A COMPARISON OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THREE ORAL
LANGUAGE SYSTEMS IN IMPROVING THE RECEPtIVE
LANGUAGE OF KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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Denton, Texas

May, 1978

This study investigates the differences in receptive language of kindergarten children who are taught by different language systems. This study compares the effectiveness of the three most widely adopted oral language systems in the state of Texas. The systems used were (A) Alpha Time, (B) Beginning Readiness Kit; Beginning to Read, Write, and Listen Kits I and II, and (c) McMillan Series R, Bank Street, Threshold K. S.

Twenty-seven kindergarten classrooms in a metropolitan independent school district in the North Texas area were selected through a stratified sampling technique. Consequently, nine classrooms were included in each of the three experimental groups. The experimental variable was the oral language system.

An adaptation of the factorial pretest-posttest control group design was utilized in the study. The groups were pretested the third week of September, 1976, and posttested the second week of May, 1977. The instrument used for measuring receptive language was the Language Test of Basic
Experiences, Levels K and L. A total of 551 children completed both pretest and posttest instruments. Teachers also responded to a self-report questionnaire.

Analysis of variance techniques were used to analyze statistically pretest and posttest scores derived from the sample. The .05 level of significance was used throughout the statistical analyses for rejection or retention of the null hypotheses. Preliminary analysis of data determined no systematic bias for teacher variability or for within group variability. Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 5 were tested using a 2 x 3 analysis of covariance. The pretest was used as the covariant in this analysis. No statistically significant differences in the classroom mean scores were determined between teaching methods, teaching methods with only girls as subjects, teaching methods with only boys as subjects, and boys and girls. Hypothesis 4, concerning the pretest differences between boys and girls, was tested using a t-test for independent samples. No statistically significant differences were found.

Additional analyses of covariance were used to determine the effectiveness of method in respect to race and socioeconomic levels. No statistically significant differences between either race or socioeconomic level were determined.

From the findings several conclusions can be drawn. The receptive language of kindergarten children can be
expected to improve when taught by any of the three selected oral language systems. Boys do not need different oral language experiences from girls; therefore the sex of the children need not be a major consideration when an oral language system is selected. Other factors which need not be major considerations in the selection of an oral language system are the race and socioeconomic level of the children.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In August 1973, public school kindergartens became a reality in Texas (28). Administrators all over the state began implementing a new and different program as compared to the first grade programs. As with any new program, questions began to arise. What teaching materials and methods were appropriate for a five-year-old child? What should be taught to a five-year-old child?

The Texas Education Agency assumed the leadership role in providing guidelines for a quality kindergarten program (25). One of the most urgent needs in establishing a program was for materials and equipment. In order to help the school districts meet these needs an adoption of kindergarten manipulatives was included in the 1973 state textbook adoption (26).

Another area of concern was the kindergarten curriculum. Most authorities in the field of early childhood education agree that one of the most important aspects of the curriculum should be language development (11, 15, 29, 30). Many believed that language was not receiving enough emphasis in the Texas kindergartens. Again in 1974, kindergarten was included in the state textbook adoption. For the first time
the state called for the adoption of oral language systems for kindergarten.

A total of thirty-nine language systems was submitted to the state textbook committee for consideration. After evaluating these programs in accordance with the proclamation issued by the Texas Education Agency, ten language systems were adopted by the State Textbook Committee for use in public school kindergartens (27).

The state of Texas spent $5,500,000 on oral language systems for kindergarten in 1975-1976. The kindergarten teachers in Texas have been utilizing these programs. An evaluation of the effectiveness of the most widely adopted programs seemed relevant.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was a comparison of the three most widely adopted oral language systems in Texas public school kindergartens as to their effectiveness in improving receptive language as measured by the Test of Basic Experiences (TOBE) Language Test. These systems were, A. Alpha Time, B. Beginning Readiness Kit; Beginning to Read, Write, and Listen Kits I and II, and C. Macmillan Series R, Bank Street, Threshold K. S. These systems will be referred to in the remainder of this study as Methods A, B, and C, respectively.
Purpose of the Study

The purposes of the study were:

1. To determine the most effective of the three oral language systems for improving receptive language in kindergarten children.
2. To determine the most effective of the three oral language systems for improving receptive language in kindergarten girls.
3. To determine the most effective of the three oral language systems for improving receptive language in kindergarten boys.
4. To determine if there was a difference in the receptive language of kindergarten boys and girls before and after treatment.

Hypotheses

In order to carry out the purposes of this study, to compare three teaching methods, the following hypotheses were formulated.

1. There will be no significant difference in the adjusted mean scores (all posttest TOBE Language Test scores were adjusted using TOBE pretest scores as the covariant) of kindergarten children, as measured by the TOBE Language Test, when comparing: a. Method A to Method B, b. Method A to Method C, c. Method B to Method C.
2. There will be no significant difference in the adjusted mean scores (all posttest TOBE Language Test scores were adjusted using TOBE pretest scores as the covariant) of kindergarten girls, as measured by the TOBE Language Test, when comparing: a. Method A to Method B, b. Method A to Method C, c. Method B to Method C.

3. There will be no significant difference in the adjusted mean scores (all posttest TOBE Language Test scores were adjusted using TOBE pretest scores as the covariant) of kindergarten boys as measured by the TOBE Language Test, when comparing: a. Method A to Method B, b. Method A to Method C, c. Method B to Method C.

4. There will be no significant differences in the pretest mean scores of kindergarten girls and boys as measured by the TOBE Language Test.

5. There will be no significant difference in the adjusted mean scores (all posttest TOBE Language Test scores were adjusted using TOBE pretest scores as the covariant) of kindergarten girls and boys as measured by the TOBE Language Test.

Background and Significance

The present age is an age of communication. Communication can never be a one-way process. It must always involve both transmission and reception. Of the four communication skills--reading, writing, speaking, and listening--the last,
which is used the most frequently, has received the least attention in school (5). In oral communication, the listener or receiver is as vital a factor as is the speaker. Until recently, little thought had been given to the importance of training a person to listen effectively.

A survey of the research in other comparable fields makes receptive language research look embryonic (9). The product of this limited research has produced little additional information about what really takes place in the human thought process during listening. Because of the complexities of receptive language, less is known about the capacity to comprehend speech than is known about the development of the capacity to produce speech (19). The study of language has primarily been in the area of expressive language because it is easier to measure or to observe (17). Russell (22), after reviewing the research on receptive language, referred to it as sporadic, atomistic, and inconclusive. Kidd and Kidd (14) suggest reasons for lack of research in this area: (a) difficulty with measuring devices and instrumentation, (b) difficulty in obtaining a meaningful and reliable response, (c) difficulty in comparing the results of one experimenter to another, and (d) the concentration of research on the auditorily handicapped child. Consequently, little is known about the development of normal auditory processes.

The auditory symbol is basic to the total language process. The spoken symbol is predominant in any culture (15).
The communicative process builds one area upon another. It is a complicated and overlapping process. The first building block is receptive language. Functional language is divided into three parts. These are: (a) receptive language, the ability to understand what one hears, (b) inner language, the ability to think, and (c) expressive language, the ability to verbalize thoughts (17). The use of expressive language can only occur after receptive and inner language have been partially established (1, 3, 15, 16). A child usually begins to comprehend some spoken language at about the age of eight or nine months.

Receptive language is the chief mode of learning in the early school years (6, 12, 23, 32). It is a primary source of learning throughout life. Brown (6) concluded that approximately 75 per cent of what is learned as an adult is learned auditorially. Chronologically, children listen, speak, read, and then write. Reading is normally superimposed upon a listening background (16). Myklebust (17) presents evidence that reading is never totally visual. Brown (4) found a direct relationship between the good listener and the good reader. As both are receptive language skills, it is logical to expect such a relationship.

The modern world is a listening world. Rankin (21) was the pioneer in the research on listening. Using high school subjects, he found that 45 per cent of language time was
devoted to listening as compared to 30 per cent to speaking, 16 per cent to reading, and 9 per cent to writing. In all of his work, the general tendency shown is the very great use of listening as compared to other modes of communication. Listening occupies 29.7 per cent of the average waking day. It is used more than talking, three times as much as reading, and four times as much as writing.

