placed upon exactness and correction. The inevitable conclusion was that practice and

¹National Council of Teachers of English, The National Interest and the Teaching of English, NCTE, p. 104, 1961.

²General Electric Company, General Electric's Answer to . . . Why Study English, p. 1, 1953.

assistance in writing can definitely bring about improvement in English usage.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to isolate the major factors involved in developing a sensitivity to correctness in English usage.

Since the establishment of this nation's first schools, the English approach has been strongly in the direction of memorization of grammatical rules as a foundation for a good command of the language. The results of this program, however, have not proved successful. A number of college professors, business executives, and members of the general public were interviewed and not one of these individuals felt that his intensive grammar education was a valuable tool in his work. In fact, none would even recommend an intensive grammar course as a prerequisite to effective communication.

The writer has discussed the value of formal grammar with many adults over a period of 10 years, and found that by far the greater majority disliked grammar indoctrination and also stated that following the instruction, little or no application of these rules was utilized in their oral or written communication.

In view of these facts, it has been the writer's belief that a comprehensive program of well-integrated reading, writing, speaking, and listening could more effectively accomplish the objective of better English usage. It was also believed that it was possible to train a student with minimal emphasis on formal grammar and in such fashion

as to equip him with a highly developed English sensitivity that would enable the individual to use language appropriate to any occasion that might arise.

The problem facing the English profession in giving students a more adequate English background was explored in the following areas:

1. The role of composition in developing communications skills.
2. The importance of reading in the English curriculum.
3. The relationship of speech and listening skills to improvement of English effectiveness.

Procedure

The procedure followed in this study involved a review of available literature.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this investigation was to show that a more successful English program could be instituted by placing major emphasis on composition and reading, and with increased attention being given to speaking and listening habits.

The first objective was to determine the role of writing in the development of English proficiency. This portion of the investigation is presented in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER II

ROLE OF COMPOSITION IN DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS

One of the major goals of any English program is training the student to effectively express himself in writing. In the past it has been accepted practice to begin concentrated training for composition at the junior high school level by requiring the memorization of a great many rules of grammar, by utilization of constant drill, and by developing the ability to recognize the parts of speech and parts of sentence. That this approach has failed has been proved not only by the experience of people in the business and educational fields but by recently published research findings which indicate that direct methods of instruction that focus on writing activities and the structuring of ideas are more efficient in teaching sentence structure, usage, punctuation, and other related factors than are methods including nomenclature drills, diagramming, and rote memorization of grammatical rules. This same study reveals that a knowledge of classificatory grammar has little measurable effect on the ability to express ideas accurately or precisely in writing or speaking.³

These statements have been verified by a good many college English professors who have encountered students with a fairly large stock of memorized rules from which to draw and yet who have considerable difficulty in the area of composition and speech. In the past, unfortunately,

³Strom, Ingrid M., Research in Grammar and Usage and Its Implications for Teaching Writing, Bulletin of School of Education, Indiana University, September, 1960.

the ever-present goal of English teaching has too often been in the direction of "correctness" whereas the real end should have been effective communication. It has been forgotten that the correctness is for the sake of the communication and not the reverse, communication for the sake of correctness. As a result, the student has often felt that the safest route is to say nothing at all and thereby make no errors. Practice is of prime importance in developing the skill of writing. Theory also has its place, but it is evident from the present state of English usage in this country that the placement of theory before exposure to the tangible subject itself has led only to grief.

During the last war, it was considered essential for pilots to learn something of the mechanics of the craft they were flying in order to make them better aware of the broader aspects of the flying business, as well as better able to cope with emergencies. Accordingly, many pilots were given a rather extensive training program concerning the theory behind their airplanes. Detailed schematic diagrams were demonstrated indicating the theory behind fuel systems, electrical systems, and airframes. The pilots were given all these facts before they had flown a plane or ever seen one dismantled, which was not felt particularly necessary. No attempt to let the men work on an engine or actually see the physical relationships was deemed important. The theory was presented quite apart from the tangible aspects. It was discovered, however, shortly after the men started flying, that even minor repairs and adjustments were beyond the scope of most of the men. As one pilot stated after a forced landing, "I knew the trouble was in the fuel system, but I couldn't find the darned

