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Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

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1978

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Overview

This study reports a descriptive survey of secondary English teachers' attitudes toward language norms and variation. The study consists of five chapters. The introductory chapter contains a background statement, a statement of the problem, a rationale for the study and a discussion of the limitations which pertain to the methodology chosen. Included in various parts of this chapter are discussions of what is meant by such central concepts as "norms," "variation," "attitude" and "language attitude." Chapter II contains a review of related literature. The review is divided into two sections: a section which sets the present study in the larger context of important allied research and a further section which describes the research studies and professional literature related to the four subtests which comprise the survey instrument used in the present study. Chapter III presents a description of the development of the instrument, data gathering procedures and methods of statistical analysis. Chapter IV reports the findings of the study, and Chapter V summarizes the study, draws conclusions and offers suggestions for further study.
B. Background Statement

To say that English teachers view language normatively is to say nothing startling. At its worst, such a statement conjures up an image of the mythical Miss Thistlebottoms, those English teachers who devote their energies to enforcing fussbudget rules of grammar and usage which—rigidly applied—inhibit and discourage expression. Other less damning stereotypes nonetheless cast English teachers in the role of language arbiter; they summarize their efforts as a series of judgments about the correctness of student speech and writing. These familiar views of English teachers imply that teachers are aware of some norms of acceptable language against which they measure language development in students. This study is concerned with exploring what language norms teachers do recognize.

The nature of norms. Norms pertain to language in several related ways. Norms may be spoken of most simply as rules or patterns. Language norms in this sense depend upon the recognition of certain forms (lexical, syntactic, phonological) as desirable of emulation. Initially, all children are provided norms by their surrounding language community. But these children learn the language around them without becoming consciously aware of those norms that shape language.

As these language communities expand to include school, children are encouraged to recognize alternative language norms—typically more formal or more "standard." One observer reports
an incident in which this appeal is rather direct.¹ She tells of a teacher who, having asked her primary school student to dictate a caption for the picture he has just painted, is told, "This is me mum," but proceeds to print neatly under the painting, "This is my mother." As this incident illustrates, the norms inherent in the alternative language models offered by schools are consciously and intentionally recommended to students as more educated or linguistically superior. These norms are more than a mere nascent pattern or model. They are norms of a second type: they comprise a standard for conduct or principles of right action. In the schoolroom, norms traditionally become imperative statements asserting what language ought to be spoken and what language has value.

Norms and language variation. This second sort of language norm alerts us to the fact that the notion of a norm necessarily includes the notion of variation. The norm is the recognized or valued variant. Linguists see the variation as occurring along several dimensions. Quirk, et al. list these dimensions:

Region: as Southern, Bostonian, Appalachian

Education and Social Standing: as more or less educated; of the lower class, middle class

Subject Matter: using registers suited to job talk, baby talk, school, etc.

Medium: spoken or written

Attitude: formal or informal, reflecting attitudes toward the hearer, toward the subject matter or toward the purpose of the communication.

In less academic discussions these dimensions are often collapsed into such phrases as "standard English" or "good" English. This study will describe several dimensions of variation in terms meaningful to secondary English teachers and then describe the points which teachers identify as normative along these dimensions. The study will seek an answer to the question: as far as the many possible dimensions of language variation are concerned, what norms do secondary English teachers hold?

Norms and language attitudes. When I talk of identifying the language norms teachers recognize along dimensions of language variation, it should be clear that "norms" is not being used in any statistical sense. It does not refer to any mathematically derived

central tendency among a group of English teachers. Instead, it refers to these teachers' attitudes toward norms in language; that is, their attitude regarding what constitutes an appropriate standard for language conduct. In this study, "identifying the norms teachers recognize along dimensions of language variation" is an operational definition for language attitudes.

C. Statement of the Problem

By using language that is meaningful to them, this study seeks to describe secondary English teachers' language attitudes. It seeks an answer to the large question: what norms do teachers recognize along several dimensions of language variation and how do they conceptualize these norms? These questions will be answered, in turn, as they are interpreted by this series of more specific questions:

1. Do English teachers see standard English as a single, monolithic structure of "good English" against which student language ought to be judged? Or, in other words, do English teachers affirm a single, absolute standard for language use or do they see standard English as relative to other variables?

2. What relative importance do English teachers place on informal and formal English in their teaching?

3. Do English teachers show more concern for form than for function in teaching English?

4. To what extent do teachers' attitudes reflect the perennial fear of the popular press that language is collapsing and to what extent do they reflect the more enlightened awareness that language change is natural?
D. Rationale

Professional literature is replete with assertions as to the nature of the norms recognized by English teachers. Daniels claims that teachers' language attitudes spring more from the popular than from the professional culture. For this reason, he explains, they reflect the popular concern about the imminent collapse of our language.\(^3\) Labov charges that teachers cling to an ethnocentric model of language which represents only their own habits of speaking and arguing as rational.\(^4\) According to Allen, teachers are influenced by handbooks that rail against the conventions of spoken and informal English and hence come to define the characteristics of spoken or informal English as errors.\(^5\) Others picture teachers' language attitudes as equally unenlightened, claiming that, English teachers are especially prone to strong attitudes on linguistic purity and correctness . . . . Since English teachers are expected to be guardians of language standards and correctness, it is only natural that they tend to play the role assigned them.

that,

. . . the average English teacher continues to regard the language advocated in prescriptive grammars and employed in


\(^4\)Labov, Linguistics, p. 60.

the dullest and most verbose of textbooks as, simply, "good English" and the language of any nonstandard speaker as "bad English."

and that,

I am firmly of the opinion that a vast majority of teachers comprising the body are still persuaded by the Good English/Bad English syndrome, which promulgates the superiority of the standard dialect as the only correct and acceptable variety of English and, through the practice of exclusion, negation and denigration, the inferiority of the nonstandard dialect as a sloppy, incorrect and corrupt form of English. . . . English teachers continue to hold fast to the prescriptive approach, proclaiming the "correctness" of Standard English (SE) and the "wrongness" of Black Nonstandard English (BNE).^6

Unlike those above who see teachers' language attitudes as needing remediation, some commentators see these attitudes as having already begun ameliorating. Shuy's observation is characteristic of that latter group. He writes,

. . . the general tendency in the school was either to ignore the situation [the existence of certain types of language variation] or to attribute it to genetic inferiority, individual ignorance, or willful stupidity. In general, today's situation is not quite that unenlightened . . . . Five years ago we seem to have wanted everyone to talk and write alike. Today even the most pessimistic observer will have to admit that the scene is gradually changing.

---


Despite claims and counterclaims, few studies directly examine teachers' attitudes toward many sorts of language variation or toward the concept of language norm. There are, however, many more studies that look at attitudes toward a particular dialect variation and tangentially yield empirically based descriptions of the sorts of language teachers recognize as normative. The language posture, the consciously identified attitudes of English teachers toward language norms and variation, has yet to be described in detail.

E. Limitations

In talking about one of his in-service projects to alter teachers' attitudes toward language variation, Roger Shuy shrewdly observed that teachers tend to think about materials and techniques

\[ \text{E. Limitations} \]

In talking about one of his in-service projects to alter teachers' attitudes toward language variation, Roger Shuy shrewdly observed that teachers tend to think about materials and techniques

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8 The studies that do examine teachers' attitudes toward language variation are reviewed in Chapter II.

rather than theory and attitude. To whatever extent this is true for teachers, the researcher of those attitudes can hardly afford to pass over the concept of attitude or attitude theory lightly. It is important for him to know what we mean and do not mean when we speak of attitude measures.

The word "attitude" has itself been defined variously. Consider these three definitions:

An attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness to respond, organized through experience and exerting a directive and/or dynamic influence on behavior.

An attitude is an underlying disposition which enters, along with other influences, into the determination of a variety of behaviors toward an object or class of objects, including statements of beliefs and feelings about the object and approach-avoidance actions with respect to it.

The first two definitions view attitudes as mediational. They speak of them as "underlying dispositions" or "states of readiness

---


to respond." Therefore, as such, they are entities that cannot be measured directly, but must be inferred from behavior.

There are several methods by means of which attitudes can be inferred by researchers. The method of self-report, used in the vast majority of attitude studies, is the primary one chosen for this study. For all its widespread appeal, self-report has limitations as a methodology to which we should be alert.

First, reported "attitudes" — and this point goes back to the one made by the first two definitions quoted above — are not attitudes per se; they are language from which attitudes may be inferred. The third definition of language attitudes quoted above loses sight of this important distinction. By referring to language attitudes as "elicitable shoulds on who speaks what, when and how," one suggests that attitudes are the response itself rather than the readiness to respond or the underlying disposition that influences response. By equating attitudes with the responses elicited by the

---

13 Stuart Cook and Claire Selltiz, "A Multiple-Indicator Approach to Attitude Measurement," *Attitude Measurement*, pp. 23-41, group potential measures into these five categories:
- measures in which inferences are drawn from self-report of beliefs, feelings, behaviors, etc.
- measures in which inferences are drawn from observation of behavior
- measures in which inferences are drawn from the individual's reaction to or interpretation of partially structured stimuli
- measures in which inferences are drawn from the performance of "objective tasks"
- measures in which inferences are drawn from physiological reactions to the attitudinal object or representations of it.
attitude object, we have a ready operational definition for attitudes, but at the cost of conceptual inflexibility. When attitudes are directly equated with responses, problems of inconsistency and instability arise. The researcher is put in the position of redescribing attitudes whenever a new means to elicit them is employed. This difficulty is avoided when we realize that self-reported attitudes need to be interpreted.

Before turning to some of the other limitations imposed on researchers by self-report methodologies, we might note that the third definition of language attitudes — Cooper's and Fishman's definition — is useful in narrowing the scope of the attitudes to be considered. By framing the definition in terms of the referent (i.e., language attitudes are people's attitudes toward language) instead of framing it in terms of the consequences (i.e. language attitudes are those attitudes that influence language behavior), its range is reduced considerably. The broader definition would be unwieldy in this study and over-inclusive since, potentially, there is no class of attitudes that might not have some influence on language behavior.

Returning again to the question of the limitation on information derived from self-report, we might note that sometimes self-report is notoriously inaccurate. Labov concluded in his study of New Yorkers' language that,

In the conscious report of their own usage, . . . New York respondents are very inaccurate. There is little correlation between their self-evaluation and their actual speech variation . . . . When the average New Yorker reports
his usage, he is simply giving us his norm of correctness. No conscious deceit plays a part in this process . . . . He does not hear the actual sound which he produces, but the norm which he imposes.\textsuperscript{14}

Labov's subjects were inaccurate in that they reported their speech to be closer to the norms at which they were aiming. They could not accurately characterize the sounds they actually produced.

Similarly, Peter Trudgill's study of a British working class population showed that the self-report of his male informants erred in the direction of a speech which they saw as having higher status. But, in this case, the speech they saw as having higher status was the less prestigious variant. Trudgill found that men in his population apparently valued certain nonstandard speech forms for the group solidarity they signaled. He writes that,

\begin{quote}
. . . male speakers, at least in Norwich, are at a subconscious or perhaps simply private level very favorably disposed toward nonstandard speech forms. This is so much the case that as many as 54 percent of them, in one case, claim to use these forms or hear themselves as using them even when they do not do so.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}


Trudgill is left with the conclusion that the male informant's overt comments about their own "bad speech" are meant for public consumption only and that they appeared to seek a "covert prestige" associated with nonstandard varieties of speech.

If people demonstrate little ability or, in other cases, little willingness to accurately describe their own speech where certain speech forms are concerned, researchers have a basis for anticipating measurement error if subjects are asked to report their own speech habits. This source of measurement error is avoided in this study by asking not for a description of actual speech, but for the subject's notions of what varieties of English should be spoken under certain types of conditions — usually, in the English classroom. If anything, this study may be able to capitalize on the propensity to misreport in the direction of the perceived norm since it seeks a description of those very norms. Nonetheless, the larger caution still obtains: there is apt to be a difference between the public and the private, between the overt report and the covert attitude.

The researcher needs also to be alert to a third limitation: an individual's report of his own attitudes varies when different measures are used to obtain it. Sometimes these different measures reflect what attitude theorists call structural differences. Some measures measure the cognitive (knowing) structure of the attitude, some the affective (feeling) and some the conative (active). And, these different structures may show attitudes that are far from
isomorphic. An example of this sort of discrepancy can be seen in Marilyn Rosenthal's exploration of pre-school children's attitudes toward Black and standard English. Rosenthal concealed in some "magic boxes" audio recordings of a black English and standard English speaker, both of whom offered the children a present. After listening to both tapes, Black children said that they thought the standard English box talked better, but they did not like it better nor would they take the preferred present from it. Black children showed a positive cognitive evaluation of standard English, but a negative affective and conative evaluation of it.16

Orlando Taylor found in his study of teacher attitudes toward black and nonstandard English that teachers' actual philosophies (or cognitive attitudes) did not line up with their teaching strategies (or conative attitudes). They were more likely to agree strongly with such items as "When teachers reject the native language of a student, they do him great harm." than they were with items like, "Teachers should allow black students to use black English in the classroom."17 What teachers were inclined to do


did not seem to derive in a straightforward way from what they said they thought.

Roger Shuy found the same lack of consistency in the attitudes of a group of Washington employers he interviewed. The employers consciously denied making use of speech as a consideration in hiring while at the same time clearly making use of linguistic criteria in hiring. Shuy concluded that they were more able to use linguistic clues in making employment judgments than they were to talk about them. The same attitudes may have discrepant manifestations in actual behavior and in reported statements.

Likewise, Dena Lieberman found that the native speakers of St. Lucia said that they preferred St. Lucian English to the patois when directly questioned, but showed a more positive attitude toward their native varieties in a matched guise, semantic differential test. Lieberman's study carries with it the warning that even self-report of language norms may produce apparent contradictions as different instruments, under different experimental conditions, are used to record them. The language attitudes -- those underlying dispositions -- are slippery creatures!


