

EFFECTS OF THE APPLICATION OF LINGUISTICS ON READING
COMPREHENSION OF BLACK FRESHMEN STUDENTS
AT TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Jeweleanne Parker Whittaker

May 1974

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Credit should be given here to the persons who have aided the writer in preparing this dissertation. Particularly, I wish to express my appreciation to Dr. Wilson H. Lane, dissertation chairman, whose suggestions regarding arrangement and content of subject matter have been largely followed. Appreciation is expressed to other members of the doctoral committee, Dr. Guy D. Cutting, Dr. Denzil R. Porterfield, and Dr. Franklin L. Stovall. The writer also acknowledges Dr. John A. Bell for his assistance in interpreting and analyzing the data.

Dr. Elneita W. Stewart, Director of the Texas Southern University Reading and Study Skills Center, is acknowledged for endorsing this study. Appreciation is also expressed to Dr. Martha B. Walton for her endless number of hours spent in proof-reading the manuscript.

DEDICATION

To my husband, Carl, and daughters, Carla and Yolanda, I express gratitude for their constant encouragement and forbearance.

J. P. W.

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Whittaker, Jeweleane Parker. "Effects of the Application of Linguistics on Reading Comprehension of Black Freshmen Students at Texas Southern University." Unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Houston, May, 1974.

ABSTRACT

It seems to be a general accepted fact that the Negro speaks a systematic dialect common to his culture. Due to this cultural variable, school learning may become a difficult task. The difficulty is not because the Negro is deficient in language skills but because he is different in his language skills. This difference might interfere with his ability to learn to read.

A preeminent and challenging question among educators today is how to teach reading to speakers of nonstandard dialect since standard English is the language of instruction in American schools. Like other educators, the members of the Reading and Study Skills Center at Texas Southern University are vitally concerned. In an effort to answer the above question, a linguistically-based program was employed to determine its effect, if any, on the reading comprehension of disadvantaged Negro students who were enrolled in reading and study skills courses.

The Problem

The purpose of this study is to determine the effects of a highly linguistically-based reading program on comprehension achievement of beginning Negro freshmen students at Texas

Southern University when compared with other beginning freshmen at the same institution who received programmed reading instruction.

The Study

The total population for the study consisted of two hundred Negro, beginning Texas Southern University freshmen students. The participants were randomly selected from a total of 525 students enrolled in reading and study skills courses; 97 of whom were male while 103 were female. All participants were 1972 high school graduates who were reared and received elementary through high school instruction in the Texas Gulf Coast area. The ages of the participants ranged from seventeen through twenty years old for both the linguistics and programmed instructed groups, respectively.

The study was conducted over a sixteen-week period. The linguistics group received instruction based on Paul Roberts' Patterns of English while the programmed instructed group received instruction based on the Science Research Associates' College Reading Program One. A session for linguistically-based instruction was taught simultaneously with a session for programmed instruction on alternate days, Monday through Thursday, twice per week. Each class session was fifty minutes long.

The Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Forms A and B, was used to measure any change in reading comprehension achievement that

occurred over the sixteen-week period. Group means were compared by submitting raw scores to an analysis of variance. The raw score means were later converted to a grade equivalent score for ease in interpreting any change that occurred in reading achievement. When the comprehension group means for the post-test were analyzed, a change of 1.8 between the linguistics instructed and the programmed instructed group was significantly higher than the .01 confidence level. A change of .3 in vocabulary achievement for the group that received programmed instruction over the group that received linguistics instruction was not statistically significant. Therefore, it may be concluded that the linguistic-based instruction was more effective than programmed instruction in improving reading comprehension of Negro beginning freshmen students at Texas Southern University.

Conclusions

On the basis of the findings of this study, it may be concluded that:

1. A linguistically-based instructional method is more effective than a programmed-based instructional method in improving reading comprehension achievement of Negro beginning freshmen students who live in the Texas Gulf Coast area.
2. Reading comprehension of Negro beginning freshmen college students in the Texas Gulf Coast area can be improved significantly by employing a linguistic method of reading instruction.

3. Although the specific applications of this study were limited to the two hundred subjects who comprised the research population, other students with similar reading deficiencies might derive benefit from such a program.

4. A measurable gain in reading vocabulary was derived simultaneously with improved reading comprehension for the programmed instructional group as well as for the linguistically-based instructional group. This was a secondary finding.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. A larger population sample should be included in the investigation.

2. Negro students of classifications other than beginning freshmen should be included in the population sample.

3. Speakers of Negro dialect from other geographical areas should be included in a similar study.

4. More research at the college level should be conducted on students who speak nonstandard English.

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Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM AND ITS INVESTIGATION

INTRODUCTION

Proficient reading skills are important variables in the prediction of success or failure of students at the college level. Many students are subjected to aptitude and/or achievement tests, that rely heavily upon reading ability as a prerequisite to being admitted to colleges and universities throughout the United States. A large number of prospective students are probably denied admission to colleges and universities on the basis of reading scores. Yet other students who have scored low in the area of reading are admitted to colleges or universities and are then referred to a reading and study skills service.

It appears that the Negro student is consistent in scoring low on tests that rely upon reading skills.¹ His inability to score well may be attributed to a deficit of reading and language skills. It seems that effective reading and language skills are basic to: (1) the student's academic success, (2)

¹Courtney B. Cazden, "Subcultural Differences in Child Languages: An Interdisciplinary Review," Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, XII (1966), 185-219; Joan C. Baratz, "A Bi-Dialectal Task for Determining Language Proficiency in Economically Disadvantaged Negro Children," Child Development, XL (1969), 889-901.

his personal adjustment, (3) his successful relationships with others, (4) his vocation or professional success, and (5) the extent of his meaningful contribution to society. Broadly speaking, effective reading and language skills are requisite to preparation for living, which is, after all, the end goal of the educational process.

There are many variables that enter into the process of learning to read. Cultural background is one that has been of some concern to the American educational system. A cultural variable experienced by the Negro student is one that seems to interfere with his ability to learn to read. The Negro language system, which is part of his culture, may be considered as a prime factor contributing to his poor reading ability.² The Negro language pattern is believed by some to interfere with his ability to learn to read, because Negro dialect is so different from the standard American English that is taught in the schools.³

The Negro who is speaking a dialect is frequently criticized and looked upon as being uneducated because his language system does not meet the criteria set for standard American

²William A. Stewart, "Sociolinguistic Factors in the History of American Negro Dialects," Language, eds. Virginia P. Clark, Paul A. Eschholz, and Alfred F. Rosa (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1972), pp. 401-11.

³Joan C. Baratz and Roger W. Shuy (eds.), Teaching Black Children to Read (Washington: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1969).

English. Several studies recommend that students should be taught in their native tongue and that standard American English should be taught as a second language.⁴ Difficulties in communication often occur because of the language divergence between Negro dialect and standard American English.⁵ Some dialects are sufficiently different from school language to cause learning difficulties.⁶ Negro students often experience learning difficulties while in school because of their language. There seems to be too much variance in Negro dialect and the language found on the printed pages.⁷

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study is to determine the effects of a highly linguistically based reading program on comprehension achievement of beginning Negro freshmen students at Texas Southern University when compared with other beginning freshmen

⁴Ibid.

⁵Estelle Cherry-Peisach, "Children's Comprehension of Teachers and Poor Speech," Child Development, XXXVI (1965), 467-80.

⁶Virginia L. Allen, "Teaching Standard English as a Second Dialect," Contemporary English Change and Variation, ed. David L. Shores (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1972), pp. 237-55.

⁷J. L. Dillard, "How to Tell the Bandits from the Good Guys: Or What Dialect to Teach?" Functions of Language in the Classroom, eds. Courtney B. Cazden, Vera P. John, and Dell Hymes (New York: Teachers College Press, 1972), p. 291.

at the same institution who receive programmed reading instruction.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Texas Southern University Reading and Study Skills staff is aware of an increasingly high number of freshmen students admitted to the university each year and who are deficient in reading skills. Each semester, on the average, more than eight hundred freshmen students enroll in remedial reading and study skills courses. The students who enroll in the reading and study skills courses have reading grade equivalent scores on the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Form A ranging from below 7.0 to 12.9, with a heavy concentration of scores between below 7.0 and 9.0. The mean reading grade equivalent score on the above test for freshmen students who enrolled in the reading and study skills courses in August, 1972, was 8.9. This score was 4.3 below the norm cited in the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Examiner's Manual.⁸

Accordingly, the Reading and Study Skills Center's staff has been trying to find a method of teaching freshmen students to read more effectively. Science Research Associates programmed materials, McGraw-Hill Basic Skills System, Educational Developmental Laboratory materials, and the cloze

⁸James I. Brown, Examiner's Manual: The Nelson-Denny Reading Test (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960), p. 20.

procedures are examples of several approaches that have been employed to help students attain reading levels comparable to college expectancy.