carburetor!" In the classroom, this same pilot got straight A's in engine theory, but he ultimately found there was nothing that could replace practical experience with the tangible objects. This has been the experience in many fields. It is known that knowledge of the law unfortunately does not make a man a safe driver, and continual lectures in theory will not make an accomplished typist. The Berlitz School, long recognized as one of the most effective in existence in teaching a command of foreign languages, has adopted the practice of quick and recurring application of every lesson as their major goal. The students have been found to learn more quickly and effectively by doing, which includes visual stimulation, auditory awareness, and continual and intensive practice in the new medium. Theory is not even a part of the system and yet students leave speaking grammatically correct sentences. Why then do schools persist in crowding the student's mind with grammar long before he gets a chance to actively use the medium of writing? It appears that in many cases tradition alone has been the guide.

Dr. James B. Conant in his American High School Today⁴ has grasped the significance of the point when he asks that writing occupy approximately half the total time devoted to the study of secondary English. He states that students should be required to write an average of one theme a week. This is a rather sharp contrast to what has actually existed. The fact is that there are students who begin college having written less than a dozen themes during their entire pre-college career. Just why composition experience should not have started with the third

⁴Conant, James B., The American High School Today, McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., New York, 1959, 48 pp.

grade when the student initially learned the function of written sentences is not clear, but there appears to be little reason why the art of writing could not evolve in a gradual manner so that by the time the student reaches the junior or senior high school, the concept is not presented as something entirely new and with a rather short time limit available for its mastery. Perhaps Conant would be able to revise his required number of themes per week downward and alleviate the overload of many English teachers if only some broadening and refinement in the already established skill in writing were necessary.

Motivation in the Composition Program

Pride. A composition program must have certain important attributes. First of all, good writing is a chore and the student must be given some very sensible motives for learning it. Perhaps one of the most important motives is the desire for his creation to be read. While it is true that most writing is done for someone else's consideration, the pride of workmanship is also a very strong influence. If the teacher can encourage and praise the student at every opportunity, in a short time the student will become quite proud of his efforts and will probably try harder to improve.

Results. Good results achieved through writing are of primary significance in further motivating the student to continue learning effective writing. He will soon see if he can talk to other graduates, where improved ability in composition is for the writer's own benefit. If the writer expects others to bend to his will, he will usually be

quite interested in assuring that he is heard and properly understood. If the teacher provides opportunity for the student to gain something by his writing, such as a work application, the motivation will come from within the student, which is by far the most effective means of encouraging more effort.

Observation. The task of motivating is not an easy one as the student has not yet realized or experienced the considerable part writing will play in his life. However, this is the logical place for field trips. When the student can see for himself the extent to which writing is used in practically all professions, and its tremendous importance in achieving a goal of benefit to the writer, he will begin to look more closely at this tool which is equally as important as a lathe to a machinist. It is one thing for a teacher to harp on the need for acquiring skill in writing, and quite another when the student sees for himself the Policeman appearing in court with his written testimony the basis for an entire case. When a girl can see a successful secretary writing letters for her superior, and see the dozens of minor occasions where a need to effectively communicate in writing occurs; when boys find out that an Engineer's work involves much more writing than actual field work; when students see first-hand how writing is involved in almost every occupation from manual labor to the top executive positions, perhaps the motivation for learning more than just the minimal essentials will arise. This type of learning can best be acquired through observation, something which has not been used heretofore in English work as it was not felt that the teacher had time for this sort of thing.

As soon as a student can see that writing is a means of getting favorable action, and that frequently success or failure depends on skill in this technique, he will naturally evince more effort when it is in his own best interest. Perhaps the tie-in between business reality and good communication has been slighted in education. Too often students have seen composition only as a difficult, imposed, non-related requirement. It is a shock, but often quite an effective one, when someone other than a teacher or parent is helpfully critical of a student, and students do need to be shocked with reality! The teen-ager cannot be isolated from his future by rationalizing his age. He must be exposed in increasing amounts to what he will some day face alone.

Interesting Topics. One of the problems in stimulating student writing has been brought about by imposing topics of interest only to the teacher. There are innumerable subjects of timely importance to the junior high or senior high school student, and the choice of topic should not override the more important goal of stimulating interest to encourage further effort. Round, a Professor of English in Baltimore, has offered a general classification of subjects that has worked well in his experience which is listed as follows:⁵

1. Topics Expressing Personal Attitudes

1. I believe . . .
2. Fear
3. Happiness
4. Loneliness
5. Worry
6. Understanding myself

⁵Round, Simeon, A Realistic Pattern for Writing Assignments, The English Journal, February, 1957.