The limitations of self-report methodology set forth above were minimized in this study by

1. using the initial teacher interviews to sensitize me to potential sources of measurement error;

2. using two indicators — the interviews and the scalar instrument — to obtain readings of the same attitudes; and

3. recognizing the need to interpret the results in the light of specific experimental conditions and in the light of previous research.

Alertness to these procedural limitations should, perhaps paradoxically, make for more certain (although qualified) findings.

There is particular justification for using self-report in exploring English teachers' language attitudes — despite the array of limitations we've examined. Even though teachers behave differently toward varieties of language than their verbally reported attitudes suggest they ought to, the verbal articulation of these attitudes is also a part of their teaching activities. Teachers do talk about language as well as nonverbally respond to it. Language, as the "subject matter" of English, is their message as well as their medium. Even though their self-conscious notions about what language should prevail do not square with their own covert response to language variation in classrooms, they are nonetheless important. They are important because this self-report corresponds to some extent to the overt classroom and curricular talk about language. The English teachers' self-reported language attitudes are a pedagogical reality that must be dealt with.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A. Growing Interest In Language Attitudes

One may well ask why so many unsubstantiated assertions about the nature of teachers' language attitudes are rampant in the literature and why there are so few descriptive studies to lend empirical credence to them. Some explanation can be had by examining developments in linguistics and in the evolution of the professional concerns of English teachers, both of which have led to a greater interest in language attitudes themselves. These developments are double-edged in that they both explain the lack of work in this area while at the same time suggesting an increasing interest in them.

Throughout the past decade, there has been a shift within linguistics that has generated renewed interest in the broad area of language variations and language norms. Linguists have begun challenging some influential abstract descriptions of language that minimized -- really ignored -- the fact of the multi-dimensional and mutually interactive causes of language variation. Noam Chomsky's competence-performance distinction is one such description that is being challenged. Chomsky explained in Aspects of the Theory of Syntax that,

... grammaticality and acceptability are distinct concepts and belong to different areas of language
description: grammar relates to competence, the characterization of the speaker's knowledge of the language, whereas acceptability relates to performance, the speaker's actual use of his language. There might be, for example, a grammatical sentence — unacceptable for its length for stylistic reasons or for the burden it places on memory.¹

Chomsky's distinction here echoed Ferdinand de Saussure's earlier one between langue (our abstract knowledge of language structure) and parole (what we actually say) and served to continue what Labov calls the asocial tradition in linguistic research.² According to Labov, linguists — even the structuralists who collected an actual corpus of speech utterances to study — analyzed language apart from other social variables. Transformational-generative linguists only carried this tradition a step further, using for data their own intuitions about grammatical and ungrammatical sentences. Since historical linguistics has been based on literary texts and, since data collection in actual speech communities required considerable time, the choice of such an alternative source of data is understandable. The linguist's looking at his own intuitions made generalizability possible at the expense of comprehensiveness: the social causes of language variation were neglected. The focus and emphasis of the asocial linguistic tradition seems lopsided to us only in retrospect, however, since our consciousness of it as "asocial" is only retrospective.


²Labov, Linguistics, pp. 41, 42.
It is important to note that our assessment and reassessment of scientific description is part of the scientific process itself. All scientific abstraction involves a trade-off between generalizability and comprehensiveness. Abstraction itself is the process whereby the parts of a phenomenon that are judged relevant to a specific consideration are identified and labeled in such a way as to exclude irrelevant parts of the same phenomenon. This purposeful simplification of phenomena through abstraction gives scientists a powerful means by which to explore phenomena and that exploration takes the form of testing the meaningfulness of the particular abstraction attempted. The scientist asks, does my abstraction of this phenomenon adequately explain it; does it increase our ability to control its effects or predict its impact? As these questions are asked, the process of abstraction in science corrects itself.

This process of revising and altering abstractions can be seen in linguistics — since the sixties particularly. According to Labov, the change came as linguists became concerned with the urgent social problems of urban minorities. They became interested in actual speech and in a "communicative competence" which includes mastery of a range of speech styles that reflect a sensitivity to the roles of the speaker and addressee, to the topic and to the speech.

They became interested in how parole impinges on school performance and on bilingual interference. Whereas in the past linguists had taken for granted such questions of use and purpose, they now turned toward them in their study of language in its social context. The term "sociolinguistics" was framed to suggest the nature of this new direction in research.

The new direction might be described as a willingness to explore and a curiosity about other types of language variation. Albert Marckwardt charts the history of a parallel change in the professional literature of English education by observing that it has passed through three stages:

1. Initially, into the first part of this century, judgments on the English language were presented in terms of a simple dichotomy. One spoke of expressions as either "right" or "wrong," "correct" or "incorrect."

2. Then, during the late twenties, a range of usage was recognized. This range was expressed in terms of a ladder-like series, with "formal or Literary English at the top; a middle characterized as Informal or Colloquial; a bottom rung stigmatized as Vulgar or Illiterate."

3. Eventually, in the late forties, this single hierarchy came under attack. Functional varieties of English -- formal and informal -- were described as interacting with the long recognized cultural levels. But even these interacting dichotomies proved to be too simplistic a picture of the social and educational structure of English. Linguists, like Martin Joos, for whose book Marckwardt wrote the historical sketch summarized here, finally began to recognize the complex ways in which every speaker adjusts his language to a variety of contexts.4

Another observer describes the same increasing appreciation for language variation in this way:

The binary right-wrong classroom paradigm is subject to question. People do use language in a number of contexts, for a number of purposes, to a number of different people. Variation in language can be seen to be the fantastically complex tool with which degrees of subtlety can be effected; tone can be manipulated and poetry produced.5

When language is looked at functionally, when it is seen as a psychological, historical, social, educational, geographical and physiological matter as well as a formally linguistic one, this interest in variation surfaces. Such an interest indicates that ground has been broken for further studies of language variation as it impacts the work of English teachers.

Both the growth of sociolinguistics and the quickened interest in language variation among English educators explain in part the relatively new work that has been done in language attitudes. The socio-political climate over the past decade has given additional impetus to these studies. Specifically, the social crises in the cities during the 1960's gave rise to federally supported research into the nature of such nonstandard dialects as black English and Mexican-American English. Since much of this research has been inspired in its methodology by the work of Lambert and his colleagues at McGill University in Canada, I have summarized two studies conducted by the Lambert group.

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In a Montreal study Lambert et al. sought " . . . to determine the significance spoken language has for listeners by analyzing their evaluational reaction to English and French."\(^6\) The researchers used a matched guise technique which required English and French Canadian subjects to rate bilingual speakers in both an English and a French guise. Speakers were rated on a series of fourteen personality traits. Because subjects found significant personality differences in the same speaker in his two guises, the investigators hypothesized that certain stereotyped notions of French and English speaking Canadians were responsible for the discrepant ratings.\(^7\)

Lambert and Tucker conducted a similar study in the United States to determine whether college students would show a particular preference for one American dialect over another. Three groups of subjects were asked to respond to audiotapes of speakers with different dialects. White college students from a Southern university and from a New England university and black students from a Southern Negro university were asked to rate each recorded speaker on a set of bipolar rating scales on which sets of bipolar adjectives were paired (e.g. good upbringing vs. poor upbringing.)\(^8\)

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\(^7\)Lambert, "Evaluational Reactions," p. 51.

\(^8\)See footnote \#10 for an explanation of this evaluative procedure.
findings indicated that both the Negro and white college students rated standard "network" speakers significantly more favorably than speakers of nonstandard dialects, with female students rating speakers slightly more favorably (although not significantly so). An additional finding was that the Negro judges rated "Educated White Southern" speakers as least favorable while white subjects rated "Uneducated Southern Negro" dialect least favorable.  

It is the use of audio recordings representing different dialects or languages and the use of the semantic differential rating procedure that have been used by other investigators of language attitudes. In the United States, Frederick Williams and his 


10 The semantic differential attitudinal measure was developed by Charles E. Osgood, et al., The Measurement of Meaning (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1957). It measures an individual's reaction to semantic objects. Scales look like the following and may be quantified in one of the following two ways:

3 2 1 0 -1 -2 -3

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The first method of quantifying the scales shows intensity from a neutral point more clearly although it involves working with negative numbers. Both methods show directionality.

A concept's profile consists of its measure on the EVALUATION, POWER, and ACTIVITY dimensions (the EPA dimensions). These three dimensions have proven to give efficient, reliable measures of a person's overall response to a concept. These dimensions are typically measured by several scales (from 4-10) which are then averaged to provide a single factor score for each dimension. While other dimensions besides EPA have been identified, the EPA dimensions are the most common. That is, they tend to emerge when responses on the various SD scales are correlated with one another.

The EPA structure resulted from Osgood's study in which he chose 76 adjective pairs from Roget's Thesaurus to represent a wide
colleagues have conducted investigations along the same lines as the Lambert group and with a similar identification of stereotyped attitudes toward nonstandard dialects. In one study Williams found that a sample of inner city grade school teachers in Chicago, after listening to an audiotaped speech sample, tended to rate children along two dimensions which the researchers called "confidence-eagerness" and "ethnicity-nonstandardness." Teachers generally rated middle-class children as less nonstandard and ethnic sounding and as more confident and eager than lower-class children.¹¹

My study makes contact with the vast body of research into nonstandard dialects because the latter, of which Williams' work is part, involves attitudes toward these dialects. Many of the studies

variety of semantic concepts. One hundred college students then rated some twenty different concepts on these scales. Responses were correlated and the EPA structure was clearly evident. There is some indication that this structure is common to the semantic space in other languages. It is, to some extent, pan-cultural.

The SD technique is highly generalizable. It provides a reliable way of measuring attitudes and of comparing affective reactions on widely disparate things. The bipolar adjective scales are a simple, economical means for obtaining data on people's reactions. With adaptations, they can be used with children and with those of various social and cultural backgrounds. The SD technique provides a standard metric which allows objects to be positioned in a single attitudinal space. Because the technique is similar in its various applications, it is possible for SD research to be cumulative.

were attitude studies. Occasionally some individual findings bore directly on my area of investigation. My descriptive study has, in some ways, a broader focus. I have been less concerned with attitudes toward specific dialects per se than with the norms secondary English teachers use in judging all language. As explained in more detail below, I wish to see (1) if teachers see "good English" as having a single, monolithic structure, (2) if they see language changes as undesirable or merely inevitable and (3) if, when teaching English, they emphasize skill at using a formal style more than an informal and (4) show more concern for the form of communication than for the efficacy of its functioning. Describing this cluster of attitudes would, it seems to me, provide a basis for speculating about other attitudes.

Therefore, without describing other studies of attitudes toward nonstandard dialects in detail, I'd like to briefly summarize some of their findings and, then, say a final word about their methodology. I have chosen not to discuss the lively difference-deficiency debate which itself was generated by the Head Start Program, one of the poverty programs of the sixties, since this debate and the research arising from it have been thoroughly reviewed by others.  

12See, for example, James Ford, "The Prospective Foreign Language Teacher and the Linguistically and Culturally Different Learner: An Attitudinal Study" (Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1974), pp. 18-23.
There seems little question that people are aware of and respond to language variation. Twelve year olds, even eight year olds, respond to these differences. Many investigators have found that dialect is a factor in judging personality and in identifying socio-economic status.

Research studies in educational settings indicate that teacher language attitudes do have an impact on pupil achievement and their attitudes; that, as measured by Hayes and Taylor's Language Attitude Scale, pre-service English teachers have a more positive attitude than do pre-service foreign language, math or social science teachers; that paraprofessionals in school settings,

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13 See Paul Bell, et al., Children's Attitudes toward Speakers of Standard and Non-Standard English, (Bethesda, Md.: ERIC Reproduction Services, ED 130 546, 1974) and Roger Shuy and Frederick Williams, "Stereotyped Attitudes of Selected English Dialect Communities," Current Trends, eds. Shuy and Fasold, pp. 85-96.


16 Politzer and Hoover, "Attitudes Toward Black English."

17 Ford, "The Prospective Foreign Language Teacher," pp. 50-68.
blacks and those of low socio-economic status feel that, in general, children's speech should be corrected while teachers, whites and those of high socio-economic status feel that it should not be corrected;\(^{18}\) and that teachers' cognitive styles influence language attitudes.\(^{19}\) Other researchers still have used language attitudes as a defining characteristic of a speech community, as a reflection of inter-ethnic attitudes, as a predictor of second language achievement, as a determinant of interlingual intelligibility and as a determinant of teachers' perception of their pupil's abilities.\(^{20}\)

This hasty catalogue is intended to be suggestive of the variety of ways researchers have investigated language attitudes. Their methodology has been equally varied — ranging from ethnographic participant observation, and rather open-ended interview questions to tighter interview schedules designed to elicit responses in terms of predetermined categories, questionnaires, semantic


\(^{20}\) This review of findings is from Cooper and Fishman, "The Study of Language Attitudes," pp. 5, 6. The last finding is corroborated by a study of English infant and junior schools and German primary and secondary schools, Robert E. Shafer and Suzanne M. Shafer, "Teacher Attitudes Toward Children's Language in West Germany and England," *Comparative Education*, vol. 1, no. 1 (March 1975), pp. 31-57.
differential rating scales, matched guise techniques and other instruments designed to quantify attitudes. It would appear that although a wide research interest in language attitudes is relatively recent, there are nonetheless several traditions within this body of research. Language attitudes constitute a new frontier which is being homesteaded in various ways.