In an attempt to meet the needs of the students at Texas Southern University, a linguistic approach to reading, was added to the methods that were currently being used in order to provide basic reading skills for the students who had not attained an adequate reading level from experiences during their elementary and high school years. The linguistic approach was elected because it was language-based; a reading program that might attain the goal of providing the basic reading skills necessary for college success.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

McDavid noted that in many parts of the world, educators and politicians are very cognizant of the fact that:

. . . language differences can create major obstacles to the educational, economic, and social advancement of those whose true integration into the framework of society is necessary, if that society is to be healthy; they are realizing that social dialect--that is, social differences in the way language is used in a given community-- both reflect and perpetuate difference in the social order.⁹

It appears that educators are the forerunners in trying to bridge the gap between the middle class and minority

⁹Raven I. McDavid, Jr., "Sense and Nonsense About American Dialect," Language, eds. Virginia P. Clark, Paul A. Eschholz, and Alfred F. Rosa (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1972), p. 353.

groups by initiating various language improvement programs in the classroom. This assumption is substantiated by the fact that the practicing linguists are being called on, with increasing frequency, to devise programs for the needs of specific groups which is most often for the Negroes.¹⁰ However, the majority of these special programs are designed primarily for students beginning in elementary school.¹¹

The last five years, a total of 1,466 investigations reported in Summary of Investigations Relating to Reading by Weintraub and others, do not reflect any studies emphasizing linguistic application as a means of improving reading comprehension at the college level.¹² Since no investigations have been made during the last five years that deal with the

¹⁰McDavid, p. 353.

¹¹Richard Corbin and Muriel Corsby, Language Programs for the Disadvantaged: Report of the NCTE Task Force (Campaign, Ill.: National Council for the Teaching of English, 1965).

¹²Samuel Weintraub, Helen M. Robinson, and Helen K. Smith, Summary of Investigations Relating to Reading, July 1, 1968 to June 30, 1969, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Newark: International Reading Association, Winter, 1970); Samuel Weintraub, Helen M. Robinson, Helen K. Smith, and Gus P. Pleassas, Summary of Investigations Relating to Reading, July 1, 1969 to June 30, 1970, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Newark: International Reading Association, Winter, 1971); Samuel Weintraub, Helen M. Robinson, Helen K. Smith, and Gus P. Plessas, Summary of Investigations Relating to Reading, July 1, 1970 to June 30, 1971, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Newark: International Reading Association, Winter, 1972); Samuel Weintraub, Helen M. Robinson, Helen K. Smith, and Gus P. Plessas, Summary of Investigations Relating to Reading, July 1, 1971 to June 30, 1972, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Newark: International Reading Association, Spring, 1973).

application of linguistics on reading comprehension of minority students, particularly Negro students, at the college level, it appears to be an appropriate area for investigation.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted within the following limitations:

1. The findings of this study cannot be generalized to any ethnic group in any area other than those that are located in the Texas Gulf Coast.
2. The instructor for the control group was the investigator.
3. No control was employed over the backgrounds of the subjects.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Black English. Black English "is taken to be a demographic marker of basically one-variety speakers."¹³ It not only stamps one as black but as lower-class black. "Thus, Black English is a stereotype that represents a certain kind of person, all of him, all of the time."¹⁴

¹³Courtney B. Cazden, Vera P. John, and Dell Hymes (eds.), Functions of Language in the Classroom (New York: Teachers College Press, 1972), p. 79.

¹⁴Ibid.

Bi-dialectalism. Bi-dialectalism has been defined as the shifting of one's speech pattern as the situation demands, usually shifting in the direction of the prestigious local pattern.¹⁵

Dialect. Dialect is "a habitual variety of a language, regional or social. It is set off from all other such habitual varieties by a unique combination of language features: words and meanings, grammatical forms, phrase structures, pronunciations, patterns of stress and intonation."¹⁶ Dialect is also "the language of a region as it varies from the norm of the parent language."¹⁷

Grammar. Grammar is "the set of formal patterns in which the words of a language are arranged in order to convey larger meanings."¹⁸ It is also "the branch of linguistic science which is concerned with the description, analysis, and formalization of formal language patterns."¹⁹

¹⁵McDavid, p. 367. ¹⁶Ibid., p. 359.

¹⁷Lee T. Lemon, A Glossary for the Study of English (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 70.

¹⁸Ravin I. McDavid, Jr., "Dialectology and the Teaching of Reading," The Reading Teacher, XVIII (December, 1964), 207.

¹⁹W. Nelson Francis, "Revolution in Grammar," Language, eds. Virginia P. Clark, Paul A. Eschholz, and Alfred A. Rosa (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1972), p. 112.

Linguistics. Linguistics may be defined as "the scientific study of language."²⁰ Basically, linguistics is the study of the underlying principles of language. The branches of linguistics which are utilized in this study are: "descriptive or synchronic linguistics, which studies language as it exists at a given moment, apart from historical or developmental considerations; and geographical linguistics, which studies the distribution of various languages and dialects."²¹

Nonstandard English. McDavid defines nonstandard English as "any one of a large number of regional or cultural dialects."²² Labov defines it as "a system of rules, different from the standard but not necessarily inferior as a means of communication."²³

Standard English. Fries defines standard American English as "the particular type of English which is used in the conduct of the important affairs of our people."²⁴ He further states that standard American English is "the type of English

²⁰Lemon, p. 79. ²¹Ibid., p. 81.

²²McDavid, "Sense and Nonsense," p. 355.

²³William Labov, "The Study of Nonstandard English," Language, eds. Virginia P. Clark, Paul A. Eschholz, and Alfred F. Rosa (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1972), p. 398.

²⁴Charles C. Fries, "Standard English," Language, eds. Virginia P. Clark, Paul A. Eschholz, and Alfred F. Rosa (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1972), p. 351.

used by the socially acceptables of most of our communities."²⁵ Lemon defines standard American English as "the normal, semi-formal discourse, more often written than spoken, of literate persons . . . it does not avoid such short-cuts as contractions and ellipses, but neither does it use obviously folksy or ungrammatical expressions."²⁶

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1 covered the general background material relating to the study. The problem was identified, the background of the study presented, the need for the study given, limitations of the study were listed, and the terms were defined.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature in which authorities recognize a need for employing linguistic principles in an effort to improve reading comprehension. The review of the literature includes studies on teaching standard American English as a second language to speakers of Negro dialect, and adapting reading content written in standard American English to Negro dialect.

Chapter 3 presents the hypotheses to be tested and the procedures by which the study was conducted.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study and a statistical analysis of the results of the investigation.

²⁵Fries, p. 351.

²⁶Lemon, p. 70.

The final chapter, Chapter 5, includes the summary, conclusions, and recommendations based upon results of the investigation.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A review of the literature reveals divergent opinions on how to teach speakers of Negro dialect. Findings from the literature reviewed is presented from both general educational and linguistical points of view.

Linguists consider a total linguistic structure as the organized way that the language grammatically relates certain words to other words. When the word "dialect" is used, it is not limited to the way people of different geographical areas or cultures pronounce words. Linguists seem to consider a dialect as a fully developed linguistic system. However, some dialects are usually unacceptable in the American social structure. Therefore, how to deal with the problem of Negro dialect in the classroom is still a much debated issue.

The review of the literature provides a background of the significances of the reading and language deficiencies of some Negro students and the implications for instruction of the same. It is impossible to overemphasize the importance of proficient reading and language skills in the Negro culture. It is by these means that the Negro is able to identify with and contribute to his culture. The need for verbal facility is essentially acute when the society of which the Negro is a part is itself highly verbal. This places premiums or penalties

on degrees of literacy or illiteracy and on the ability or inability to verbalize. These variables makes it possible for one to virtually listen, speak, read, and write himself into the rewards of American culture. Functional literacy can move one upward on the scale of economic and social well-being in a technological society such as America's. The lack of a linguistic skill can deprive one of upward mobility.¹ It would seem that the concern of teachers with the students' general lack of reading and language proficiency is undeniably justified. A complicating factor is that these deficiencies, that are admittedly widespread, vary greatly in the extent of their frequency, the seriousness of their nature, and the degree of their severity.

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON THE NEED TO EMPLOY
LINGUISTIC PRINCIPLES IN AN EFFORT TO
IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION

American schools and colleges have never really ignored language variations. Their chief concern in language seems to have been whether a particular form is "standard" or "nonstandard," "good" or "bad." Emphasis has usually been placed on standard American English--the form used in textbooks, and any variant of the English dialect was discredited and not allowed

¹Eunice Newton, "Planning for the Language Development of Disadvantaged Children and Youth," Journal of Negro Education, XXXIII (Summer, 1964), 264-74.

to become an integral part of classroom instruction. However, because of widespread school integration over the past few years, the divergent language patterns of students, particularly that of Negro students, could no longer be ignored. Once the problem was isolated to linguistic variations in speech patterns, how to handle it became a much debated topic throughout the United States. Several alternatives for resolving the language problem, as it related to reading, in our schools have been offered. Among the most advocated alternatives are:

1. First teach standard English to nonstandard English speakers,²
2. Accept nonstandard dialect reading of traditional material written in standard English,³
3. Develop materials in standard English which minimize dialect and cultural differences,⁴ and
4. Develop materials which incorporate the grammar of black children.⁵

²Raven I. McDavid, Jr., "Dialectology and the Teaching of Reading," The Reading Teacher, XVIII (December, 1964), 206-13.