7. Faith
8. Wishes
9. Meeting Life's Problems

II. Topics Expressing Concern With Personal Standards

1. Our strong need to conform
2. Friendship
3. Fair Play
4. School Rules
5. Cheating
6. Double Standards (adult and youth)
7. Maintaining My Individuality
8. Fads
9. Words to Live By
10. Don't Let Anyone Step on You
11. Learning to Live Alone
12. Dating

III. Topics Expressing Concern About Education and a Career

1. Planning a Career
2. Job or School
3. Getting Along with my Problems
4. A Career in _____
5. Working Teen Ageds
6. The Problem of Studying
7. My Family and My Career
8. Adequate Preparation
9. Look Before You Leap
10. In My Father's Footsteps
11. Job Satisfaction
12. Making My Own Decisions
13. My Search for Independence

IV. Topics on Family Living

1. Understanding our Elders
2. My Place in the Family
3. Economic Problem
4. The Youngest (oldest) Child
5. Making a House a Home
6. A Doctor (etc.) in the Home
7. A Happy Childhood
8. A Family Crisis
9. Dad Knows Best
10. Having My Own Way

V. Growth of American Thought

1. Prejudice
2. School Politics

3. Is College Necessary for Success
4. Teen Ageds and Religion
5. Is the Curfew Helpful in Problems of Juvenile Delinquency
6. New Opportunities in an Age of Automation

The topics listed are only a few that can be used to start students writing. The teacher can usually find at least several subjects about which the student feels so strongly that writing can be a vent for his feelings. Expression of these emotionally charged thoughts will demand a search for the words which best express the situation, and some organization to more effectively convince the reader, and this is exactly the goal for which the teacher is striving. These first compositions should be short, which means no more than 300 words. It is not difficult to write a page in developing an idea, and a short composition presents most of the intricacies of a longer one. In such a short composition, organization, transition, and good sentence construction are critical in order to prove a point or to be convincing. The emphasis on these first efforts should be on lucidity, clarity and organization. The student should be helped to realize that his topic is worthwhile and demanding of some intensive thought. He should also realize the need for good spelling, punctuation, and grammar, but only because they help him more effectively communicate his ideas. They are the little refinements that make his composition a finished product, but certainly not the primary reason for writing.

The first attempts at writing will probably be largely narrative. While this has its value, the teacher should attempt to guide the student into expository writing where there is more involved than

the mere relating of facts. The student should be brought to the point where he understands that it is his ideas and his particular viewpoints in which others are interested. This involves going into his subject to a more penetrating level, involving reflection and discussion. Once the student gets into this type of composition, he usually finds it quite rewarding. He often takes considerable pride in his creation since it mirrors his own thinking and his own labor and because it concerns something about which he is quite concerned.

If a student is motivated within himself, then one of the most important parts of composition, namely revision, will not seem distasteful to him. He will automatically revise in order to make his creation more perfect, more logical. The student will be writing to convince himself as much as anyone else. It becomes a method for clarifying his own thoughts, accepting and rejecting, modifying and developing his own opinions.

A very important point for teachers to emphasize to students is that language is something that can be manipulated. It is not solid and inflexible. With a bit of effort, it can be a very satisfying experience to create with words. Unfortunately too many students have been led to believe that there is only one way to compose, and that is the right way.

The school must not lose sight of the real goal in English which is effective communication. Rules are not the end product but the means to the end. The teacher can make good use of motivating factors such as pride in workmanship, good results, firsthand observation, and composition

topics interesting to the student to achieve this proficiency. The key factor is constant supervised practice.