The remainder of this review will be subordinated to a discussion of the four subtests or meaning dimensions that make up the survey instrument used in the present study. For that reason, the remainder of the chapter is divided into four sections offering, respectively, discussions of views toward standard English, informal and formal styles in language instruction, form and function in language instruction and language change. The description of these topics in the context of related literature is designed to set them within existing traditions of scholarship as well as to elaborate the topics themselves by considering some of the important issues these topics entail.

B. Standard English as an Absolute Monolithic Structure

The first subsection of the survey instrument explores teachers' attitudes toward the term "standard English." The underlying question here is whether teachers see standard English as a single monolithic structure of "good English" against which student language ought to be judged or whether they reject this view of standard English for any one of several more complex views.

There is much in the professional literature of English educators that attempts to expose the danger of the former attitude. In fact, there are so many warnings that one readily supposes that there is a basis for concern and that teachers do hold such an attitude. According to this view, specific language forms are either correct or incorrect. Just which forms are correct can be determined by consulting one authority or another -- a grammar book, usage manuals, English teachers or, sometimes, "educated people" always with the expectation that they will all agree. Appealing to "educated people" as authorities often turns out to be a circular proposition since people are said to be educated if they speak like educated people and language is said to be acceptable, standard English if it is spoken by educated people. Such an arrangement allows for assertions about both educated speech and educated people that are hard to prove or disprove.

There are three research studies which suggest that teachers talk and teach as though there were an unambiguous correct structure to the language. Louise Stokes found in a series of interviews with
English teachers what she judged to be an over-concern for correctness — a correctness mania. She found teachers insistent and consistent in referring to standard English as "correct" usage and as "good grammar" and to black English or nonstandard usage as "incorrect" speech or "poor grammar."

The second study that bears on this issue is important since the present study derives some of its design and inspiration from it. This study, the work of Hayes and Taylor at the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C., assessed the language attitudes of some 422 teachers from rural and urban school districts representing nine geographic regions. These researchers sought to "... determine the professed attitudes of teachers toward standard and nonstandard varieties of English . . . ."

Taylor and Hayes devised the Language Attitude Scale (LAS) to measure teacher attitudes in four content areas, one of which was the structure and inherent usefulness of nonstandard and black English. The researchers found that (1) teacher language attitudes varied from topic to topic; teachers "... did not appear to have a single, generic attitude toward dialects, but, rather, differing attitudes depending upon the particular aspect being discussed;"

22 Stokes, "Dialect and Teaching."


(2) teachers with 3-5 years teaching experience had significantly more positive attitudes toward nonstandard dialects than teachers just beginning their careers or those with 10 or more years of experience; (3) teachers from white schools profess less positive attitudes than teachers from predominantly black schools or racially mixed schools; (4) that attitudes did not prove to be a significant function of sex or of race, even though more black teachers had slightly more positive attitudes; (5) that there were no significant differences between the attitudes of Northern and Southern teachers; and (6) that, with the exception of the attitudes related to language structure, teacher attitudes toward nonstandard dialects are positive to neutral. Attitudes show that a substantial number of teachers are favorably disposed toward language variation.

The finding of most interest for the first subsection of the present study is the last one reported above: that teacher attitudes were most negative when they were asked to agree or disagree with statements about the structure of nonstandard English. Hayes and Taylor asked teachers to react to these specific statements:

1. Black English is a misuse of standard English.
2. Black English is a clear, thoughtful and expressive language.
3. Black English has a faulty grammar system.
4. Black English sounds as good as standard English.

5. Black English is cool.

6. Nonstandard English is as effective for communicating as is standard English.

7. Black English is an inferior language system.

8. Black English sounds sloppy.

Teachers' responses to these items showed that they found the structure of nonstandard English most objectionable. The researchers speculate that their objections arise from the fact that language structure is the part of the dialect that is formally taught, the part that is the most objective and substantiated by data and, therefore, least judgmentally subjective. While some of these assertions are themselves problematic, it does seem reasonable that teachers would report being least able to tolerate variations from the standard language structure that is fixed in the tradition of English pedagogy — from the catalogue of stigmatized forms to the narrowly prescribed points of usage and syntax. Taylor suggests that this prescriptive tradition may make it difficult for teachers to recognize a difference without judging it to be deficient.

The third study investigates attitudes toward Quebec style French. D'Anglejan and Tucker studied the attitudes of French Canadian students, teachers and workers from three separate areas of Quebec and found, in general, that Quebec Style French (QSF) was

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perceived to be weaker with respect to its phonology and lexicon than Standard European French (SEF). They regarded SEF as the prestige form of the language and their dissatisfaction with QSF was accompanied by a desire for correctness, norms, and specific information regarding appropriate language use. This particular finding is of interest in that it suggests a link between linguistic insecurity and prescriptive rules about correct usage. Such a link between rules and linguistic insecurity has itself been the topic of a small group of investigations into language attitudes. This Canadian study contributes cross-cultural evidence that some speakers of other languages, too, may feel that there is one standard to which speech ought to conform.

Why would such an absolutist stance toward usage have an appeal for English teachers? Mary Taylor, after evaluating informal questionnaires of individuals' attitudes toward "correct" language, discovered that English teachers focus attention on a small number of highly stigmatized items -- often reviewing the same items year after year, irrespective of actual usage. Taylor hypothesized that

English teachers establish and protect absolute standards for linguistic performance because in so doing they are establishing and protecting their own prestige and they feel it is necessary to establish it because they are themselves linguistically insecure.\(^{30}\)

Taylor charges that English teachers find changing language and changing tastes threatening.

To be sure, there are other explanations for these absolutist attitudes. Roger Shuy offers a rather abstract explanation for what he calls the myth of a single standard English. He writes,

Myths in any field often develop when reality is too complex to deal with. As such, they are variation-free poles on a continuum of some sort. They are abstract rather than real. They are over-simplifications which enable us to conceive of essences without being overburdened with distracting conditionality. \(^{31}\)

Shuy's explanation is compelling because language is obviously a complex phenomenon. Teachers are in no position to sort out its complexities in novel ways since their tasks now are to help students' language develop in desirable ways. The practical demand that they do so militates against the tentative postures that characterize the researcher and gives the traditional distinctions (e.g., standard-nonstandard) a good deal of force even when these distinctions are not particularly clear or specific. And, as Shuy further points out, it is not as though the myth of standard-nonstandard polarity is wholly bad. Initially, it is a useful


description, but it begets pretense and hypocrisy as it comes
to be confused with actual speech. The pretense and hypocrisy
Shuy points to are occurrences of hypercorrection and the denial
of the existence of social dialects.\textsuperscript{32} It does not seem unlikely
that, as Shuy argues, initially useful abstractions become
tyrranizing myths. One critic declared that, considering our in-
ability to identify its specific and individual characteristics,
standard English is "non-existent, but psychologically real."\textsuperscript{33}

However the myth of a single monolithic standard for correct
English evolved, attacks on it have been continuous. The early
National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE) monographs attacked
the myth of one standard English by establishing the role actual
usage plays in shaping usage standards. NCTE published Sterling
A. Leonard's research that demonstrated the unreliable nature of many
of the linguistic judgments commonly recorded in school grammars.
Leonard updated these judgments by asking a group composed of 30
linguists, 30 editors, 22 writers, 19 businessmen and 30 English
teachers, to estimate the use or non-use of a large number of ex-
pressions often condemned in English grammars and handbooks. These
groups of cultivated persons (to use Leonard's phrase) were asked
to categorize various expressions in accord with their observations
of what current usage is rather than what it should be. They were
to categorize them as

\textsuperscript{32} Shuy, "Useful Myths," pp. 17, 18.

\textsuperscript{33} Taylor, "The Folklore of Usage," p. 762.
1. Fully correct English, appropriate chiefly for serious and important occasions, whether in speech or writing; usually called "literary English;"

2. Fully acceptable English for informal conversation, correspondence and all other writing of well-bred ease; now wholly appropriate for occasions of literary dignity; "standard cultivated colloquial English;"

3. Popular or illiterate speech, not used by persons who wish to pass as cultivated, save to represent uneducated speech, or to be jocose; here taken to include slang or argot, and dialect forms not admissible to the standard or cultivated area; usually called "vulgar English," but with no implication necessarily of the current meaning of vulgar: "naif, popular, or uncultivated English."34

On the basis of this categorization, 71 items were labeled "established," 38 items were labeled "illiterate" and 109 were labeled "disputed."

Leonard's survey of opinion was supplemented by Marckwardt and Walcott's survey of fact. These latter researchers consulted the Oxford English Dictionary, Webster's Second International Dictionary (1934), Howell's Modern American Usage (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935) and Hall's English Usage (Chicago: Scott Foresman and Company, 1917). Their study made clear that they were not attempting to define any standard or advocate any particular usage as correct, but only to report usages that appeared in the works of universally recognized authorities. They found that all but five of Leonard's 38 "illiterate" usages were recorded in the sources employed and that roughly one-third were

deemed reputable, literary or colloquial use in either England or America. Of the 38 items condemned in Leonard's study as illiterate, 20 dealt with verb forms. Of them, 7 were found to be standard English, 2 archaic and 11 dialectal. Marckwardt and Walcott concluded that "in respect to matters of verb formation and use, our prejudices are heightened." More generally, they found that opinion was very conservative when compared with the recorded facts of usage. They found, for example, that 87% of the disputed usages (106 out of 121) are found to be "on the basis of recorded fact, actually in cultivated use today . . . . Of the remaining 15 items, 6 were in standard use at some previous time." The overly conservative nature of the judgments of the cultivated people in Leonard's sample illustrates the process whereby usages that are inappropriate in certain circumstances come to be stigmatized generally as incorrect forms despite the fact of their also being recorded in current cultivated use. Bad reputations seem to cling to certain usages. Marckwardt and Walcott's final warning to teachers was that, if they are influenced by these reputations and censure such expressions, they cannot do so on the basis of their not occurring in the mouths of cultivated speakers or on the pages of cultivated writers.

35 Marckwardt and Walcott, *Current English Usage*, pp. 59, 60.

36 Marckwardt and Walcott, *Current English Usage*, p. 49.
When in 1927, NCTE appointed a committee to consider the question of usage, the question was one that had already had a considerable history. According to Marckwardt, the grammars in use in 1900 displayed a rigid, prescriptive attitude toward grammar.\textsuperscript{37} They were, for the most part, designed for elementary schools since remedial native language instruction was still confined to that level. Lindley Murray's \textit{Grammar of the English Language Adapted to Different Classes of Learners}, passing as it did through some 200 editions after its publication in 1795, was likely to be the text.

Murray's \textit{Grammar} reflected the authoritarian tradition characteristic of the eighteenth century grammarians.\textsuperscript{38} These grammarians (Lowth, Ward, Coote) had had no training in philology but had gained eminence because the newly rich mercantile class, having achieved political and economic status, now sought some language guidelines to give them the social status of the culturally secure. In formulating these guidelines, these grammarians did not hesitate to challenge contemporary usage as unacceptable. Literary usages,


too — those of Shakespeare, Milton, Addison, Swift, Dryden, Pope, Hobbs, Bacon, Locke, even the Bible — were likewise subject to criticism. Those grammarians saw their purpose as prescribing correct forms. This purpose is aptly typified by this bit of dialogue from Aeflin's grammar for young children:

"We children beg thee, oh teacher, to teach us to speak because we are ignorant and speak incorrectly."

"What do you want to say?"

"What do we care what we say, provided it is correct speech and useful and not foolish or bad."^®

The teacher's role as corrector of faulty speech forms is clearly implied by this verse.

According to Marckwardt, remedial instruction in English shifted to the secondary school when, in the late twenties, more students began to continue on to college (at the rate of one in ten instead of merely one in twenty-five). Schools could no longer count on the home environment to reinforce standard English since schools were populated by more than the children of the highest social class. For this purpose, a functional grammar developed, one concerned especially with specific details and certain errors. From this functional grammar came the tradition of "school grammar," influenced by the eighteenth century prescriptive grammars and by a growing collection of shibboleths about language usage, including warnings against certain stigmatized forms and specifications for certain fine points and niceties of speech.

^® Marckwardt, et al., "Standards and Attitudes."
Leonard, Marckwardt, and Walcott were anxious in the early thirties to recommend the structural linguists' criterion for standard English; that is, "the actual language of those who are carrying on the affairs of the English speaking people," as Fries put it. Despite the thirties movement, NCTE felt impelled to resolve in 1952 that "all usage is relative." And still today the specter of English teachers who cannot appreciate this fact recurs in the professional literature. Indeed, we have become familiar with their personifications -- Miss Thistlebottom and Miss Fidditch, those mythical figures who devote all their energies to enforcing picayune grammar and usage dicta.

The narrowest view of a standard English has presumably been embodied in these figures and then criticized because it still reflects the language attitudes of some English teachers. The first subsection of the survey instrument is designed to describe the extent to which these mythical figures are straw men. Teachers will be asked, on the one hand, to express their disagreement or agreement with statements which affirm a single, absolute standard of language use. On the other hand, they will be asked to express their agreement or disagreement with statements which urge a view of standard English as relative to other variables.

40 Marckwardt, et al., "Standards and Attitudes." It is interesting to note that since the advent of open admissions to colleges and universities, remediation has moved to that level.

41 Quoted by Marckwardt, et al. "Standards and Attitudes."
C. THE PROLIFERATION OF DISTINCTION: INFORMAL AND FORMAL ENGLISH

There are certainly many ways to shake the notion of an absolute standard for correct English. The movement of the thirties sought to do so by introducing actual usage as a criterion for acceptable language. Actual usage is obviously a varied and changing criterion. Perhaps one reason this movement had not been more influential than it has is that its criterion for acceptability did not allow for enough language variation — or at least not in a conscious enough fashion. It often collapsed all sorts of variation into the three levels of usage. Nor did the thirties movement recognize the ways in which such social variables as region, socio-economic status and ethnicity influence the acceptability of language. In the case of Leonard's categories (quoted above) no functional distinction was made between spoken and written English.