³Kenneth Goodman, "Dialect Barriers to Reading Comprehension," Elementary English, XLII (December, 1965), 853-60.

⁴Richard Venezky, "Nonstandard Language and Reading," Elementary English, XLVII (March, 1970), 334-45.

⁵William Stewart, "On the Use of Negro Dialect in the Teaching of Reading," Teaching Black Children to Read, eds. Joan C. Baratz and Roger W. Shuy (Washington: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1969), pp. 156-219.

In response to the four alternatives mentioned above, Shuy writes:

If it is decided that children must be taught standard English before they learn to read, the teachers and the materials must surely begin with an exact account of the differences between Black English and Standard English. If the schools decide to accept the oral renderings of standard English she goes as she go, the teacher will have to be alerted to the precise conditions in which such renderings are to be expected. If an avoidance strategy is set up to neutralize the mismatch between the written text and the child's oral language, the materials developers will have to rely on this same delineation of the contrast between Standard English and the speech of black children. And if it should be decided that special reading material should be developed utilizing Black English grammar, it will be necessary to know precisely what that grammar is.⁶

Educators, teachers, textbook writers, program designers, and linguists all share the idea that handling language situations in the classroom is a major problem which merits immediate attention. Even though the problem is recognized, there is a lack of agreement on how it should be treated.

In considering linguistics as a possible means of improving reading programs, Gumprez and Hernandez-Chavez state:

It is not enough simply to present the educator with the descriptive linguistic evidence on language or dialect differences. What we need is properly controlled work on reading as such; work that does not deal with grammar alone.⁷

⁶Roger W. Shuy, "Speech Differences and Teaching Strategies: How Different is Enough?" Contemporary English Change and Variation, ed. David L. Shore (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1972), p. 333.

⁷John J. Gumprez and Eduardo Hernandez-Chavez, "Bilingualism, Bidialectalism, and Classroom Interaction," Functions of Language in the Classroom, eds. Courtney B. Cazden, Vera P. John, and Dell Hymes (New York: Teachers College Press, 1972), p. 120.

Here again an awareness was shown for the need to incorporate linguistic principles into the reading program, but no specific suggestion as to how it should be done was stated.

Some feel that the teachers of nonstandard English speaking students should be taught the basic elements of the variant dialect spoken by their students. In regard to teachers being taught to respect black children's dialect, Leacock writes:

. . . the patterns of black children are different from, but not inferior to Standard English and that they represent a well-ordered, highly structured variant of English with which teachers should familiarize themselves as part of their teaching technology.⁸

McDavid also senses a need to educate teachers with respect to language variants. He writes:

While we are planning language programs for our disadvantaged, we must educate the dominant culture in the cases and significance of dialect differences; it is particularly urgent that we educate teachers on all levels, from kindergarten through graduate school. The disadvantaged will have enough to do in learning new patterns of language behavior; the dominant culture must meet them part way, with greater understanding, with a realization that dialect differences do not reflect intellectual or moral differences, but only differences in experiences.⁹

⁸Eleanor Burke Leacock, "Abstract Versus Concrete. Speech: A False Dichotomy," Functions of Language in the Classroom, eds. Courtney B. Cazden, Vera P. John, and Dell Hymes (New York: Teachers College Press, 1972), p. 120.

⁹Raven I. McDavid, Jr., "Sense and Nonsense About American Dialect," Language, eds. Virginia P. Clark, Paul A. Eschholz, and Alfred F. Rosa (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1972), p. 368.

Unlike some other authorities, McDavid does suggest teaching some form of standard English as a second language to speakers of Negro dialect.¹⁰

In order to understand more clearly the situation that confronts teachers who teach speakers of Negro dialect, it might be well to delineate the factors which influence this deficient language and the characteristics of such language. First of all, as members of a submerged but visible cultural minority, Negro students are in the second or third generation of an "inherited poverty family," a family which has less than two full generations of literacy. They were born and/or have lived during their formative years in a culturally barren environment.¹¹ Traditionally, their family environment has not regarded academic values highly nor has it demonstrated a belief in the values of education for its own sake. There has been little or no family conversation which answered their questions as children and which encouraged them to ask questions which extended and enriched their vocabularies and which gave them a right to and a need for self-assertion through self-expression. As for their language itself, it may be categorized as "underdeveloped." Newton identifies three kinds of "underdeveloped" languages:

¹⁰Raven I. McDavid, Jr., "Dialectology and the Teaching of Reading," Teaching Black Children to Read, eds. Joan C. Baratz and Roger W. Shuy (Washington: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1969), pp. 14-28.

¹¹Newton, pp. 264-74.

(1) true verbal destitution, (2) full but nonstandard language, and (3) underdeveloped language because of unconceptualized experience. To these three characteristics she adds casual observances of standard language inflections, simple monosyllabic words, frequently mispronounced words, and profused use of regionalism, slang, and cant.¹²

Many writers group these characteristics under the label "social dialect." The task is, in their opinions, to help the student to be able to change from a variant dialect of the language to the standard dialect and to understand why the flexibility is desirable.¹³

According to other writers, this goal is not an unattainable one. These students' formal deficit in language does not mean that they are nonverbal or inarticulate. They are more often inhibited, frozen in unfamiliar and uncomfortable situations because they cannot adjust to the different types of language required of them in an increasingly wider range of language situations.¹⁴ It is then incumbent upon any type of

¹²Newton, pp. 264-74.

¹³Marianne Musgrave, "Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Students with Substandard Dialect," CLA Journal, VII (September, 1963), 84-91.

¹⁴Juanita Williamson, "What Can We Do About It? The Contribution of Linguistics to the Teaching of English," CLA Journal, I (November, 1957), 23-27; Thomas Kochman, "Rapping in the Black Ghetto," Transaction, II (February, 1969), 26-34; Claudia Mitchell-Kernan, "Language Behavior in a Black Urban Community" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1969), Working Paper No. 23, Language Research Laboratory; Gumprez and Hernandez-Chavez, p. 105.

educational planning for disadvantaged Negro students to take into consideration certain factors:

1. Students should not be alienated from the teaching-learning experience. This is particularly important to the teaching of language arts, for language is personal, an extension of the person. Unsympathetic criticism is often tantamount to personal rejection.¹⁵

2. Programs should include experiences which will help to change "self-concepts" by offering a chance for some type of initial success and an atmosphere free from ridicule. These learning experiences must be challenging but not threatening.¹⁶

3. The approach to "standard" English as a foreign or second language must be tried.¹⁷

4. A developmental rather than remedial approach is called for to supply those missing experiences which result in deficits in language and reading skills.¹⁸

¹⁵Jacob Landers, "Responsibilities of Teachers and School Administrators," Journal of Negro Education, XXXIII (Summer, 1964), 318-32.

¹⁶Otis D. Froe, "Educational Planning for Disadvantaged College Youth," Journal of Negro Education, XXXIII (Summer, 1964), 290-303.

¹⁷Richard Corbin and Muriel Corsby, Language Programs for the Disadvantaged: Report of the NCTE Task Force (Champaign, Ill.: National Council for the Teaching of English, 1965), p. 137.

¹⁸William Raspberry, "Should Ghettoese Be Accepted?" Language, eds. Virginia P. Clark, Paul A. Eschholz, and Alfred F. Rosa (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1972), pp. 412-17.

It appears that far too much time and money are now wasted on deciding "what and how" to teach speakers of nonstandard English. The prime concern according to Sledd, should be on teaching the children of the minority to read.¹⁹

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON TEACHING
STANDARD AMERICAN ENGLISH AS
A SECOND LANGUAGE

Educators, particularly reading teachers, must recognize that language is viewed as a vocal symbol-system from which a written system may or may not have been derived. Graphic symbols are considered derivatives codes of visual symbols that reflect the basic verbal repertoire. Studies by Carroll²⁰ and Frost²¹ suggest that it makes little difference whether a language has an historical and distinguished tradition of literacy, or is simply the speech of a people who have never developed a writing system. This concept is pertinent to education, pointing toward new theories of language learning and teaching, new materials and new methods.

¹⁹James Sledd, "Bi-Dialectalism: The Linguistics of White Supremacy," Language, eds. Virginia P. Clark, Paul A. Eschholz, and Alfred F. Rosa (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1972), p. 429.

²⁰John B. Carroll, The Study of Language (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963).

²¹Joe L. Frost, "Language Development in Children," Guiding Children's Language Learning, ed. Pose Lamb (Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown Company, Publishers, 1967), Chapter 1.

There have been several studies devoted to the major causes of poor academic performance among Negro students. The majority of them attribute poor academic performance to the inability of these students to read and comprehend material written in standard American English.