Listening can be taught. It does improve with training (8, 13, 20). In a study by Childers (8), which used 111 children with a wide range of intelligence, receptive language was measured before and after a series of lessons designed to increase receptive language. Children in all groups improved their listening skills significantly. However, instructional materials and textbooks seem to ignore listening (7, 10). Brown (7) found that less than 1 per cent of the content of texts for children is devoted to topics on listening.

The earlier instruction in receptive language skills is begun, the greater the gains. Duker (9) states that it is generally agreed that parents who listen to their children tend to be the best teachers of listening. It follows that teachers must be good listeners to encourage good listening skills (24). Instruction depends on inner maturational pattern, experience background, and the opportunity to learn. There are individual as well as cultural differences in receptive language (1). The wide difference in listening
ability found in kindergarten seems to widen as children grow older (24). Barsch (2) states that the refinement of the auditory process may depend to a large extent on early exposure and teaching. It is possible that a child's listening efficiency develops according to the extent of the demands confronting him. Since past experiences affect listening ability (1, 18, 31), children must be provided with wide and varied experiences. Wilt (31) concludes that children need real experiences in a permissive environment which encourages listening, speaking, reading, and writing to meet life's needs.

As indicated by the initial review of literature, this study was significant in the following areas:

1. There is a distinct need for more research on receptive language. This study added to that body of research.

2. Receptive language is one of the primary bases for all learning; therefore studies on the teaching of that skill were relevant.

3. The amount of time spent in listening, both by children and adults, warranted further study of receptive language.

4. There is a need for formal teaching of receptive language skills. This study evaluated the effectiveness of three teaching methods.
5. This study could assist the Texas Education Agency in evaluating three adopted systems and serve as a guide for future state adoptions of oral language systems.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were thus defined for this study.

**Kindergarten**—the section of the Texas public schools devoted to the education of children five years of age.

**Oral Language System**—any of the ten oral language programs adopted by the state of Texas for use in the public school kindergartens (Appendix A).

**Receptive Language**—the ability to understand the meaning of language which is heard. This ability is synonymous with auditory decoding and active listening.

Basic Assumption

It was assumed that all teachers followed the instructions for testing which were provided for them.

Procedures for the Collection and Analysis of Data

The following factors were employed as procedures in the study:

1. The instrument chosen for use in measuring receptive language was the **TOBE Language Test**.

2. The population in this study was kindergarten children from a metropolitan school district in North Texas.
3. The sample included twenty-seven kindergarten classes.

4. The research design was a three-group pretest-posttest design.

5. The experimental variable was the method of teaching.

6. Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 5 were tested with analysis of covariance. A $t$-test for independent samples was used for Hypothesis 4.
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CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Listening always has been and continues to be the most widely used human means of receiving information. According to Lundsteen (55), we listen a book a day, speak a book a week, read a book a month, and write a book a year. Little attention and importance were paid to the development of listening and listening skills until the last two decades. Ninety per cent of the research in listening has been conducted since 1952 (90). Listening, as a daily experience, is so familiar that skill development has been taken for granted. Educators assumed that every child entering school had developed the skills of listening (25). This statement might be true if the only prerequisite for listening was hearing; however, listening requires far more than just hearing.

Historically, the importance of listening was first demonstrated through studies about the amount of time spent listening both in and out of school. In terms of the amount of time the four communication skills are employed, listening is the most important skill (77).

An investigation in the late 1920's by Rankin (77) of sixty-eight adults revealed that 70 per cent of the waking
time of a man was spent in oral communication. Of this waking time, 9 per cent was spent in writing, 11 per cent was spent in reading, 32 per cent was spent in speaking and 42 per cent was spent in listening.

A study conducted by Wilt (101) in 1949 of elementary school children from grades one through six in nineteen classrooms showed that children were expected to listen 57.5 per cent of the time they spent in the classroom, the median daily time being 158 minutes. The study revealed the unawareness among teachers of the importance of receptive language. Teachers ranked reading as the most important language skill, even though students spent two and one-half hours of a five-hour school-day in some form of listening, about twice as much time as the teachers estimated. At the first-grade level, children were required to listen 84 per cent of the time. Little difference was found in the amount of time spent listening in traditional as opposed to progressive classrooms. However, in the progressive classrooms there was more student talk and less teacher talk. A similar study by Bird (5) during the early 1950's with female college students, revealed that 42 per cent of their time was spent in listening, 25 per cent in speaking, 15 per cent in reading, and 18 per cent in writing.

Demands to listen are also made on children outside the school. In 1966 Witty (103) reported that a child listened
over one-half of the time he was awake. Recently researchers have estimated that about 90 per cent of the class time in high schools and colleges was spent listening to discussions and lectures (90).

In the world today, an individual spends most of his time engaging in some form of communication. Although all communication is vital to man, more time is spent listening, approximately 38 to 45 per cent, than in any other type of communicative behavior (16). Through skillful listening, thinking is stimulated, information is gained, oral language skills are improved, and creative appreciation is increased. Therefore, the developmental process of receptive language should be an important consideration.

The Development of Receptive Language

Listening is a learned receptive skill, which differs from hearing. Hearing is a physiological process and does not involve interpretations (85). Language development is a continuous process which begins the moment an infant hears language. The first response of the infant to a world of language communication is through listening to those about him. Language ability continually increases as the ability to respond to a social world increases (38).

Strickland (89) proved empirically that listening and speaking are directly related. A child usually begins to comprehend some spoken language at about the age of eight.
or nine months. Early recognition of meaning depends more upon tone and timbre rather than upon specific words. However, the most crucial process of language development is the internalization of auditory input. Because receptive language develops before expressive language, a child's receptive vocabulary is larger than his expressive vocabulary (3). By eleven or twelve months, a child may be using simple word sounds with meaning (39). The first true words are spoken when verbal sounds are closely associated with objects, people, or activities. Berry (4) suggested that it is as important to determine what a child understands as to record what he says. We must be aware of the quality as well as the quantity of speech. Wells (99) also stressed the vital role listening plays in language development.

Language and cognitive development are closely related and sequential, according to Piagetian theory (71). The first stage of cognitive development is also the language prerequisite of hearing. The next cognitive stage is perception. The child must learn to audit language, his own and others, in order to produce the sounds in his native language. From ten to fourteen months words are developed as needed and as fast as experiences will allow. Words are then associated with other words to form categories and comparisons (10). At the same time comprehension for language improves. This receptive function should occur at about twelve to twenty-four months, the same time as the expressive function,
association of symbols. From two years to seven years, ideas and words are stored. Attention and memory are the most important skills, observing and listening are as important as verbalizing. Listening is facilitated by clarity and simplicity (34). Soon after, this stored knowledge is used to solve problems. Characteristics and distinctions are abstracted to help solve problems. This process is the receptive stage of analysis. Eventually theoretical situations will be created and reality-testing will begin (59).

In a study by Rossi (79), the organization of wordlists for free recall was investigated. Children between the mental ages of two and five showed different organizational patterns. The progression by age in the choice of organizational pattern of rhyming, syntax, clustering, and serial ordering was consistent with the theory of Piaget and could be described as developmental from concrete to abstract functioning and from perceptual to conceptual responding.

McElroy (59) identified four basic requirements for language development. The requirements are both developmental and learned--being maturationally and environmentally controlled. The requirements are as follows:

1. audition--hearing and perceiving language as a monitoring or feedback system.

2. memory--remembering language in order to use it consistently.
3. intelligence--using language as a part of problem-solving.

4. performance--having opportunities to use language.

Factors in Listening

Taylor (90) divided listening into three parts--hearing, listening, and auding. Hearing concerns the ability of the child to receive speech accurately under normal everyday conditions. Factors which must be considered in hearing are auditory acuity, masking, auditory fatigue, and binaural hearing.