The structural linguists made an effort to leave behind altogether the normative question of acceptability. Charles Fries wrote in his introduction to American English Grammar that a descriptive grammar "... assumes as its first principle a scientific point of view with its repudiation of the conventional classification of mistakes and correct forms and attempts to outline the types of differences that appear in our American language practices."42 Fries then described three classifying groups, using occupation and

education to distinguish them: Standard English speakers, graduated from reputable colleges and having professional careers; Common English users, having some formal education in high school and holding neither professional nor strictly manual or unskilled occupations and Vulgar English users not educated beyond eighth grade and holding unskilled or manual jobs. For all of Fries' intentions to merely describe, it is interesting to note that the group labels still have strong normative connotations. Early American dialectologists like Hans Kurath adopted a classification system parallel to Fries. Kurath described regional varieties linguistically in terms of their phonological, grammatical and lexical patterns and according to the social groups in each region. These levels tended to conceal much about the ways the varieties of language function but they represent a considerable advance over the overly simplistic and overly normative dichotomies of right-wrong, correct-incorrect, good-bad.

Fries and Kurath's work, as well as that of the structural linguists as a whole, focused clearly on spoken utterances but made no effort to suggest that what was spoken serve as a pattern for written English. In fact, these linguists continued to empirically describe language in a way that avoided prescription. Perhaps their non-normative empiricism made their conclusions of less use to teachers whose practice posed normative questions for them daily. As suggested above, teachers cannot avoid the implicit -- if not explicit -- questions about what language ought to be taught. Not
surprisingly, the early Leonard and Marckwardt-Walcott studies were more normative in intent, as is clear from the category labels adopted: "acceptable," "disputed," and "illiterate."

A survey of professional thought shows that the bases for normative judgments of language have been repeatedly challenged as more and more distinctions between varieties of language have been drawn. To put it in Shuy's terms, the earlier myth of the polarity of standard and nonstandard language has been exposed. John Kenyon defined the differences between cultural levels of usage (standard-nonstandard) and functional levels (familiar-formal). Kenyon did not see these levels as mutually exclusive but as principles of classification which are needed to account for the complexities of language acceptability. William Labov in his 1966 study of The Social Stratification of English in New York City isolated four contextual styles: casual, conversational, reading and formal.

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43 Although the bases for these judgments has been challenged, Wolfram and Fasold, Social Dialects, p. 27, note that there has always been a normative component in language study: "It is obvious that throughout the history of the English language in America, the layman has recognized that social differences were reflected in language differences. Scholars of the English language in America have also been quite aware of these differences. Terms such as "vulgar," "uncultivated," "common" or "illiterate" speech all refer to what we now call nonstandard English. For the most part, English scholars viewed the language varieties as deviations from acceptable usage reflecting the same linguistic prejudice as the layman."


45 Labov, Social Stratification, pp. 90-131.
Martin Joos in *The Five Clocks* expanded functional levels of language into five which he labeled intimate, casual, consultative, formal and frozen styles.  

Others have underlined the importance of the difference between spoken and written language use. In my interviews with high school English teachers, this distinction surfaced again and again. Sometimes what is acceptable as convention in spoken language — elliptical and incomplete sentences, false starts, run-on sentences, redundancies, faulty agreement — are labeled "errors" by the handbooks. By labeling these violations against formal writing conventions errors in such an undifferentiated fashion, the handbooks overlook the confusions that are bound to result from the differences between spoken and written conventions. Labeling such confusions errors makes them appear more inscrutable than they are.  

Bailey notes that the widespread prestige accorded to the printed word has in several important ways warped our language judgments. It has encouraged "eye pronunciations" and the imitations of the "elegantisms" from the prestige dialect and has

46 Joos, *The Five Clocks*. See Table 1 on pages 48, 49 for an elaboration of these functional styles.

thereby discouraged the development of the naturalness and fluency that are ostensibly the goal of native language instruction.  

It becomes apparent that the acceptability of language varies according to such stylistic or circumstantial considerations as medium (written or spoken); degree of formality; degree of spontaneity; the relationship of participants in a discourse (including their mutual expectations of each other) and format being used (i.e. letter, post card, legal document, newspaper headline, etc.). An awareness of these factors alerts us to the importance of extra-linguistic factors in meaning. It is not the words alone that determine acceptability, but the ways the contexts of the words interact with the words.

The extra-linguistic factors involved in measuring the acceptability of specific usages are recognized by modern researchers. The British researchers, Greenbaum and Quick, show their recognition of these factors by qualifying their judgments of acceptable or unacceptable forms in many ways. They claim only to have examined the potential or habitual use of language forms rather than the actual use since their elicitation techniques do not necessarily yield the same results that unobtrusive ethnographic techniques would. They also seek to determine whether use is conditioned by specific linguistic or structural factors, whether

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it is relatively uniform or relatively diverse for individuals and for society and whether use is related to attitudes — to a belief about one's own use, a belief about what ought to be spoken or a willingness to tolerate the forms. One is struck by the number of distinctions introduced into this research to make it valid. Researchers have come far from the simple presentation of alternative forms. The upshot of these distinctions is a tendency to take greater care in talking categorically about acceptable language or in condemning any one style — to use Joos' term — by measuring it in terms of any other.

The second subsection of this survey instrument focuses on one of the distinctions mentioned above — the distinction between formal and informal language. (All of these distinctions are of central importance also to the third section of the instrument.) As noted above, the dichotomous distinction between formal and informal language has been stretched out into a continuum by Martin Joos who offers descriptions of some five styles. The British researchers Quirk, et al., have likewise described the gradients between a stiff, formal, impersonal attitude on the one hand and a warm, informal friendly attitude on the other. His labels for these "attitudes" are: familiar, informal, normal, formal, rigid. The "attitude" or "style" of language — formal or informal — are

50 Randolph Quirk, et al., Contemporary English, pp. 23-25.
merely one conditioning factor (or boundary condition) for lan-
guage. As such, Quirk, et al., note that conditioning factors have
no absolute effect. One would not expect a consistent all-or-
nothing response to the demands of informality, for example. The
conditioning is nonetheless real, they conclude, even though it is
relative and variable. The nature of this variable and relative
conditioning is suggested by the descriptions of the range of styles
along the informal-formal continuum in Table 1 below.

Table 1 suggests several reasons to recognize the importance
of informal as well as formal English instruction. The first is
that both styles (and, indeed, all the gradients of style between
them) are part of the range of language for all native speakers.
As William Labov asserts, "There are no single-style speakers."

We may all speak both more and less formally, but observers
agree that it is possible to be more or less skillful in doing so
and also that part of communicative competence included being able
to distinguish between situations calling for one style or the
other. W.H. Auden suggests that it is more desirable to err in one
direction than another, that

Private Faces
in public places
are wiser and nicer
Than public faces
in private places.

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51 Quirk, et al., Contemporary English, p. 30.
52 William Labov, The Study of Nonstandard English (Champaign,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intimate</th>
<th>Casual</th>
<th>Consultative</th>
<th>Formal</th>
<th>Frozen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Private Meanings</strong></td>
<td><strong>Slang Meanings</strong></td>
<td><strong>Consultative Meanings</strong></td>
<td><strong>Technical Meanings</strong></td>
<td><strong>Allusive Meanings</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information is absent</td>
<td>Information is incidental</td>
<td>Information is ancillary</td>
<td>Designed to inform</td>
<td>Informs individuals separately; lures the reader on through successive inventive discoveries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuses two personalities</td>
<td>Integrates disparate personalities</td>
<td>Produces cooperation without integration; listener helps speaker adjust conversation by participation</td>
<td>Participation drops out; detachment &amp; cohesion are defining features</td>
<td>Style for print and declamation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater tolerance for elliptical and incomplete sentences, false starts, run-on sentences, redundancies, extraneous words and what are labelled &quot;errors&quot; by usage handbooks. What is said may be regarded as something that can be taken back if misconstrued as too inept.</td>
<td>Pronunciation is clear with no clatter; semantics are adequate, but not fussy; speaker composes 2 or 3 sentences in advance</td>
<td>Pronunciation is explicit; correct intonation is essential; semantics are fussy, syntax complex; speaker must plan in advance</td>
<td></td>
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**PRIMARILY SPOKEN**

PRIVILEGED

PUBLIC

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1. **TABLE 1**

THE RANGE OF STYLES ALONG THE INFORMAL/FORMAL CONTINUUM.
TABLE 1  --  Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intimate</th>
<th>Casual</th>
<th>Consultative</th>
<th>Formal</th>
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<tr>
<td>Language Norms</td>
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INFORMAL STANDARDIZATION is the result of "a certain amount of normalization of language behavior in the direction of some linguistic usage with high social prestige. People automatically and unconsciously adapt their speech habits in the direction of those they admire. Informal standard English may be defined elastically as those forms of the language after which individuals actually model their speech."\(^4\)

FORMAL STANDARDIZATION is what is prescribed for a language "by prescriptive grammars and usage books, dictionaries, orthoepical guides, codifying agencies like schools and national language academies. Invariably these formal codes are drawn up so that almost no one speaks the standard language. It is based on the writing of established writers, which automatically limits it to the most formal style of older, highly educated people. It is the last style to be reached by any change going on in the language. Therefore, formal standardization is conservative to the point of obsolescence."\(^4\)

Sources:

1. All sections of this table not attributed to other sources are summarized from Martin Joos, *The Five Clocks* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967).
The verbal analogue to Auden's warning is that overformalized lan-
guage is inappropriate. Wendell Johnson, with his eye on the rela-
tion of language use and mental health, would agree with Auden.
He would perhaps add to Auden's "wiser and nicer" — healthier.
His work with stutters has led him to the conclusion that "formal
rigidity" is maladjustive. As the expression suggests, "formal
rigidity" is the habitual use of bookish or ceremonially polite
language as well as the habitual use of slang, profanity or cliches
without due regard to context. In other words, formal rigidity is
being stuck at any one point on the formality-informality continuum.
Johnson has the clear awareness that an ability to express oneself
in the full range of styles is very important to one's emotional
well-being. People have an emotional need to experience the range
of relationships depicted in Table 1.

It is also clear that they have a social and psychological
need to do so. Many educators call attention to the social desira-
bility of having such an ability. One educator warns that

A speaker who never uses anything except "-ing" ought
to be counted as a bit rigid and inflexible. His lan-
guage lacks one dimension of subtlety . . . . Instead
of being signs of ignorance, such contractions [as "Zee
finished?" ("Is he finished?")], "What'siss?" ("What's
this?")], "What'na world?" (What in the world?) and
omissions are, in reality, signs that the speakers have
a delicate sensitivity to the level of formality on which
they speak.  

53 Wendell Johnson, People in Quandaries: The Semantics of Per-
54 Robbins Burling, English in Black and White (New York: Holt,
Similarly, Wolfram and Fasold point out that those who cultivate an over-precise speech style risk sounding "too correct," "too snooty" or "too 'high falutin'." Since this over-precise speech is apt to make others feel distant from us, many of us experience a kind of schizophrenia: we are aware of some formally "correct" forms we feel we should use, but don't. We reject the overly-correct forms on an emotional level. We save our intimacy with our peers at the cost of using language that is unsuitable to a larger unknown audience.

Certain styles of language do help us "save our intimacy" with others and, hence, the psychological importance of informal language. Language has many functions besides the communication of information. It is, one is tempted to say, first and foremost a means of identifying with others. It is "... a statement about one's personal status; to speak the same language as one's neighbor expresses solidarity with those neighbors, to speak a different language from one's neighbor expresses social distance or even hostility." It is important for teachers who want to see students adopt more formal ways of speaking -- and this was the goal most consistently evident

55 Wolfram and Fasold, Social Dialects, pp. 19, 184. Wolfram and Fasold point out that we often reject the suprastandard form as well as the substandard; for example, "Ain't it?" (substandard), "Isn't it?" (standard) and "Is it not?" (suprastandard).

in the teacher interviews conducted for this study -- to be aware that (1) mastery of the range of styles is desirable and that (2) there are strong subconscious reasons for students' not adopting a more formal style in the presence of their peers. Students don't wish to give up the identification with others that informal language gives them.

Sometimes the informal dialect is positively intransigent. One of the participants at the Dartmouth Conference tells the story of a British teacher who was attempting to teach his class to substitute "put" for "putten". He had given them an exercise to do and was working with students when he was interrupted by one boy who reported of his neighbor, "Look Sir, he's putten "putten" and he should have putten "put"." The conferee concluded that prescription alone does not alter informal speech in any direct way.

Another conferee showed the same recognition of the intransigence of one's native informal language when he defined a native speaker as "... someone who will accept uncritically any half-baked statements about language, perform any ill-conceived exercise in language without actually destroying his ability to communicate in the language. He is insulated from his teachers." The humor in this definition makes us unwilling to see it as either self-pitying or cynical. Behind the joke is an affirmation of the power

57 Marckwardt, et al., "Standards and Attitudes."
58 Marckwardt, et al., "Standards and Attitudes."
of identification that language gives. Acquiring the language—especially the informal language of those around us—is a way of identifying with them.