Feigenbaum acknowledges that educators have been looking for an effective method of teaching "culturally different" Negro students new methods that might prove beneficial in acquiring standard English. The one method that has received the most attention is that of teaching standard English as a foreign language. He has further observed that the technique is sometimes referred to as "aural-oral approach," "the linguistic method," "the audio-lingual method," and "pattern practice." Whatever the label, the practice has been to teach new patterns of grammar and pronunciation in addition to language skills for the student to use when English is required.²²

In reference to nonstandard speakers of the English language, Stewart recommended using an aural-oral approach for teaching standard English. This approach is comparable to a foreign language approach.²³

²²Irwin Feigenbaum, "Using Foreign Language Methodology to Teach Standard English: Evaluation and Adaptation," Contemporary English Change and Variation, ed. David L. Shores (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1972), p. 256.

²³William A. Stewart. Non-Standard Speech and the Teaching of English (Washington: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1964), p. 11.

Slager advocates the use of oral drill teaching English as a foreign language in teaching standard English to nonstandard English speakers.²⁴

Allen equates a second dialect speaker to someone learning a second language, in that they both need to develop a new set of language habits. That is, they need to develop new habits that will enable them to speak appropriate responses instantaneously, whenever the need arises, without having to stop and think.²⁵ She further suggests using different kinds of drills, disguised as a conversation to make standard English sound natural.²⁶ This practice has been widely used in courses for students of English as a foreign language. Three studies to support the practice of teaching standard English as a second dialect are: (1) Barrows' Good English Through Practice, which shows how to use a set of cleverly devised games for getting junior high school students to use many troublesome standard English forms over and over again while taking part in entertaining, creative language activities;²⁷

²⁴William R. Slager, "Effective Change Through Oral Drill," English Journal, LVI (November, 1967), 1167.

²⁵Virginia F. Allen, "Teaching Standard English as a Secondary Dialect," Contemporary English Change and Variation, ed. David L. Shores (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1972), p. 243.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 248.

²⁷Marjorie Wescott Barrows, Good English Through Practice (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1956).

(2) Golden's Improving Patterns of Language Usage, in which the problems and attitudes of students learning the standard dialect are analyzed, and many language-learning activities are suggested, including games, stories, and role-playing skits;²⁸ and (3) Lin's three year research project which experimented with pattern-practice techniques as a means of helping students at Claflin College in South Carolina master standard English. The population of this study was weighted heavily with Negroes from rural communities. Through trial and error, the Claflin Project was able to make three conclusions:

1. . . . no matter how other people may judge it, it has proven socially and psychologically satisfactory to the individual who uses it. It is the language of his family--a symbol of security and love. It is the language of his initiation into life--from the dawn of awareness through successive steps in which he learned to adjust to different groups and to establish rapport with the world around him.
2. The teachers must become aware, and help the students become aware, of the infinite variations that exist in the many dialects of American English, both regional and social.
3. Speakers of Negro dialect . . . more sensitive to intolerance and tactless criticism, they also differ from standard speakers in being faced with the task of establishing a set of language habits. They are learning a second language which must be taught with some methods and procedures that are used in learning a second language.²⁹

²⁸Ruth I. Golden, Improving Patterns of Language Usage (Detroit: Wayne University Press, 1960).

²⁹Allen, p. 250, citing San-su C. Lin, Pattern Practice in the Teaching of Standard English to Students with a Non-Standard Dialect (New York: Teachers College Press, 1965).

The purpose of the Claflin University Project was to find out to what extent pattern-practice techniques might help Negro students who needed to master standard English as a second language, and to develop materials and procedures to implement such techniques.³⁰ It was found that native speakers of English who wish to master the standard dialect do need pattern-practice. Although, when English is taught as a second language the form used should be different from that which is customarily used in teaching a foreign language.³¹

Riessman recommends that textbooks, particularly readers, should be more attuned to disadvantaged students. He notes that disadvantaged students are said to be nonverbal to a great extent, but these students as Riessman postulates are merely unfamiliar with standard American English as it is used in the school system. He writes:

The forms of communication characteristic of deprived children raise important educational questions. The acquisition of knowledge obviously requires some degree of facility with formal language. As we have seen, underprivileged children are capable of utilizing language in a rich and free fashion, have well-developed, non-verbal ways of communicating, but are solely lacking in advanced linguistic form. The problem is how to help them to attain this level of language so that their creative potential can be realized. It would be easy to say, as many have said, that we must give these children what middle-class parents give their children--we must stimulate them in the use of language through reading, discussion, and the like. However, it is probable that this would not

³⁰Allen, p. 8, citing Lin.

³¹Ibid., p. 145.

work nor would it make the best use of the deprived child's particular mode of functioning. It would seem that he has to be taught in a different way, with the aim of giving him the necessary linguistic techniques without having him become wordbound. His non-linguistic skills should not be ignored or suppressed, but rather brought out and integrated with verbal communication. Thus, it would seem essential that the method of teaching formal language to deprived children take advantage of their communication style by employing teaching techniques that stress the visual, the physical, the active, as much as possible. We must be careful not to try to make these children over into replicas of middle-class children. The educational system should be pluralistic enough, broad enough, to find a place for variety of mental styles.³²

It appears that a speaker of Negro dialect does poorly in reading because his symbolic communication system does not correlate highly with standard American English, the system he is expected to use at school.

Deutsch notes that students who lack communication skills are often products of nonverbal homes. He theorizes that for these students to adjust to a regular classroom successfully the schools must provide special help. He indicated that the amount of academic success will depend, in part, upon the schools implementing programs based on productive experimentation and innovation.³³

³²Frank Riessman, The Culturally Deprived Child (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1962), p. 116.

³³Martin Deutsch, "The Disadvantaged Child and the Learning Process," Education in Depressed Areas, ed. A. Harry Passow (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1963), pp. 163-80.

Warden's analysis of research on communication skills among disadvantaged students supports the notion of providing materials designed for the disadvantaged. She states "the need to develop curricula aimed specifically at fostering formal verbal skills among children who lack training and experience in this area is a very clear one."³⁴

Many problems arise in the classroom when a standard English speaking teacher is faced with a classroom of children who speak Negro dialect. Usually the materials used for reading instruction is written in standard American English, unmindful of the dialect or language of the learner. Stewart suggests adapting beginning reading materials to the patterns of nonstandard dialect spoken in a particular area with particular reference to the Negro nonstandard dialect. He lists four stages through which the transition to standard English is made. He claims an advantage of this approach is that the teacher can combine oral language with the reading program to any degree felt useful.³⁵

McDavid argues that "a reading program, in any language, at any stage in a student's career, is likely to be effective in proportion to its use of the language habits that the student

³⁴Sandra A. Warden, The Leftouts: Disadvantaged Children in Heterogeneous Schools (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1968), p. 137.

³⁵Stewart, "Use of Negro Dialect," pp. 156-219.

has acquired in speaking." Considering the Negro along with other speakers of nonstandard English, he suggests teaching some form of standard English as a second language.³⁶

Goodman's idea of teaching nonstandard speakers of English supports that of McDavid. He considers the dialect which the child learns to speak in his home as his mother tongue. In order to facilitate the ease of learning to read, the child should be taught in his existing language rather than one that is foreign to him, standard English. Goodman hypothesizes that "the more divergence there is between the dialect of the learner and dialect of learning, the more difficult will be the task of learning to read."³⁷ In regard to the barriers of dialect difference, Goodman offers the following alternatives:

1. Write materials for non-standard dialect speakers in their own dialect or rewrite standard materials in their dialect.
2. Teach the students to speak standard dialect before teaching them to read in standard English.
3. Let the students read the standard materials in their own dialect.³⁸

Due to the fact that Negro college students have experienced reading instruction in standard English, they probably will

³⁶McDavid, "Dialectology," pp. 2-10.

³⁷Kenneth S. Goodman, "Dialect Barriers to Reading Comprehension," Teaching Black Children to Read, eds. Joan C. Baratz and Roger W. Shuy (Washington: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1969), p. 14.

³⁸Ibid., p. 25.

profit more by using Goodman's third alternative to overcome problems in reading comprehension.

An exploration of the literature does not give supportive evidence to the notion that dialect divergence is the direct cause of reading failure. However, Cramer³⁹ and Baratz⁴⁰ suggest that this may be the case among nonstandard speakers of English. They contend that a mismatch exists between the dialect of the learner and the dialect of the materials of reading instruction. Baratz writes:

Because of the mismatch between the child's system and that of the standard English textbook, because of the psychological consequences of denying the existence and legitimacy of the child linguistic system, and in the light of the success of vernacular teaching around the world, it appears imperative that we teach the inner-city child to read using his own language as the basis for the initial readers. In other words, first teach the child to read in the vernacular, and then teach him to read in standard English. Such a reading program would not only require accurate vernacular texts for the dialect speaker, but also necessitate the creation of a series of "transition readers" that would move the child, once he had mastered reading in the vernacular, from vernacular texts to standard English texts.⁴¹

Labov recognizes the difficulty of teaching Negro students to read with instructional materials written in standard

³⁹Ronald L. Cramer, "Dialectology--A Case for Language Experience," The Reading Teacher, XXV (October, 1971), 33-39.

