LINGUISTICS, PEDAGOGY, AND FRESHMAN COMPOSITION

THESIS

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By

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The teaching of freshman composition can be a challenging and exciting endeavor if teachers are aware of current linguistic facts about the nature of language variations manifested by their students and the linguistic shortcomings of many textbooks. Awareness of the distinction of linguistic competence and linguistic performance can aid teachers in making freshman composition more realistic to students. These concepts are technically explained in Aspects of the Theory of Syntax by Noam Chomsky (1965), and are applied to dialect for teachers of composition by the Committee on CCCC Language Statement in Students' Right to Their Own Language (1974).

With knowledge of linguistic principles, teachers can respond to their students' dialects humanistically and realistically and can teach academic English without making impressionistic and incorrect statements about non-academic variations from their students.
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1.0 Introduction. In recent years an awareness of several varieties of the English language has emerged in the academic community. Many of these varieties have in the past been condemned both in the classroom and in society. Now, however, linguistic studies find that these previously, and in some quarters currently, condemned language varieties are completely systematic and valid. Hence, the validity of certain prescriptive methods of English teaching has come into question. In order to deal with both the validity of variant dialects and the questions surrounding prescriptive teaching methodology, the Conference on College Composition and Communication developed and published a resolution on the students' right to their own language and a statement of the background for writing such a resolution.

Most discussions involving the students' right to their own language center on the college freshman and his basic course in freshman English--Composition and Rhetoric. Although it is acknowledged that the issue is more far-ranging--beginning, perhaps, in the pre-school years and moving through primary and secondary education before reaching the college level--the present study deals with some linguistic aspects of the issue about which teachers of freshman composition should have some understanding. The writings of current linguistic scholars
reveal their opinions to be divided between two camps: those in favor of and those opposed to the teaching of academic English (also known as "standard English" and "Edited American English") to speakers of non-standard dialects--primarily Blacks (more specifically, lower-class Blacks), although other groups are certainly involved. An examination of the policies, procedures, and materials used in two English departments in the north Texas area show that the policies favor the teaching of academic English and that the materials do not embrace the linguistic notions that would make this effort easier for their instructors and more realistic to their students. Linguistically based definitions of the most basic terms involved in the issue--language and dialect--reveal how a linguistic point of view can aid in the teaching of freshman English. This study closes with a discussion of the linguistic knowledge needed by teachers which provides insight into how they might respond humanistically and realistically to the varieties of English which they will encounter.

The purpose of this study is to summarize some linguistic aspects of the CCCC resolution on language, the divided opinion on the issue of the students' right to their own language, the ways in which two English departments address the issue, to reveal some seeming linguistic shortcomings of textbooks, handbooks, and dictionaries, and to suggest to teachers how a linguistic background can help them deal with certain performance problems in a freshman composition course more realistically and humanistically.
1.1 Linguistics and the students' right to their own language. In the recent past linguistic scholars have produced a significant number of documents which address the issue of the right of students to use a variety of dialects in the classroom. Although most of these scholars and documents evince the conviction that no one language or dialect is intrinsically superior or inferior to another, opinions vary widely on the issue of how teachers are to deal with the divergent dialects in the classroom.

The document which seems to garner the most attention in discussions on the subject is the 1974 resolution on language, written by the Executive Committee of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (hereinafter referred to as CCCC), adopted as policy by the CCCC, and published by the National Council of Teachers of English as "Students' Right to Their Own Language." This document, written as a policy statement on how teachers should respond to the dialect variety of their students, reaffirms the validity of different dialects, calls for the preservation of our country's diverse heritage of dialects, and affirms that teachers must have the training and experience to respect this diversity and uphold the students' language right. The resolution is supported by a background statement which explains the CCCC position on what dialect is, how it is acquired, and what teachers of English should know about it, and is followed by an extensively annotated bibliography.
Professor James Sledd, author of such articles as "Bi-Dialectalism: The Linguistics of White Supremacy" (1969) and "Doublespeak: Dialectology in the Service of Big Brother" (1972), argues that the teaching of standard English to speakers of non-standard dialects is an effort of the white middle class to exert its control over lower class Blacks.

Gary Underwood, who read his (subsequently published [1974]) paper, "Bidialectal Freshman Handbooks--the Next Flim-Flam" to the same CCCC meeting which passed the controversial resolution, agrees with Sledd. Underwood asserts that bi-dialectalism, the teaching of standard English to non-standard English speakers, is "predicated on cultural elitism" (45) and is aimed toward the lower and working classes as well as being racist in intent.

William Labov, noted for his study, The Social Stratification of English in New York City, and his statement and resolution on the inherent equality of intelligence of all classes and races, a resolution which was reaffirmed by the Linguistic Society of America (1974), agrees that all languages and dialects are equally valid and have no claim to superiority. He suggests, however, that speakers of non-standard dialects be afforded the opportunity to learn the academic dialect so that it may be used as a means of social mobility.

Beryl Loftman Bailey (1968) suggests that classroom techniques be structured in such a way that Black English can be accepted as a systematic and valid dialect, and that standard English be taught as a second dialect.
Melvin J. Hoffman, in his paper, "Bi-Dialectalism is not the Linguistics of White Supremacy: Sense versus Sensibilities" (1971), argues that minority speakers as well as middle class whites make judgments on the social acceptability of various dialects and that the anti-bidialectalists fail to recognize that standard dialects are learned in all languages and that "bi-dialectalism is normal and accepted in many countries" (99).

These documents point out emphatically that although there is widespread agreement on the validity of dialects as equally systematic language varieties, there is little agreement on the manner in which teachers should deal with these varieties of language in the classroom.

The CCCC resolution and background statement. The background statement which explains and supports the resolution on language prepared by the CCCC (1974) supports functional bi-dialectalism. The section of the background statement entitled "How Can Students Be Offered Dialect Options?" states that "classroom assignments should be structured to help students make shifts in tone, style [Cf. Labov], sentence structure and length, vocabulary, diction, and order" (11). The background statement was written with the purpose of answering what the authors felt to be controversial questions raised by the resolution which follows in its entirety:

We affirm the students' right to their own patterns and varieties of language--the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity
and style. Language scholars long ago denied that the myth of a standard American dialect has any validity. The claim that any one dialect is unacceptable amounts to an attempt of one social group to exert its dominance over another. Such a claim leads to false advice for speakers and writers, and immoral advice for humans. A nation proud of its diverse heritage and its cultural and racial variety will preserve its heritage of dialects. We affirm strongly that teachers must have the experiences and training that will enable them to respect diversity and uphold the right of students to their own language.

The background statement deals with the questions raised by this resolution. These questions involve the definition of dialect, how dialects are acquired, how and why they differ and why some are more prestigious than others, how modern linguistic concepts can help to clarify the question of dialects, and what effects or limitations dialects have upon the abilities to read, to write, and to think. Also treated in the document are the issues of the background for teaching one grammar versus the ways in which dialect options can be offered, the problems involved with handbooks and standardized tests, the implications of the resolution for students' work in courses other than English, and the effect of dialect upon employability. Finally, the areas of linguistic knowledge needed by English teachers are discussed at length.

James Sledd. In his response to the advocates of functional bi-dialectalism, James Sledd (1969) expresses doubt that a second dialect can successfully be taught in the classroom and that because of the inherent white prejudices and racial implications of bi-dialectalism, it should not be taught even if it could. He claims that in the American school system run by
white businessmen, English language instruction is the beginning of middle-class linguistic prejudices. The study of black English, moreover, has provided for the white linguist a quite profitable industry. Bi-dialectalism, therefore, rests on the assumption that middle-class white linguistic prejudices "cannot be changed but must be accepted and indeed enforced on lesser breeds" (1972:420). Sledd accuses Labov of failing to see the wrong in the attempts of a bi-dialectal approach to initiate "children into the world of hypercorrection, insecurity, and 'linguistic self-hatred'" typical of the average New Yorker (421). He is against what he believes is an unprofitable spending of government money on teaching standard English as a second dialect by the use of techniques which in second language teaching have fared poorly, particularly the use of "incessant drill in inessentials" (422). He also cites psychological damage to students through this practice as evidenced by a little girl who after six months of drill could repeat "his hat" after her teacher without translating into Black Dialect "he hat" (424). Bi-dialectalism is doomed to failure, according to Sledd, because, all other arguments notwithstanding, the English teacher's forty-five minutes per day with the student cannot compensate for the rest of the day in which the student is in constant linguistic interaction with his out-of-class socio-cultural environment, and, furthermore, "because the most essential of all conditions might not be met--namely, the desire
of the children to talk like the white middle class" (426).

All this, finally, is an immorality that should not be tolerated; bi-dialectalism, says Sledd, is the use of dialect differences for exploitation and oppression; it is a political instrument for such uses; and it is unnecessary anyway because black children already demonstrate that they can easily attain the ability to understand their peers who speak different dialects.

In addressing the argument that academic English is more negotiable in getting its speakers a place in the job market, Sledd advocates (1972: 380-381) a higher ambition than "to get ahead." He also recommends such things as decentralization of the power which looms over our socio-cultural environment, particularly the powers of the academic environment, and an end to the social isolation and stigma of "substandard speakers" and their speech. Furthermore, he suggests that English teachers teach their students and colleagues alike "how society uses language as its most insidious means of control, how we are led to judge others--and ourselves--by criteria which have no real bearing on actual worth" (380); that we teach white students about black English and black culture; that our aim as English teachers be to educate our students and not to change their language; and that "we must stop acting as the watchdogs of middle-class correctness" (381). He concludes by calling for a defense of the freedoms of inquiry and expression which double-speak (bi-dialectalism) endangers. Sledd's alternative would be to change the system wherein discrimination thrives; to have
employers hire individuals regardless of their color or their dialect; to have whites learn about black culture and learn black dialect so that they can understand the people and their language. Finally, Sledd's position on the issue of Blacks learning the "standard" English dialect (the question of its teaching now put to rest) is best summed up in his conclusion to the Doublespeak paper:

There is not, moreover, and there never has been, a serious proposal that standard English should not be taught at all, if for no other reason than because its teaching is inevitable. Most teachers of English speak it (or try to speak it); most books are written in it ... and since every child, if it is possible, should learn to read, schoolchildren will see and hear standard English in the schools as they also see and hear it on TV. Inevitably, their own linguistic competence will be affected.

In other words, even the oppressed Blacks will somehow, by mere exposure to it, learn standard English through the same insidious middle-class instruments of control--mass communication media and the schools.

William Labov. William Labov (1966), however, disagrees. According to him there must be, in addition to television and radio media and textbooks, personal contact of some sort for a speaker to be influenced by another dialect (658). This observation is offered as a footnote to his assertion that persons striving for upward social mobility will adopt the norms of the next higher social reference group and are less likely to be governed by the linguistic norms of an historically more socially stable group. Labov advocates bidialectalism for social mobility and asserts that for educational and occupational
advancement a tolerance for style shifting is necessary for the community (1964:489). This style shifting is only possible when standard English is acquired. Within a pattern of social and stylistic stratification, lower-class children can be given the same wide range of stylistic variation available to middle-class children in two ways: early training in which they would enter the acquisition route at a higher point; and special training (bidialectalism) which would increase the normal rate of acquisition of standard English. To accomplish this end, Labov reported to his colleagues (1964:498) that because upward social mobility is not given the emphasis in lower-class homes that it receives in middle-class homes, "we must build into the group, starting from a level not much above the nursery school and going on through high school, a tolerance for practice in second role playing." Labov argues strongly that this can be achieved without genetic interference as proposed by Arthur Jensen and others who claim that many people of the lower classes are born with an intelligence which is confined to association of ideas and is limited in the ability to form concepts. Labov asserts that such a philosophy is based on assumptions not founded in fact (1974: 1, 3, 11) which would alter educational policy and harmfully affect the lives of many American citizens. Because of these facts he offers the following statement and resolution in the name of the Linguistic
Society of America, which represents "the considered professional opinion of scientific linguists":

1. By an early age, children learn without direct instruction, on the basis of the speech that they hear, the largest part of the grammar of their native language. This grammar is the knowledge of a hierarchically structured set of relations, used by the speaker to produce and to understand an unlimited number of simple and complex sentences.