The importance of this identification has been given much attention by educators considering the desirability of teaching the standard dialect to speakers of nonstandard dialects. The critics of the policy that urges the eradication of nonstandard English or, less aggressively, the acquisition of the standard dialect as a second dialect often talk about the psychological threat that such a policy represents to the sense of identity individuals derive from speaking the dialect of the speech community which nourishes them. This identity, they conjecture, may be threatened by efforts to change that native dialect. As Moffett puts it,

... learning to write "correctly" [i.e. conforming to the particular grammar of the standard dialect] involves a shift of dialect and hence the very sensitive moral and psychological matter of joining a new speech community ... In this view, teaching a prescriptive body of rules to induce correctness appears blandly technical and humanly naive. The student is being asked, in effect, to prefer the dialect of a speech community to which he does not belong and to disavow, in some measure, the way of talking that he learned from his parents and from other people upon whom his sense of personal and social identity depend. A lot more than variation in linguistic form is entailed in this sort of correction ... Actually to preserve his own sense of integrity, he has a powerful motive not to adopt this alien grammar.59

If the students who are being asked to adopt a new dialect feel psychologically threatened, how must students feel who are asked to replace, if not one dialect with another, then one style with another? How do students respond to the implicit or explicit suggestion that formal English is better than informal English? For that matter, how do students respond to the suggestion that formal English is very important, even more important, that the informal English they have already mastered? Labov suggests that sometimes students read English teachers' efforts to change their language as a request to identify with an alien social group. He suggests that the message to nonstandard speakers in New York City schools might be articulated in this way: "Don't talk like those boys in the back of the room who beat up on kids and take their lunch money away; you should talk instead like the kids who sit in the front of the room, get beat up and have their lunch money taken away." There is no reason to insist that the underlying message to students who are nonstandard speakers of English is as pointed as this. Nonetheless, the general message that language involves the individual's identification with other groups is clear.

The importance of a psychological and social identification in second language learning has been demonstrated by many research studies. These studies suggest the importance of identification with the group whose language is being learned. Lambert attributes to those who demonstrate this identification an "integrative

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orientation." According to Lambert, learners with an "integrative orientation" are those who seek to learn about the cultural community as if they desired to be potential members. These learners prove more successful in learning a foreign language than those with "instrumental orientations"; that is, those who see language study as having utilitarian value -- as, for example, being a useful achievement in getting ahead in one's job. Other researchers have found that those individuals who have more need of the standard form, those with a higher socio-economic status, are more able to learn it and that "the readiness of a person to learn and use a second language may depend in part on his willingness to identify with the group with which the language is associated -- or, at any rate on his desire to reduce the social distance between himself and that group."63

All of these studies bear out some aspects of the formal-informal styles described in Table 1 above. These descriptions make

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it clear that a changing psychological and social relationship is involved in style changes. As teachers respond to the items which measure the relative importance they place on teaching formal and informal language, they will also be saying something about the conditions of language use that seems most worthy of attention.

D. THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF FORM AND FUNCTION IN ENGLISH INSTRUCTION

Dell Hymes wrote in 1972 that "what is crucial is not so much a better understanding of how language is structured, but a better understanding of how language is used; not so much what language is, as what language is used for." Hymes directs attention to the questions of use and function. These questions necessarily involve language's social context and what Herbert Clark called its boundary conditions. Boundary conditions include such situational variables as the time, place and the circumstances of the utterance as well as the speaker's beliefs about the listener and the listener's general knowledge. These boundary conditions are an important part of comprehension.

In the past, linguists have overlooked or taken for granted these boundary conditions. They have overlooked the social and personal context of language as they examined the differences between language forms. At one time they saw communication as contained

64 Hymes, "Introduction," Language in the Classroom, p. xii.
65 Herbert Clark, "Understanding What We Were Meant to Understand," Colloquim at The Ohio State University, February 2, 1977.
in a body of linguistic constructs which had been encoded by one communicator and could be decoded by another. Now, however, psycholinguists see communication as the interaction of the unique information of the utterance with the knowledge the listener already has.

In fact, the knowledge the listener already has is primary because the surface structure of the utterance is made use of and quickly discarded seconds after it's heard. One experimenter found that listeners asked to recall the specific words of a recent utterance were unable to do so because they had combined the new information with previously acquired knowledge and stored it as meaning or idea. When asked to identify recent utterances, subjects either mistakenly identified a combination of the new information and previously acquired information or a combination of the new information and inferences they had unconsciously drawn from it. These experiments suggest that comprehension may be thought of as a somewhat active process of construction which entails far more than mastery of certain language forms. For this reason it is


easy to endorse the assertion that "educational intervention in the case of verbal behavior must be more than the replacement of one set of forms with another." It is clear that comprehension is not facilitated by mere mastery of forms although usage manuals seem to have evolved from that tacit assumption that this is the case.

Clark describes comprehension as a problem solving process in which we build candidate interpretations, test them against the boundary conditions and accept them as the speaker's intended meaning if they pass the test. In this view, comprehension doesn't involve a passive acceptance of piles of information encoded in correct forms. Instead of just passively receiving, the listener uses the larger context (the boundary conditions) in "constructing" his understanding.

The importance of boundary conditions to communication is demonstrated ironically by the failure of a series of psycholinguistic experiments which attempted to explain the process by which language is decoded and encoded. Psycholinguists were interested in determining whether or not Chomsky's descriptions of transformational grammar

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69 Herbert Clark, "What We Were Meant to Understand."
(both his 1957 and 1965 versions) could also be viewed as an adequate explanation of language production. They were interested, for example, in determining how much time was needed to linguistically process various sorts of sentences — active, passive, negative, reversible, nonreversible, and so forth. They hypothesized that the time needed for comprehension would vary as different linguistic forms called for differing amounts of linguistic processing. The results of their experiments were disappointing. They tended to be contradictory and unstable because ubiquitous "performance factors" continued to contaminate the results.

The experimenters gave the name "performance factors" to all those factors, other than the looked-for linguistic ones, that influenced the findings. They included such variables as the instructions given subjects, the type of materials used, the amount of time given for processing sentences, opportunities for practice, habitual strategies used by subjects to encode materials and other aspects of the larger communicative context such as the subject's view of the requirements of the experiment. In research parlance, comprehensive history is given in Judith Greene, Psycholinguistics: Chomsky and Psychology (Great Britain: The Chaucer Press, Ltd., 1972).

A reversible sentence is one like "The cat chased the dog," and a nonreversible sentence, like "The boy watered the flowers."

these performance factors are all extraneous variables that inter­
act with the main effect (the variable of linguistic pro-
cessing) in such a way as to threaten the validity of the findings.
The upshot of this interaction is that psycholinguists have been
unable to explain linguistic processing apart from the larger com-
municative context. Clearly, communication involves people,
language and social context in a mutually interactive relationship.

The third subsection of the questionnaire will explore the
extent to which English teachers recognize the social and personal
contexts (or boundary conditions) of language that are so important
to comprehension by exploring the relative importance they place
on the mastery of correct language forms and the communicative
functioning of language.

The relative importance of form and function to teachers is
an issue that is hotly debated by those who teach English as a
second language as well as by those who teach "standard English"
as a "second dialect." An instance of the former's concern can be
seen in Braj Kachru's assertion that,

In linguistically and culturally pluralistic Third World
Countries, the motivations for the study of English -- its
social, educational and other roles -- have to be viewed
in terms of the typical native sociological parameters
. . . the pragmatics of Third World Engishes [that is, the
roles and uses of English in the overall societal net-
work of the speech community] and their linguistic
innovations and "deviations" cannot be neglected.\(^7\)

\(^7\) Braj B. Kachru, "Models of English for the Third World:
White Man's Linguistic Burden or Language Pragmatics," *TESOL
Quarterly*, vol. 10, no. 2 (1976), p. 221.
Kachru contends that Indian socio-cultural influences on the kind of English being learned in India are undeniable, inevitable and, even, desirable. He argues that the appropriateness of foreign varieties of English should be judged with reference to the socio-cultural context of the particular non-English speech community using the variety.

In other words, the appropriateness of Englishes in other countries ought to depend on their being functional and not on their being merely formally precise in matching British (or American) English. Kachru warns against overemphasizing the phonetic level of intelligibility. As noted above, meaning depends as much upon the broader situational context of people, things and events as on the 'noise' made by the speaker. The noise is important, but not as important as purists think.

The issue of the relative importance of form and function is likewise debated by those teaching standard English as a second dialect. In second dialect teaching, as in other matters relating to language variation, attitudes are as important in making judgments about policies as are any "facts" since the facts themselves are often a matter of interpretation (Which facts are relevant? Which are important? etc.).

In any case, recognizing the importance of attitudes in making such judgments, a committee working in the Program on Teaching Linguistic Pluralism at the Stanford University Center for Research and Development set out to measure teachers' understanding of and
attitudes toward black English. This committee used the SCRDT Black English Attitude Measures to identify some of the subtly racist assumptions inherent in our education system. It also identified certain elitist assumptions which the SCRDT attitude measures were not sufficiently able to measure. It is of special interest that the committee identified certain elitist assumptions above and beyond the racist assumptions.

What the Stanford committee called "elitist assumptions" have some bearing on the attitudinal dimension measured by this subsection of the instrument. We might characterize the difference between racist and elitist assumptions in this way: Racist assumptions would (consciously or unconsciously) cause one to condemn nonstandard forms because they are spoken by a racial group deemed inferior. The elitist, on the other hand, would (consciously or unconsciously) condemn these nonstandard forms because they are not the "purest" or "best" forms. Elitist assumptions champion form for form's sake, without evaluating how those forms function in specific contexts.

It might be useful to explore in more general terms the relationship of "form" to "function". The concepts are not in logical opposition. For the purposes of this instrument, they're polarized as opposing emphases. These opposing emphases were suggested by my conversations with secondary English teachers.

(See Appendix A for a transcription of these conversations.) Often teachers spoke of students' being able to use language correctly or their being able to use it effectively as if both matters were quite separate ones. Some teachers emphasized the hiatus between correct form and effective functioning by devising a grading system that calls for assigning one grade for the paper's form and the other for the effectiveness of its ideas. In this way and others teachers indicated that they had chosen to emphasize form over function or vice versa.

Wolfram's and Fasold's discussion of the evolution of language norms is useful in suggesting how an emphasis on correct form comes to compete with an emphasis on function. These authors explain that, since language differences derive from social differences, some types of language standardization and norms occur. Linguistic norms, our notion of "proper" language behavior, have nothing to do with inherent linguistic capacity although, in fact, their existence is often rationalized in this way.

The possibility that judgments about the acceptability of language forms conceal sociological judgments is made by many observers. Burling points out that the sociological nature of these judgments becomes apparent when one examines the linguistically arbitrary nature of stigmatized forms. For example, the stopped pronunciation of [th] is strongly stigmatized whereas the failure

75 Wolfram and Fasold, Social Dialects, pp. 17-21.
to distinguish between "which" and "witch" is not. Similarly, the alternative forms "I guess not" and "I don't guess so" are equally acceptable alternatives to some, but not to others.

Realizing the sociological impulse for judgments of language acceptability, others have noted that "the only way for nonstandard English speakers to become adequate speakers of standard English is to modify the social system so that they become accepted by the white middle class power structure." One cannot speak of merely changing language forms. Changing language forms depends on a more widespread social change. It is important to note that some observers reverse the causal direction and argue that a language change causes a change in social status and

76 Burling, Black and White, pp. 21-14.

77 Dennis E. Baron, "Non-standard English, Composition and the Academic Establishment," College English, vol. 37, no. 2 (1975), p. 177. Thomas Kochman is a particularly articulate spokesman on this point. See, for example, his "Standard English Revisited, or Who's Kidding/Cheating Who(m) ?" The Florida FL Reporter, vol. 12, nos. 1 & 2 (1974), pp. 31-44, 96. In this article, Kochman contrasts his own "dissident" position with that of the old and new "scholastics." According to Kochman, the old scholastics supported a prescriptivist position which proclaimed an ideal language and argued that rules ought to determine usage. There was a standard language and a substandard language. The new scholastics challenged this position. They took a descriptivist position which spoke of ideal speakers and of usage determining rules. For this new scholastic, there was a standard and nonstandard language. According to Kochman, the new scholastics have not gone far enough. The movement from prescriptivism to descriptivism is far from democratic. It still permits an intolerance of nonstandard language. Still, people with economic and political power confer prestige on language. Kochman charges that scholastics recommend social accommodation in urging speakers of NSE to pursue secondary sources of prestige (i.e. language) instead of primary sources (i.e. political and economic) although minorities historically make progress by "counter coercion in the political and economic arena through creative disorder: demonstrations,
and that behavior change causes and attitudinal change. Hence, the contrasting prescriptions urged by speakers of nonstandard English (like black English). Some urge that blacks be taught the standard dialect while others urge that the nonstandard black dialect be accepted as linguistically and practically equal to the standard dialect. Somewhat hermaphroditically, language change can be seen as both cause and effect. I am reminded of Mark Twain's delightful story of the man whose tooth was extracted. When extracted, the tooth was found to have been attached to his big toe in such a way as to have caused his entire skeleton to be extracted!

Twain's anecdote provides a wonderful image for the difficulty involved in trying to separate social phenomena into cause and effect. Is it acceptance of one's language that leads to social acceptance or the other way around? Is it correct language forms that lead to effective communication or is it effective communication that marks off the correct language forms? Perhaps one cannot be readily separated from the other. David Smith caught the complexity of the tangle when he wrote,

boycotts, strikes, etc. Accomodation is recommended by those in power because it makes it easier for them to rule and control while others are docile and accommodating." (p. 40) Schools, Kochman concludes, ought not to discriminate against nonstandard English just because society as a whole does. Above all, schools need to reject the racist rationalizations of both new and old scholastics. See also, Jay Robinson, "The Walls of Babel, or Up Against the Language Barrier," Varieties, eds. Bailey and Robinson, pp. 303-316 and Richard Day, "Can Standard English Be Taught," pp. 7-20.
The individual is at the same time the matrix for cultural behavior, the locus of the rules and a participant in a system of rules which is larger than himself. . . . [he is] both a victim of the system and its creator.78

Where, indeed does one look for cause and effect in such a formulation? It may be that such social phenomena defy cause and effect explanations because they are mutually interactive.79 When seen as mutually interactive, it becomes inappropriate to see either phase of the transactional cycle as wholly cause or wholly effect. It also becomes inappropriate to see phases of the cycle as competing with one another in any strict sense. They can, at most, be competing emphases. Figure 1 suggests the nature of this cause-and-effect interaction.