⁴⁰Joan C. Baratz, "Teaching Reading in an Urban Negro School System," Teaching Black Children to Read, eds. Joan C. Baratz and Roger W. Shuy (Washington: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1969), pp. 93-116.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, p. 113.

English. He attributes the difficulty to (1) the ignorance of standard English rules on the part of the speaker of nonstandard English, and (2) to the ignorance of nonstandard English rules on the part of the teachers and textbook writers.⁴²

Even though the literature cited suggests teaching standard English as a second language, it also recognizes that it is easier to suggest than to accomplish. It is more difficult to learn a different dialect than a second language because the first language interference is more profused for dialect speakers.

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON ADAPTING READING CONTENT TO DIALECT

Adapting reading content to dialect is another alternative for improving reading comprehension among speakers of nonstandard English. Baratz recognizes the ineffectiveness of the present educational system in teaching reading to Negro students. The educational system, according to Baratz, has treated reading failure as if it were due to intellectual deficits of the student rather than to ineffective methods of teaching procedures. She implies that a more effective method of teaching Negro students to read may be by recognizing the

⁴²William Labov, "Some Sources of Reading Problems for Negro Speakers of Nonstandard English," Teaching Black Children to Read, eds. Joan C. Baratz and Roger W. Shuy (Washington: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1969), pp. 29-67.

student's different syntactic structure, then incorporate that structure into the teaching procedure.⁴³ Lefevre places great stress upon intonation and syntax in reading in which he makes the sentence the focal point.⁴⁴ Lloyd says reading should be related to the spoken language of the reader and intonation is an important aspect of this.⁴⁵

Ruddell finds a close relationship of comprehension to the similarity of structure between the child's language and his reading material.⁴⁶ Carroll seems to support Ruddell's beliefs when he suggests that reading instruction be alternated between (1) periods of carefully controlled sequences, that is, proceeding from very simple structure to more complex, and (2) periods in which the language of the textbook should be presented.⁴⁷ According to Goodman, linguistic knowledge should be integrated with psychological, sociological, physiological, and educational knowledge in order to produce a new synthesis of

⁴³Baratz, p. 113.

⁴⁴Carl A. Lefevre, Linguistics and the Teaching of Reading (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1964).

⁴⁵D. Lloyd, "Intonation and Reading," Education, LXXXV (1964), 538-41.

⁴⁶R. B. Ruddell, "The Effect of Oral and Written Patterns of Language Structure on Reading Comprehension," The Reading Teacher, XVIII (1965), 270-75.

⁴⁷John B. Carroll, "Some Neglected Relationships in Reading and Language," Elementary English, XLIII (1966), 577-82.

teaching reading.⁴⁸

While reading difficulties are not restricted to any particular group in society, the disadvantaged Negro students represent one of the groups that has failed to acquire sufficient reading skills in terms of expected progress in response to current practices in reading instruction.⁴⁹ Deutsch and Associates attribute much of this failure to social influence on cognitive and linguistic factors in the education of the disadvantaged Negro.⁵⁰

Kochman emphasizes the aesthetic aspect of Negro dialect and makes note of the conflict in aesthetics that might take place in the classroom. He argues for an educational policy based on the use and development of black English itself.⁵¹

In response to the question, should speakers of Negro dialect be taught to read and write Black English, Fishman and Lueders-Salmon write:

⁴⁸Kenneth Goodman, "The Linguistics of Reading," Elementary School Journal, LXIV (1964), 355-61.

⁴⁹J. Wesley Schneyer, "Research," The Reading Teacher, XXIII (March, 1970), 571-73.

⁵⁰Martin Deutsch and Associates, The Disadvantaged Child: Studies of the Social Environment and the Learning Process (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1967).

⁵¹Thomas Kochman, "Black American Speech Events and a Language Program for the Classroom," Functions of Language in the Classroom, eds. Courtney B. Cazden, Vera P. John, and Dell Hymes (New York: Teachers College Press, 1972), pp. 211-61.

. . . Under such circumstances it would obviously be disfunctional to teach reading and writing of Black English. Instead of sharing a variety with the white world, and instead of using this variety for some of the same functions as it has in the white world, the black and white verbal repertoires would become even more discontinuous, linguistically and functionally than they are today. The interacting relationship between language and social behavior being what it is, such discontinuity would not only reflect the social distance between blacks and whites but it would further reinforce and extend this distance as well.⁵²

Contrary to the above notion, Gumprez and Hernandez-Chavez recognize a need for properly controlled work on reading, work that does not deal with grammar alone. Not only is there a need for improved instructional materials for disadvantaged speakers of nonstandard English, but a need for reeducating the teachers in "both linguistic and ethnographic aspects of speech behavior."⁵³ Teachers must be able to diagnose their own communication problems in order to adapt their teaching techniques to their students' backgrounds.

Some conflicting views exist between linguists, educators, and psychologists on how speakers of nonstandard English should be taught. Some believe that the causes of reading difficulties and failures among Negro students are due to severely

⁵²Joshua A. Fishman and Erika Lueders-Salmon, "What Has the Sociology of Language to Say to the Teacher? On Teaching the Standard Variety of Speakers of Dialectal or Sociolectal Varieties," Functions of Language in the Classroom, eds. Courtney B. Cazden, Vera P. John, and Dell Hymes (New York: Teachers College Press, 1972), pp. 80-81.

⁵³Gumprez and Hernandez-Chavez, p. 105.

limited oral speaking vocabularies, deficient speech patterns, and auditory perceptual deficiencies; meanwhile, some linguists believe that a virtually important factor is not that the Negro students lack speaking vocabularies or correct speech but that their speech patterns are different.⁵⁴

Negro dialect seems to create a communication problem between speakers of nonstandard English and standard American English. There is a feeling that many disadvantaged Negro students are failing in reading because of this linguistic barrier. There are many problems to be considered in the area of language and thought. The Negro students' language and cognitive style are among the problems. The most viable medium of instruction and provision for the teaching of Negro students must be determined after their cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds are considered. Those linguistic skills which may not be a part of Negro culture but which seem to be necessary for success in an educational pursuit should be identified and taught by the schools. Teachers must be helped to understand, appreciate, and respect Negro culture. By recognizing Negro dialect as a language system different from the language of textbooks,

⁵⁴Baratz, p. 92; Joan C. Baratz, "A Bi-Dialectal Task for Determining Language Proficiency in Economically Disadvantaged Negro Children, Child Development, XL (1969), 889-901; Roger W. Shuy, "A Linguistic Background for Developing Beginning Reading Materials for Black Children," Teaching Black Children to Read, eds. Joan C. Baratz and Roger W. Shuy (Washington: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1969), pp. 117-37; Stewart, "Use of Negro Dialect," pp. 156-219.

teachers may begin to teach Negro students to read more effectively.

SUMMARY

The literature reviewed reflected that a problem exists when speakers of Negro dialect are taught to read by using standard American English. The problem is considered to be national in scope.

There are divergent opinions as to the causes of the high rate of reading failures among speakers of Negro dialect. Many alternatives are offered to help correct and/or resolve the problem of nonstandard American English in the classroom. The many suggestions made in dealing with the problem of teaching Negroes who speak nonstandard English in the classroom are recommended for beginning reading or the elementary grades. An extensive search of the literature revealed nothing that can be applied to help such students at the college level.

Chapter 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this chapter was to:

1. state the hypotheses tested in the investigation,
2. describe the instruments used in the study,
3. identify the population sample that participated in the study,
4. describe procedures employed in gathering the data, and
5. explain the methodology employed in analyzing the data.

The time over which data were gathered for the study was sixteen weeks, beginning September 5, 1972, through December 22, 1972.

HYPOTHESES

During the investigation, three major null hypotheses were tested. They were:

H_{01} --There is no statistically significant difference in posttest means for vocabulary, as measured by the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, of the linguistics and programmed instructed groups.

H_{a1} --The group mean in vocabulary for the linguistics group will be significantly greater than the group mean in vocabulary for the programmed group.

Ho₂--There is no statistically significant difference in posttest means for comprehension, as measured by the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, of the linguistics and programmed instructed groups.

Ha₂--The group mean in comprehension for the linguistics group will be significantly greater than the group mean in comprehension for the programmed instructed group.

Ho₃--There is no statistically significant difference in posttest means for total reading, a combined score for vocabulary and comprehension, as measured by the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, of the linguistics and programmed instructed groups.

Ha₃--The group mean in total reading for the linguistics group will be significantly greater than the group mean in total reading for the programmed instructed group.

The alternate hypotheses tested along with the null hypotheses. These hypotheses were submitted to a one-way analysis of variance to determine change, if any.

INSTRUMENTS USED IN THE COLLECTION OF DATA

The criterion measures of reading achievement which were used to test the hypotheses were grade equivalent test scores on the Nelson-Denny Reading Tests. The test norms for the Nelson-Denny Reading Tests which are used to describe typical performance in reading over a wide range of grade levels can be used to secure adequate descriptions of the achievement of students whose reading behaviors are atypical.