2. No one language or dialect, standard or non-standard, is known to be significantly more complex than another in its basic grammatical apparatus. Linguists have not yet discovered any speech community with a native language that can be described so conceptually or logically primitive, inadequate or deficient.

3. The non-standard dialects of English spoken by lower class families in the inner circles of the United States are fully formed languages with all of the grammatical structure necessary for logical thought. Statements to the contrary by some educational psychologists are misinterpretations of superficial differences in the means of expression between these dialects and standard English.

4. No theory yet developed by linguists or psychologists can account satisfactorily for children's language learning ability. It is generally agreed that the mere association of ideas is not sufficient. The minimal ability to learn and speak any human language includes native skills of a much higher magnitude than those used in the laboratory tests offered in evidence for Dr. Jenson's view.

On the basis of these generally recognized conclusions of linguistic investigation, linguists agree that all children who have learned to speak a human language have a capacity for concept formation beyond our present power to analyze: that language learning abilities indicate that the nature and range of human intelligence is not yet understood or well-measured by any current testing
procedure; that tests which may have some value in pre-
dicting later performance in school should not be
interpreted as measures of intelligence in any theo-
retically coherent sense of the word; that to attribute
a limited level of "associational intelligence" to a
sizeable section of our population is a serious mis-
conception of the nature of human intelligence.

RESOLVED: that linguists should make known to the widest
possible audience their views on this question and the
facts which support them.

Beryl Loftman Bailey. According to Beryl Loftman Bailey
(1968) more and more teachers are learning from linguists that
language is a system, and that by the time a child is from five
to seven years old he has established this system and is capable
of completely novel utterances which his community will under-
stand. The speakers of non-standard dialects, however, have
a system which is very similar to standard English but different
enough to require special methods for developing their language
skills in the classroom. According to Bailey, specialists in
Creole linguistics believe that Negro Nonstandard English
speakers have a valid linguistic system much like that of English-
based Creoles, the validity of which teachers must understand
in order to guide the children to acquire the new system. The
fact that the standard is so much like the students' own system
increases linguistic interference. Bailey says that spelling
books and teaching methods must be modified "if the children
are to be completely literate in their written language" (20).
Also involved is the presence of a hypercorrect "intrusive -s in contexts where the present tense form is not predicted" due to "the contact and imperfect learning situation in school and elsewhere" (22).

Bailey asserts that many incorrect grammatical usages are traceable to the faulty use of function words, "not as contraction items, but as lexical units" (23). Cited as examples are the choices made for prepositions at the beginning of a prepositional phrase rather than the lack of a preposition ("The space that you have in life is so short, not to just waste it by"); also mentioned are particles which complement or follow verbs.

Bailey would not advocate returning to the structural approach to grammar, although she asserts that upon careful examination such an approach does not distort the facts of English nearly as much as "some linguists would have us think" (23). Rather, "emphasis must be placed on the spoken as well as the written language, and it would seem more logical and certainly more effective to build the programs for written language directly around the systemic differences in the dialect as it is spoken" (23). In all, she would recommend that classroom techniques be changed to accommodate acceptance of Black English as a completely systematic dialect and that standard English be taught as a second dialect.
Melvin J. Hoffman. In arguing against Sledd's notion that bidialectalism is the application of white supremacy to linguistics, Hoffman (1971) garners support from Brooks (1964), Shuy (1969), and the New York Board of Education (1967). He finds that the main function of bidialectalism is to aid social mobility. He rebukes Sledd (1969) and Kochman (1969) for their contention that the two reasons for the impracticality of functional bidialectalism are lack of efficiency and lack of cooperation from those being taught. He also finds fault in their agreement that the advancement of social conditions should be a greater concern than advancing bidialectalism.

Hoffman points out that the social acceptability of certain dialect forms is not strictly the province of the white middle class, and that "minority group speakers tend to perceive themselves as employing the preferred of alternative forms even when this is not the actual case" (98). After stressing the presence of standard dialects and functional bidialectalism in all languages the world over (99), he shows that the opponents of bidialectalism are more paternalistic—in their implication that "minority group members in the United States are less able to fulfill" the expectations of second dialect learning (99)—than the
very bidialectalism which they attack. He suggests that in a free society we should not deny to any member of the community the opportunity to make his own dialectal choice (100).

It is clear that there are varying opinions concerning the issue of the student's right to use his native dialect in the classroom. From Sledd and Underwood on the one hand, of the opinion that teaching a standard of language exerts white middle-class dominance upon a racially mixed lower-class, to Labov and Hoffman on the other, supporting the teaching of a second dialect to speakers of "non-standard" dialects as a means of social mobility, the issue is clearly current among linguists and educators. A close examination of English department procedures at two schools and a few in-depth linguistic definitions may serve to further clarify the issue.

1.2 Two settings. The materials, course structures, and general philosophies concerning freshman composition and its relation to the "students' right to their own language" at North Texas State University (NTSU) and Mountain View College (MVC) serve as diverse settings. The choice of these settings is motivated by direct personal and professional acquaintance with the two departments.
1.2.1 Freshman Composition at North Texas State University.

North Texas State University freshman English is listed in the University catalog (1975:45) as a two-course block under the title of English Composition. The first course, English 131, bears the title "Grammar and Composition" and is followed by this description:

Practice in written composition; sentence structure, paragraph development, composition organization; model pieces--essays, stories, poems, and other genres.

The second course, English 132, titled "Composition and Rhetoric," a continuation of the first, is described in the catalog as follows:

Continuation of English 131, rhetorical devices and effects. Preparation of fully documented research paper, assigned library readings, individual conferences.

For students who have performed well on advanced placement examinations or have qualified for specific programs sponsored by the College Entrance Examination Board or the National Council of Teachers of English, an advanced block of freshman English Composition courses is offered which places emphasis upon reading and literature in addition to composition and research. This study, however, will focus on the most basic of these courses, English 131, Grammar and Composition.

Materials used at North Texas State University in English 131. The basic freshman English texts used in English 131 at North Texas State University consist of a rhetoric text, an
essay reader, a handbook, and one of several desk dictionaries.

It should be noted here that, although several special-topic freshman English seminars (each bearing its own sub-title) are emerging under the course designations English 131, Grammar and Composition, and English 132, Composition and Rhetoric, and that instructors of these courses often choose texts which are more closely related to the topic at hand, these texts generally serve as substitutes for the rhetoric text and the reader only, and departmental goals for the course are not affected.

The standard rhetoric text for NTSU freshman English courses is Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren's Modern Rhetoric (1973) from which essays are selected for discussion. Also discussed throughout the course are readings from Randall E. Decker's Patterns of Exposition (1974) which serve as examples of the several methods of essay writing which students are encouraged to emulate. The standard usage handbook required of all freshman English students at NTSU is John C. Hodges (deceased) and Mary E. Whitten's Harbrace College Handbook (1972). Freshman English students at North Texas may choose one of the following desk dictionaries: American College Dictionary, The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Random House Dictionary, Webster's New World Dictionary, or Webster's Eighth New Collegiate Dictionary.
Syllabus and Course Structure. Available to instructors of English 131 is a course syllabus which states the goals of the course and outlines the steps for achieving those goals.

The goals of the course are to acquaint the students with language structures and devices so that they can achieve reading and writing proficiency through practice in reading and writing expository prose; to instruct the students in organizing and writing expository essays by an examination of their standard structures using the readings in the texts as examples; and to teach them how to clarify and develop a thesis by the writing of essays.

The syllabus states that, although remedial-level instruction is not the purpose of the course, problems of grammar and mechanics will be discussed as the need presents itself.

The syllabus also provides for the requirement of at least ten 300- to 500-word essays to be written by the student during the course of the semester. Each student must also pass a departmental examination consisting of a 500-word theme which is graded on a pass/fail basis by a committee of two faculty members of the department. Although the instructor may be on a similar committee, he does not evaluate papers written by the students in his class.

The course is divided into five blocks of study including dictionary study, paragraph structure, composition organization, expository methods, and an optional block covering description.
During each of these units, the students are assigned readings from the texts and are also given writing assignments, about half of which are done in the classroom.

Appendices to the syllabus include an exercise in synonymy; some suggestions for theme topics; examples of paragraphs lacking unity, coherence, and development; and evaluation standards for grading student papers.

The general philosophy of freshman composition instruction at NTSU. Standards for course structure and instructional philosophy for freshman composition courses at NTSU take a "middle ground," according to Dr. J. F. Kobler of the NTSU Department of English (BCB, 2, April 1974) who, returning from the 1974 meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication at which the resolution on the students' right to their own language was passed, reported programs at Fullerton State College at which 52 different freshman composition courses are taught by 52 different faculty members using 52 different texts and at Rutgers University whose program is "rigidly planned and tightly controlled."

Dr. Jackson White, Chairman of Basic Courses Committee of the Department of English at North Texas State University, declares that language, like any other social behavior, is based upon convention. The philosophy of instruction in freshman composition courses at NTSU, likewise, conforms to this convention and at the same time emphasizes freedom of expression. There need be no conflict between conventionality and freedom
of expression, according to Dr. White. The specific conventionality embraced in NTSU freshman composition courses is what the CCCC and others call "Edited American English."

Although there is no stated departmental policy concerning non-standard or non-conventional dialects, Dr. White says that during his six-year tenure as Chairman of Basic Courses "we have never embraced, philosophically, the notion that one may write any way he wants and not be marked off for doing so." He feels that this issue of the students' right to their own language was born out of the general unrest and social rebellion of the late 1960's and was fostered by the radical elements among both student and professorial ranks. The issue at NTSU today, however, draws little student attention. Most students, realizing that language is a skill and that freshman composition is a skills course, want the best training in that skill that they can get. Dr. White acknowledges that those few who have in the recent past raised the issue of a right to their own language manifest problems more of illiteracy than of dialect.

Recognizing that any good instructor can teach freshman composition as well with Aristotle's principles as with those of Brooks and Warren, Dr. White foresees a return to conventional rhetoric. Conventionality and freedom of expression, under the rubric of skills training, underlie the instructional philosophy of freshman composition at North Texas.
1.2.2 Freshman Composition at Mountain View College. In the course catalog for Mountain View College (1975:55), a campus of the Dallas County Community College District System, freshman English is listed as two courses, the first a prerequisite for the second. The beginning course, "English 101, Composition and Expository Reading," is described as follows:

Writing and reading activities designed to help the student write more clearly and effectively and read more enjoyably and efficiently. (This course is offered on campus and via television.)

The second course "English 102, Composition and Literature," bears the following description:

Prerequisite: English 101. Writing and reading activities in poetry, drama, the short story, and the novel designed to increase the student's understanding and enjoyment of good literature. (This course is offered on campus and via television.)

For students who have performed poorly on a battery of tests given by the college or who have done poorly on the College Entrance Examination Board of ACT tests, a number of courses are available including a composition laboratory course and courses in developmental writing and reading. For those students in freshman composition courses who show a lack of competence in language skills early in the semester, a Learning Skills Center is available, staffed by permanent full-time and part-time instructors, and designed to give guided instruction in language skills on a semi-tutorial basis. At Mountain View no advanced freshman composition course is offered.
Materials used at Mountain View College in English 101.