Figure 1. THE TRANSACTIONAL OR MUTUALLY INTERACTIVE NATURE OF LANGUAGE AND OTHER SOCIAL PHENOMENA


79 The metaphysical notion of cause and effect is built so soundly into the scientific method that one is apt to forget that it is a metaphysical assumption. Although the scientific method is often represented as one of the more objective and rational human processes, it rests nonetheless on the metaphysical assumption that every effect has a cause (or causes). The transactional nature of much social behavior (including language behavior) challenges this assumption.
This subsection of the instrument will measure teachers' willingness to identify in themselves an emphasis on form or an emphasis on function. Presumably their willingness to do so would be reflected in corresponding curricular decisions. The former emphasis might make the knowledge of the same sounds, words and syntax of a certain language variety a primary goal. The latter might lead to a concern for what Hymes calls the "mode of use;" that is, the tacit rules for indicating when topics can be introduced among people who aren't intimates, for taking turns and getting the floor, for making allusions, avoiding insults, showing respect and self-respect and so forth. Hymes's important point is that often the status or meaning of an utterance is not clear from its form alone and that this uncertainty cannot be explained by the more obvious differences of ethnic region or family backgrounds. He observes that,

Sometimes a marriage of many years is frozen into unwillingness to budge on the definition of minor acts of speech. Is what is done or said a neutral statement, a request, a command? a complement or an insult? a spontaneous act or a quotation? and to what genre of speech act does it belong? is it a greeting or a taking leave? is it self-revelation or copping a plea? . . . one cannot always tell the act from the form of the message! One and the same sentence, the same set of words in the same syntactic relationship maybe now a request, now a command, now a complement, now an insult depending upon the tacit understandings in the community.  

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80 Hymes, Language in the Classroom, pp. xxxvii-xxix.
81 Hymes, Language in the Classroom, pp. xxviii-xxix.
According to Hymes, these tacit understandings or norms of interpretation clearly indicate that the status or meaning of speech acts are more than a matter of language forms. The meaning entails all the issues relating to the functioning of language in specific contexts: the recognition of conventional ways of expressing or accomplishing certain things, the importance of the place something is said in the sequence of things, the rights and obligations that are recognized as obtaining between participants — to list some of the functional variables mentioned specifically by Hymes. By insisting on the irreducibility of meaning to form, Hymes demonstrates the importance of the extra-linguistic boundary conditions mentioned above. All of these boundary conditions bespeak the function and functioning of the language more than they explain its form.

E. THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

We have already noted that Bishop Lowth and other eighteenth-century grammarians envisioned grammar as an opportunity to improve the language. They subjected English to a process of classical regularization in order to restore it to its "original" perfection. They viewed contemporary English as debased, corrupt and in need of restoration. 82

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82 This interpretation of Lowth and other eighteenth-century grammarians is elaborated by Belok and Clift, "The Bishop Lowth Complex," pp. 271-276.
As early as the turn of the century, some language scholars were denouncing the view of language as corrupted and corruptible.

In 1903 Thomas Lounsbury of Yale wrote that

there is no such thing as a language becoming corrupt. . . . The words which constitute it have no real significance of their own. It is the meaning which we put into them that gives them all the efficacy they possess. . . . Never was there a more ridiculous reversal of the actual order of events than that contained in the assertion that "no nation has long survived the decrepitude of language."

Lounsbury's articulate attempts to influence teachers' attitudes were not enough to prevent NCTE from developing the following pledge for speech week in 1918:

"I love the United State of America. I love my country's flag. I promise
1. That I will not dishonor my country's speech by leaving off the last syllables of words.
2. That I will say a good American 'yes' and 'no' in place of an Indian grunt 'unhum' and 'nup-um' or a foreign 'ya' and 'nope'.
3. That I will do my best to improve American speech by avoiding loud, rough tones, by enunciating distinctly and by speaking pleasantly, clearly and sincerely."

This pledge embodies the fear that a decline in people's ability to speak "good English" -- very specifically and narrowly defined here -- will threaten the country's well-being. Because good speech

84 Quoted by Daniels et al., What Teachers Believe.
is made to appear a matter of patriotism, this pledge embodies the assertion Lounsbury was at pains to refute fifteen years earlier: that "no nation has long survived the decrepitude of language." It urges children to hold the line against changes in speech which will weaken the language.

According to Daniels et al., the speech week pledge was rescinded after a protest was issued by some of the membership. From that point on, the professional leadership within NCTE has been more enlightened in its attitudes toward language change. Instead of fearing this change as a corruption, it has seen changing standards and, increasingly, different standards as inevitable and healthful. It has lent its support to the usage movement of the thirties and continues to call attention to the fact of language change in its journals.

In 1956, a NCTE commission offered the resolutions that language changes constantly and that change is normal and represents, not corruption, but improvement. It may seem strange to find what are supposed to be linguistic facts offered in the form of a resolution; that is, as something that has been consciously decided upon and adopted. Proverb has it that facts speak for themselves and need only to be known to be influential. What is factual is not expected to require the endorsement of resolution. Such apparently is not the case with language facts and attendant language

85 Daniels et al., What Teachers Believe, pp. 5, 6.
attitudes. The fact of language change, highlighted as it has been by professional activities, is not felt to have sufficiently altered teacher's attitudes toward language change.

Daniels et al. explain the intransigence of teachers' attitudes by speculating that their beliefs about language spring more from popular than professional literature. These popular notions about language seem perennially to include grave concern over the health of the language. Language events like the decline of SAT scores or the impertinence of the latest slang seem to provide near-hysterical cries of concern from syndicated opinion columnists, editors and feature writers for newspapers, magazines and TV. Even when observers do not forecast a linguistic doomsday, they may feel that language is nonetheless deteriorating. They may point to the infringement of some normative rule which results in ambiguity or the loss of an important semantic distinction.

One Canadian study paints a somewhat different picture of people's awareness of language as a static or dynamic entity. After interviewing a sample of French Canadian students, teachers and workers, the researchers found that 80% of the respondents agreed that language continues to change. Of the three groups, the workers

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were the least language conscious. The group as a whole identified radio and TV, improved educational opportunities, the effects of immigration, an awareness of poor speech habits and cultural isolation as forces that might cause language to change. This exploration of language attitudes in another culture is of special interest because it suggests the presence of more enlightened attitudes toward language change than does the professional literature reviewed above.

The final subsection of the instrument seeks to describe the extent to which teachers' attitudes reflect the perennial fear of the popular press that language is collapsing and the extent to which they reflect the more enlightened awareness that language change is part of its natural growth cycle.

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CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

A. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INSTRUMENT

In developing a survey instrument to describe teachers' attitudes toward language norms, one is faced with the problem of conceptualizing those norms in specific, measurable terms. How can one get hold of so broad a topic? It is intuitively reasonable that attitudes toward any broad topic will vary as focus shifts along the various aspects of that topic. So it is not surprising that, in his 1973 study of teachers' attitudes toward black and nonstandard English, Orlando Taylor found that teacher attitudes were not monolithic across the four content areas he investigated. Taylor conceptualized attitudes toward nonstandard dialects in terms of these areas: their structure and inherent usefulness; the consequence of using and accepting them; philosophies concerning their use and acceptance and the cognitive and intellectual abilities attributed to their speakers. He found, as was reported above, that teachers' attitudes varied from topic to topic.¹

The investigation of teacher attitudes toward language norms can similarly be conceptualized and explored in various ways. By

¹This finding was discussed in Chapter II, page 30. It was reported in Taylor, "Language Attitude Scale," pp. 174-201.
drawing on a review of professional literature and a series of interviews with English teachers, the following four content areas or meaning dimensions were identified for exploration:

1. attitudes toward a single monolithic standard for good English;
2. attitudes toward formal and informal language;
3. attitudes toward form and function in language instruction; and
4. attitudes toward the desirability of language change.

These content areas were discussed in detail at the end of Chapter II in conjunction with related research and literature.

The scope of the literature survey from which these content areas were drawn was considerable and unevenly comprehensive. I looked at teacher attitudes toward various nonstandard dialects and variant usage forms. I studied several general semanticists', linguists', psycholinguists', and sociolinguists' discussions of appropriate attitudes toward language variety. As I continued reading, it became apparent that the area of language attitudes is very much like a web: one could not focus on one part of it—the attitudes of secondary English teachers toward language norms—without becoming aware of various threads reaching into other areas and issues. Some of the issues that had some bearing on my particular focus included attitudes toward:

- non-native varieties and TESL (teaching English as a foreign language)
- problems of multilingualism and language standardization
- bidialectalism in schools
- the use of dialectic reading materials in schools
- the standard/nonstandard dialogue in professional literature
- language legislation, including non-sexist guidelines and governmental edicts
- the language bias inherent in standardized testing

As this list makes clear, looking at language attitudes in terms of their consequence in language behavior makes for a broadly inclusive view: any and all attitudes have a potential to affect language. Only occasionally do issues and research that entail language attitudes in this broad sense bear directly on language attitudes in the narrower sense of this study — that is, attitudes toward language itself, what Cooper and Fishman called the "elicitable shoulds on who speaks what, when and how." Nonetheless, a brief examination of these peripheral issues was useful in suggesting potentially useful ways of categorizing attitudes toward language norms.

Of more specific help was a series of interviews conducted with thirty-two secondary English teachers. The teachers interviewed were those members of the Suffield High School (Connecticut), Franklin Heights High School (South-West School District, Franklin County, Ohio), Upper Arlington High School (Ohio) and Westerville North High School (Ohio) English departments whose schedules and willingness enabled them to be interviewed.

Interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. A copy of the transcription appears in Appendix A. During the interviews,

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teachers were asked to respond at whatever length they wished to these questions:

1. What changes in your students' language would you like to see?

2. What language do you find acceptable or unacceptable?

3. What do you understand to be standard English?

4. Do you see teaching standard English as a part of your job as an English teacher?

5. Do most of your students need instruction in standard English?

6. In whatever way you define "informal language," what view do you take of it in your teaching?

These questions were deliberately general and open-ended. They were designed to give teachers a chance to interpret phrases like "acceptable" or "standard English" in their own terms and to make distinctions about desirable varieties of language that are meaningful to their daily teaching efforts. Interviewees were encouraged to respond with candor to questions for which, admittedly, there are several possible responses.

From these interviews and from a review of relevant literature, about 125 items were developed for use in a scalar instrument. Items were framed in such a way as to enable teachers to mark a response on the familiar Likert continuum: Strongly Agree--Agree--Not Clear/Don't Know--Disagree--Disagree Strongly. Because of the genesis of the items, it was hoped that they would be meaningful to both teachers in terms of actual classroom practice and students of English education in traditional disciplinary terms.
The Likert method of scale construction represents a compromise between a strict interview format and a strict questionnaire format. The former was rejected because the topic — the norms teachers attribute to language varieties — could easily inspire responses so divergent as to make descriptive generalizations impossible. The latter was rejected because it might include distinctions that are central to the professional literature but meaningless to teachers, or vice versa. Using both the interview to gather data and the questionnaire to present the data in scale form is one way to achieve a measure of conceptual richness as well as a convergent pattern of responses.

The 125 draft items were submitted to graduate students for their review. Those items identified as ambiguous or unclear in any other way were discarded. The remaining items were then submitted to a panel of three scholars in the field of English language learning with the request that they determine to what extent each item measures the meaning dimension identified. For this purpose, items were grouped in terms of the four areas identified above and a brief description of each area was supplied. The expert panel was asked to rate each item in terms of how well it measured the meaning dimension to which it had been assigned. Those items which were felt not to measure the dimension or which were not clear in their measuring of it were discarded. Those items that remained were included on the pretest survey.
Each of the four content areas was described in terms of a bipolar continuum, the justification for which, again, derived from the professional literature and teacher interviews. Since the justification for the continua is not theoretical, they are in no way taxonomic, nor do they include all areas of language variety or all ways of conceptualizing language norms about which teachers might have attitudes, nor are they necessarily mutually exclusive.

The bipolar nature of the continua means that each item places the respondent in some relation to one position or its opposite. Respondents would either recognize one absolute standard for judging language or not; emphasize informal language or formal language; emphasize the function of language over its form in language instruction or vice versa and acknowledge the natural inevitability of language change or not.

An effort was made to generate an equal number of items describing attitudes at both ends of the four continua. And, although an equal number of positive and negative items were devised, the statistical item analysis of the 97 pretest items proved more of the negative items to be sufficiently reliable than the positive ones. For that reason the final survey instrument has eleven negative and two positive items for the first content area; six negative and five positive for the second; seven negative and four positive for the third and four negative and two positive for the fourth. In both pretest and final versions,
items were mixed so that the direction of the item and the content area to which it belonged were randomized. In this way the formation of a psychological set was discouraged.

The final stage in the item analysis involved submitting the items to an internal item analysis and factor analysis. Items with moderate to high factor loadings and moderate to high coefficients of correlation between each item score and the total score for each teacher subject were judged to have the best attitude-predicting ability.

Since a high reliability for each part of the instrument was sought, items were analyzed with an eye on the reliability of each content area. A Kuder-Richardson reliability formula was used to calculate reliability. The 124 pretests analyzed indicated that content area one had a reliability of .89, two of .87, three of .80 and four of .86. Appendix E contains the item-to-total correlations and factor loadings for each item retained for final analysis. All items retained have r's that are significant beyond the .01 level.