The Nelson-Denny Reading Tests used in this study were revised in 1960 by James I. Brown. They were originally designed

to provide measures in abilities in terms of vocabulary and comprehension. A measure of reading rate is assessable to supplement and to complement the information obtained from vocabulary and comprehension measures.¹ Further, the tests were designed to be used in grades nine through sixteen.²

The two comparable forms of the revised tests, Form A and Form B, respectively, contain one hundred items for ascertaining vocabulary achievement, while the comprehension sections contain thirty-six items. The comprehension score has a double weight, that is, a comprehension score has twice the value as a vocabulary score. The vocabulary score and comprehension score are added to yield a total raw score which can be converted to a grade equivalent score by using the Grade Equivalent Norm Table in the manual.³

SUBJECTS INCLUDED IN THE STUDY

The total population for the study consisted of two hundred Negro, beginning Texas Southern University freshmen students. Ninety-seven of whom were male while 103 were female. All participants were 1972 high school graduates who were reared and received elementary through high school instruction in the Texas Gulf Coast Area. The ages of the participants ranged

¹James I. Brown, Examiner's Manual: The Nelson-Denny Reading Test (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1960), p. 3.

²Ibid., p. 10. ³Ibid., p. 20.

seventeen through twenty years old for both the linguistics and programmed instructed groups, respectively.

The distribution of subjects by age and sex is shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Distribution of Subjects According
to Age and Sex

Age	Male	Female	Total
17	1	3	4
18	13	17	30
19	70	76	146
20	13	7	20
Total	97	103	200

The population was fairly evenly distributed according to sex and age. The mean age for the total population was 18.9 years.

The experimental and control groups, respectively, consisted of one hundred students selected randomly from a total of 525 students who were enrolled in Basic Reading and Study Skills courses. A part of the admission requirements at Texas Southern University is that all beginning freshmen students are administered the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Form A. Students

whose grade equivalent score is 9.0 or below on the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Form A, are asked to enroll in a Basic Reading and Study Skills course. Two hundred students were selected at random to participate in the investigation, from a total of 525 students who enrolled in such courses.

COLLECTION OF DATA

During the week of Freshmen Orientation all beginning freshmen students are administered the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Form A, as part of general admission requirements. Those students whose grade equivalent scores are 9.0 or below are asked to enroll in a Basic Reading and Study Skills course while others, whose scores range between 9.1 through 12.9, are referred to a more advanced reading and study skills course.

The Nelson-Denny Reading Test was administered and scored by the staff of the University Testing Center at Texas Southern University. The answer sheets were machine scored and the raw score for each individual was converted to a grade equivalent score by using the Grade Equivalent Norm Table in the Examiner's Manual.⁴

Entering freshmen students for the 1972 Fall Semester were assigned to reading classes as dictated by their Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Form A, grade equivalent scores. A total

⁴Brown, p. 20.

of 525 students enrolled for basic reading and study skills courses. Twenty-one sections, each with an enrollment of twenty-five students, were formed from this total enrollment. One section was taught by the department chairman, leaving five sections each to be taught by four other instructors. One instructor volunteered to teach four sections as the experimental group for the study while the investigator taught four other sections as the control group.

Instructors for both groups were female. Each instructor had comparable educational backgrounds--training in teaching reading at the secondary level. Both instructors received their Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Prairie View A. and M. University and Texas Southern University, respectively. Graduate credit hours in reading for both instructors included at least eighteen semester hours above the Master's level. The instructor for the experimental group earned her hours at The University of Texas at Austin. The hours of the instructor for the control group were earned at Indiana University and the University of Houston. Each of the instructors had had one course in sociolinguistics.

Formal class instruction began on September 5, 1972. The experimental group received programmed reading instruction as prescribed in College Reading Program One, published by the Science Research Associates, which hereafter shall be referred to as SRA. The control group was instructed according to

specific directions given in the manual which accompanies Paul Roberts' Patterns of English, a linguistics reader, published by Harcourt, Brace, & World, Inc. The programmed instructed and the linguistics instructed groups received equal instructional time during the duration of the investigation.

Random sampling was used in selecting students to participate in the study. Student identification numbers were used rather than names in an effort to conceal students' identities. A separate list for male and female was compiled during registration for classes. Every third number was selected from the lists until a total of two hundred students were chosen to participate in the study. The two hundred students were further randomized by placing the even list-numbers in one group and the odd list-numbers in still another group. The two groups were then arbitrarily called experimental and control.

During the sixteen weeks of the investigation, each group, the experimental and control, respectively, received equal instructional time. The classes met at 8:00 o'clock and 9:00 o'clock in the mornings and 1:00 o'clock and 2:00 o'clock in the afternoons on alternate days, Monday through Thursday. Each class period was fifty minutes long. A control group section and an experimental group section met simultaneously at the hours indicated above.

The Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Form B, was administered to all participants during the week of December 18 through 22, 1972, as a posttest or final evaluation instrument.

TREATMENT AND DATA

The Nelson-Denny Reading Test's answer sheets from the pretest and posttest were scored by machine. Each answer sheet was scored twice to double check for accuracy in scoring.

The raw score on the posttest for each subject was converted to a grade equivalent score by using the Grade Equivalent Norm Table in the Examiner's Manual. The raw score was computed for the experimental and control groups separately, it was also computed for each individual and again by sexes. By so doing, any change in reading score was observable within a group, as well as each group as a whole, for the sixteen-week period over which the study was conducted. The information gathered from the pretest and posttest was reduced to tabular form for easier interpretation.

To test the three hypotheses, the mean difference between posttest achievement raw scores from the experimental and control groups were submitted to an analysis of variance as described by Huntsberger and Billingsley.⁵

⁵David V. Huntsberger and Patrick Billingsley, Elements of Statistical Inference (3d ed.; Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1973), pp. 176-83.

The .01 level was used as the criterion level for significance.

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results of the investigation. The primary purpose of the investigation was to determine, as precisely as possible, the effects of the application of linguistics principles on reading comprehension when compared with programmed reading instruction for beginning Negro freshmen students at Texas Southern University. The effectiveness of the two aforementioned instructional methods was determined by the amount of change in equivalent grade scores in reading comprehension that occurred over a sixteen-week period when the programmed group was compared with the linguistics group.

The study was chiefly concerned with the comparison of the mean change in reading grade scores of the linguistics group and the programmed group. The amount of change in comprehension grade scores for each group was measured by the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Forms A and B, respectively.

The results were submitted to an analysis of variance as recommended by Huntsberger and Billingsley.¹

¹David V. Huntsberger and Patrick Billingsley, Elements of Statistical Inference (3d ed.; Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1973), pp. 176-83.

TEST OF THE HYPOTHESES

This investigation tested three major hypotheses, the results of which are herein analyzed. The study employed a two-sample technique, unpaired observation and equal variance according to the Nelson-Denny pretest scores. The two-sample means were compared for each hypothesis stated in Chapter 3, pages 35-36. Using a random sample from each population, the alternate hypothesis, H_a , was tested along with the null hypothesis:

$$H_{o1} : u_1 = u_2$$

$$H_{a1} : u_2 = u_1$$

since the populations were normally distributed and had a common but unknown variance.

A comparison of pretest vocabulary and comprehension scores for the programmed and linguistics groups reveals there was no significant difference between the groups at the beginning of the study. Table 2 shows how the vocabulary pretest means for the programmed and linguistics groups compared with each other at the beginning of the study. When the raw score group means are converted to grade equivalent scores, the two group means are equal. A raw score of twelve has to be used for each group because the Grade Equivalent Norm Table in the

Table 2
Comparison of Vocabulary Pretest Means

Group	N	Raw Score Group Mean	Grade Equivalent	Group Variance	SD
Programmed	100	12.05	8.3	18.2	4.2
Linguistics	100	11.52	8.3	22.1	4.7

Examiner's Manual: The Nelson-Denny Reading Test is based on whole numbers only. Therefore, when 12.05 and 11.52 are rounded off to whole numbers, both equal 12, respectively. A raw score of twelve for vocabulary, measured by the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Form A, is converted to a grade equivalent score will equal 8.3.

Table 3 shows the results of the vocabulary scores for the programmed and linguistics groups, respectively, when submitted to an analysis of variance.

Table 3
Analysis of Variance for Vocabulary
Pretest Scores

Source	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	df	F-ratio	Significant Level
Between Groups	14.04	14.04	1	.679	.405
Within Groups	3991.71	20.16	198		
Total	4005.75		199		

It may be concluded that there was no significant difference between the programmed and linguistics groups at the .01 confidence level.

To further determine whether the two groups were comparable to each other at the beginning of the treatment, the comprehension mean scores were compared. Table 4 shows the comparison of comprehension group mean scores for the programmed and linguistics groups, respectively.

Table 4
Comparison of Comprehension Pretest Means

Group	N	Raw Score Group Mean	Grade Equivalent	Group Variance	SD
Programmed	100	17.44	7.0	25.78	5.07
Linguistics	100	17.40	7.0	25.33	5.03

It may be concluded from inspection of Table 4 that the two groups were equal at the beginning of treatment. Further analysis of comprehension pretest scores is shown in Table 5.