However, before composition is possible, the writer must have ideas and opinions to bring to his creation. Since the teenager cannot draw on a wealth of experience, he must expose himself to the ideas of others through reading, and this is the second major area of concern in this paper which is explored in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER III

IMPORTANCE OF READING IN THE ENGLISH PROGRAM

There have been numerous surveys made within the past few years which have pointed out that students are not reading as much as they formerly did. There also have been statements to the effect that students are acutely aware of literature today.⁶ Whichever is the case, the fact that reading is vitally important in the English development of young people is usually not disputed. The principal problem has been centered around how we can motivate our youngsters to do more reading, and of higher calibre. Here, lack of funds handicaps many schools. The National Council of Teachers of English reports⁷ that the average amount per pupil spent in secondary schools on library books in 1960 was \$1.60, or about half the cost of one book. If schools expect to help young people develop their English skills by reading, there must be a well-stocked library available to insure that all students will find books of interest to them. One of the answers seems to lie in the area of paperbound books which many schools are buying in very large quantities. Scholastic Magazines, Inc. publishes paperbound books⁸ covering almost any field a young person could be interested in and their price range is from 25¢ to 75¢ with the majority being about 35¢. The Readers Digest Association has also published a set of books

⁶Sauer, Edwin H., English in the Secondary School, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., New York, 1961.

⁷National Council of Teachers of English, The National Interest and The Teaching of English, NCTE, p. 102, 1961.

⁸Scholastic Magazines, Inc., Readers Choice, New York 36, N. Y., 1961.

called Skill Builders in Reading⁹ covering an extremely wide range of topics and designed to build interest in reading.

The question arises as to why an attempt should be made to stimulate more reading with services such as these. Does reading really aid in development of English skills? The facts seem to indicate that it does. A study made by Reeves,¹⁰ Supervisor of Junior and Senior High School English in Houston, disclosed that where students were encouraged to read books particularly interesting to them, they were much more apt to become interested in also improving their reading ability.

Why does improved reading ability contribute toward better English usage? Unfortunately, many students have a home environment in which a good command of English is actually a penalty. When children grow up in an atmosphere such as this, it is an enormous job for the English teacher to be the spearhead in overcoming such a handicap. Partially through the medium of reading, such a student can come to the realization that certain required levels of correctness in language prevail in business and society and that he will be severely penalized if he does not conform to these standards. It is in his own best interest to learn several levels of communication which will be appropriate to the situation in which he finds himself. Extensive reading can make a student aware of such language differences. It can improve his vocabulary, and give him good examples of organization, structure, and usage.

⁹Readers Digest Services, Inc., Reading Skill Builders, Educational Division, Pleasantville, N. Y., 1961.

¹⁰Reeves, Ruth E., An Experiment in Improving Reading in the Junior High School, The English Journal, Jan., 1958.

On another plane, reading helps young people crystallize their thoughts on subjects only vaguely understood. It gives them current opinion, and keeps them up-to-date in the field of their choice as well as in regard to the rest of the world. It helps develop standards of discrimination, evaluation and good taste. Good reading provides material for conversation and argument, and acquaints students with material in a variety of fields. The student cannot help but be affected by reading, even if only to a minor degree. If the material is of interest to him, the chances are good that he will pick up more information, broaden his scope of understanding, be forced to learn new concepts, and be exposed to different types of writing. People are all imitative creatures to varying degrees. The student will probably find himself paraphrasing or even copying groups of words that appeal to him and which will help him overcome any language deficiencies he may have.

Magazines are also a good method of encouraging reading. Articles have the advantage of being short and usually attractive in their makeup.

A Suggested Reading Program

A good reading program might follow an infinite number of approaches. One that might help get results is as follows:

1. Let each student select some subject in which he is interested, and over a period of several weeks, locate in recent magazines and books whatever information is available on that topic. Have him make an annotated bibliography on the subject chosen. Perhaps he will not read all the material, but if the subject

is one in which he is really interested, the chances are that he will make a good effort to do so. Have the student talk with the class about what he has read or divide the class into groups and have the students carry on informal conversations centering around materials read. A student forum might be planned.

2. Let several students take turns in preparing signed bulletin boards which give lists of resource material they recommend to their fellow students on various subjects.
3. Take every opportunity for in-class reading.
4. Have individuals or groups make a careful study of their reference material. They might check the content, editorial bias, and usefulness.

The traditional method of preparing book reports as a written or oral recounting of one or two highlights has been of extremely limited value insofar as stimulating further reading is concerned, and it certainly has done little to develop better reading habits.