B. PRETEST SAMPLE AND FINAL POPULATION

The final instrument was administered to the 175 English teachers in the 18 Columbus public high schools. A census of the entire population of secondary English teachers in Columbus public schools was sought. In order to avoid a multiple treatment threat to the external validity of the instrument, no member of the final population was asked to respond to a pretest survey.
The pretest survey forms were distributed to English teachers from junior high schools in Columbus, urban-suburban junior and senior high schools surrounding Columbus in Franklin County, rural-suburban schools in other Ohio counties and one suburban school in Connecticut. The pretest sample would be characterized as a selected convenient sample since the sampling procedure involved soliciting volunteers from an accessible population.

C. DATA GATHERING PROCEDURES

English department heads were contacted and asked to assist with the distribution of the survey (either the pretest or final version). In making this request, I spoke informally with each to explain my purpose and something of the genesis of the research. If the department head agreed to cooperate, multiple copies of the survey forms were sent to them.\(^3\) Attached to each copy of the final version of the survey was a letter of endorsement for my study written by the supervisor for the English teachers being asked to complete the survey. Since both versions of the surveys contained brief explanatory notes at the top of the forms, teachers completing them received, in effect, two explanations: the uniformly impersonal one at the beginning of the forms and the undoubtedly more varied, personal one conveyed through their department heads.

The double explanation was purposeful. It seemed reasonable that the forms would be somewhat more meaningful to teachers and

\(^3\) Copies of both versions of the survey appear in Appendices B and C.
that they might be more motivated to complete them if their immediate supervisors said something about them. I felt that if the department heads could give teachers some feeling for the purpose behind the surveys, the forms might not be greeted as "just another survey."

I realize that this strategy introduced a threat to the internal validity of the study. All teachers received the same written directions, but some English staffs would, inevitably, receive a different informal explanation from their respective department heads. The department heads' enthusiasm or lack of it, appreciation for the study or confusion about it might cause these differences in explanations. In short, these different explanations amount to a possible difference in intrasession history. Nonetheless, my feeling as I talked with department heads, the overwhelming majority of whom were very cooperative, was that this threat from intrasession history was minimal and would be offset by the increased percentage of responses such a strategy was likely to encourage.

Another possible threat to the study's internal validity was the time of the school year during which the final survey instrument was distributed. Teachers were asked to complete the final survey during the last month of the school year. It is possible that this unusually busy time created a climate in some schools quite different from that in others to such an extent that responses would reflect these differences as well as genuine differences in attitudes.
The pretest requires approximately thirty minutes to complete and the final survey with the accompanying request for biographical information approximately twenty minutes. After teachers responded to the 97 statements on the pretest form or the 43 statements on the final form, they mailed it directly back to me, returned it to their department head who in turn mailed it to me or returned it to their supervisor's office where I could collect it myself.

D. ANALYSIS OF DATA

There were two stages of data analysis. The first stage, as suggested in the section on the development of the instrument, sought to establish the reliability and validity of the four dimensions of the scalar instrument. The validation of the dimensions included these steps:

1. A conceptual definition of the dimensions was established and a pool of 125 items was generated from the data provided by the series of teacher interviews and the review of the literature. The dimensions were, in this way, shaped and modified to reflect an experiential as well as academic reality.

2. These dimensions and the items which constitute them were then subjected to an informal process of expert validation. Experts -- faculty members and advanced graduate students in English education -- were asked to determine for each item answers to the following questions:

   a. Is the item understandable?

   b. Does the item tap this dimension?
c. To what extent does it tap this dimension?

3. The initial pool of items was pretested on volunteer secondary English teachers not to be surveyed in the final administration of the instrument.

A factor analysis of items by dimension was conducted to ascertain the extent to which each item did, in fact, measure the same underlying meaning dimension. Those with the highest factor loadings were retained.

The reliability of the instrument was assured by selecting items for the final form that contributed to the highest coefficient of reliability. For this purpose, the inter-item correlations, the item-to-total correlations and the standard deviations of items were examined.

In conducting the item analysis, I sought to maximize both the validity and reliability of the items retained while making the instrument itself somewhat shorter. When the analysis was completed, there remained some fifteen items in the first content area, eleven in the second, eleven in the third and six in the fourth.\(^4\) At this point, the dimensions reflected an academic, experiential and experimental reality.

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\(^4\)Two additional items in the first content area were subsequently dropped when the same item analysis was replicated using the data from the final administration of the survey. These items proved to be weak items in that they had low correlations with the subjects' total scores and lowered the overall reliability of the subtest of which they were a part.
The second stage of data analysis began after the item analysis was completed and the final population had responded to the revised survey. It consisted of these four steps:

1. An item analysis using factor analysis, item-to-item correlations and item-to-total correlations was again conducted on the 124 teacher respondents. This replication within the study on a second group of teachers -- this time, teachers who did not volunteer in advance -- lends more confidence to the coefficients of reliability for the various content areas and to the validity of these dimensions.

2. The attitudes revealed by the respondents to the final survey were described and interpreted in the light of previous findings. The percentages of teachers agreeing and disagreeing with specific items were calculated and the significance of these attitudes considered.

3. The biographical data were examined statistically by a one-way analysis of variance and by figuring simple correlations to see whether any of these variables -- age, sex, years, teaching, nature of English assignment, undergraduate major, level of education or specific training in linguistics -- were correlated with differences in attitudes.

4. Finally, the four dimensions were examined statistically to determine whether there were any grounds for positing a theoretical unity to them. A factor analysis of all items from all dimensions and a test to measure the correlation of one dimension to another were used for this purpose. It was possible to speculate
about the extent to which underlying factors reflect the four di-
mensions that comprise the instrument, the extent to which those
factors are independent and the extent to which they are related
one to another.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

A. ATTITUDES TOWARD LANGUAGE STANDARDS

The items in the first content area are all designed to answer the question: do English teachers see standard English as a single monolithic structure of "good English" against which student language ought to be judged? Before considering teacher responses to this question, we might briefly consider the metaquestion, "What is meant by 'standard English'?"

The term "standard English," although prevalent in discussions of language variation, is by no means universally understood in the same way. One might expect there to exist a general shared meaning for "standard English" — perhaps that it is that form of the language which is established by some authority, custom or general consent as a model for good use. And, as Table 2 indicates, this general meaning is recognized in some form by most of the teachers interviewed for this study. But the specific meaning of the term is distinct for many. A few disliked the phrase because they found it unuseful. Some few others said quickly that there was no single standard. Many equated standard English with a formal style of language use, but one suggested that it was the most common, colloquial sort of speech. Others talked about just who or what
TABLE 2

RESPONSES OF SECONDARY ENGLISH TEACHERS TO THE QUESTION, "WHAT IS STANDARD ENGLISH?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard English is</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>. . . the kind of English found in our textbooks, the most responsible of our printed media, in rather formal addresses and in the kind of formal papers that the students themselves produce.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . language that observes what we consider grammatically correct sentences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . English preferred by educated people, people who know the difference between a double negative and the proper way of stating a phrase, who use &quot;accept&quot; and &quot;except&quot; properly -- I suppose, just anything that is grammatically correct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . the use of language that communicates best as opposed to a regional breakdown or old English or new English breakdowns or whatever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . speaking without cliches, speaking without profanity and speaking without slang and speaking correct grammar, correct usage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . [is what] our experts at this particular moment at this particular time . . . are telling us [standard English is.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . what would largely appear in grammar books, what would largely be used in more scholarly writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . what I grew up with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . know[ing] how to put a simple sentence together and make it a complete sentence and be[ing] able to make agreement in number work with verbs and nouns and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . language that is used by most educated people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . [is different] for me and for the students. I was taught and brought up under, you know, very correct usage was drilled and drilled when I was young . . . correct usage and everything else. But nowadays, &quot;I see the cat&quot; is almost standard usage or &quot;I ain't got no more.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 2 — Continued

... language that is usually printed and spoken by the media.

English that's understood by everybody ... by the majority of the people.

... that in which verbs and subjects tend to agree, pronouns and antecedents. They have a sense of the difference between words that are frequently confused such as "effect" and "affect" and we're still working on that bugaboo "lie" and "lay," "sir" and "set."

... colloquial in nature ... that which is spoken most frequently or that which is commonly spoken or written and transcribed as such in written English.

[varied.] There's standard spoken and there's standard written and I do make this distinction so it would depend what the students would be doing at the time.

... talking in correct tenses. It's using subject-verb agreement correctly. It's using superlatives correctly.

... [dependent] on the situation. There's one standard in Time magazine. There's another standard that I would expect sixteen year olds to use. But for the most part, it's English that would be understood clearly and accepted by the vast majority of the population.

... [varied] depending on the situation ... [to] lock myself in and say it's the kind of standard English taught in English books really denies other situations where the English spoken is standard to them.

... a lot of what's used in publication or speaking.

... probably what you see and hear most often in ordinary situations -- magazine articles, newspaper articles, conversations.

... whatever textbook we adopted, that's the standard English that you use all the time ... that language which at an expository level of writing is considered acceptable.

... is different [in many parts of the country.] It's like asking what is normal within a normal day. You know, it's kind of ... it's difficult to say.

... proper usage as I was taught in college. I guess standard English is that scholarly English that everyone has decided on as being correct ... .
TABLE 2 -- Continued

. . . just speaking correctly according to grammar and all that kind of stuff. But with anyone . . . my interpretation of standard English is just what you speak.

[doesn't exist.] I . . . my feeling is that language is symbolic of what you are as a person. You pick up what you are from other people and so you're going to talk like people who have influenced you personally.

. . . the language that I learned. The correct-usage type thing with, you know, . . . not using "ain't" and using proper verbs with a singular and plural subject and things like that.

. . . the language of the media these days. It's . . . it's the language that is heard clear across the coast. We've got a president now who speaks with a tremendous Southern accent and all that, but I really think it's almost Midwest or not real snobbish Eastern kind of blend.

. . . the level of usage that is acceptable on, I would say, a television news show broadcast interview -- not the kind of thing you find on a talk show . . . the kind of language that intelligent people -- intelligent adults would use in a serious situation.

The way Walter Cronkite talks, I guess.

. . . language that follows the rules of grammar, that does not use slang. Beyond that, I wouldn't put any other limitations on it.
established it as standard, citing textbooks, grammar books, printed mass media, non-print media, college instruction, Midwestern speech, educated people, intelligent adults in serious situations, language experts, what is understood by most people, what is judged correct by most people and what most people speak. Here is the gamut! Since a comprehensive description of the features of standard English has not been made -- usage manuals notwithstanding -- this range of responses should not be surprising. The range is, nonetheless, an overlapping one and foreshadows the responses to the survey items in content area one.

The vast majority of English teachers responding to the survey would not agree that there was one best form of English (see item 1, Table 3). They would not agree that nonstandard dialects were inconsistent or illogical (items 8 and 40, 91% and 90%),¹ that language varying from standard English was deficient (item 20, 85%) or that nonstandard speech should be eradicated (item 5, 89%). While this large majority was unwilling to agree to a blanket condemnation of nonstandard speech in favor of a single absolute standard, a smaller majority disagreed that some nonstandard dialects were inferior to standard English in their expressive and communicative powers (item 32, 63%).

¹Percentages are percentages of those responding positively (Agree's and Strongly Agree's) and negatively (Disagree's and Strongly Disagrees) and exclude those marking the "Don't Know/Unclear" category.
### TABLE 3

FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF RESPONSES TO ITEMS IN CONTENT AREA ONE:
ATTITUDES TOWARD LANGUAGE STANDARDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Of Those Responding:</th>
<th>Responding:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%Agree</td>
<td>%Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. There is <strong>one</strong> best form of English which should be spoken at all times.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Nonstandard speech should be eradicated.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Nonstandard dialects are inconsistent and illogical.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Language that varies from standard English is deficient.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. It is fair to say that standard English is the most logical English.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Usage is not completely relative. There are some absolute standards that determine whether usage is good or bad.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Correct language standards can be found in grammar books and usage manuals.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Some nonstandard dialects are inferior to standard English in their expressive and communicative powers.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Dialect variation in language is good.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. English teachers are guardians of language standards and correctness.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. No dialect is inferior to any other dialect.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Nonstandard dialects are inconsistent and illogical.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITEM</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Of Those Responding:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%Agree  %Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. It is part of my job as an English teacher to represent standard English as linguistically superior.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>47      53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; Don't Know = Don't know or unclear; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree. Percentages showing those agreeing (Agree's and Strongly Agree's) and those disagreeing (Disagree's and Strongly Disagree's) were computed from the total of those responding positively or negatively; these percentages do not include those responding in the middle category.*
The 37% who felt that some nonstandard dialects were inferior in their ability to be communicative and expressive separate themselves from what might be called the linguists' position of "dialect relativity." This academic position insists on seeing language variation — including the variation called standard and nonstandard — as a mere difference rather than a deficiency. Over one-third of the teachers refused to adopt this relative position. In fact, as item 26 indicates, over two-thirds refused to adopt a position that recognized the completely relative nature of usage itself. Most teachers felt that there were some absolute standards against which good or bad usage might be measured. Apparently, then, for at least one-third of the respondents, the absolute standards for judging usage are standards that apply to standard and nonstandard dialects alike.

These standards, according to some 87% of the respondents, could be found in grammar books and usage manuals. This finding raises some interesting questions. We may wonder, along with Taylor, whether the standards of the classroom do constitute "a comprehensive approach to writing and speaking 'good English'" or whether, instead, they "focus attention on a small number of relatively stigmatized items, reviewed year after year."² Many, many of the teachers interviewed offered these very stigmatized forms as examples of what standard English is not. We might also wonder to

what extent teachers see grammar as prescriptively setting standards for usage rather than as descriptively offering alternative analyses. During the interviews teachers invariably spoke of "grammar" in a normative context. Finally, we might wonder how broad the English teacher's concern for communicative competence is. How much attention do they give to the social functions of language? To what extent are they aware of the broad psychological and social context that influences language learning? Have they been influenced by the personal growth model of English instruction that was articulated (again) at the Dartmouth Conference or by the more recent work of sociolinguists (many of whose pertinent insights are mentioned in Chapter II, section 3)?