It may be concluded that there was no significant difference in comprehension between the programmed and linguistics groups on the pretest results.

A total reading score is obtained by adding the vocabulary and comprehension scores. Thus, the Nelson-Denny Reading Test total reading grade equivalent score is 7.7 for the group

Table 5

Analysis of Variance for Comprehension
Pretest Scores

Source	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	df	F-ratio	Significant Level
Between Groups	.07	.07	1	.003	.956
Within Groups	5060.64	25.55	198		
Total	5060.71		199		

which received programmed instruction as well as the group which received linguistic-based instruction. Table 6 shows the comparison of the total reading for the programmed and linguistic-based instruction, respectively.

Table 6

Comparison of Pretest Total Reading Scores for
Programmed and Linguistics Instruction

Group	Pretest Vocabulary Group Mean	Pretest Comprehension Group Mean	Pretest Total Group Mean	Grade Equivalent
Programmed	12.0	17.4	29.4	7.7
Linguistics	11.5	17.4	28.9	7.7
Difference	.5	.0	.5	.0

The two groups had the same grade equivalent score at the beginning of the investigation.

ANALYSIS OF POSTTEST RESULTS

The major hypothesis, number 1, and its alternate hypothesis, set forth below, were tested with the following results:

H_{o1} --There is no statistically significant difference in posttest means for vocabulary, as measured by the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, of the linguistics and programmed instructed groups.

H_{a1} --The group mean in vocabulary for the linguistics group will be significantly greater than the group mean in vocabulary for the programmed group.

To test the aforementioned hypothesis, the posttest means for the programmed and linguistics groups were compared. Table 7 shows the results of the comparison.

Table 7

Comparison of Vocabulary Posttest Means

Group	N	Raw Score Group Mean	Grade Equivalent	Group Variance	SD
Programmed	100	23.84	10.5	80.66	8.98
Linguistics	100	22.77	10.2	78.94	8.88

The linguistics instructed and programmed instructed group both made gains in vocabulary as shown in Table 7. The posttest raw score mean for the group which received programmed

instruction was 23.84 which equals 10.5 when converted to a grade equivalent score. The group which received linguistic-based instruction had a raw score mean of 22.77 which is a 10.2 grade equivalent score. The difference of .3 between the two groups was not statistically significant at the .01 confidence level; therefore, the major hypothesis was accepted over the alternate hypothesis.

Further analysis of vocabulary posttest means is shown in Table 8.

Table 8
Analysis of Variance for Vocabulary Posttest Mean

Source	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	df	F-ratio	Significant Level
Between Groups	57.24	57.24	1	.717	.398
Within Groups	15801.15	79.80	198		($p < .01$)
Total	15858.39		199		

The second hypothesis, set forth below, was tested with the following results:

H_{02} --There is no statistically significant difference in posttest means for comprehension, as measured by the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, of the linguistics and programmed instructed groups.

H_{a2} --The group mean in comprehension for the linguistics group will be significantly greater than the group mean in comprehension for the programmed group.

To test these hypotheses, the posttest means for the two groups were compared. Table 9 shows the means as they relate to each other.

Table 9
Comparison of Comprehension Posttest Means
for Linguistically Based and
Programmed Instruction

Group	N	Raw Score Group Mean	Grade Equivalent	Group Variance	SD
Programmed	100	21.17	8.2	74.70	8.64
Linguistics	100	27.70	10.0	55.54	7.45

The programmed and linguistics groups made measurable gains in the same direction. The difference in grade equivalence score was 1.8 in favor of the linguistics group. The raw score group means were analyzed. The results of which is shown in Table 10.

Table 10
Analysis of Variance for Comprehension
Posttest Means

Source	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	df	F-ratio	Significant Level
Between Groups	2132.04	2131.04	1	32.73	.000
Within Groups	12895.11	65.12	198		($p > .01$)
Total	15027.15		199		

When the comprehension group means for the posttest were analyzed, a change of 1.8 between the linguistics instructed and the programmed instructed group was significantly higher than the .01 confidence level. Therefore, the linguistic-based instruction was significantly more effective than programmed instruction in improving reading comprehension of Negro beginning freshmen students at Texas Southern University.

Table 11

Comparison of Pretest Reading Scores for
Programmed and Linguistics Instruction

Group	Pretest Vocabulary	Pretest Comprehension	Pretest Total	Grade Equivalent
Programmed	12.0	17.4	29.4	7.7
Linguistics	11.5	17.4	28.9	7.7
Difference	.5	.0	.5	.0

The two groups had attained the same grade equivalent score at the beginning of the investigation.

Table 12 shows how the same groups related to each other at the end of the investigation.

The Programmed Group mean change was slightly more than that for the Linguistic Group mean change in vocabulary; however, the change was not significantly different when they were

were submitted to an analysis of variance. The group which received linguistics-based instruction made greater changes within the group than the group which received programmed instruction. The greatest change occurred in comprehension. The linguistics group had a grade equivalent change of 3.0 while the programmed group had 1.2. Although the gain in vocabulary grade equivalent mean score was 2.2 as compared to 1.9 for the linguistics-based instructed group, the linguistic-based instructed group still had a greater total reading grade equivalent group mean.

Table 12

Comparison of Posttest Composite Scores for
Programmed and Linguistics Instruction

Group	Posttest Vocabulary	Posttest Comprehension	Posttest Total Reading	Grade Equivalent
Linguistics	22.7	27.7	50.4	10.2
Programmed	23.8	21.1	44.9	9.5
Difference	-1.1	6.6	5.5	.7

Table 13 shows how the two groups within group changes related to each other at the end of treatment.

Table 13

Amount of Change Between Pretest and Posttest Total Grade Equivalent
Scores Within the Linguistics and Programmed Groups

	<u>Pretest</u>		<u>Posttest</u>		Grade Equivalent Group Mean Change
	Raw Score	Grade Equivalent	Raw Score	Grade Equivalent	
Programmed					
Vocabulary	12.0	8.3	23.8	10.5	2.2
Comprehension	17.4	7.0	21.7	8.6	1.6
Linguistics					
Vocabulary	11.5	8.3	22.7	10.2	1.9
Comprehension	17.4	7.0	27.7	10.0	3.0

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 5 summarizes the research study, presents conclusions drawn from an analysis of the data, and makes recommendations based upon results of the investigation.

SUMMARY

This study was designed primarily to determine the effects that a highly linguistically-based and programmed reading instructional program had on reading comprehension achievement of Negro beginning freshmen students at Texas Southern University when compared with each other.

The group which received linguistically-based instruction was taught by the method prescribed in Paul Roberts' Patterns of English, a linguistic reader. The group which received programmed reading instruction was taught by the method prescribed by the Science Research Associates' College Reading Program One.

The same population for the study consisted of 103 females and 97 males who were randomly selected from a total of 525 students enrolled in Basic Reading and Study Skills courses for the 1972 Fall Semester. All the participants were 1972 high school graduates. Their ages ranged from seventeen through twenty years. All subjects were Negroes who received

elementary through high school instruction in the Texas Gulf Coast area.

All beginning freshmen students are required to take the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Form A, as part of the general admission requirements at Texas Southern University. Those who participated in the study had a Nelson-Denny Reading Test composite grade equivalent score of 9.0 or below.

The study was conducted over a sixteen-week period during which time each group met for fifty-minute periods on alternate days, twice per week. A programmed instructed section met the same time, on the same days, as did a linguistics instructed section. Four sections of twenty-five students each comprised the sections for programmed and linguistics instruction, respectively.

No instructional materials were used to supplement either method during the duration of the investigation.

READING TEST

The Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Form B, was administered to all participants upon completion of the treatment phase of the study. The results of the students' performance on the latter test were compared with the pretest results as part of the procedure for assessing the effectiveness of the two instructional methods. Raw scores were used to get a more accurate assessment of group means which were submitted to an

analysis of variance, and later were converted to grade equivalent means.

Reading comprehension achievement for the linguistically-based instructional group improved significantly over the programmed instructional group when tested at .01 level of confidence. Initially, both groups had a grade equivalent mean score of 7.0 in reading comprehension. At the completion phase of the study, the programmed instructional group had a grade equivalent group mean of 8.2 as compared to 10.0 for the group which received linguistically-based instruction.

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the findings of this study, it may be concluded that:

1. A linguistically-based instructional method is more effective than a programmed-based instructional method in improving reading comprehension achievement of Negro beginning freshmen students who live in the Texas Gulf Coast area.

2. Reading comprehension of Negro beginning freshmen college students in the Texas Gulf Coast area can be improved significantly by employing a linguistic method of reading instruction.

3. Although the specific applications of this study were limited to the two hundred subjects who comprised the research population, other students with similar reading deficiencies might derive benefit from such a program.