Listening goes beyond hearing to those factors which affect awareness of speech sounds or patterns and how one identifies sounds as words. In order to listen there must be attention, auditory analysis of sounds, mental reorganization for retention, and association of meaning to experience. Since listening is a continuous act, the rate of input must be considered. Words may also evoke unrelated associations, usually emotional in nature, that alter communication.

In auding, the listener assimilates the flow of words and responds with feeling or understanding. The listener utilizes all past experiences and background. Thinking skills, which must be developed in auding, are those which allow indexing, comparing, sequencing, sensory impressions, and appreciation. These thinking skills are similar to those used in other forms of communication.
The involvement of the listener affects the degree of attention. According to a study by Fisher (32), the degree of attention, which the listener is prepared to give, is an indication of the extent to which he feels himself to be involved. Different levels of listening are really different degrees of involvement (3).

Because listening can occur at a much greater rate than speaking, it is easy to become distracted. Speaking rates are approximately 100 to 150 words per minute, yet the speech-thought ratio is 100 to 400. The thoughts of the listener accept the message at 400 words per minute (82). In order to determine if this higher rate of listening ability can be utilized for instruction, many studies have been conducted using compressed speech.

In compressed speech, normal speech is speeded up, yet the natural voice quality and pitch are retained. The earlier findings of Fergen (30) indicated that 130 words per minute were the optimum for listening; in contrast, recent studies indicated that faster rates of speaking were just as effective (43, 81, 92). A study by Woodcock and Clark (104) indicated that faster rates of presentation may be even more effective. This study, using third-, fifth-, and sixth-grade children, indicated that listening rates of 228 and 328 words per minute were more efficient for learning and retention than the normal speaking rate of 178. A later
study, using thirty-six children from the preschool laboratories at the Pennsylvania State University, indicated that there were no significant differences in the comprehension of stories or commands as a function of rate of presentation. Stories and commands were presented at a fast rate, moderate rate, and slow rate (51).

Sticht (88) attempted to determine if presenting new information in the time saved by the compression process would improve overall performance on a criterion listening comprehension test. No statistical evidence of increased learning was found.

Green (38) discussed four factors that influence language development: physical equipment, intelligence, sex differences, and family environment. In the area of physical equipment, most research has been conducted with handicapped children (50).

Whether high intelligence produces language ability or language ability produces high intelligence, is not altogether clear (33). However, that some type of relationship exists is clear. Intelligence is highly related to listening comprehension (9, 14, 53). Childers (18) concluded that listening becomes less a function of intelligence as children progress through school. Listening ability and intelligence, though highly correlated, are not one and the same.
In a study of story recall in kindergarten children, thirty-four children were selected from day care centers. Two groups were matched for age, intelligence, and ethnic background. The socioeconomic class was relatively uniform. Stories were presented to the two groups using two different methods. The children were then asked to retell the story and answer questions concerning the story. Regardless of the method of presentation, a strong relationship was found between language performance and intellectual functioning (7).

Early research indicated that girls were superior to boys in all areas of language development (57), but later studies made these assumptions questionable (102). Today there appears to be no direct correlation between listening ability and the sex of the child (9, 14, 53). In a study by Motley (63) using 420 elementary students, no significant differences were found in the listening abilities of boys as compared to girls either before or after treatment. These results indicated that both sexes could benefit from activities geared to the development of listening skills and work-study skills. Nesbitt (66), using first-grade pupils, found no differences in the auding achievement of boys and girls. Auditory discrimination also appeared to be unrelated to sex (42, 62).

The family environment is a crucial factor in language development. Dialect differences and socioeconomic levels
are two areas of the family environment which have received much attention. As to the question of dialect interference in the comprehension of standard English, the results of studies have not agreed (21). The majority of the studies, however, indicated that there is considerable proficiency in understanding standard English by children who speak non-standard English (41, 75, 93, 98).

A study by Copple and Suci (21) supported these previous studies which failed to find dialect differences blocking the comprehension of standard English by children. Ninety-six children from lower-income black families served as subjects with an equal number of boys and girls. The children were then interviewed to establish their use of non-standard English. The subjects were asked to complete sentences. Half of the sentences were in standard English form and half in non-standard English. In a second session, the form of each sentence was changed. If the child completed the sentences appropriately within a five-second interval, understanding was assumed. Actually, the children performed better in response to the standard English.

Nesbitt (66) did not observe socioeconomic status differences in the auditory abilities of first graders. Differences were observed, however, by Hendrix (42) in the auditory discrimination of culturally deprived and non-deprived preschool children. Differences were also found in the listening skills of forty-eight black third-grade
pupils from two schools. One school was a low socioeconomic Title I school and the other was a middle-class school. Significant school differences, in mean performance on the listening test, were found favoring the middle-class school.

Other factors which seem to influence listening are age, personality, feedback, and practice. As would be expected, listening scores increase with age; older children comprehend better than younger children (24, 29, 49, 51, 58). Three studies (44, 48, 78), investigating the relationship between listening and personality, found that good listeners were better adjusted socially and personally than poor listeners. This relationship suggests that the ability to use listening skills may be directly affected by the adjustment of the child. Goolsby (35, 36), in separate studies of culturally-deprived school children and the general population of preschool children, found that immediate feedback resulted in higher listening achievement levels. Practice also appears to influence listening comprehension (51, 100).

Listening and Reading

In the early years, information is obtained through listening rather than through reading. Another reason for the emphasis on the development of listening skills during the preschool years is that listening serves as a basis for the later reading skills. Many opportunities can be provided to develop these listening skills through stories and music (38).
A national survey, done by the University of Minnesota, reported that the most important reading readiness skill needed in kindergarten was listening (19). Responses of principals, kindergarten and first-grade teachers, consultants, and directors, concerning reading readiness skills in kindergarten, focused on the importance of listening skills, following directions, language skills, and auditory discrimination. Kellogg (47) also found evidence that auditory discrimination and the ability to listen are areas that contribute to reading success. In a study by Corley (22), of kindergarten children who were given a planned daily listening program, the listening sub-test showed significant gains, but logical thinking did not improve. Listening comprehension is the most difficult of the language skills and the one that creates the most tension (65). One of the problems of listening, as compared to reading, is that listening does not allow the receiver to re-listen to a phrase or to look up a word in the dictionary. Children are unable to control the rate of the speaker and are also at the mercy of the organization and delivery of the speaker. One advantage of listening, as compared to reading, is that listening is a personal experience between the producer and the consumer of language. In listening, voice inflections, gestures, and facial expressions of the speaker can help the listener understand the message (13).
Most training in listening produces gains in listening and reading. Thinking skills used in listening are similar to those used in reading, writing, and speaking (72, 105). Specific links between reading and listening were noted by Lundsteen (56). A review of research by Taylor (90) also showed that reading and listening measurements involving common attributes correlate highly. Both reading and listening use the same experiential background and thinking skills, but differ as to the way the individual receives and recognizes words.

In the elementary school, listening should not be considered a by-product, but rather a major objective in the language arts program (28). In long- or short-range educational planning, high competence in listening comprehension and reading comprehension is essential for high academic achievement and a weakness in either area will produce an adverse effect on most subject areas (27).

A study by Durrell (27) reported useful comparisons at different grade levels between listening comprehension and reading grade levels. In the early years of schooling children prefer to listen and listening comprehension may be used as an index of pupil growth in basic reading skills. In all primary grades, listening vocabulary surpasses the reading vocabulary. Listening vocabulary of a child is a year and a half ahead of reading grade level at the middle of the
first grade and a year ahead of reading grade level at the middle of grades two and three. By eighth grade these differences diminish (27). Again, a similar pattern is shown with regard to comprehension of larger units of language. From sixth grade and up, factors such as superiority in reading as compared to listening, and a high level of silent reading speed, may account for preference in reading to listening. At fifth grade, reading comprehension reaches 90 per cent of listening comprehension, and in the eighth grade both abilities are equal (27).

A study by Taylor, Frackenpohl, and Pettee (91), supported the findings of Durrell. Listening abilities are more advanced than reading abilities in the elementary school years and these children usually prefer to listen. Changes occur around the sixth grade. At this age level students prefer to hear easy material and read the more difficult content. This research indicated that all through the grades less competent students tend to rely on listening to learn. Early (28) reported research that indicated listening skills actually deteriorate as reading skills improve. Brown (11) predicted that if listening were taught it could surpass reading as the primary means of learning.