Textbooks used in freshman composition courses at Mountain View College include an essay reader and a combination rhetoric/usage text. A dictionary (desk or pocket) of the student's choice is recommended but not required except in some cases by individual instructors. Randall E. Decker's Patterns of Exposition is the required essay reader, from which selections are used as examples of writing for discussion and examination. One of two texts, Kenneth S. Rothwell's Questions of Rhetoric and Usage or Hans P. Guth's Words and Ideas, is used both as a rhetoric text and a usage handbook.

Syllabus and Course Structure. The course syllabus for English 101 at Mountain View College lists the course objectives, core subject matter, required written assignments, course procedures, and a statement on plagiarism.

The general objective of the course is to enable the student to write clearly organized and developed expository prose which reflects his responsibility to himself, his subject, and his audience. The specific course objectives are to teach the student to write clearly expressed, logically organized short papers of various kinds. Emphasis is placed upon diction, sentence construction and variation, and paragraph development in an effort to enable the student to develop critical thinking and effective expression through the production of ten or more 300- to 500-word essays.
Courses in freshman composition at Mountain View College usually begin with an introduction in which the students are given course objectives, and a discussion of overall course organization. A diagnostic writing sample is required of the student during the first week of the course so that those needing remedial instruction can be identified and placed in the proper course. Departmental grading standards are announced at the beginning of the course, and the students are made aware that class time will not be devoted to any formal and extensive review of grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Students with severe deficiencies in these areas are referred to the Learning Skills Center.

The first few weeks of the course are devoted to class discussions and exercises in rhetoric; the remainder of the semester is devoted to discussion of readings from *Patterns of Exposition* and student writing.

The general philosophy of instruction in Mountain View College freshman composition courses. According to Dr. Bruce Coad, chairman of the Communications Division at Mountain View, the freshman composition language policy is to teach standard Edited American English. The department allows that there is no right or wrong language, but finds that Edited American English is the appropriate medium for purpose, audience, and subject matter in freshman composition courses. In an attempt to steer away from racial issues in discussions of dialect, emphasis is placed upon teaching a standard of language that the student
may effectively use in the community. Those who enter the classroom as speakers of "non-standard" dialects are encouraged to learn standard Edited American English as a second dialect that they will be able to use in the marketplace should they choose or need to do so. Who determines this need? Ultimately, it is the receiver of any given communication.

Dr. Coad also pointed out that no formal challenges to departmental policy on language standards have been made during his tenure at Mountain View. He further opined that we may find the only ones supporting "the students' right to their own language" are members of "the white-dominated professorate." It was also acknowledged that the majority of language problems among Mountain View students, regardless of their dialect background, concerned basic language skills rather than dialectal variations.

1.3 Some linguistic definitions. Any argument for or against "the students' right to their own language" involves discussion around terms which should be more clearly defined. These definitions should provide clarity and insight to the larger argument.

Language. The American Heritage Dictionary (1969:736) defines language as "the aspect of human behavior that involves the use of vocal sounds in meaningful patterns and, when they exist, corresponding written symbols to form, express, and communicate thoughts and feelings." A linguistic definition of language is as follows: the system of arbitrary but conventionalized symbols, always realizable as systematic speech
sounds which human beings use to communicate with each other; a special kind of learned knowledge which permits a person to communicate ideas, concepts, etc. Implicit in this linguistic definition is the concept that language is primarily a spoken form of communication which is often represented by a corresponding system of written symbols.

Although it is agreed that animals do communicate with one another, linguists are reluctant to label the communication of animals as language. The act of expressing concepts and the ability to comprehend and create an infinite number of novel sentences seem to be unique to human beings. In discussing animal communication systems, Martin and Rulon (1973:4) assert that "these animal systems are limited in that they are closed systems with only a few discrete signals. Animals cannot come up with novel utterances--dogs do not bark about barking and bees do not discuss last year's food supply." Language, then, is a human behavior--a system of speech sounds used to communicate ideas, feelings, concepts. One specific language is distinguished from another by mutual unintelligibility. In other words, when speakers, speaking their native languages, are not intelligible to one another, they are said to speak different languages.

**Dialect.** The CCCC background statement (1974:3) defines dialect (generally adhering to dictionary definitions) as "the variety of language used by a group whose linguistic habit patterns both reflect and are determined by shared regional,
social, or cultural perspectives." The statement points out what is general linguistic knowledge; that is, differences among dialects involve matters of phonology, lexicon, and syntax. These differences are caused by social, cultural, and geographical isolation, and although they are sometimes great, the differences do not prevent mutual comprehension. Some features of dialect do, however, carry social stigma while others carry prestige. "These designations of prestige [and stigma] are not inherent in the dialect itself, but are externally imposed, and the prestige [or stigma] of a dialect shifts as the power relationships of the speakers shift" (5).

Bidialectalism. Bidialectalism, referred to by some as biloquialism (e.g., Sledd [1972:362]), is the theory and practice of teaching standard English to speakers of non-standard dialects. It is based upon the idea that all speakers of English should have at their disposal—should they want or need to use it—the ability to speak and write the language of social mobility—academic English.

"Their own language." Although manifestations of "non-standard" English are found in the speech of many groups, such as the Spanish-speaking Americans of Texas, the Puerto Ricans of New York, oriental-Americans, and American Indians, it is the language of the Black community—specifically urban lower-class Blacks—which dominates most discussions of standard versus non-standard English dialect forms. It should be emphasized, moreover, that it is not the language of the entire
Black community; many upper- and middle-class Blacks claim not to use it at all and insist that their children learn academic English. "Their own language," then, is generally considered the dialect of English commonly referred to as Black English.

Linguistics. Because this study deals with linguistic aspects of the teaching of freshman composition, a definition of linguistics is appropriate here. Linguistics is the scientific study of language, and is herein restricted to that approach articulated by Chomsky (1957 and 1965), Chomsky and Halle (1968), and Chomsky (1972). It includes the description of the sounds of language (phonology), and the forms of language (morphology), the arrangement of words in phrases and sentences (syntax), and the meanings of words, phrases, and sentences (semantics).
CHAPTER II

TEXTBOOKS

2.0 Introduction. Classroom instructors in freshman composition courses have at their disposal four general types of textbooks which aid to varying degrees of success their efforts to instruct their students in the skills of writing. This chapter addresses two of these types: rhetoric textbooks and essay anthologies.Usage handbooks and dictionaries each merit their own chapter and will be dealt with above. Two texts, Rothwell's Questions of Rhetoric and Usage (1974) and Guth's Words and Ideas (1975), combine sections on both rhetoric and usage, and will be treated in this and the following chapter.

2.1 Competence and performance. The one characteristic which most freshman composition textbooks share is their failure to distinguish between the notions of linguistic competence and linguistic performance. Chomsky (1965:4) puts the distinction in its simplest terms: linguistic competence is "the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language" and linguistic performance is "the actual use of language in concrete situations."
It is common knowledge among linguists that by the time a child is five to six years old, he has internalized the rules of grammar for his native language. He has achieved linguistic competence in that language. This does not mean that he can explain--or even recognize--the rules themselves, nor does it mean that he has mastered sophisticated levels of style and vocabulary. It does mean, however, that he has the ability to produce an infinite number of novel utterances based upon the finite set of grammatical rules he has internalized. This competence allows him to recognize sentences as grammatical or ungrammatical as the following "strings" will illustrate (the asterisk [*] marks a string which is ungrammatical):

(1) the dog bit the man.
(2) *the desk bit the man.
(3) *Dog man bit the the.
(4) *The frommy glerbs were thwacking the gimbial marps.
(5) *ksed eht tib nam eht.

The native speaker who looks at this list of word-strings immediately recognizes that (1) is a well-formed sentence in his language. He knows that in (2) desk does not have the semantic properties necessary to make the string grammatical,
but that otherwise the string fits a proper syntactic pattern. In string (3), the native speaker recognizes each word as semantically correct but that the arrangement of the words is completely ungrammatical. He does not recognize many of the words in (4) but because he recognizes some of them, and because those he does not recognize have recognizable inflections for nouns, adjectives, and verbs, he knows that they might have meaning to someone but not himself. Still, he sees that the string is well-formed syntactically, but, for him at least, not semantically. Finally, string (5) makes no sense at all regarding either syntax or semantics. Strings (6) through (10) further highlight the notion of linguistic competence.

(6) The man was bit by the dog.
(7) What the dog bit was the man.
(8) It was the man that the dog bit.
(9) Pam enjoyed boring old ladies.
(10) Fighting women can be dangerous.

The native speaker's competence allows him to recognize, also, synonymy and ambiguity as the above sentences illustrate. He knows that (6), (7), and (8) are paraphrases of (1)--that they vary in style and emphasis, but have the same meaning. Likewise, he knows that (9) and (10) are ambiguous, each having at least two meanings. Any native speaker of a language, provided he has not suffered brain damage, has the linguistic competence
to recognize well-formed and ill-formed sentence structure in his language on the bases of syntax and semantics. His linguistic competence also allows him to recognize synonymy and ambiguity in his native language.

Linguistic performance, on the other hand, is the speaker's actual verbal demonstration of his linguistic competence in the real world. This performance occurs in both speaking and writing. Linguistic performance, of course, has certain environmental constraints placed upon it which linguistic competence has not. Performance is constrained by such phenomena as short-term memory, the need for sleep, laryngectomies, interruptions by other speakers, and other real-world events.

The CCCC Language Statement Committee recognizes the distinction between linguistic competence and linguistic performance, and applies the distinction to dialect:

In linguistic terms the normal teenager has competence in his native dialect, the ability to use all of its structural resources, but the actual performance of any speaker in any dialect always falls short of the totality implied by competence. No one can ever use all of the resources of a language, but one function of the English teacher is to activate the student's competence, that is, increase the range of his habitual performance (1974:6).

But it is difficult for a teacher "to activate the student's competence" when the texts at his disposal do not make the distinction between competence and performance. Surely, most rhetoric texts deal to some extent in levels of style. For example, Rothwell (1974) devotes two chapters to the subject: "The Writer's Devices: Style as Function" (97-122) in which he discusses stylistic options, tone, irony, idiom, and the like;
and "The Writer's Devices: Style as Artifice" (123-157) dealing with sentence rhetoric, figurative language, emphasis, and clarity. But nowhere does Rothwell discuss the distinction between linguistic competence and linguistic performance or the stylistic opportunities such a distinction offers.

Guth (1975) offers one chapter devoted to "Tone and Style" (178-204) which addresses such topics as personal voice, formal versus informal writing, imagery, emphasis, point of view, irony, satire, etc. A paragraph in the preface devoted to "Part Two: The Writer's Tools" mentions developing the student's "competence and confidence in dealing with words, sentences, and paragraphs" (x), but nowhere distinguishes competence from performance. Likewise, Brooks and Warren (1970) devote 616 pages to the rhetorical aspects of writing and, again, give no attention to the issue of linguistic competence and linguistic performance.

2.2 Style and the students' right to their own language. If Underwood is accurate when he finds that most new textbooks for freshman English offer "the same old stuff you have seen in hundreds of other freshman composition texts" (1974:45)--and there is no reason to believe that he is not accurate--then it is reasonably safe to assume that what is true for the texts in the above paragraphs is also true for most freshman composition textbooks. Furthermore, we may also include the class of essay anthologies of which Decker's Patterns of Exposition (1974) is representative: by anthologizing previously published
essays and occasionally excerpts from larger works, these volumes are merely extended examples of performance and give no attention to competence. These texts offer no explicit distinction between linguistic competence and linguistic performance, and therefore do not give the student a tool by which he can easily recognize and select his own variations in style.