Limitations in Reading. The preparation of book lists for students is an extremely doubtful procedure. Students should be allowed to read what they like. It is taking an extremely negative attitude to assume that young people will choose the poorest kinds of literature as their prime interest in reading. That they will do some experimenting is perfectly natural and to be expected, but there is no reason to believe that restricted book lists will prevent exposure to certain types of literature which is too "mature" for them. A comparison is probably

the best proved method of pointing out shortcomings and strengths. Students will find that good literature has just as many thrills, just as much adventure, and deals with subjects of interest to them on a much more interesting plane than the poorer writing. The goal is to help the student find some subject which is of great interest to him, and then let the youngster's natural curiosity lead him into other subjects and areas. The teacher must remember to encourage the student to share his reading experiences. This may be done by writing or orally, but either method crystallizes ideas, and has the possibility of motivating interest on the part of other students. It must not be merely busy-work. The student should be brought to realize that the discussion of his reading is actually of interest to others and not merely an imposed assignment. Other students might help him see that he has not missed the main purpose in his reading, lead him to other materials, and contribute discussion which leads to a more complete understanding of the subject.

The reading program in essence is designed to supplement the writing phase of the English curriculum. It is not separate, but rather an invaluable adjunct. It stimulates enthusiasm, creates awareness of language, informs, and provides an example for composition exercise.

The school must provide sufficient books to assure that all students will find a field of interest. **A**ny reading approach should encourage the student to continue with his own interests and become actively involved in sharing his newly acquired information with others. The student should be allowed to find his own reading level and not be forced to hold to a particular prescribed list which may stifle motivation.

While silent reading performs a definite and important job, oral reading and discussion, as well as improved listening habits also form a vital part of total language development. These aspects are covered in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER IV

RELATIONSHIP OF SPEECH AND LISTENING SKILLS TO
IMPROVEMENT OF ENGLISH EFFECTIVENESS

Good English is a function involving not only writing, but good listening and speaking as well. In order to acquire good English, the student must be conscious of speech sounds and then attempt to imitate them. In this way, proper patterns will become established which will serve as lifetime aids.

Listening

The need for ear training is a factor of prime importance in the development of English proficiency. It is only through the constant monitoring of speech that people are able to communicate. Those unfortunates who have lost their hearing and must lipread report¹¹ that the ability to hear even slightly far exceeds in efficiency any mechanical device or artificial means of learning to communicate. A student's ability to listen comprehendingly is a leading factor in learning. The teacher must guide and assist her pupils in learning to listen attentively, selectively, critically, or appreciatively as the case demands. Listening does not decrease in significance in later life. The events of a community, the state and the nation plus wide influence of international affairs have increased the importance of good listening. The use of radio and television have increased enormously and it is probable that even more time will be spent listening in the future.

¹¹Johnson, Wendell, Speech Handicapped School Children, Harper and Brothers, New York: 1956, p. 403.

Elementary students spend a great portion of their school day listening. They listen to instructions, to teacher comments, to outside noises, and to other pupils. The quality of the listening these children do has a direct bearing upon their learning and on the study habits built up in the course of their elementary school experience.¹²

Listening is not just hearing sounds. It is identifying and interpreting sounds. The average speaker generally speaks at about 125 words per minute. A listener can hear and comprehend four times faster. This gives considerable spare time for pitfalls such as day-dreaming, detouring, debating, and private planning.¹³ The listener has no control over the rate at which he must listen and the words he hears are perceived but once or not at all. It would seem that listening is a crucial skill and certainly an invaluable asset in improving language facility.

Students, in order to benefit most from learning, must develop the ability to think as they listen. Improvement results only when the student is ready to listen, knows why he is to listen, and how to do it most efficiently.

Listening Skills

Listening skills believed by the writer to be important to the English student include the following:

¹²Rasmussen, Carrie, Speech Methods in the Elementary School, New York: Ronald Press, 1949.

¹³Taken from Coronet Film "Effective Listening."

1. Listening to detect likenesses and differences in the sounds of letters, words, and phrases.
2. Listening in order to follow a sequence of ideas.
3. Listening to make comparisons.
4. Listening in order to answer questions and hear the responses of others.
5. Listening for the purpose of imitation.
6. Listening to detect emotionally-loaded words, to react to voice, emphasis, and inflection.