4. A measurable gain in reading vocabulary was derived simultaneously with improved reading comprehension for the programmed instructional group as well as for the linguistically-based instructional group. This was a secondary finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

1. A larger population sample should be included in the investigation.
2. Negro students of classifications other than beginning freshmen should be included in the population sample.
3. Speakers of Negro dialect from other geographical areas should be included in a similar study.
4. More research at the college level should be conducted on students who speak nonstandard English.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A: Pretest Programmed Instructed Individual
Raw Scores on Nelson-Denny Reading Test,
Form A

Pretest Programmed Instructed Individual Raw Scores
on Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Form A

Student	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Total
001	12	22	34
002	08	16	24
003	12	10	22
004	12	16	28
005	14	16	30
006	15	22	37
007	08	16	24
008	14	22	36
009	16	18	34
010	11	12	23
011	18	12	30
012	18	22	40
013	16	20	36
014	07	16	23
015	16	14	30
016	19	18	37
017	19	20	39
018	08	14	22
019	05	10	15
020	13	12	25
021	12	18	30
022	09	12	21
023	12	14	26
024	13	24	37
025	12	14	26
026	04	10	14
027	14	22	36
028	11	12	23
029	12	18	30
030	07	24	31
031	07	18	25
032	05	14	19
033	07	16	23
034	06	20	26
035	22	18	40
036	11	10	21
037	20	08	28
038	11	16	27
039	13	16	29
040	13	14	27
041	16	14	20
042	15	20	35

Student	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Total
043	13	08	21
044	18	22	40
045	14	22	36
046	09	22	31
047	12	12	24
048	14	24	38
049	16	14	30
050	17	20	37
051	16	18	34
052	07	10	17
053	17	20	37
054	12	16	28
055	13	22	35
056	16	22	38
057	17	16	33
058	13	16	29
059	06	18	24
060	12	20	32
061	09	14	23
062	12	24	36
063	17	18	35
064	19	18	37
065	14	12	26
066	12	14	26
067	04	14	18
068	12	14	26
069	12	22	34
070	07	20	27
071	09	26	35
072	21	12	33
073	09	28	37
074	00	38	38
075	09	14	23
076	09	20	29
077	14	26	40
078	11	12	23
079	13	14	27
080	11	10	21
081	11	18	28
082	19	20	39
083	09	22	31
084	15	16	31
085	12	20	32
086	06	10	16
087	15	18	33

Student	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Total
088	15	16	31
089	07	20	27
090	05	12	17
091	12	22	34
092	14	26	40
093	05	20	25
094	11	26	37
095	11	24	35
096	14	20	34
097	05	14	19
098	16	22	38
099	10	10	20
100	14	16	30

APPENDIX B: Pretest Linguistics Instructed Individual
Raw Scores on Nelson-Denny Reading Test,
Form A

Pretest Linguistics Instructed Individual Raw Scores
on Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Form A

Student	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Total
101	16	20	36
102	16	18	34
103	11	12	23
104	12	10	22
105	16	20	36
106	07	14	21
107	11	12	23
108	09	14	23
109	14	18	32
110	12	12	34
111	15	18	33
112	17	06	23
113	11	24	35
114	09	16	25
115	14	18	32
116	08	14	22
117	05	12	17
118	14	20	34
119	23	14	37
120	12	20	32
121	15	22	37
122	05	12	17
123	10	12	22
124	19	16	35
125	07	14	21
126	12	12	24
127	07	18	25
128	14	20	34
129	08	20	28
130	16	24	40
131	17	10	27
132	15	20	35
133	08	14	22
134	11	24	35
135	10	10	20
136	06	12	18
137	14	26	40
138	06	14	20
139	13	12	25
140	14	22	36
141	05	14	19
142	03	18	21

Student	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Total
143	05	20	25
144	06	14	20
145	12	16	28
146	14	10	24
147	05	16	21
148	09	14	23
149	13	24	37
150	12	26	38
151	18	24	32
152	13	18	31
153	11	22	33
154	15	22	37
155	10	12	22
156	11	22	33
157	18	20	38
158	12	22	34
159	05	14	19
160	16	22	38
161	15	22	37
162	00	32	32
163	15	20	35
164	18	14	32
165	00	32	32
166	11	10	21
167	08	14	22
168	18	22	40
169	16	24	40
170	08	14	22
171	12	20	32
172	08	18	26
173	19	20	39
174	18	18	36
175	13	24	37
176	16	16	32
177	12	20	32
178	05	16	21
179	24	16	40
180	10	24	34
181	09	12	21
182	04	14	18
183	14	26	40
184	14	06	20
185	11	18	29
186	04	16	20

Student	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Total
187	20	16	36
188	05	14	19
189	08	18	26
190	11	12	23
191	12	20	32
192	05	16	21
193	11	16	27
194	13	18	31
195	09	16	25
196	15	24	39
197	08	14	22
198	11	12	23
199	15	24	39
200	15	16	31

APPENDIX C: Posttest Programmed Instructed Individual
Raw Scores on Nelson-Denny Reading Test,
Form B

Posttest Programmed Instructed Individual Raw Scores
on Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Form B

Student	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Total
001	19	22	41
002	23	24	47
003	13	26	39
004	15	34	49
005	19	30	49
006	27	32	59
007	20	32	52
008	38	24	62
009	23	24	47
010	23	18	41
011	17	36	53
012	53	46	99
013	36	38	74
014	24	18	42
015	38	24	62
016	24	30	54
017	36	38	74
018	23	18	41
019	12	16	28
020	16	18	34
021	27	32	59
022	12	20	32
023	35	32	67
024	22	32	54
025	47	48	95
026	12	10	22
027	27	14	41
028	28	14	42
029	31	10	41
030	24	14	38
031	23	14	37
032	10	08	18
033	12	10	22
034	29	16	45
035	32	22	54
036	12	08	20
037	37	12	49
038	18	18	36
039	16	16	32
040	19	10	29
041	10	10	20
042	22	18	40

Student	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Total
043	19	12	31
044	28	14	42
045	38	10	48
046	18	14	32
047	18	10	28
048	23	10	33
049	10	06	16
050	31	14	45
051	14	16	30
052	10	12	22
053	30	24	54
054	13	26	39
055	19	30	49
056	20	32	52
057	22	32	54
058	16	18	34
059	12	16	28
060	24	18	42
061	16	16	32
062	32	20	52
063	20	34	54
064	35	32	67
065	14	30	44
066	12	27	39
067	12	20	32
068	11	22	33
069	17	28	45
070	12	20	32
071	18	24	42
072	34	10	44
073	20	32	52
074	17	36	53
075	12	20	32
076	22	24	46
077	23	22	45
078	14	16	30
079	23	22	45
080	15	18	33
081	27	16	43
082	50	28	78
083	29	16	45
084	13	22	35
085	35	18	53
086	18	16	34

Student	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Total
087	42	24	66
088	19	26	45
089	24	22	46
090	26	12	38
091	28	20	48
092	34	32	66
093	26	22	48
094	22	30	52
095	34	24	58
096	21	26	47
097	21	18	39
098	31	32	63
099	18	18	36
100	21	18	39

APPENDIX D: Posttest Linguistics Instructed Individual
Raw Scores on Nelson-Denny Reading Test,
Form B

Posttest Linguistics Instructed Individual Raw Scores
on Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Form B

Student	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Total
101	14	18	32
102	26	44	70
103	27	42	69
104	26	24	50
105	14	20	34
106	15	26	41
107	20	20	40
108	14	24	38
109	29	24	53
110	12	22	34
111	18	18	36
112	31	20	51
113	23	34	57
114	37	32	69
115	21	22	43
116	34	38	72
117	11	24	35
118	31	26	57
119	44	44	88
120	19	26	45
121	38	38	76
122	12	16	28
123	11	28	39
124	24	28	52
125	26	32	58
126	23	30	53
127	22	36	58
128	18	20	38
129	18	26	44
130	35	34	69
131	19	20	39
132	34	34	68
133	25	26	51
134	23	32	55
135	31	40	72
136	20	18	38
137	10	20	30
138	14	24	38
139	19	26	45
140	11	28	39
141	26	28	54
142	26	32	58

Student	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Total
143	23	30	53
144	22	36	58
145	18	20	38
146	18	26	44
147	35	34	69
148	19	20	39
149	32	34	66
150	25	26	51
151	23	32	55
152	27	24	51
153	20	18	38
154	23	22	45
155	11	16	27
156	17	28	45
157	26	28	54
158	24	28	52
159	06	16	22
160	29	28	57
161	29	20	49
162	10	32	42
163	18	28	46
164	25	28	53
165	12	16	28
166	12	28	40
167	10	20	30
168	37	44	81
169	33	44	77
170	02	26	28
171	25	32	57
172	17	22	39
173	53	40	93
174	24	32	56
175	32	40	72
176	15	20	35
177	25	36	61
178	21	30	51
179	25	30	55
180	33	26	59
181	06	16	22
182	17	24	41
183	28	36	64
184	12	24	36
185	22	24	46
186	32	26	58

Student	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Total
187	13	16	29
188	22	24	46
189	24	36	60
190	28	32	60
191	19	38	57
192	30	38	68
193	26	16	42
194	39	20	59
195	17	26	43
196	36	36	72
197	14	38	52
198	25	28	53
199	36	38	74
200	23	20	43