The distinction is an easy one to make, as Martin and Rulon exhibit in the following examples which, although varying in style and emphasis, are synonymous (1973:60-61):

(11) It is clear that it is unnecessary for grammar to be dull.
(12) That for grammar to be dull is unnecessary is clear.
(13) That it is unnecessary for grammar to be dull is clear.
(14) It is clear that for grammar to be dull is unnecessary.

If the student does, indeed, have a right to his own language, then he has the right to be presented with all the facts of his language. It is clear that he is denied one of these facts. None of the rhetoric texts or essay anthologies shows explicitly by making clear the distinction between linguistic competence and linguistic performance that semantic meaning remains the same while stylistic emphasis can be changed. This omission in current texts not only denies the student a part of his right but also deprives the instructor of one basic tool he needs to most effectively teach freshman composition.
CHAPTER III

HANDBOOKS

3.0 Overview of handbooks and their effectiveness. The usage handbooks which freshman composition instructors have at their disposal today are at worst mixtures of grammar and prescription, and at best incomplete in grammatical description. On the one hand, these books present to the teacher and student alike great lists and tables of common errors to be avoided, and restricted, prescriptive lists of examples to be emulated, while on the other hand, they fail to give the student means by which he can increase his variety of sentence patterns and vary his style. Again, as with rhetoric texts and essay anthologies, the handbooks fail to make a distinction between linguistic competence and linguistic performance, and encourage the student to emulate given examples rather than to give him a basis on which to build his own style.

3.1 Spelling. The three handbooks used in this study, Rothwell's Questions of Rhetoric and Usage (1974), Guth's Words and Ideas (1975), and Whitten's Harbrace College Handbook (1972), are quite similar in their approaches to spelling. All three give brief lists of rules and long lists of troublesome words for spelling. The Harbrace (168-187) devotes the most pages to the subject and lists five rules dealing with (1) mispronunciation, (2) words of similar spellings and sounds, (3) prefixes and suffixes, (4) ie and ei, and (5) plurals. Rothwell (183-
devotes many pages to spelling problems, "look-alike and sound-alike words," Spoonerisms, and malaprops, including five spelling rules: (1) i before e, (2) final e, (3) double consonants, (4) plurals, and (5) y before ed. Guth (403-419) gives only four rules, (1) i before e, (2) double consonants, (3) y as a vowel, and (4) final e, but gives close attention to other spelling problems.

A significant feature of all three handbooks is their inclusion of lists of commonly misspelled words. The Harbrace (177-183) amasses the largest list with 650 entries; Guth (410-413), the proximal second with 402; and Rothwell (196) trailing far behind with a mere 135. It is interesting to note that only two of Rothwell's 135 words appear on either the Guth or Harbrace list, but Rothwell doesn't call his a list of commonly misspelled words but "words which have proved troublesome for many college freshmen" (196). It is not surprising that such an esoteric list would prove troublesome. The Guth list and the Harbrace share many commonly misspelled words. It is also interesting to note that only the Harbrace lists two very troublesome areas for many college freshmen: to, too, two and there, their, they're (178).

Mary E. Whitten, editor of the Harbrace College Handbook, has recently pointed to the regularity of changes in many spelling patterns that may be new to college freshmen in view of her assertion that "many spelling rules are ignored in the classroom because of the necessary memorization involving consonants and vowels or because of countless mind-boggling exceptions" (1974:7). The exceptions, however, may be not so
countless and not so mind-boggling as Professor Whitten would have us believe. Wayne O'Neil argues "that English orthography is nearly optimal . . . at an abstract level" and that "the pronunciation of words is generally predictable from their spellings" (1969:xxxv). He also points out that English spellings are related to the history and meaning of the words. There are irregularities, of course, but these irregularities, rather than obeying the general phonological rules of the language, such as vowel shift and tri-syllabic laxing, show that "it is not the generalizations that are wrong; it is rather that the items . . . are irregular" (xxxvi). Hence, the plural of man is men rather than *mans, the past of sit is sat rather than *sitted, and the -ity form of obese is pronounced without change in the second syllable. O'Neil's point is that wherever a general rule of phonology together with grammatical information predict a certain pronunciation, the spelling reflects not the surface phonetic facts but rather the underlying phonological consistency of the phonetic facts.

The handbooks in question do give some basic spelling rules, and two, at least, offer reasonably significant lists of common spelling errors. They discuss to some extent the relationship between spelling and pronunciation, but none takes a deeper point of view and discusses the underlying historical and phonological levels of the relationship.

3.2 Irregular verbs. Presumably the canon of irregular verbs is much smaller than that of regular verbs. The English lexicon of irregular verbs contains approximately 200 entries.
Many of these verbs are troublesome for students because of regionally and socially competing principal parts. The competence versus performance issue of language impinges upon the area of regularity and irregularity of English verbs and the attempt by handbooks to deal with linguistic reality and classroom ideality.

Most handbooks generally give adequate treatment to the be and have verbs and modal auxiliaries, and also address the issue of semantic leveling—the confusion between and the merging of such pairs as sit/set, lie/lay, and rise/raise (Rothwell [1974:214], Guth [1975:370], Harbrace [1972:69-70]). In some spoken dialects the use of these verbs in contexts which require, academically, the use of the other similar verb may be tolerable or may be accepted practice, but in the written dialect of academic English such leveling is not acceptable.

Handbooks generally offer lists of varying length giving the principal parts of some irregular and some troublesome regular verbs. These lists include verbs with competing principal parts in the preterite and participle, such as dived/dove, lighted/lit, etc. Such lists often manifest shortcomings which a linguistic analysis could overcome. Presumably the lists contain verbs which the authors of the handbooks have in their experience found most troublesome for their students. Although many treatments of irregular/troublesome verbs are often extremely brief—and this is not always the case—the
treatment given in the Harbrace may be more representative of the problem. It should be emphasized that the Harbrace gives no explanation for its list (see in this reference the Harbrace's spelling list [176-183] which gives rationale for the inclusion of its entries and the verb list does not). The verb forms are merely listed for the student to study. In view of the fact that few freshman composition students are likely to use the list as more than a check of their own usage, it is unclear what other purpose the list serves. If the list is, indeed, merely a checklist, it would better serve the student were it complete.

The Harbrace (71-73) lists the principal parts of forty-five troublesome verbs, verbs the author has found to be "commonly misused." All verbs in the list but two (drag and raise) are irregular and are divided into classes based upon similarity of the participle to the present or preterite form.

Linguistic analysis can account for the full range of irregular and troublesome verbs in English in a systematic manner. In this way, and by providing a rationale for their lists, such analyses show the shortcomings of the mere listing of troublesome verbs in the handbooks. The handbooks (concerned merely with linguistic performance) fail to give insight into the structure of the verb, whereas the linguistic analyses—concerned as well with linguistic competence—provide this insight.
For example, Virginia McDavid and William Card (1972: 109-132) have compiled a list (based upon performance and intended to be used by teachers) containing 209 English verbs which are either irregular, troublesome, or both. The verbs are simply listed with accepted forms in capital letters and variant forms in lower case listed below the accepted forms in descending order of frequency. Explanatory notes are added when appropriate, and less frequently used acceptable forms are given in parentheses. Two examples from the list are given here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Accepted Form</th>
<th>Variant Form</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BURN</td>
<td>BURNED (BURNT)*</td>
<td>Burn</td>
<td>*More common in British than in American usage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURN</td>
<td>BURNED (BURNT)*</td>
<td>Burn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A generative study of English verb inflection is given by Silas Griggs and Curt M. Rulon (1974) which deals with a complete list of 189 irregular and mixed English verbs in a study which bases its list upon that of Bernard Bloch (1947) with a few modifications. The Bloch study is based primarily upon linguistic performance, whereas the generative study of Griggs and Rulon is based upon linguistic competence.

Ralph Fasold (1972) gives a scholarly examination of tense and aspect in Black English and carefully surveys the system of Black English with linguistic rigor. In a study of Washington, D.C., working-class Blacks, Fasold garners evidence
that the past tense distinction, for example (38-41), is an inherent part of the grammar of the speakers in his sample, as (1) through (5) below illustrate.

(1) He hold his hand out and made him fell.
(2) Honest to goodness, I really did learn.
(3) No, he didn't do nothing.
(4) Did you read the article in the Post?
(5) I didn't did anything to you.

Fasold gives insight into the system of Black English, which in some cases is different from academic English. Our purpose here is not to defend the system of Black English, but to report that the dialect is completely systematic—with a system different from academic English—and that it may possibly cause some classroom problems.

The knowledge of studies dealing with English verb inflection which are based upon linguistic competence, and comprehensive studies based upon linguistic performance, can be very useful to the teacher of freshman composition when he encounters the various language patterns that he as a teacher of composition is likely to encounter. These studies can give him a basis for handling the many classroom situations in which dialect issues are likely to arise.

3.3 Handbooks and dialects. In their efforts to inculcate freshman composition students with the techniques of standard Edited American English, the usage handbooks consistently, and often incorrectly, admonish their readers
to avoid the use of dialects. Rather than define or explain correctly what a dialect is, the handbook authors fall back on the mythical notion that a dialect is always and only a deviant form of speech used by the persons of a select regional area. They generally limit their discussions of dialect to lexical items, failing to recognize—or choosing to ignore—that the term dialect, when used in reference to regional, rather than social language differences, also embraces differences in syntax and phonology. Guth (1975:309) admonishes by implication:

American speech shows some regional differences. By and large, the constant intermingling of settlers from many areas, and the rapid growth of mass media of communication, have kept these American dialects from drifting very far apart. Here are some of the words that your dictionary is likely to mark as dialectal: dogie, poke (bag), reckon (suppose), tote (carry), you all.

Rothwell (1974:104) gives more of the same:

What about dialect? Is it ever appropriate to introduce an ethnic group's private language into written expression? Belonging almost altogether to the spoken, not the written, tradition, dialects rarely work in expository prose.

Rothwell's entire conception of dialect is summed up, apparently, in the phrase "an ethnic group's private language." As defined in Chapter I above, dialect cannot be explained in such simple terms as Rothwell's. Furthermore, although all ethnic groups speak their dialect, it is simplistic to limit a definition to such terms.
The Harbrace College Handbook (1972:201) addresses the issue in this way:

Regional, or dialectal, words (also called localisms or provincialisms) should normally be avoided in speaking and writing outside the region where they are current. Speakers and writers may, however, safely use regional words known to the audience they are addressing.

REGIONAL  Aunt Ella was fixing to go on a tour.
GENERAL  Aunt Ella was getting ready to go on a tour.

What Whitten does not point out (besides limiting her discussion to vocabulary--only one feature of dialect differences) is that localisms or provincialisms are merely smaller--and separate--categories within the larger study of dialects in general. It is interesting, also, to note that her "general" example getting ready is an informal way of saying preparing. It may, perhaps, also be found to be predominant in the region of Whitten's rearing.

Everyone--students, teachers, authors of usage handbooks--speaks and writes in one or another form of dialect. Rarely, if ever, is one found who speaks but one dialect on all occasions or writes in one dialect for all audiences. If handbooks are going to continue making pronouncements about dialects and their usage, they should, at the very least, define dialect in terms of current linguistic theory. Anything less is not only incomplete but inaccurate.

3.4 Conclusion. Progress is beginning to be made in modernizing the pronouncements on usage found in handbooks. The old bugaboo about the "split infinitive" is gradually
fading away. Whitten says "those [split infinitives] needed for smoothness or clarity are now acceptable" (1972:277). It is not, however, merely clarity and smoothness that are at issue; it is, rather, ambiguity.