Skill Development

Just how does the teacher develop good listening skills? First of all, the student must learn to be aware of the thousands of auditory impulses that bombard him from all sides. He must learn to increase his attention span. This can be accomplished by having him practice listening until he can repeat directions accurately. The material must be interesting or emotional and related to the student's own knowledge. He must already have acquired a backlog of listening experiences.

For maximum effectiveness, the teacher must tie in listening improvement with everyday learning. She must give listening tests, analyze pupil's listening habits, and ultimately make students "sound conscious." It is this awareness of the sounds of language that can ultimately make students users of acceptable English. With the proper education in correct usage, improper language will seem to strike a

discordant note. What happens is that the ear becomes attuned to words. Even more important, the ear has also become aware of the fact that different levels of English are required under varying circumstances. For example, the language used in conversation would not be appropriate in a formal speech nor would it be effective when used by an Army Sergeant drilling recruits. As soon as the student learns how to converse on several levels with ease, his language proficiency can be considered no longer a problem. However, language is a very fluid medium and requires constant attention for us to remain its able and effective users.

This method of sensitizing the mind to good English is in use today by many very able leaders. Many excellent speakers say they learn their art by being very English conscious, and by constant verbalizing. Perhaps this is an area which has been neglected in teaching. There has been no time for each of the 35 students in a room to discuss frequently something of interest to the class. The teacher has too much ground to cover. As a result, student responses are held to a "yes" or "no" and brevity is encouraged so as not to hinder the progress of the class. As a result, only those students with a natural feel for language and those with an excellent home environment begin to show the mark of good English. The era of "children should be seen and not heard" has undoubtedly done a good deal of unwitting damage. Schools have not been able to accept the fact that language, like art and music, is learned by practice, and by more practice! If adults want children to be at ease socially in all kinds of situations, shall they be taught by ordering them not to participate?

Speech Skills

While listening is extremely important as a means of acquiring knowledge, verbal practice is also important in cementing the habits of correct speech. This is the method by which speech is learned by infants; it is the method by which speech is improved in school; and it is the method by which conversational abilities are continually improved in later adulthood. Top track stars cannot be taught simply by demanding that they observe. While this is definitely a part of learning, the actual physical practice is inextricably tied in with the total process.

There are many opportunities to observe children in the first three grades of school engaged in language activity. Teachers will confirm that at this age, children are inveterate talkers! They can expound at length on things they have seen and done; their questions seem limitless, and their oral stories reveal a marked degree of creativity and imagination. This is nature's own way of giving them facility in communication. Without this phase, sign language might become the means of communication. Just why the educational system immediately calls a halt to this vital phase of English development is difficult to comprehend. It is felt by the writer that two-way discussion is one of the most effective means of transmitting information, as well as learning. The fact that educational methods have not been geared to this method is unfortunate. Children must hear themselves using correct language. It is a critical part of the learning process in English, and cannot be ignored.

It has been noted in the classroom that many pupils misspell words simply because they have never heard them correctly. This seems quite plausible in view of the fact that many students have not had an opportunity to speak out extensively in the classroom and hear themselves using good English. Accordingly, they learn incorrectly and proceed to establish a habit that takes years to unlearn, and is frequently never corrected.

Listening skills are not a natural by-product of hearing, but are learned. Students need training to develop listening habits appropriate to situations encountered, and schools have the responsibility of providing the practice necessary for mastery of this art. In the same manner, correct speech habits are the result of extended practice over a period of many years beginning in the elementary grades. They cannot be learned solely by memorization of rules. The student must become thoroughly familiar with hearing himself use correct speech in order that he will feel no hesitation in actual usage.

A summarization of this paper and the resulting conclusions are contained in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study has been concerned with isolating the major factors involved in developing a sensitivity to correctness in English usage. The information used was obtained from a review of literature reflecting recent thinking on the presentation of English.

Summary

The problem was to determine the primary aspects of an English usage program which would provide a student with a feeling for correctness. It was found that four key areas seemed to comprise the elements essential in achieving this goal. These four categories were:

1. Composition
2. Speech
3. Reading
4. Listening

It was found that each of these points has been proved to be of major importance in building a good English foundation. It was also shown that there exists a distinct failure on the part of many schools to provide adequate English skills and that the approach in the past has been directed primarily toward the theory of grammar.