Graves (37) reported significant gains in reading made by pupils in the lower third of reading achievement when instructed in a listening center. Van Valkenburg (96) indicated that students from low socioeconomic areas gained
more in reading and in listening comprehension from listening experiences than those pupils from high socioeconomic areas.

In a multicultural, technological, highly competitive society, the fundamental processes of receptive language must not be overlooked if educators are going to build the foundation necessary for all children to learn the higher order language skills (1).

Instruction in Listening

The teaching of listening is imperative because communication and learning are dependent upon effective listening (73). Research indicates that only 50 per cent of what is heard is retained and two months later, only one-half of that amount will be recalled. Factors which may account for this limited retention are the lack of instruction in listening, sequential developmental listening programs, and the complexity of listening (90).

Listening instruction has been neglected because of misconceptions about the nature of listening. Experimental research has discredited the assumption that all but the hearing impaired can listen effectively (70, 90). Platter (73) listed the following misconceptions that hinder the teaching of listening.

1. Listening is determined by intelligence.
2. Listening is determined by hearing acuity.
3. Listening is automatic.
4. Teaching reading is more important than teaching listening.

Nichols (67) had suggested much earlier that the reason for the lack of listening instruction was due to the belief that efficient listening required only intelligence and unguided practice. This neglect of instruction in listening is further indicated by the absence of an English term which refers to the oral communication skills of listening and speaking. British researchers have coined the word "oracy" to parallel the term literacy. Coining the word oracy does not solve the subsequent instructional problems: the nature of oracy, identification and sequence of oracy skills, determination of critical skills for instruction, and appropriate methodologies (40, 72).

In a movement by the National Council of Teachers of English in 1945, a commission was established to study the need for stressing the teaching of listening in the schools. This commission, after an investigation, stated that there was a need to stress listening because: (a) listening is the most used language art, (b) listening exerts tremendous influence in life, (c) listening is often poorly done, and (d) evidence suggests that listening habits can be improved through training (20). Brown (12), a pioneer in the research on listening, stated similar reasons for instruction in listening.
In a study by the Central New York Study Council (17), in 1957, the following results were obtained: (a) children got their information through listening, (b) children got directions better from listening than from reading, (c) listening results did not necessarily parallel reading achievement, (d) there was a greater improvement in listening than in reading in the higher intermediate grades, (e) there was a limit to the number of things a child could remember, and (f) there was no significant difference in the listening abilities of the sexes. The conclusions drawn from this study were that: we need to do more direct teaching of listening to improve the quality of learning; teachers should be conscious of teaching listening as a language arts skill; listening is a good technique for teaching the slow learners; and, teachers should be aware of the limitations of the listening ability in the group and give directions accordingly.

Listening is a continuous process. The competencies involved in effective listening cannot be assigned to a grade level or age group because they are in constant need of practice and refinement (8, 60).

The individual components of the ability to listen include the ability to hear, to recognize words, to acquire new words, to understand and gain meaning, to concentrate, to anticipate sequence, to associate with ideas, to recall and to identify important elements (76).
Smith (83) cited four types of listening in which children participated during their daily routines. These types were attentive listening, appreciative listening, analytical listening, and marginal listening. In attentive listening, most distractions are eliminated and the attention of the listener is focused on one person or on one form of communication. In appreciative listening, the listener is listening for enjoyment, and the listener is in a more relaxed and less tense state. In analytical listening, the listener is listening only for the purpose of responding one way or another, and the listener has to think carefully about what is heard. In marginal listening, the listener may have two or more distractions present.

Cayer (16) gave five types of listening, which agreed with the work of Smith with the exception of the deletion of marginal listening and the addition of purposive listening for normal language development. Analytical listening can be separated into listening for acquisition of information, main ideas, and details with the purpose of recalling information for later use; and critical listening for the purpose of drawing inferences from what is heard in order to evaluate ideas.

Fessenden (31) stated seven levels of listening, which isolate, identify, integrate, inspect, interpret, interpolate, and introspect. These levels were described as isolating
sounds, ideas, arguments, facts and organization; identifying the aspects isolated; integrating with past experiences; inspecting new and old data; interpreting data; interpolating comments and statements; and, introspecting as well as listening.

Certain basic steps in teaching listening can be identified. The first step is to define the purpose of the listening. Unfamiliar vocabulary should be explained and related background experiences should be recalled. If possible, the listening experience should be repeated to discover elements missed the first time (39).

In critical or evaluative listening, specific skills must be taught. These skills include relating what is perceived and comprehended to previous learning, and second, making inferences and arriving at new ideas. These skills are similar to those of analytical and critical thinking (39). While critical and evaluative listening should be taught at every opportunity in the school curriculum, they can also be developed by using specific lessons designed for these purposes (74).

In general, the majority of research indicated that listening skills can be taught in a variety of ways and that listening ability does improve with instruction (70, 80, 90). However, most of the research on improvement of listening abilities used intermediate, junior high, and college students as subjects.
If listening is the basis for all language skills, then early instruction would seem appropriate. Olsen (68) and Keislar (46) developed activities for the instruction of preschool children in listening comprehension. Both studies found that listening skills could be taught by specific instruction. Keislar developed games to teach the listening comprehension of four language constructions to children in a Head Start Program. Olsen designed activities to develop the listening skills of following directions, selective listening, discriminative listening, and attending appreciatively. Studies by Trebilcock (94) and Steen (86) also supported direct instruction at the kindergarten level for improved listening.

A series of studies on the ability of preschoolers to follow instructions indicated that the key to success was that the child comprehend the words. Children could follow verbal direction as easily as by demonstration, if the words were understood (84). Several studies have indicated that the program used made no significant difference (23, 62, 64). Auditory discrimination lessons produced gains in auditory discrimination but not in listening habits and attitudes (64).

The auding achievement of first-grade students was significantly higher for students who had received preschool instruction (66). Durrell and Murphy (26) suggested from their findings that intensive instruction in auditory perception removes most, if not all, of the advantages that girls
appear to have over boys in first grade. In a study by Blackburn (6) 220 first-, second-, and third-grade students from Title I schools were divided into an experimental and a control group. The experimental group received fifteen minute daily listening lessons. The experimental group improved significantly over the control group in listening skills.

Studies using fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade students also showed significant gains from direct instruction in specific listening skills (15, 54, 95). Specific skills, such as following directions, listening for the main idea or details, and making inferences, were strengthened. Children benefit significantly from a systematic application of materials and instruction designed to improve listening ability (18, 45).

Motley (63) conducted an experimental study using students from kindergarten through sixth grade. Treatment consisted of a program of activities geared to the development of listening and work-study skills. Results indicated that students in the experimental groups tended to improve their performance in mathematics, reading, listening skills, and work study skills, to a significantly greater extent than students in the control group.

Through a broad study, Penfield (69) attempted to determine at what level training in listening would be of greatest value. Instruction was provided at the second, fifth,
eighth, and eleventh grades. Training at the second-grade level was very successful. Gains were also noted from instruction in the fifth grade; however, little impact was noted at grades eight and eleven.

In summary, the research indicated that listening is the most widely used form of communication. Listening is developmental and many different factors influence this development. There is a high correlation between the listening ability of a child and his reading ability. Since listening skills can be taught and this instruction affects both listening and reading, educators must increase the emphasis placed on listening.

In order to function well, both in school and in the adult world, an individual needs well-developed listening skills, yet Americans generally have been called poor listeners (87, 97). Since the advent of television, the percentage of listening time has increased. Great masses of people are more easily swayed by what they hear than by what they read. The spoken word is becoming a more and more powerful medium of communication; therefore, critical listening skills are of the utmost importance in the society of today (61).