(1) Joshua commanded his troops to forcefully blow the trumpets.

(2) Joshua commanded his troops forcefully to blow the trumpets.

(3) Joshua commanded his troops to blow the trumpets forcefully.

(4) Joshua commanded the forceful blowing of trumpets by his troops.

(5) Joshua commanded that his troops forcefully blow the trumpets.

Sentence (1) is clearly unambiguous, but contains the split infinitive. Traditionally preferred, but ambiguous, sentence (2) leaves open to question whether it is to blow or commanded which is modified by forcefully. Sentence (3) is better, but the same ambiguity remains. Sentence (4) using the gerundive complementizer, provides a solution to the problem: avoidance--a common handbook term. Sentence (5) offers another option by the use of the clausal complementizer, which avoids the issue of whether or not to split the infinitive, but it is another linguistic aspect of sentence style.

The handbooks discussed in this chapter are filled with examples which support the contention issued by the CCCC that "many handbooks still appeal to social-class etiquette and cultural stasis rather than to the dynamic and creative
mechanisms which are a part of our language" (1974:10). Primarily in their reluctance to state the distinction between linguistic competence and linguistic performance, and in their failure to use this distinction, the handbooks limit themselves to a finite set of examples which do not allow the student access to his ability to create an infinite number of sentences (performance) based upon the rules of grammar (competence).
4.1 Lexicography. In addition to an essay anthology, a rhetoric text, and a usage handbook, the student of freshman composition must also possess a dictionary in order to verify current spelling, determine usage, pronunciation, syllabication, inflected forms, and meanings. He may also frequently find in the dictionary etymologies, synonyms, and usage notes. He may occasionally find words used as examples in contexts taken from literature and science. At North Texas State University, the instructor will normally choose one of five desk dictionaries for his students to use: American College Dictionary, The American Heritage Dictionary, Random House Dictionary, Webster's New World Dictionary, or Webster's Eighth New Collegiate Dictionary. At Mountain View College, no departmental requirement or directive concerning the choice of a dictionary is made, and current practice among individual instructors ranges from giving the student his choice to requiring one specific desk dictionary for the course. Regardless of which of these extremes an instructor chooses, problems inherent in dictionaries confront student and instructor alike--problems which range from variant spellings to linguistic or social bias.

From the time of Samuel Johnson to the present, dictionaries have been mixtures of description and prescription.
Not only wishing to describe the language as it occurred in their time, lexicographers have also sought "to collect words suitable for inclusion" (Hodge 1975:130). Noah Webster, noting that American usages and definitions differed from those of the British, sought to record these differences, and, moreover, to simplify American orthography. In the twentieth century, prescriptivism in lexicography is disappearing. More emphasis is now placed upon the dynamic aspects of language. Linguists have shown that language is constantly changing, that correctness is dependent upon usage, and that usage is relative (Hodge 1975:134).

The efforts of linguists notwithstanding, editors and lexicographers still must make subjective decisions on what entries and usage notes are included in their dictionaries. Very often an editor will allow his personal biases "to give precedence to some words over others" (Hodge 1975:138).

4.2 Linguistic and social bias. Anthony Wolk criticizes the highly promoted usage panel of The American Heritage Dictionary (AHD) for extreme conservatism and for being sociologically "guilty of linguistic racism in a society which needs rather less of such restrictive attitudes" (1972:935). He argues that the general effect of this linguistic policy is to declare inferior those whose usages are contrary to the AHD norm, which is "to risk being considered gross" (934). In evidence he rebukes editor William Morris for his opinion that one's use of the word irregardless is a sign of ignorance.
He questions the panel's practice of giving as input to the dictionary answers to yes/no questions rather than providing examples of their own writing, a practice which leaves no room for shades of opinion. He also calls to question the fact that the panel members' average age is 64 years and that seven of the panel are professionally associated with the dictionary's publishers.

If such a situation as just described is true for one dictionary, it is certainly possible for similar situations to be true for other dictionaries; all have editorial boards which are made up of persons who are subject to their own personal biases, sociological or linguistic. It is not merely usage notes, moreover, which are subject to the subjective decisions of dictionary editors, but also the ordering of definitions—whether ordered on the basis of historical chronology or usage currency—plus pronunciations and variant spellings.

4.3 Variant spellings. Many words in the English language have more than one spelling. From common every-day words to the highly esoteric, from native English words to those borrowed from other languages, from words spelled according to historical analogy or precedent to pronunciation spellings and dialectal usages, writers have at hand large numbers of variant spellings from which to choose for their writing purposes. Whether he uses one dictionary or many as his authority, the writer has many "correct" ways to spell
his words. For teachers and students such a grand range of spelling choices can create many problems.

Donald W. Emery reveals some of the problems that the use of variant spellings can cause in both common and extreme situations. He uses five dictionaries in his study (1973:1): The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (which for brevity he designates AH), Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (NC), Webster's New World Dictionary (NW), The Random House College Dictionary (RH), and Standard College Dictionary (SC).

The first situation Emery suggests (1) in discussing the problems of variant spellings is one in which two students each develop the topic of car-polishing. One always uses a shamois, while the second prefers a soft cloth to a shamoy. In looking up the "correct" spelling, the teacher finds three dictionaries in agreement. In the AH, NC, and NW, the main entry is chamois, and the three dictionaries give chammy and shammy as variants. Upon finding their papers marked for misspelling the word, however, the students show that the SC gives shamois and the RH gives shamoy as unqualified variants. The teacher must allow the students' spellings.

Emery's second case, he admits, demonstrates the "bizarre extreme" to which variant spellings can lead (1). Consider the following sentence:
In a cozy house cater-cornered from the palace a finicky caliph, who maintained that a jinni had revealed to him the secrets of the cabala, spent much of his time smoking panatelas—sometimes kef—and training his pet parakeet (1-2).

If a student were to write this sentence, and if this student were to refer to the five above-named dictionaries for spelling authority, the fifty-six spellings of the nine italicized words would reveal 11,197,440 unique ways to spell the sentence. Even if only the first entries in each of the dictionaries were chosen, the number of different spellings for the sentence would be extremely high. The variants are given below with first entries indicated by dictionary in parentheses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>cozy</th>
<th>cater-cornered</th>
<th>finicky</th>
<th>caliph</th>
<th>jinni</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(all)</td>
<td>(AH, NW, RH, SC)</td>
<td>(all)</td>
<td>(all)</td>
<td>(AH, NW, SC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cosy</td>
<td>cater-corner</td>
<td>finical</td>
<td>calif</td>
<td>jinn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cosey</td>
<td>catty-cornered</td>
<td>finnicky</td>
<td>khalif</td>
<td>genie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cozev</td>
<td>kitty-cornered</td>
<td>finicking</td>
<td>kalif</td>
<td>djinni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cosie</td>
<td>catty-corner</td>
<td>finikin</td>
<td>khalip</td>
<td>djinn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cozie</td>
<td>kitty-corner</td>
<td>finiking</td>
<td>khalifa</td>
<td>jinnie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>finicking</td>
<td>jinnin</td>
<td>jin</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>djn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>djinny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cabala</td>
<td>panetela</td>
<td>kef</td>
<td>parakeet</td>
<td>(all)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(all)</td>
<td>(AH, NC, NW)</td>
<td>(NC, NW, RH, SC)</td>
<td>(all)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cabbala</td>
<td>panetela</td>
<td>kif</td>
<td>parakeet</td>
<td>(all)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kabbala</td>
<td>panetella</td>
<td>keef</td>
<td>parroquet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kabbalah</td>
<td>panatella</td>
<td>keif</td>
<td>paroquet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cabbalah</td>
<td></td>
<td>kaif</td>
<td>parroket</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>paraquet</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Extremes laid aside, Emery exhibits the common problems to be encountered among lexicographical entries. These problems include the lack of agreement among dictionaries concerning which entries are listed first and which are variants and the
variant forms one will find in any one dictionary. He also
discusses the variant plural forms to be encountered, including
plurals of nouns ending in o: banjos/banjoes (6); plurals of
compound words: notaries public/notary publics (8); and
plurals of nouns ending in ful: shovelfuls/shovelsful (9).
He goes on to describe derived forms such as adjectives
ending in -able and -ible: collectible/collectable (11);
agent nouns with -or and -er endings: adviser/advisor (12);
words with -y endings before suffixes: fryer/frier (13);
variants with terminal -e in the base word: linage/lineage (15);
and base words ending in a single consonant: bused/bussed (17).
He finally discusses qualifying labels which account for
variant spelling. Such labels include British (gaol for the
American jail), other national labels, and variants involving
varying definitions and usage currency.

Instructors and students of freshman composition must
daily cope with these and related problems, which can perhaps
be minimized by an awareness of the situation. Although Emery
considers the arbitrary selection of one dictionary as the sole
spelling authority for a course "an unhappy and impractical
solution which might suggest to some students that other
dictionaries simply duplicate entries or are unreliable" (1),
such selection can alleviate many problems of variant spellings.
Such practice is, in fact, quite common.
4.4 **Dictionaries and the students' right to their own language.** A student of freshman composition should be introduced, if only briefly, to his dictionary in such a way that he will know something about what the book can offer him in terms of spelling convention, etymology, lexicography, and usage. He should also be made aware of the inherent problems and shortcomings in his dictionary that he is likely to encounter, such as possible linguistic and social bias and the problems of variant spellings. If the student considers his dictionary a guide and a tool, and if his instructor makes clear his purpose in choosing a particular dictionary as a spelling and usage authority for the exigencies of a particular class, then the dictionary can offer the student a means to enhance his language abilities and perhaps broaden his linguistic horizons.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.0 Background. The first chapter in this study has presented, through an examination of the writings of linguistic scholars, the divided opinions on how teachers of freshman composition are to deal with the variety of language patterns which they will encounter in the classroom. Two English departments were examined to show current policies and attitudes toward the issue. In addition, insight was offered through linguistically based definitions of language and dialect. The subsequent chapters exhibited that through a failure to distinguish between the linguistic concepts of competence and performance, the teaching materials, specifically textbooks, handbooks, and dictionaries, fail to provide to teacher and student alike linguistic insight which could simplify considerably the teaching of composition and rhetoric.

5.1 The teacher's need for linguistic knowledge. Through reading, course work, experience, or a combination thereof, the CCCC (1974:15) wisely and perceptively suggests that "all English teachers should, as a minimum, know the principles of modern linguistics, and something about the history and nature of the English language in its social and cultural context." Too vigorous an emphasis cannot be placed upon the necessity
for this knowledge. The CCCC Committee's suggestions of the areas of linguistic expertise needed by teachers are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Teachers of composition and rhetoric must have some familiarity with the symbolic nature of language. Language is primarily a system of spoken sounds which convey meaning in a completely arbitrary but conventionalized manner. Writing is a derived system of another set of arbitrary but conventionalized symbols which represents the spoken system. Students may have competence and facility in spoken language and yet be inexperienced in the conventions of the written system. "Once a teacher understands the arbitrary nature of the oral and written forms, the pronunciation or spelling of a word becomes less important than whether it communicates what the student wants to say" (CCCC 1974:15). Teachers can then address spelling and pronunciation problems with some humane understanding.

The history of the English language has shown that the language has undergone a series of changes from the time Germanic tribes invaded Britain in the middle of the fifty century. These changes have continued through the centuries to the present. The language has been and is constantly influenced by contact with other languages in addition to social and cultural phenomena. Although vocabulary is the easiest area of language change to observe, changes in syntax
and pronunciation also occur. English has borrowed words from many languages, and teachers must realize that borrowings occur among dialects as well as among languages. It is also important for the teacher to acknowledge that change is among language's constant conditions. Attempts to regulate, retard, or stop the process of language change have been unsuccessful. Languages simply change—they become neither better nor worse—and "dialect is merely a symptom of change. Paradoxically, past change is considered normal, but current change is viewed by some as degradation" (18).