Conclusions

The findings of this study seem to justify the following conclusions:

1. There is a definite need for increased emphasis upon composition. This emphasis should consist of much more practice in writing and should be started as soon as the student learns to write in the elementary grades.

2. A great deal of verbal practice in correct English is essential in fixing the habit of good speech. This must be accomplished in the classroom where it may be supervised.

3. More training in listening is needed to improve English as the development of a sensitive ear is the means by which all speech is monitored and corrected.

4. An extensive reading program to enable the student to make the visual connection between his own composition and that of proficient writers is a definite requirement of the English program.

5. There appears to be a disproportionate amount of class time given to the study of traditional grammar in many schools with more time being spent on the theory of English than on the communication itself.

The evidence indicates that English must be learned by constantly hearing and seeing correct examples, and by the actual doing. It is an art that has many component parts which must be at all times integrated and not compartmentalized. It is felt that these factors will develop the language awareness or sensitivity needed to adequately communicate today and in the future.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Hall, Robert A., Jr., Leave Your Language Alone, Ithaca, New York: Linguistica, 1950, 254 pp.
- Hook, J. N., The Teaching of High School English, New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1959, 532 pp.
- Johnson, Wendell, Speech Handicapped School Children, Harper and Brothers, New York: 1956, 575 pp.
- National Council of Teachers of English, The National Interest and the Teaching of English, NCTE, Champaign, Illinois: 1961, 140 pp.
- Pooley, Robert C., Teaching English Grammar, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1957, 207 pp.
- Pooley, Robert C., Teaching English Usage, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1946, 265 pp.
- Rasmussen, Carrie, Speech Methods in the Elementary School, New York: Ronald Press, 1949.
- Sauer, Edwin H., English in the Secondary School, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961, 245 pp.
- Stone, George Winchester, Jr., Issues, Problems and Approaches in the Teaching of English, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961, 246 pp.

Periodicals

- Arnold, Freida, "A Creative Writing Activity," Elementary English, 38:298-300.
- Baker, William D., "The Natural Method of Language Teaching," The English Journal, Vol. 52, April, 1958.
- Conant, James B., "The American High School Today", McGraw Hill Book Co., Inc., New York: 1959, 48 pp.
- Corbin, Richard, "Grammar and Usage: Progress But No Millennium," The English Journal, November, 1960.
- French, Ruth E., "The Potential of Speech in the English Program," The English Journal, November, 1960.

- General Electric Company, "General Electric's Answer to . . . Why Study English", 1953, 4 pp.
- Hamilton, Mary Glenn, "A Creative Approach to Writing," Educational Div., Readers Digest, 1960.
- Hurley, Elsie M., "Motivating Reluctant Readers," Elementary English, 38:328-329.
- Leonard, George B., Jr., "Why Johnny Can't Write," Look, 25:103.
- Norman, R. B., "Magazines in the Classroom," A Report to Teachers for National Library Week, April, 1960.
- Pooley, Robert C., "Automatons or English Teachers," The English Journal, March, 1961.
- Pooley, Robert C., "What is Correct English Usage," NEA Journal, 48:17-20, Dec. 1960.
- Readers Digest Services, Inc., Reading Skill Builders, Educational Division, Pleasantville, N. Y., 1961.
- Reeves, Ruth E., "An Experiment in Improving Reading in the Junior High School," The English Journal, January, 1958.
- Round, Simeon, "A Realistic Pattern for Writing Assignments," The English Journal, February, 1957.
- Scholastic Magazines, Inc., Readers Choice, New York 56, N. Y., 1961.
- Singleton, Carlton M., "The Classroom Teacher as a Researcher," Elementary English, 38:330-335.
- Spiegler, Charles G., "The Right Book at the Right Time," NEA Journal, May, 1958.
- Stocking, Fred H., "The Two Jobs of English Teachers," The English Journal, March, 1961.
- Strom, Ingrid M., "Research in Grammar and Usage and Its Implications for Teaching Writing," Bulletin of School of Education - Indiana University, September, 1960.
- Trace, Arther S., Jr., "Can Ivan Read Better than Johnny?," The Saturday Evening Post, 234:30, May 27, 1961.
- Zollinger, Marian, "Written Communication," The World Book Company, 1960, #6 Language Art Notes.

Films

Coronet Films, Inc., "Effective Listening."