Educators must become aware of the tremendous impact of the spoken word and the need for improving the quality of listening. The listening habits and abilities of children must be studied and the schools must plan to improve the listening situation (2).
Students are expected to listen during major portions of the day. This amount of time exceeds the length of time that students can be expected to sustain a high level of interest and attention (90). A physical change takes place during active listening; brain waves, temperature, and heart-beat accelerate (55). Teachers must listen carefully to children and encourage children to listen to each other. Teachers must reevaluate their teaching method and integrate listening skills into the content areas. The establishment of a listening program in the classroom is not an end product, but rather a means to further develop and foster the skills necessary for communication (52).
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CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

This chapter delineates the research design, the selection of subjects, the instrumentation, the experimental variable, and the description of controls. Statistical procedures to be used in the analysis of data are also included.

Research Design

An adaptation of the factorial, pretest-posttest control group design was utilized in this study. Three groups were each administered a different treatment. This design was chosen because, according to Campbell and Stanley (3, pp. 13-16), the main effects of history, maturation, testing, instrumentation, regression, selection, mortality, and interaction of selection and maturation are controlled, giving the design internal validity.

The interaction effects of external validity (3, pp. 16-21) were controlled. The young age of the children and the long time interval between the pretest and posttest eliminated the interaction effects of testing and the treatment. Each group was pretested the third week of September on Level K of the TOBE Language Test and posttested the second week of May on Level L of the TOBE Language Test. The interaction
of selection and the treatments was negligible due to the
selection of classes. Reactive arrangements did not pose a
threat to this study because the tests and treatment for each
class were administered by the classroom teacher and the
children were unaware of the experiment. External validity
was secure.

Selection of Subjects

The population included in this study was kindergarten
children from a metropolitan school district in the North
Texas area. Permission from the research department and the
director of early childhood education in the school district
was obtained prior to the study. This district was selected
because the three oral language systems evaluated were being
used in the kindergartens.

In order to keep the sample as representative as
possible, all of the kindergarten classes using Method C
were used as a base. Method C was chosen because that method
involved the least number of classrooms using full-day pro-
grams encompassing the three socioeconomic levels. Three
socioeconomic levels of the schools, high, middle, and low,
were determined by the school district. Classrooms were
selected randomly from Method A and Method B to match the
socioeconomic stratification of the total population of
Method C. To select the specific classrooms in Method A
and Method B, the names of the schools, using full-day
programs, were listed alphabetically within each socioeconomic classification. If more than one classroom were in the same school, the last names of the teachers were listed alphabetically under that school. A table of random numbers (9, p. 410) was used. Each group was pretested the third week of September, 1976, and posttested the second week of May, 1977. Tests were administered by the homeroom teacher.

A total of 551 children in 27 kindergarten classrooms was included in the study. The socioeconomic stratification of the classrooms was as follows: high--one classroom in each of the three methods, middle--three classrooms in each of the three methods, and low--five classrooms in each of the three methods.

The total number of children pretested and posttested in each method, and the sex distribution of the sample are presented in Table I.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Pretested</th>
<th>Lost</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE I
SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION


A total of ninety-four subjects was lost during the study. This mortality rate was consistent across methods. The loss was due to children either moving or being absent during the entire week of posttesting.

Instrumentation

The instrument chosen for use in measuring receptive language was the TOBE Language Test. This instrument was designed for use with young children.

The review in Buros of the TOBE (2, pp. 63-64) by Cazden was favorable. Cazden reports that the design of the test and the conditions for administration are probably as good as can be obtained in a group test. Even though tests for this age range are rare, according to Cazden, the TOBE procedures are very good. Test booklets minimize inattention by having only one item per page and any "mark" is acceptable. The TOBE pictures are very clear, which is extremely important in a test for young children. Raw scores can be converted to standard scores, percentile ranks or stanines. The proportion of children in the national reference group who have the correct response for each item is given in the Class Evaluation Record. The TOBE was standardized in the fall of 1969. The standardization group consisted of 10,300 children, prekindergarten through second grade, and included numerous types of public and private schools from all sections of the country (2).
Level K of the TOBE was designed for use with kindergarten children. Level L of the TOBE was designed for use with first-grade children. In order to assure that the test items provided a range of difficulty sufficient for all children, Level K was used for the pretest and Level L for the posttest.

The manuals for the TOBE (6, 7) include a section on the technical data. Of particular interest are the validity and reliability of the tests. Since there is no comparable test in print at this time, the best available evaluation of content validity was expert opinion. A content validation study was initiated in 1970. The test items for Mathematics, Language, Science and Social Studies were randomized. The test items were then sent to seventeen kindergarten teachers and seventeen first-grade teachers in different parts of the country. The kindergarten teachers were given items from the TOBE Level K, and the first-grade teachers were given items from the TOBE Level L. The teachers were asked to place each item in one of the four subject categories: Mathematics, Language, Science, and Social Studies; or into a special category entitled "Would not use this item."

Agreement among the classification of kindergarten teachers and test designation on the Level K Language Test was 68 per cent. Agreement among the classification of first-grade teachers and test designation on the Level L Language Test was 62 per cent.
The reliability of the tests was determined by a test-retest situation. The median Pearson Product-moment coefficient for the Level K tests, administered to kindergarten children, was .78. The median Pearson Product-moment coefficient for the Level L tests, administered to kindergarten children, was .70. Each test consisted of twenty-eight items. The Level K Language Test reliability coefficient was .72 when administered to kindergarten children. For the Level L Language Test, the reliability coefficient was .62 when administered to kindergarten children. The internal consistency as measured by a Kuder-Richardson coefficient was .82 for the Level K Language Test and .73 for the Level L Language Test. The standard error of measurement, which determines the accuracy of test scores was 2.14 for the Level K Language Test and 2.30 for the Level L Language Test (6, 7).

Experimental Variable

The experimental variable was the method of teaching. The three most widely state adopted oral language systems in Texas public school kindergartens (10) were used as experimental treatments. These treatments were Method A--Alpha Time, New Dimensions in Education; Method B--Beginning Readiness Kit, Beginning to Read, Write, and Listen, Kits I and II, J. B. Lippincott Company; and Method C--Macmillan Series R, Bank Street, Threshold K. S., Macmillan Publishing Company.
According to the professional guide, Method A is a multimedia, multisensory beginning language arts program. It provides a variety of oral language and literature experiences which are necessary for meaningful comprehension of the written word. No entry skills are presumed. All activities are based on classroom activities. Activities are based on active participation, visual delight and fantasy. The activities and experiences are designed to help children acquire a variety of skills and concepts as well as the appropriate vocabulary with which to talk about their experiences. Such oral language is a prerequisite to learning to read. Recognizing the alphabet and the sounds of the letters are stressed in the program. The daily lesson plans offer many individualized activities, several small group projects and a section which is used with the entire class (8). The component parts of Method A are listed in Appendix B.

Method B is described as a language development program which helps children progress from the most elemental readiness skills through the mastery of the basic arts of language--speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It has successfully united learning and enjoyment because it takes into account the different learning styles and paces of children. A complete kindergarten curriculum is provided. Along with language activities, it provides a wealth of
additional activities. It provides the basics necessary for the child's development in speaking, reading, and writing the English language. The child learns to listen, to do, to write, to read as he learns to write, and to talk about his world (1). Component parts for Method B are listed in Appendix C.

The teacher's guide for Method C defines it as a multisensory, multidisciplinary, developmental approach. It is designed for flexible small group or individual instruction. Evaluative check lists are included and the system lends itself to the interest center teaching approach. The program accepts and builds on the child's own language and experiences. There are three distinct strands in the program (5).

Strand 1 is the reading component for use with the very few children whose oral language and readiness skills are advanced. It is based on the latest research and techniques for making beginning reading experiences meaningful to the young child. This material is available, but is not necessarily used in each classroom.

Strand 2 is the Bank Street Early Childhood Discovery Materials. These materials meet the child on his own terms, reflect and deepen the meaning of his own experience, and provide him with new experiences. The child is involved with adults and other children. The materials are reality-oriented. They invite the child to discover and explore the world around him with his whole being. Four major skills are
stressed: language skills, conceptual skills, perceptual skills, and motor skills. Each new learning experience allows the child to develop in accordance with his own innate pattern. The goal of the program is to foster the skills of mind and body which will make later experiences with school and living truly productive (5).