Teachers must know that dialect similarities and differences are products of geographical, social, cultural, or economic isolation, and that the dialects of wealthy or powerful people are the ones that gain admiration and respect. No dialect is superior or inferior to another; judgments on a person's speech are made on the basis of the connotations of the listener. A teacher who realizes that dialect is spoken by everyone will respond to the language varieties of his students in a humane fashion.

An understanding of the processes of language and dialect acquisition will give the teacher a more thorough comprehension of the presence and absence of certain sounds uttered by his students. The knowledge that a child acquires only those sounds and structures which he hears will help the teacher to take a humane approach in teaching the student more academic structures.
A familiarity with the concepts of phonology, morphology, and syntax, and the realization that these aspects of language are systematic in all dialects, will suggest to the teacher that differences in phonological, morphological, and syntactic manifestations are systematic within dialects and produce no barrier to understanding. The teacher will then have gained linguistic insight which will aid him in his teaching. Knowing that grammar is a description of the system of phonology, morphology, and syntax by which the meanings of sentences are conveyed, and that usage is the speaker's choice of proper forms, can further aid the teacher. "Teachers who recognize that morphological forms vary from dialect to dialect, but that within each dialect the morphology follows a system, will be less likely to challenge a student whose morphology is different on the ground that such variations represent 'mistakes'" (17).

Teachers should also know that semantics concerns not only how meanings affect people rationally but emotionally as well. Teachers who know this can help their students make lexical choices not merely on the basis of propriety or correctness, but on the possible impact upon his reader or listener. The knowledge that words have connotative as well as denotative meanings, and that dictionaries are best used as guides rather than authorities for pronunciation and meaning, will aid the teaching process.
Finally, teachers need experience in and exposure to dialects other than their own in addition to book knowledge of dialect studies. Interaction with speakers of various dialects on the social level in addition to the academic level would be ideal, but listening to tapes and conducting interviews with dialect speakers can beneficially supplement the teacher's linguistic knowledge.

5.2 Scope of the present study. This paper does not presume to tell teachers how to be artful teachers, nor to provide lists of dos and don'ts for better teaching. Such things are provided elsewhere. For these purposes there is great value in reading the CCCC statement (1974), the Labov statement and resolution (1974), and their accompanying bibliographies, which provide much practical and general information and strategies for handling problems in the classroom. More bibliographies of value to the teacher in his learning about dialects are found throughout Rulon and Sims (1975), Guide to American Dialectology, including an especially useful annotated bibliography at the end of the volume.

The purpose of this study is confined to elucidation of what the CCCC statement means by competence and performance, and reiteration that Edited American English is just a dialect with a set of conventions adhered to for supposedly good purposes which are advantageous for social, as well as academic endeavors. There is no doubt in the mind of the transformational-generative linguist that a student has
linguistic competence. An erudite speaker has no better linguistic competence than any other native speaker of his language, but he has exercised the option to increase his vocabulary. Such an assertion as this is well grounded in theory of linguistic performance (e.g. Chomsky 1965).

Teachers, furthermore, are cautioned against making impressionistic or wrong statements such as "students don't know what sentences are." A statement such as this is groundless, as a visit through any mental institution will demonstrate. Even the idiot can talk in sentences! Teachers are urged, moreover, to avoid telling students to "avoid the passive" and "this is clumsy" without first having some rationale for doing so, or without having some supporting evidence to prove that the students' manifestations are wrong. The best writers in literature use the passive construction for foregrounding objects and shifting emphasis. If a student's use of passive is inappropriate for a particular passage, the teacher must have some rationale for elucidating the impropriety. In many cases this rationale might be the nature of the language itself.

5.3 Summation. The teaching of freshman composition should be at once humane and thorough. Because he will very likely encounter students from several dialect backgrounds, a teacher must have knowledge of language theory and practice in addition to some knowledge of what shortcomings he is likely to encounter in teaching materials.
The teaching of freshman composition can be a challenging and exciting, as well as rewarding, endeavor if the teacher is prepared with linguistic knowledge of what he will encounter in both teaching materials and the variety of his students' language. "Every speaker of a language has a tremendous range of versatility, constantly making subtle changes to meet various situations. That is, speakers of a language have mastered a variety of ranges and levels of usage; no one's idiolect, however well established, is monolithic and inflexible. This ability of the individual speaker to achieve constant and subtle modulations is so pervasive that it usually goes unnoticed by the speaker and hearers alike" (CCCC 1974:6).

The issue of the students' right to their own language involves not so much the question of the students' "right" as it does the teacher's responsibility to acquire the linguistic expertise and to choose the teaching materials which allow him to create situations which will permit the students to "achieve constant and subtle modulations" in the use of their language. Students need not discard "their own language" in deference to another. Instead, teachers of freshman composition must assist the students in achieving an enriched, realistic concept of the English language, made possible only with the teacher's knowledge and application of linguistic principles. After all, the language is English, the language that Whitman called the dialect of common sense--the medium
that shall well nigh express the inexpressible. The students
indeed have a right to it—not merely the dialect of the
region of their rearing, nor merely the dialect of the social
class of their parents—they have a right to their language
in its entirety.
APPENDIX A
A SYLLABUS FOR ENGLISH 131

This syllabus was prepared by the Basic Courses Freshman English Committee. It is intended to serve as a specific statement of goals for the 131 course and a general outline for achieving these goals. The schedule of assignments (after Block I) need not necessarily be followed as outlined, but may be altered to meet the teaching approach of the instructor and the needs of the students. To be sure, there is more material scheduled in each block than can reasonably be covered, and some readings are assigned more than once; the instructor should gauge his assignments to suit his own needs. Since there is some changing of sections during the first week of classes, instructors should follow the syllabus closely in Block I.

Since rhetorical devices are learned through reading good examples as well as through lectures, freshman essays should be closely coordinated with the readings. English 131 students should write a minimum of ten essays during the semester, preferably on topics drawn from Modern Rhetoric and Patterns of Exposition. We recommend that students be given specific rather than vague general topics. For an example of grading standards, see Appendix III. The departmental examination will consist of specific problems suggested by selected pieces in Modern Rhetoric and Patterns of Exposition. A list of these pieces will be distributed prior to the departmental exam.

Jack E. White, Chairman
Basic Courses Freshman English Committee

Bob Banks
Fruitt Davis
Marian Massie
Curt Rulon
The Goals for English 131

The one-year requirement of freshman composition at NTSU is used primarily to acquaint students with the structures and devices of language so that they can become proficient in reading and writing. Since, except in a few special instances, the writing done by freshmen is expository prose and since the vast majority of the reading done by students in college and in our culture generally is expository, the regular freshman composition course will deal primarily with expository prose both in reading and writing. Any major departures from the syllabus--such as use of substitute textbooks--should be approved by the Chairman of the Basic Courses.

The minimum purpose of the first semester will be to show the student how to organize and write an expository essay by examining the standard structures of such essays. In reading essays the student will learn close analysis so that he can determine what problem the author is dealing with, what the author's thesis is, and how the author develops his thesis through a series of paragraphs. In writing essays the student should learn to employ a standard structure which will allow him to clarify his problem and his thesis to the reader and then to develop his thesis in a clear, concise, and appealing manner. Problems of mechanics and grammar should be discussed when the need arises, but remedial-level instruction is not the purpose of 131.

Course Requirements

Each student should write a minimum of 10 essays of about 300 to 600 words. Approximately one-half of the essays should be written in class.

Instructors are to keep their students' essays on file throughout the semester and for one full semester thereafter. Under no circumstances are the essays to be returned to the students except for purposes of correction. The essays should be kept in individual folders (provided by the students at the beginning of the semester). Reasons for these requirements are as follows: (1) to prevent circulation of essays among students, (2) to provide documentation in the event of student appeal, and (3) to provide a file for use in instructor conferences with students. The instructor should have individual conferences with all of his students during the semester. Since some students will obviously need more individual help than others, the specific number of conferences with each student is left to the discretion of the instructor.

Each student must pass the departmental examination in order to pass English 131. (although passing the departmental examination does not necessarily mean that the student will pass English 131.)
Texts for English 131

Brooks and Warren, Modern Rhetoric (Since Parts Four and Five are to be covered in English 132, instructors should limit themselves to syllabus assignments.)

Decker, Patterns of Exposition

Hodges and Whitten, Harbrace College Handbook, 7th Edition

One of the following dictionaries:

- American College Dictionary
- American Heritage Dictionary
- Random House Dictionary
- Webster's New World Dictionary
- Webster's Eighth New Collegiate Dictionary

Schedule of Assignments

This schedule is made for the MWF time pattern. Instructors with TTh sections will have to make adjustments to follow a twice-a-week time pattern.

BLOCK I: DICTIONARY AND LANGUAGE STUDY

Those instructors who are using the American Heritage Dictionary may want to assign Morton W. Bloomfield's article "A Brief History of the English Language."

Harold Whitehall devotes a section of his article "The English Language" (xxvi-xxxii) to the history of English which might prove helpful for those instructors who are using Webster's New World Dictionary.


Student Guides are available for each of the five recommended desk dictionaries. No matter what dictionary he may choose to use, each instructor should explain to the class what his policy is concerning USAGE and DIALECTAL VARIATION. Listed below are suggested exercises from the various dictionaries.
American Heritage Dictionary
1. "Good Usage, Bad Usage, and Usage," Morris Bishop (pp. XXI-XXIV).
3. Student Guide (pp. 18-25).

Webster's 8th
1. Pamphlet: A New Outline for Dictionary Study: "Status Labels," (pp. 8-10)
2. Dictionary, (pp. 11a).

Random House
1. Student Guide: Restrictive Labels (p. 15) to be accompanied by Raven I. McDavid's "Usage, Dialects, and Functional Varieties," (pp. xix-xxi)

New World
1. The Definitions, (pp. xi-xii).
2. Your own good common sense.

American College Dictionary
1. Usage Levels and Dialect Distribution, (pp. xxiv-xxvi).
2. Your own good common sense.

The syllabus committee recommends that the instructor view with a "caveat emptor" eye some of the statements concerning diction (Chapter 11) made by Brooks and Warren. For example, they state:

To most people, **firefly** seems more dignified than **lightning bug**; **taper** than **candle**. The relative dignity of **bucket** and **pail** is not so easily settled. But for many modern Americans **bucket** is more likely to seem the ordinary word, with associations of everyday activity; whereas **pail** will seem a little more
old-fashioned and endowed with more "poetic" suggestions (p. 397).

As any good dialect atlas will tell one, pail is a Northern form whereas bucket is a Midland and Southern form. Firefly and lightning bug are interchangeable Northern and Midland forms. Southerners seem to prefer (or have in the past at least) the form lightning bug. Of course, the term glowworm dates one! Finally, one staff member, a linguist, judges taper to be too prissy to be used at all. And so it goes!

A sample study in synonymy, which may be used in a number of ways, is included in Appendix I. Also see Appendix IB for suggested theme topics.

FIRST WEEK:

1. Introduction to 131. Assign texts and discuss general outline of the course.

2. MR: pp. 3-10 Theme 1. Recommend, in-class.

3. MR: pp. 11-15 (Students should read these pages prior to writing; discussion will come later.)

SECOND WEEK:

1. Discussion of Theme 1.

2. Use of Dictionary

   Either
   A. Exercises in MR: pp. 406-414, or
   B. Use student guide to dictionary

3. Continue exercises on the dictionary.

THIRD WEEK:

1. MR: pp. 396-406

2. MR: pp. 414-434

3. Continue exercises on the dictionary.
Since the student who can write a unified, coherent, and well-developed paragraph can usually write a good essay, there is probably no more important block in the syllabus than this. The student should be brought to understand that the paragraph has as definite a structure as the sentence and that failure to establish this structure will result in unclear writing.