The Threshold™ Early Learning Library is Strand 3. This is a set of teaching manuals to help make every classroom object an effective learning device. It is a comprehensive curriculum guide for the development of strong cognitive skills. The program recognizes that effective learning for young children cannot be isolated into separate categories. These guides help the teacher make the most of standard classroom equipment. This program can be introduced into any existing classroom organization to structure traditional play activities around specific concepts. Threshold™ Learning Abilities is also included to help the teacher make an operational diagnosis and provide activities most useful for children with specific learning disabilities (5). The component parts for Method C are listed in Appendix D.

Description of Controls

In order to increase the probability of consistent procedures, an in-service session was held for the participating teachers. Background data concerning the purposes, procedures, and selection of classrooms were supplied. Information,
regarding whom to contact with questions or problems, was provided. Teachers were instructed as to procedures for returning completed test booklets and materials. At this time, the participating teachers were asked to complete a self-report questionnaire (Appendix E).

A diagnostician, who was experienced in administering and interpreting the TOBE Language Tests, conducted the teacher training for the administration of the tests. Appendix F includes an outline of the procedure used in the teacher training session (6, 7). The following areas were discussed: basic test concepts; materials needed by the children, examiner, and proctors; duties of the examiner and proctors; and general directions.

Tests were hand-scored using an answer key. Standard rules and scoring procedures for the TOBE Language Tests were employed (6, pp. 33-34; 7, pp. 33-34). All tests were scored by the researcher to eliminate teacher bias.

**Statistical Procedures**

The pretest and posttest data derived from the TOBE were scored according to the instructions or procedures for scoring the instrument (6, pp. 33-34; 7, pp. 33-34). The individual scores were then transcribed to data sheets for analysis by the North Texas State University Computer Center.

After preliminary analysis of the data, a 2 x 3 analysis of covariance, as described by Ferguson (4, pp. 288-295), was
used to test hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 5. The F ratio obtained from each analysis was used to determine if there was a significant difference in methods of teaching between the sexes, and if a particular method was more effective for a given sex. For hypothesis number 4, a t-test for independent samples was used to determine if there was a difference in the receptive language of kindergarten boys and girls before treatment. Two 3 x 3 analyses of covariance were used. One 3 x 3 analysis of covariance was used to determine if there was a significant difference in methods of teaching in respect to race. A second 3 x 3 analysis of covariance was used to determine if there was a significant difference in methods of teaching in respect to socioeconomic levels.

Summary

This chapter has presented an overall view of the research design, selection of subjects, and the methods used to collect the data on Methods A, B, and C. The test instruments, experimental variable, and controls were discussed. A description of the statistical treatment of the data was also presented.
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CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Statistical Analysis of Data

This chapter details the statistical treatment used to test the following null hypotheses:

1. There will be no significant difference in the adjusted mean scores of kindergarten children, as measured by the TOBE Language Test when comparing Method A to Method B, Method A to Method C, or Method B to Method C.

2. There will be no significant difference in the adjusted mean scores of kindergarten girls, as measured by the TOBE Language Test, when comparing Method A to Method B, Method A to Method C, or Method B to Method C.

3. There will be no significant difference in the adjusted mean scores of kindergarten boys as measured by the TOBE Language Test, when comparing Method A to Method B, Method A to Method C, or Method B to Method C.

4. There will be no significant differences in the pre-test mean scores of kindergarten girls and boys as measured by the TOBE Language Test.

5. There will be no significant differences in the adjusted mean scores of kindergarten girls and boys as measured by the TOBE Language Test.
The .05 level of significance was used as the level for rejection of the null hypotheses.

Preliminary analysis of data was used to determine teacher variability and experimental group variability. The data presented in Table II show the results of a one-way analysis of variance for both pretest and posttest scores between classrooms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>2306.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>80.7</td>
<td>4.59*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within</td>
<td>10124.</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12430.</td>
<td>550</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>2221.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>85.4</td>
<td>6.58*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within</td>
<td>6799.</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9020.</td>
<td>550</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05.

The resultant F ratios were significant at the .05 level. These data indicated no consistent pattern of teacher variability on either the pretest or the posttest. The variability was distributed equally across all classrooms. These results were an indication that no systematic bias was
present because of teacher variability. Thus data analysis could continue, since within group variability was established.

One-way analysis of covariance, using the pretest as the covariant, was used for preliminary analysis to determine variability within methods. Table III contains the results for the preliminary analysis within methods.

**TABLE III**

RESULTS OF ONE-WAY ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE FOR WITHIN-GROUP VARIANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>38.32</td>
<td>4.78*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within</td>
<td>1403</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>8.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1709</td>
<td>183</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>44.31</td>
<td>5.47*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within</td>
<td>1255</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>8.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1609</td>
<td>163</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>62.86</td>
<td>5.55*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within</td>
<td>2162</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>11.32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2665</td>
<td>199</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*P < .05.

The resultant F ratios indicate within group variability. No consistent pattern of variation was determined. Again, the variability was distributed equally within each method. Therefore, no systematic bias was present within each group.

This preliminary analysis was used to determine the efficacy of using a 2 x 3 analysis of covariance for
hypotheses testing. Since no patterns of variability were determined, analysis continued.

Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 5 were tested using a 2 x 3 analysis of covariance. The results of this analysis are presented in Table IV. The corresponding pretest was used as the covariant in each case.

TABLE IV
RESULTS OF ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE
FOR METHOD BY SEX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5841</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>24.06</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.0302</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>36.16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.0814</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>5953.11</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>10.9432</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p ≤ .05.

The resultant F ratios for this analysis were not significant at the .05 level. Analysis was discontinued at this point, and no multiple comparisons were made since the overall F ratio did not reach the level of significance.

Therefore, null hypothesis 1, which concerns the differences between Methods A, B, and C, was retained. Null hypothesis 2, which concerns the differences of kindergarten girls between Methods A, B, and C, was retained. Null hypothesis 3, which concerns the differences of kindergarten
boys between Methods A, B, and C, was retained. Lastly, null hypothesis 5, which concerns the differences between boys and girls, was retained. Since no overall significance was found, comparisons between cells were not made.

Table V contains the results of a t-test for independent samples between the pretest scores of girls and boys on the TOBE. This table concerns hypothesis 4.

**TABLE V**

RESULTS OF A t-TEST FOR INDEPENDENT SAMPLES FOR PRETEST DIFFERENCES BY SEX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>17.01</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>16.95</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>.0148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05.

The resultant t value was not significant at the .05 level. Therefore, null hypothesis 4 was retained.

Additional analyses were conducted to determine if there were statistical differences between Methods A, B, and C as to race or socioeconomic status on the TOBE scores.

Table VI contains the results of an analysis of covariance between Methods A, B, and C and Caucasian, Mexican-American, and Black children.
Knowledge of race was obtained about the children during the pretest administration. The study included 198 Caucasian children, 31 Mexican-American children, and 310 black children. A $3 \times 3$ analysis of covariance between Methods A, B, and C and the racial groups, using the pretest as the covariate, resulted in $F$ ratios which were not statistically significant.

Table VII contains the results of an analysis of covariance between Methods A, B, and C and low, medium, and high socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status was determined by the socioeconomic designation assigned to the individual school by the school district. The resultant $F$ ratios were not significant at the .05 level.
TABLE VII

RESULTS OF ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE FOR METHODS A, B, AND C AND SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic</td>
<td>22.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>57.93</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.48</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>926.53</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>10.95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p ≤ .05.

The data in Table VIII shows a comparison of the means and standard deviations of the experimental data to the national normative data (1).

TABLE VIII

A COMPARISON OF NATIONAL MEAN SCORES TO EXPERIMENTAL MEAN SCORES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>Method A</th>
<th>Method B</th>
<th>Method C</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>̅X</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>̅X</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>̅X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the pretest, the experimental data is below the national norm mean, but within one standard deviation below. This
trend is true for all three experimental groups as well as for the overall total.

The posttest means present a slightly different pattern. Although all three groups are again within the range of one standard deviation, the means in this case were above the national normative data. These results may be a function of test variation or an indication of larger mean gain for the sample population.

In addition to the data concerning the major experimental hypotheses, information, concerning a number of teacher variables, was collected (Appendix E).

Table IX displays the frequency of "yes" and "no" responses made by the teachers to the listed questions. The total number of teachers was twenty-seven.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Method A</th>
<th>Method B</th>
<th>Method C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Was the oral language system you are using your choice?</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you taught this language system before?</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you satisfied with the oral language system you are using?</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you use the oral language system as your total language system?</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition, teachers were asked to respond to a question concerning how often the oral language system was used. All teachers stated that the oral language system was used five days per week.

These data were collected in order to provide an indication of teacher choice, satisfaction and use of method. The data above indicate that the teacher most often chose the method, responded positively to the question of satisfaction, and had used the system before.

In this study, thirteen teachers have had more than ten years of experience; ten teachers have had from three to ten years of experience; and five teachers have had two or less years of experience. These three levels of teacher experience were present in Methods A, B, and C.

When asked to rank, in order of importance, the four basic communication skills of reading, talking, writing, and listening, 52 per cent of the teachers in this study ranked listening as the most important skill. Talking was ranked as the most important communication skill by 33 per cent of the teachers, while reading was considered the most important skill by 11 per cent of the teachers. Only 4 per cent of the teachers ranked writing as the most important of the communication skills. These percentages were consistent across Methods A, B, and C.
Discussion

This chapter has presented the statistical data which were collected and analyzed for comparing the effectiveness of three oral language systems in improving the receptive language of kindergarten children. All null hypotheses were retained. Additional related data were analyzed and reported.

Hypothesis 1 was concerned with the differences between Methods A, B, and C. No statistical differences among the three methods were observed although the methods differ greatly in philosophy, theoretical background, time spent in direct instruction, and in numbers and types of materials. Consequently, the method of instruction may not be the key factor in developing receptive language.

Hypotheses 2 and 3 were concerned with whether one of the methods was more appropriate for a member of a particular sex. No statistical differences were obtained. Often teachers conclude that learning for one of the sexes does or does not take place because of the method utilized. This research study indicates that this conclusion is not justified.

Hypotheses 4 and 5 were concerned with the differences in receptive language abilities between boys and girls. The review of literature presented contradicting studies concerning sex differences in language development. Many teachers assume that girls are superior to boys in language-related
activities. This research does not support the superiority of girls over boys, in the area of receptive language. The conclusion would also indicate that sex differences need not be considered in program selection for receptive language instruction.

Additional analyses were concerned with the differences between Methods A, B, and C as to race or socioeconomic status. No statistical differences were found for either race or socioeconomic status. In recent years, many programs and methods have been developed based on the assumption that certain types of programs were needed for a particular racial group or socioeconomic level. This assumption was not substantiated in this research study.

In addition, a questionnaire concerning a number of teacher variables was administered to the teachers in the participating classrooms. Observations concerning this questionnaire centered on the attitude of the teacher toward the method of instruction. Teacher selection of the method and satisfaction with the method could be a significant factor in whether learning occurs. When asked to rank, in order of importance, the four basic communication skills, 52 per cent of the teachers in this study ranked listening as the most important skill. This response indicates a greater awareness, among teachers, as to the importance of receptive language, as compared to earlier studies. Hopefully this
increased awareness and current research will be utilized in decisions regarding oral language programs for use in kindergarten classrooms.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study investigated the differences in receptive language of kindergarten children who were taught by different language systems. This study compared the effectiveness of the three most widely adopted oral language systems in the state of Texas. The systems used were (A) Alpha Time, (B) Beginning Readiness Kit; Beginning to Read, Write, and Listen Kits I and II, and (C) McMillan Series R, Bank Street, Threshold K. S.

Twenty-seven kindergarten classrooms in a metropolitan independent school district in the North Texas area were selected through a stratified sampling technique. Consequently, nine classrooms were included in each of the three experimental groups. The experimental variable was the oral language system.

An adaptation of the factorial pretest-posttest control group design was utilized in the study. The groups were pretested the third week of September, 1976, and posttested the second week of May, 1977. The instrument used for measuring receptive language was the Language Test of Basic
Experiences, Levels K and L. A total of 551 children completed both pretest and posttest instruments. Teachers also responded to a self-report questionnaire.

Analysis of variance techniques were used to analyze statistically pretest and posttest scores derived from the sample. The .05 level of significance was used throughout the statistical analyses for rejection or retention of the null hypotheses. Preliminary analysis of data determined no systematic bias for teacher variability or for within group variability. Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 5 were tested using a 2 x 3 analysis of covariance. The pretest was used as the covariant in this analysis. No statistically significant differences in the classroom mean scores were determined between teaching methods, teaching methods with only girls as subjects, teaching methods with only boys as subjects, and boys and girls. Hypothesis 4, concerning the pretest differences between boys and girls, was tested using a t-test for independent samples. No statistically significant differences were found.

Additional analyses of covariance were used to determine the effectiveness of method in respect to race and socioeconomic levels. No statistically significant differences between either race or socioeconomic level were determined.
Findings

The following findings resulted from the study:

1. No significant differences were found in the receptive language of children taught by the three teaching methods.

2. No significant differences were found in the receptive language of girls taught by the three teaching methods.

3. No significant differences were found in the receptive language of boys taught by the three different teaching methods.

4. No significant differences were found in the pretest or posttest level of receptive language of boys as compared to girls.

5. No significant differences were found between the three teaching methods when considering the races of the children.

6. No significant differences were found between the three teaching methods when considering the socioeconomic level of the children.

The findings alluded to in this section apply solely to the subjects used in this study. The findings were contingent upon the variables considered, the conditions under which the study was conducted, and the instrument used to collect the data.
Conclusions

The following conclusions are based upon the findings.

1. All three oral language systems were effective for improving the receptive language of kindergarten children.

2. Boys do not need different oral language experiences from girls; therefore, the sex of the children need not be a major consideration when an oral language system is selected.

3. The race of the children need not be a major consideration when an oral language system is selected.

4. The socioeconomic level of the children need not be a major consideration in the selection of an oral language system.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based upon the findings and conclusions.

1. It is recommended that teachers be permitted to choose their own oral language system.

2. It is recommended that the race and socioeconomic levels of the children not be a major consideration in the selection of an oral language program.

3. It is recommended that price, amount and types of material, and the amount of consumable materials be considered when selecting an oral language system.

4. It is recommended that an oral language system be used as only a portion of the oral language program.
5. It is recommended that a study be done to investigate the effectiveness of teacher selected systems compared to administration selected systems.

6. It is recommended that a replication of this study be done with the following modifications: (a) measuring expressive language, and (b) using different age levels to determine the most appropriate age for receptive language instruction.

7. It is recommended that a study be done to investigate receptive language gains of children who are instructed using oral language systems as compared to informal approaches.
APPENDIX A

TEXAS STATE ADOPTED ORAL LANGUAGE SYSTEMS FOR KINDERGARTEN

Alpha Time, New Dimensions in Education.

Beginning Readiness Kit; Beginning to Read, Write, and Listen Kits I & II, J. B. Lippincott Company.

Bold Beginning No. 4500, Ideal School Supply Company.

Early Explorations, Denoyer-Geppert.


Playway, Hold, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

Self, Silver Burdett Division, General Learning Corporation.