The student should further be taught to understand and discuss the structure of paragraphs in his reading. In this respect, the few reading assignments in this block are mere suggestions. The instructor should feel free to make additional assignments as he wishes, though he should keep in mind that at this point discussion of paragraphs (methods of organization) should be central to any discussion of the essays. The instructor may find it helpful to assign specific paragraphs rather than complete essays.

FOURTH WEEK:

1. Introduction to the Paragraph (See Appendix II).
   MR: pp. 355-360
   HCH: pp. 328-330

2. Methods or Paragraph Organization
   A. Illustration: MR: p. 360
   B. Detail: HCH: pp. 355-357
   C. Example: HCH: pp. 358-359; PE: p. 1

   E. Definition: HCH: pp. 360-361; PE: p. 191

FIFTH WEEK:

1. (Methods Continued)
   F. Comparison and Contrast: MR: p. 361; and HCH:
      pp. 363-365; PE: p. 69
   G. Cause and Effect: HCH: pp. 365-367; PE: p. 161
      Syllogistic Pattern: MR: p. 361

2. H. Sequence in Time: MR: pp. 361-362; and HCH:
   pp. 335-336
   I. Arrangement of Objects in Space: MR: p. 362; and
      HCH: pp. 336-339
3. Theme 2 (Possibility: This "theme" need not be anything more than a paragraph or a series of topic sentences built around a thesis which might be expended into a full theme in the sixth week.)

SIXTH WEEK:

1. Unity and Coherence in the Paragraph
   MR: pp. 363-364
   HCH: pp. 330-335
   (Mention should be made here of transitional devices; refer to MR: pp. 367-370.)

2. Paragraph Development
   HCH: pp. 351-355
   (Examples of poor paragraph structure are included in Appendix II.)

3. The problem of Making a Beginning
   MR: pp. 11-16

Theme 3

BLOCK III: ORGANIZING THE COMPOSITION

The material in this section may be viewed as a bridge from the paragraph to the essay. In Block II, the paragraph was treated; in Block IV, the essay is considered. Since unity, coherence, and emphasis have been discussed in relation to paragraph development, the instructor may find the beginning of this section an excellent time to emphasize that unity and coherence, like many other principles of composition, are as applicable to the essay as to the paragraph.

SEVENTH WEEK:

1. Unity
   MR: pp. 31-34

2. Coherence
   MR: pp. 35-44, 367-370
3. Emphasis

MR: pp. 45-51
HCH: pp. 302-313

BLOCK IV: THE METHODS OF EXPOSITION

Block IV is intended to introduce students to the methods of exposition: identification, comparison and contrast, illustration, classification, definition, and analysis. Causal analysis is taken up in English 132.

Students should write six themes after a study of methods and an examination of model essays. The syllabus suggests two themes of definition, moving from a shorter definition to an extended definition, and, similarly, two themes of analysis. Some instructors, however, may choose to have students attempt one essay for each of the six methods of exposition. Other instructors may desire to select as models pieces in Modern Rhetoric and Patterns of Exposition other than those suggested. Whatever the decision, the syllabus includes more material than should be assigned.

The instructor is cautioned to select the essays and "Applications" in advance, since no effort has been made to determine which should be assigned, and which are suitable for in- or out-of-class work.

EIGHTH WEEK:

1. The Main Intention

MR: pp. 55-60, 16-30
MR: pp. 712-721 (Suggestion: Have the students identify the problem and thesis.)

2. The Methods of Exposition

MR: pp. 61-68
HCH: pp. 392-403
PE: Introduction, pp. xiii-xv

3. A. Identification

MR: p. 69
MR: pp. 652-657

B. Comparison and Contrast

MR: pp. 69-73
PE: pp. 69-85
NINTH WEEK:

1. (Continuation of First Two Methods)
   MR: pp. 74-79
   MR: pp. 637-644
   PE: pp. 86-104

2. C. Illustration or Example
   MR: pp. 78-87
   MR: pp. 692-698
   PE: pp. 1-37

3. Theme 4: Identification or Illustration (See application MR: p. 89)

TENTH WEEK:

1. D. Classification
   MR: pp. 90-94
   PE: pp. 46-51

2. (Continuation of Classification)
   MR: pp. 94-100
   PE: pp. 52-67

3. Theme 5: Classification (See application MR: p. 100)

ELEVENTH WEEK:

1. E. Definition
   MR: pp. 100-104
   PE: pp. 191-198

2. (1) The Structure of Definition
   MR: pp. 104-110 (Suggest assignment form application II or III on pp. 110-111 to prepare for theme 7 to be written twelfth week, third day.)

3. (2) Caution
   MR: pp. 111-114
   Continue discussion of assignments on definition
   Theme 6: Definition (See application II MR: p. 122)

TWELFTH WEEK:

1. (3) Extended Definition
   MR: pp. 114-121
   PE: pp. 210-218

2. (Continuation of Extended Definition)
   MR: pp. 122-127
3. Theme 7: Extended Definition (See application V, MR: p. 129.)

THIRTEENTH WEEK:
1. F. Analysis
   MR: pp. 130-136
   PE: pp. 131-136
2. PE: pp. 137-150
3. PE: pp. 151-158

FOURTEENTH WEEK:
1. Theme 8: Analysis (See application MR: p. 136)
2. Functional Analysis
   MR: pp. 136-146

BLOCK V: DESCRIPTION (OPTIONAL)

FIFTEENTH WEEK:
1. Description
   MR: pp. 275-285; 286-296
   PE: pp. 253-289
2. Continuation of Description
   Theme 10: Description (Choose topics from applications,
   MR: pp. 279, 282, 292, 305.)
   MR: pp. 296-305
3. Departmental Examination
SIXTEENTH WEEK:

1. Return Theme 10

2. Review

3. Review

SEVENTEENTH WEEK:

Final Examinations
APPENDIX I: AN EXERCISE IN SYNONYM

Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms (1951) lists the following entries for the word enormous (pp. 297-98).

enormous immense huge vast gigantic giant
elephantine mammoth Gargantuan gigantean
Brobdingnagian Antaean Cyclopean Herculean
Titanic exceedingly, or excessively large

These synonyms may be distinguished in the following manner.

1. enormous: suggests an exceeding of all bounds and therefore abnormality not only in size or amount, but also in degree.

2. immense: implies immeasurableness, but in current use it more often suggests a size, amount, degree, or the like, which exceeds ordinary measurements or standards.

3. huge: commonly suggests immensity of bulk.

4. vast: suggests immensity of extent.

5. gigantic: implies comparison (literally or figuratively) with the size, the prowess, or the activities of a giant or one who has exceeded normal human limits in size and strength.

6. giant, gigantean: are often used in place of gigantic, the ordinary word in best usage.

7. colossal: implies comparison (literally or figuratively) with a statue of enormous height and size and therefore suggests stupendousness or incredibility.

8. mammoth and
elephantine: suggests the hugeness characteristic of, or a ponderousness appropriate to, the mammoth (an extinct and very large elephant).
9. **titanic:** suggests the Titans, or the primeval Greek gods, conceived of as colossal in size and earth shaking in power.

10. **herculean:** suggests the Greek hero Hercules, noted for his gigantic strength and prowess.

11. **cyclopean:** suggests the mythical race of giants of great brute strength and capacity for heavy work.

12. **antaean:** suggests Antaeus, the mythical Libyan giant and wrestler, son of Gaea, whose strength was renewed when he touched his mother earth.

13. **gargantuan:** suggests gargantua, the gigantic king with an enormous appetite who is the hero of the satirical romance.

14. **brobdingnagian:** suggests the inhabitants of the mythical country of Brobdingnag (in Swift's Gulliver's Travels), where each man is "as tall as an ordinary spire steeple."


2. C.W. Eliot wrote of "the world of today . . . in its _____ variety."

3. "____ over-dressed dowagers" caught the imagination of Oscar Wilde.

4. That day, Bikini Beach was a ___ expanse of bosom.

5. Grandgent asserted that "if this is our object, we must confess that our (academic) instruction is a ______ failure."

6. Karl K. Darrow reported that "physics is building high-voltage engines for invading the recesses of the atoms."

7. According to Meredith, "he was no sooner stretched in bed, than he seemed to be of enormous size; all his limbs--his nose, his mouth, his toes--were ________!"
8. "Eight million volts, or four million, or even a single million--these are ______ voltages," according to Darrow.

9. Mencken observed that "he swallowed at one gigantic gulp, and out of the same ______ jug."

10. A ______ engine lifted the rocket from the earth.

11. The ______ power of the mob vanished when it was dispersed by the police.

12. By the Lilliputians' standards, Gulliver had a ______ appetite.

13. A ______ shadow developed as the sun rose magnificently against Apollo XIII.

The original entries were as follows:

1. Enormous 5. gigantic 9. herculean
2. immense 6. colossal 10. cyclopean
3. huge 7. elephantine 11. antaean
4. vast 8. titanic 12. gargantuan
13. brobdingnagian

For those instructors who are using the American Heritage Dictionary, it might be edifying for them and their classes to examine the entry *gno* on page 1519, which lists the following cognates: know, can, con, cunning, couth, kith, notive, note, notify, notion, notorious, acquaint, noble, gnome, gnosis, physiognomy, narrate, annotate, connote, prothonotary, normal, enormous.
APPENDIX IB

Suggested Theme Topics

1. Many people think that the English language descended from Latin. In 300-500 words, explain why such a statement is misleading and, in fact, false. In your introduction, mention why some people think Latin, not German, is the parent of English. Divide your paper into the types of evidence you are using to show why this notion is misleading. Make your main idea clear in your conclusion. (Preface to AHD, XIX-XX, XIV-XVII.)

2. Write an essay in which you catalog some major differences between and among Old English, Middle English, and Modern English. (Preface to AHD Dictionary, pp. XIV-XVII.)

3. Look up your given, family, and middle name in the American Heritage and/or Oxford English Dictionary. Devote a paragraph to explaining the etymology and development of each part of your name.


5. Read pp. 1603-4 in the American Heritage Dictionary. Then examine the entry *ank in the appendix (p. 1506). Write an essay on the various development of the entry.
Lacks Unity

The school I attended as a child was not very large. The rooms were small and the teachers dull. But the worst thing about school was that it was seven miles from my house. Often, while walking to school in the late spring, I would pass the pond where I liked to fish. In the pond were catfish and bass. I remember one day when I caught seventeen fish in ten minutes from our leaky, old rowboat, which we never did fix. It finally got so rotten that we bought an aluminum one from Sears. We bought several other things too, and our bill got so large that my father just left home, and we never saw him again. We heard last year that he had died.

Lacks Coherence

While driving from Dallas to the West Coast last summer, I saw many types of plants. In New Mexico the yucca plants were just blooming, and the flowers were beautiful. In and around Los Angeles were thousands of orange, date, and avocado trees. And in Nevada the cactus didn't look barren at all the way cactus usually looks. All through Texas Indian paintbrush lined the highways.

Lacks Development

I spent most of my summer travelling over South Texas. We went lots of placed and did lots of things. My uncle told me several good stories about the early settlers in Texas. We went lots of places and did lots of things. My uncle told me several good stories about the early settlers in Texas. They were real interesting. But the most fun I had was at what everybody called "El Laquioda."
APPENDIX III: THEME EVALUATIONS

Evaluation of student writing is often a subjective operation, but there is general agreement on what characterizes A, B, C, D, and F themes.

The A Theme:

1. Originality of thought and effectiveness of expression.
2. Logical development of a central idea.
3. Effective organization of the whole theme.
4. Support of central idea clearly and concretely illustrated.
5. Sentences and paragraphs mature in construction and organization.
6. No major deficiencies in spelling, punctuation, structure, and usage.

The B Theme:

1. Logical development of a central idea.
2. Effective organization of the whole theme.
3. Adequate support of a central idea.
4. Sentences and paragraphs logically constructed and organized.
5. Diction appropriate and lively.
6. No gross errors in spelling, punctuation, structure, and usage.

The originality in thought and expression characteristic of the A theme is usually less distinctive in the B theme.

The C Theme

1. Development of a central idea with fair and reasonable support.
2. Organization of the whole acceptable.
3. Sentences and paragraphs satisfactorily constructed and organized.
4. Diction fairly appropriate and effective.
5. Gross errors in spelling, punctuation, structure, and usage not extensive.

The C theme may lack originality and content and expression and is usually duller than the A or B theme.
The D Theme is characterized by any one of the following:

1. Failure to present logical development of a central idea.
2. Poor organization of whole theme.
3. Lack of maturity and clarity in sentence structure and paragraph organization.
4. Lame and ineffective diction.
5. Gross errors in spelling, punctuation, structure, and usage.

The F Theme is characterized by any number of the following:

1. Failure to develop a central idea.
2. Lack of organization in whole theme.
3. Sentences and paragraphs poorly constructed and organized.
4. Diction inappropriate and ineffective.
5. Excessive errors in spelling, punctuation, structure, and usage.

Any theme that does not develop the assigned topic may be rejected by the instructor or given the grade F. Any theme with excessive errors that the student could have corrected by careful proofreading may also be rejected by the instructor or given the grade F.
APPENDIX B
Course Syllabus
English 101-Freshman Composition
Communications Division
Mountain View College

English 101 is the basic, first semester course in freshman composition. Most students enrolled in an academic degree program or who plan to transfer to another college or university for their junior and senior years generally take this course. Entering students will have finished a high school degree (or its equivalent) and will have taken a diagnostic writing test upon registering for classes at Mountain View. Students must successfully complete (grade of D or better) English 101 before entering the second semester composition course, English 102.

General Course Objective

English 101 is designed to enable students to write expository prose that is clearly organized and developed and which reflects responsibility to the writer's audience, his subject, and himself.

Specific Course Objectives

1. To teach the student to write various kinds of short papers (approximately 300-500 words) that are characterized by unity of thought, logical organization, and clear expression.

2. To teach the student to understand the paragraph as an expansion of a unit of thought, emphasizing unity, coherence, development, and smooth transition.

3. To teach the student to write complete, well-constructed, and varied sentences.

4. To teach the student to make an accurate selection of words.

5. To help the student to think critically about the ideas he reads and to study reading selections as models of writing.

Core Subject Matter for English 101

The following subject matter should be discussed during the semester, although not necessarily in the order given. Certainly, the instructor is free to supplement this material when necessary.

1. Overview of rhetorical stance and the demands of various audience/readers, the purposes of the communication, and the subject matter.
2. Pre-writing strategies (generating a topic and the writer's material)


5. Purposes for composition (aims): papers that are persuasive, self-expressive (personal experience/journal), informative, analytic/scientific.

6. Introductory paragraphs.

7. Developmental paragraphs, topic sentence, unity, coherence, development.

8. Transition between paragraphs.


10. Effective sentence usage.

11. Effective word usage.

12. Brief review in groups or on individual basis of any grammatical problems that occur in papers (no time in class is devoted to formal grammar review).

13. Use of student-written examples and professional writers' examples (from reader) as models for writing.

14. Discussion of standards of appropriateness and levels of language usage (relate to rhetorical stance).

15. Discuss preliminary research techniques (locating information and documenting it) and situations of plagiarism.

Required Written Assignments

The total amount of writing each student does each semester should be about 10 written assignments (substantial enough to equal approximately a total of 4000 words). The student should be asked to write something (complexity will vary) each week. Instructors should be careful to expose students to various kinds of papers (see section above on appropriate subject matter) and should balance in-class and out-of-class assignments. Since this course builds on successive lessons, papers should be returned to students on a weekly basis and written comments should reflect careful consideration of the paper.
Course Procedures and Orientation

English 101 is the basic, first semester course in freshman English composition. In-coming students will have been tested during registration in order to identify those so ill-prepared that they would not be likely to succeed. However, sometime during the first few class meetings, all students must produce a diagnostic writing sample. The instructor should evaluate the writing sample quickly and give the student a forthright appraisal of his weaknesses and strengths. Marginally prepared students (along with those who wish to supplement basic instruction) should be referred to the Learning Skills Center for individual work as necessary to reach mastery of specified communications skills.

During the first week of class, the instructor should distribute a detailed written syllabus (based on the stated departmental syllabus) to his students. The instructor should discuss the overall organization of the semester's work, the deadlines, course objectives, number of assignments, absence policy, make-up procedures, office location, hours, conference policy, and any other information pertinent to beginning the course.

All students should be made aware of the departmental grading standards (attached sheet) to be used in evaluating their papers.

Since English 101 is designed to be a college-level course, no class time is allotted for a formal and extensive review of spelling, grammar, or punctuation. Students displaying the following gross errors in their writing should, in most instances, be counseled into a developmental writing course, English 101 Long, or the Learning Skills Center (depending on the degree of the deficiencies):

a. comma splice or run-together sentences.
b. unjustifiable sentence fragment.
c. lack of subject-verb agreement.
d. lack of antecedent-pronoun agreement
e. faulty use of tense
f. illiterate or frequent misspelling.
g. illiterate sentence structure

Certainly the instructor is expected to aid the student in personal conferences when appropriate; however, no instructor should fail to be honest and forthright in informing the student as soon as possible about deficiencies so extensive that completion of the course objectives is nearly impossible.
Statement on Ethical Standards for Student Writing

In the Communications Division of Mountain View College, and especially in the English program, questions occasionally arise concerning standards of honesty in student writing. Improper collaboration, insufficient documentation, and plagiarism are opposed to the standards of conduct expected of college students. Such practices are particularly objectionable because they are unfair to honest students.

Obviously, presenting the work of someone else as one's own is dishonest; but many kinds of help that students get from friends are equally improper. A student, for example, may properly get advice in general terms; that is his helper may tell him that the punctuation or sentence structure of a passage is faulty, that misspellings are evident, or that the organization of a paragraph or of the whole theme is defective. The helper may not, however, rewrite an unsuccessful sentence or paragraph, correct the grammar, punctuation, or spelling. Of course he may not dictate the theme to the student or edit his rough draft. When the student is in doubt about the propriety of the assistance he is getting, he should remember that totally independent work is the safest procedure.

The use of sources in critical essays and research papers presents special problems. Consider, for example, the following sentences from Brooks and Warren's discussion of William Faulkner's story, "A Rose for Emily":

Miss Emily is obviously a pathological case. The narrator indicates plainly enough that people felt that she was crazy. All of this explanation prepares us for what Miss Emily does in order to hold her lover -- the dead lover is in one sense still alive for her -- and the realms of reality and appearance merge.

A student might change the above excerpt to the following:

There is no doubt that Emily is crazy and the townspeople all seemed to support this conclusion. We know that reality and illusion have become one when Miss Emily refuses to acknowledge that her lover is really dead.

This version is not really the student's work; the ideas are wholly those of Brooks and Warren. Certainly the student could use this material, but only if gives credit to his source. Failure to give credit with a footnote would constitute plagiarism.
Teachers can usually observe the differences between a student's normal writing and writing that is not his own. They have, however, no desire to do detective work and find the discovery of dishonest work a painful experience. Maintenance of academic standards and the protection of honest students from unfair competition require that students exercise care in noting and acting against dishonest practices. A paper deliberately plagiarized cannot be rewritten and will receive no credit in the course.

If every student at Mountain View College understood precisely what plagiarism is, there would be no need for the preceding illustrations. Nonetheless, the question of what is honest and what is dishonest use of source material is one which plagues many students; many of the unwary and uninformed have suffered serious consequences academically. As with the larger question of honesty in general, there are also various degrees of plagiarism. If these examples and the student's own conscience are still inadequate guides, he should consult the person who is guiding his research paper work.
I. Standards for an "A" Paper

A. Content
1. A significant central idea clearly defined and supported with substantial, concrete, and consistently relevant detail
2. Clear, logical organization, the topic developed with originality in an orderly, effective manner; paragraphs coherent, unified and adequately developed with clear effective transitions between them

B. Mechanics
1. No comma splices, fused sentences, dangling participle or incorrectly used fragments*  
2. Correct spelling
3. Punctuation conforming to standard usage  
   * Fragments may be used for stylistic effect, but they must be identified or marked as fragments.

C. Style
1. A forceful, vigorous, vivid statement of ideas  
2. Skillfully constructed, mature sentences of varied patterns  
3. Distinctive diction: fresh, precise, economical, idiomatic, appropriate

II. Standards for a "B" Paper

A. Content
1. A worthwhile topic clearly defined, adequately supported and honestly treated  
2. Clear and logical organization of the materials; paragraphs coherent and effectively developed; smooth transition between paragraphs, the whole being well-unified

B. Mechanics
1. No comma splices, fused sentences, dangling participle or incorrectly used fragments (see note above)  
2. Correct spelling
3. No serious lapses from conventional punctuation  
4. Grammar and usage conforming to standard English

C. Style
1. Sentences well-constructed and varied, showing a degree of maturity and fluency  
2. Diction accurate, economical, and idiomatic
III. Standards for a "C" Paper

A. Content
1. Central idea apparent, but trivial, trite, or too general; supported with inadequate concrete detail, repetitious, or irrelevant
2. Apparent but ineffective organization; paragraphs unified and effectively developed; transitions clear but abrupt, mechanical or monotonous
3. A paper must have positive value to be acceptable; a paper poorly organized and weak in content, though otherwise flawless, does not merit a passing grade.

B. Mechanics
1. No more than one comma splice, fused sentence, dangling modifier, or fragment (note, I, B, 1. above)
2. Few, if any misspelled words
3. Punctuation conforming to standard conventions with perhaps a few minor deviations
4. In general, grammar and usage standard, with only a few minor slips

C. Style
1. Sentences correctly constructed but lacking in distinction
2. Variety of sentence patterns (A paper consisting of primer sentences seldom varied is unacceptable as a "C" paper.)
3. Diction appropriate, clear, economical

IV. An Unsatisfactory Paper

A. Content
1. Central idea lacking, or confused; unsupported with concrete and relevant detail
2. No plan or purpose evident; topic underdeveloped or developed with redundancy or irrelevance; paragraphs incoherent, not unified, or underdeveloped; transition between paragraphs unclear or completely lacking

B. Mechanics
1. More than one of the following: Comma splice, fused sentence, dangling participle, fragment
2. Excessive spelling errors
3. A few serious deviations from conventional standards of punctuation or several less serious ones
4. Serious deviations from standard grammar or usage

Note: the breakdown between a "D" and "F" paper is one of degree; whereas that between "A", "B", or "C" papers demonstrates a concept of the "whole" paper, of a plan, of a step-by-step progression, a "D" or "F" paper shows none of these things. A "D" paper may show some striving after coherence even in the midst of frequent mistakes; but an "F" paper, on the other hand, makes so many mistakes of grammar and organization that the paper is inherently incoherent.
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