SWRL Kindergarten Program--Texas Configuration, Ginn and Company.
APPENDIX B

COMPONENT PARTS FOR METHOD A

1. 26 Letter People
2. 5 Records
3. 4 Story Books
4. 6 Filmstrips
5. 16 Giant Poster Cards
6. 420 Picture Books (6 sets)
7. 144 Picture Squares
8. 162 Duplicating Masters
9. 2 Game Boards
10. 27 Puzzles in 9 Trays
11. Professional Guide
APPENDIX C

COMPONENT PARTS FOR METHOD B

Beginning Readiness

Student's Kit

3 Shape Books
3 Shape Rings
6 Pop-Out Cards

Teacher's Kit

3 Teacher's Guides
5 Filmstrips
3 60-minute Cassettes
10 Sticky Pictures
9 Storage Boards
36 Color Cards
25 Matching Cards
30 Game Boards and Coordinated Game Cards
30 Duplicating Masters

Beginning to Read, Write, and Listen

Student's Kit

Letterbooks 1-24
6 Pop-Out Cards
1 Startwrite™ Slate

Teacher's Kit

Letterbooks 1-24
Teacher's Guides 1-24
Listening Tapes 1-24
144 Duplicating Masters
Curriculum Resource Index
26 Alphabet Cards
5 Merry Masks
Startwrite™ Chalk
6 Pop-Out Cards
APPENDIX D

COMPONENT PARTS FOR METHOD C

Strand 1

INSTRUCTION OF CONCEPT
Read and Tell 1
Read and Tell 2
2 Insertable Pocket Pages (laminated for writing
and erasing on one side)

MANIPULATIVES
(1 set upper- and lower-case alphabet on clear plastic)
(1 set upper- and lower-case alphabet cards with
flocked letters)

(42 picture cards (including TV sequence cards)
(63 picture and word cards)
(20 word cards)
Pick 'n Play (and stand)

PUPIL BOOKS
Read It Yourself 1-A
Read It Yourself 1-B
Read It Yourself 2-A
Read It Yourself 2-B

PRACTICE
Do It Yourself 1
Somemore 1
Do It Yourself 2
Somemore 2

PARENT INVOLVEMENT
Parent letters on Spirit Duplicating Masters

LEARNING TO USE BOOKS
THE BOX Solo Book 1A
THE CAN Solo Book 1B
EEK-A MONSTER Solo Book 2A
SHAPES Solo Book 2B

REINFORCEMENT
Extra 1
Extra 2

ASSESSMENT
Level 1 Pre & Post Assessment Test on Spirit
Duplicating Masters
Level 2 Pre & Post Assessment Test on Spirit
Duplicating Masters
Achievement Tests for Levels 1 and 2

SKILLS MANAGEMENT
Class Plan Sheet Levels 1-3
Student Keysort Cards with box Levels 1-3
Strand 2

Each of the eight sets listed below contains one Folding Picture; two each of two different NAME AND KNOW Books; two each of two different TURN THE PAGE Books; two PUT THEM BACK Boards; two WHAT COMES NEXT Boards; two LOOK AND LISTEN Books; and one Teacher's Guide.

AT THE SUPERMARKET SET
IN THE PARK SET
ON THE FARM SET
AT SCHOOL SET
PLAYING IN THE PLAYSTREET SET
BY THE TALL HOUSES SET
IN THE CLINIC SET
IN THE BIG STORE SET

Listed below are additional sets of books for use with the above sets--each set includes one copy of each of the two NAME AND KNOW Books, one copy of each of the two TURN THE PAGE Books, and one LOOK AND LISTEN Book.

AT THE SUPERMARKET BOOKS
IN THE PARK BOOKS
ON THE FARM BOOKS
AT SCHOOL BOOKS
PLAYING IN THE PLAYSTREET BOOKS
BY THE TALL HOUSES BOOKS
IN THE CLINIC BOOKS
IN THE BIG STORE BOOKS

Listed below are associated materials independent of the above sets but most effective when used in conjunction with them.

MIX AND MATCH BLOCKS
SEE-THROUGH GAMES
FOLD-OUT BOOKS
YOU TELL ME BOOKS
ADD A PICTURE BOARDS
PATHFINDERS
COLOR DOMINOES
PUT TOGETHER BOARDS

RESOURCE BOOK AND GUIDE
Strand 3

VOLUME 1: PERCEPTUAL AND ORGANIZING SKILLS
Classifying, organizing, and sequencing according to: color, size, shape, space, and sound

VOLUME 2: MATHEMATICAL SKILLS AND SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY
Counting, measuring, and comparing: money, parts (fractions), inanimate objects, and living things

VOLUME 3: LANGUAGE SKILLS AND SOCIAL CONCEPTS
Making yourself understood and understanding other people: at home, at school, in your town, and all over the world

VOLUME 4: MUSIC AND MOVEMENT IMPROVISATIONS
Converting sounds you make into music: singing, playing instruments, listening, moving to rhythms, and music games

VOLUME 5: ART EXPERIENCES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN
Drawing, clay modeling, painting, stitching, weaving, woodworking, creating collages, mobiles, and stabiles

VOLUME 6: CREATIVE DRAMATIZATION
Learning a sense of "Me" through understanding of: space, shape, time, the senses, characterization, communication, expression

VOLUME 7: PHYSICAL SKILLS
Body awareness, balance, basic movements, catching and throwing, eye-hand coordination, body language

VOLUME 8: HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR YOUNG CHILDREN
Self awareness, how I grow and develop, eating to stay healthy, dental hygiene, acquiring habits for good mental, physical, and emotional health

THRESHOLD LEARNING ABILITIES
Helps children with disabilities cash in on their strengths.

RECORD SHEETS (Pad of 250)
APPENDIX E

SELF-REPORT QUESTIONNAIRE

Name ___________________________________________ Age ________

Race: Anglo _____ Mexican _____ Negro _____ Other ________

Marital Status: Divorced _____ Married _____ Single _____

Number of years teaching experience _______ Sex ________

Grade levels taught _______________________________________

Bachelor's Degree:

College _________________ Major _____ Minor _____ Date____

Master's Degree:

College _________________ Major _____ Minor _____ Date____

List last year in which college courses or training were taken?

Do you have the Texas kindergarten endorsement? ______

How many years have you taught kindergarten? Public ______

Private ______

Number of years in present position? ______________________

In which states have you taught kindergarten? ____________

Was the oral language system you are using your choice? ___

Have you taught this language system before? _____ Number of

years? ______________

Are you satisfied with the oral language system you are using? ____________

How often is the oral language system used each week?

1 day _____ 2 days _____ 3 days _____ 4 days _____ 5 days ______

Amount of time per day spent using oral language? ___ min.

Do you use the oral language system as the whole or a part of

the total language program? Whole ______ Part ______________

Please rank in order of importance from 1 to 4 (1 is the high-
est rating) the following: Reading __ Talking __ Listening __

Writing __
OUTLINE OF TOBE TEACHER TRAINING SESSION

I. Basic Concepts of the TOBE Language Test
   A. Vocabulary
   B. Sentence structure
   C. Verb tense
   D. Sound-symbol relationships
   E. Letter recognition
   F. Listening skills
   G. Perceptions of symbols as the carrier meaning
   H. Uses of nonsense words

II. Materials
   A. For children
      1. A copy of the TOBE Language Test booklet
         a. Level K in September
         b. Level L in May
      2. A crayon
   B. For the examiner
      1. A copy of the TOBE Language Test booklet
         a. Level K in September
         b. Level L in May
      2. An examiner's manual
         a. Level K in September
         b. Level L in May
   C. For the proctor--Instruction sheet
III. Duties

A. Of the examiner (classroom teacher)

1. Be familiar with the examiner's manual and tests before administering the test

2. Select proctors: a ratio of one proctor for every 4-6 children

3. Conduct a preliminary training session for proctors

4. Provide comfortable physical environment for the children during testing

B. Of the proctor (teacher aid; parents; clerical employees; other teachers; mature, responsible older students)

1. Be familiar with the instruction sheet for proctors

2. Complete the information page of the test booklet
   a. school
   b. teacher
   c. group size
   d. date of test
   e. date of birth (age)
   f. race
   g. sex
   h. name

3. Observe and assist the children during the testing session

IV. General TOBE Language Test Directions

A. Children be separated

B. Questions repeated by the examiner only.

C. Directions modified if necessary to clarify any misunderstandings.
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Dissertation Abstracts


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**Interviews**

Telephone interview with Glen French, Program Director for Elementary Education at the Texas Education Agency, February 4, 1976, Austin, Texas.