The two items (nos. 36 and 42) that showed the most divided attitudes were those that sought information about teachers' views of their roles with regard to language standards. There were 47% of the teachers who said that they agreed with the statements that

- English teachers are guardians of language standards and correctness.
- It is part of my job as an English teacher to represent standard English as linguistically superior.

The remaining 53% disagreed. Perhaps this difference in response reflects the difference described by John Dixon in his description of alternative teaching styles. Some English teachers, he noted, stress the skills of reading and writing and the importance of the written text without promoting interaction between pupils. In so
doing, these teachers find themselves in the role of "authority." Other English teachers emphasize instead the operation of language as it is used to carry out such fundamental human purposes as recalling experience, getting it clear and giving it shape, making connections, speculating, building theories, celebrating, etc. These teachers have a more complex role relationship with pupils; they are more consultants to students than authoritative founts of knowledge. The nature of the English teacher's role is an important issue in the present climate of teacher accountability. With regard to language standards, for what do teachers think they ought to be held accountable? If some see themselves as guardians of correctness and some do not, there is likely to be a division in articulating role expectations in general.

A final result from this set of statements is that most of the respondents see dialect variation as itself good (item 33, 84%). This finding suggests that most teachers in this study recognize the value of our society's linguistic pluralism. This finding concurs with Taylor's finding that a substantial number of teachers are favorably disposed toward this type of language variation. The traditional view of linguistic diversity, anchored in one

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interpretation of the Biblical Tower of Babel, is that it is dysfunctional insofar as it interferes with communication. This view was challenged by Labov after he observed a great deal of linguistic stratification in New York City, a place where the "mechanical factors of drift and isolation" could not satisfactorily explain such stratification. He hypothesized that linguistic diversity may be evolutionally functional in its allowing cultural pluralism to flourish. Most teachers' attitudes in this study, whether following Labov's reasoning or not, cause them to value the mosaic rather than the melting pot.

B. ATTITUDES TOWARD FORMAL AND INFORMAL ENGLISH

The second content area explores the relative importance English teachers place on informal and formal English in their teaching. The findings indicate that more than three-fourths of those responding feel that skillful use of informal English is important and is as important as a skillful use of formal English (items 6 and 31, Table 4). In my interviews with teachers, some explained the relative emphasis on formal English in their teaching by saying that students already had a mastery of informal English; students knew how to use slang. This reasoning may account for more than half the teachers' avoiding the use of slang in class (item 34, 55%) and feeling that students should not be encouraged to use slang themselves (item 13, 56%) even though 61% of them reported liking slang themselves (item 17).
### TABLE 4
FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF RESPONSES TO ITEMS IN CONTENT AREA TWO:
ATTITUDES TOWARD FORMAL AND INFORMAL ENGLISH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Of Those Responding:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%Agree %Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The spoken language is a corrupted and imprecise form of written</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The students' command of informal English is just as important</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>76 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as their command of formal English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Students should be encouraged not to use slang.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>56 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I like slang.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>61 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Students should be encouraged not to use informal English.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26 74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Using informal English in the classroom is a way of making</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>59 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English meaningful to students.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. As an English teacher, I feel that there are some circumstances</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>88 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that call for my use of slang in the classroom.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. It is important for students to develop their ability to use</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>84 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>informal English skillfully.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. I try to avoid using slang in my English class.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>55 47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITEM</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Of Those Responding:*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Formal English is a more adequate variety of language for com-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>municating than informal English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; Don't Know = Don't know or Unclear; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree. Percentages showing those agreeing and those disagreeing were computed from the total of those responding positively (Agree's and Strongly Agree's) or negatively (Disagree's or Strongly Disagree's); these percentages do not include those responding in the middle category.
But the declared need to emphasize formal English is not the full story. A sizable minority of English teachers do not see informal and formal English as equally important in different circumstances. A full 30% see the spoken language as a corrupted and imprecise form of written language (item 2). There were 36% willing to say that formal English is in general a more adequate variety of language for communicating than informal English (item 37). Some 41% felt that informal language would not help make English more meaningful to students. These findings incline one to agree with Bailey that perhaps the widespread prestige accorded the printed word has in several important ways warped our language judgments. 5

There appears to be a small group of English teachers who find no place at all in the classroom for slang (item 27, 12%). This finding requires careful interpretation, however. It seems clear that teachers interpret "slang" and "informal language" differently since more of them feel inclined to discourage the former than they do the latter (cf. items 13 and 20). If that small group of teachers thing of slang as the ungrammaticality of such forms as "ain't" or the most hackneyed teenage jargon, we would not be surprised at their spurning it. But if they are also dismissing the entire batch of new coinages, some of which are adapted to formal speech styles and some of which continue to enliven informal conversation, we may well wonder about the tone of some English

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5 Bailey, "Dialect and the Teaching of Composition," p. 388.
classrooms. Some English teachers apparently aim for a more formal classroom than others. One-fourth report that they do discourage students from using informal language (item 21).

It may be that too few English teachers fully appreciate the primacy of informal language for private communication or for communication that is designed less to inform than to integrate disparate personalities — in other words, communication designed to help us get along with each other and get closer to each other. Do teachers recognize the social and psychological importance of informal speech in its giving identity to individuals? Do they realize that requests to change or eliminate informal speech entail personal and social change? Are teachers who reject the formal rigidity of habitual slang, profanity and cliches themselves guilty of the formal rigidity of habitually bookish or ceremonially polite language — the kind of sanitized speech that seems correct only in a narrow sense?

C. ATTITUDES TOWARD AN EMPHASIS ON FORM OR FUNCTION IN ENGLISH INSTRUCTION

One observer complains that English teachers have been too unconcerned with how well student writing -- particularly that of nonstandard speakers -- functions and too concerned with its mechanics. She writes,

Every English teacher -- from kindergarten on up -- seems to think that his or her job is to get kids to write correctly, and that somebody else farther
up the line is supposed to get kids to actually say something worth saying . . . and to do it in an interesting and effective way.6

This anxiety, English teachers' concern with the form of language and their neglect of the efficacy of its functioning,7 is one that is examined by the survey's third content area.

Although many observers see form and function as at odds with one another, they may not necessarily be so. The competition between form and function may be an artifact of our way of talking about them. Polarizing them as "opposite emphases" in order to explore the ramifications of relative emphasis on one or the other may result in items that are of the "damned-if-you-do, damned-if-you-don't" category. Two items in this content area seem especially to fall in this double-bind category:

22. If students communicate effectively, the fine points of grammar and usage are unimportant.

and

43. As an English teacher, I feel that teaching effective communication is more important than teaching correct grammar and usage.


7 There is some ambiguity in the phrase "language function." "Language function" sometimes refers to the effectiveness of language in communicating. (i.e. How well does language function for its intended purpose? Is it functional?) At other times, "language function" refers to the descriptive operation of language in a context. (How does language function here? What role does language play in relation to other boundary conditions?) It is in its descriptive sense that it is usually intended throughout this discussion. In all cases, the context of the phrase will be helpful in determining its particular use.
Both items help test the relative emphasis on form and function, but at the cost of, perhaps, forcing choices which teachers may feel are uncomfortably inaccurate. Presumably the 11 and 19 teachers who marked the "unclear/don't know" category for items 22 and 43 respectively (see Table 5), may have been reacting to the difficulty of these alternatives although the number of abstainers for these items is not unusually high.

The interesting response of teachers to these items is that most feel that the fine points of grammar and usage are important, even after students have learned to communicate effectively (item 22, 76%). A somewhat smaller majority feel that effective communication is more important than teaching correct grammar and usage (item 43, 69%). The teachers recognize both necessities.

But, although teachers recognize both necessities, it is insightful to look further at their attitudes toward each separately since both form and function have phenomenological validity -- both concepts persist in professional and public conversation. The items analyzed below shed further light on teachers' attitudes toward form and function.

The majority of the respondents indicated that they felt it part of their responsibility as English teachers to call attention to incorrect forms in their students' speech (item 14, 84%). They felt this way in some cases with the awareness that it is nonetheless possible to be an effective speaker without using correct English (item 3, 63%). The other 37% of the respondents felt that correct
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Of Those Responding:</th>
<th>%Agree</th>
<th>%Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. It is possible to be an effective speaker without using correct</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. As an English teacher, I should make sure that only standard</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English is spoken in the classroom.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I cannot give a passing grade to a student paper filled with</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>errors in usage, spelling and punctuation -- even if the idea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>developed is sensible.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. As an English teacher, I feel it is my responsibility to call</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my students' attention to incorrect forms in their speech.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Language should be judged by its correctness.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. If students can communicate effectively the fine points of</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grammar and usage are unimportant.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. If the message is not letter-perfect, it is apt to be</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>misunderstood.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITEM</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Of Those Responding:</td>
<td></td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%Agree</td>
<td>%Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Attention to linguistic standards is essential for effective communication.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. In general, I do not think English teachers should correct students' speech during class discussions.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Bad grammar usually makes speech ineffective.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. As an English teacher, I feel that effective communication is more important than teaching correct grammar and usage.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; Don't know = Don't know or Unclear; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree. Percentages showing those agreeing and those disagreeing were computed from the total of those responding positively (Agree's and Strongly Agree's) or negatively (Disagree's or Strongly Disagree's); these percentages do not include those responding in the middle category.
English was necessary for effective speaking. A similar division was apparent in attitudes toward correctness in writing. Some 25% felt that unless the written message were letter-perfect, it was apt to be misunderstood (item 25). In both the case of speaking and writing, a sizable minority was inclined to emphasize the importance of correct form.

Even though most English teachers saw it as part of their job to correct students' speech, most chose not to do this during class discussions (item 35, 65%) and 14 teachers felt strongly that this should not be done. During my interviews with teachers, several presented a rationale for not correcting students in class. They recognized that students often interpreted criticism of their speech as a criticism of them personally. Therefore, the criticism tended to cause some students to withdraw from class participation.

Two other teachers I spoke with, however, said that they always corrected students but were aware of the danger involved in doing so. Both emphasized the importance of being "humorous" in making corrections or, in other ways, adopting a tone that would spare, if not his incorrect language, at least the student's self-regard.

Obviously, these percentages need to be interpreted carefully. They could, as one respondent mentioned to me, make sensational headlines — to wit: "English Teachers Feel Bad Grammar Okay" (item 39, 43%). Such a facile charge would be unfair. Item 39 might better be interpreted together with items 25 and 28. Teachers responded in these ways:
25. If the message is not letter perfect, it is apt to be misunderstood — 25% agreed and 75% disagreed

39. Bad grammar usually makes speech ineffective — 57% agreed and 43% disagreed

28. Attention to linguistic standards is essential for effective communication — 75% agreed and 28% disagreed

The pattern here suggests that teachers make some careful distinctions. They see some sorts of language blunders as more likely to lessen the effectiveness of language than others. Small, local errors that prevent a message from being letter-perfect are less grievous than grammatical errors which, in turn, are less grievous than violations of linguistic standards. "Linguistic standards" is the most general term here and perhaps might be thought of as including the other spelling and grammatical criteria.

Nonetheless, 28% of the teachers still disagreed that linguistic standards were essential for effective communication. Does this mean that more than one-fourth of the respondents are teachers who recognize no standards, who let incorrect, careless language pass without so much as a raised brow, all the while condoning bad grammar and poor spelling in the name of "motivating" students? This interpretation is not the only one possible, nor is it, I think, the likely one. It may be that some of this minority recognize more than certain linguistic standards as important in measuring the functional success of language. Unwilling to judge by its linguistic correctness (item 18, 59%), they pay careful attention to the extra-linguistic context talked about in Chapter II, sections three and four. As teachers become aware of the extra-linguistic
context of speech, they become concerned with the functioning of language in its personal and social contexts. Then, language learning ceases to be the "replacement of one set of forms for another."  

This view of how students become skillful language users is more complex than traditional views of English instruction in which such activities as parsing sentences, memorizing spelling words, learning correct usage forms and mastering verb paradigms are familiar. The untraditional view of English instruction -- English as more than the mastery of correct form -- does not lend itself to headlines or even to brief explanations to those who buttonhole English teachers at parties with the challenge, "Why can't kids write?" (or spell or talk correctly or . . .).

The pattern of responses to items in this content category suggests that some English teachers may have an appreciation of a more sophisticated view of native language learning. They are, for example, aware of the danger of ignoring completely the student's intended communication in assigning grades. Some 81% reported that they could give a passing grade to a student paper filled with errors in usage, spelling and punctuation if the idea developed was sensible (item 10). Similarly, some 69% said that they would not limit classroom talk to standard English (item 7). One gets the sense that, unlike the conservative minority

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8 As Horner and Gussow put it, "John and Mary," Language in the Classroom, eds. Cazden, John and Hymes, p. 192.
(fluctuating from between 16 and 35% of those responding) most English teachers have a primary concern for the intended message above and beyond their concern for the code in which it is embodied. They seem inclined to resist burying the spirit of the communication in the graveclothes of its form.

D. ATTITUDES TOWARD LANGUAGE CHANGE

In response to the statement, language has never been so abused as it is today, 21% of the respondents indicated their agreement (item 11, Table 6). A larger 41% agreed that we are indeed faced with a linguistic crisis brought on by the poor quality of English being spoken (item 15). There were 20% who considered slang to be a threat to language. Only 11% of the respondents see today's language as better handled than ever before. This does not mean that a larger number do not see language as being as well used today as it has been in the past. And, when we realize that English teachers are in a special position to appreciate the artful language of great literature, perhaps the 11% is itself surprising.

All these figures suggest that many teachers, though not a majority, are concerned about the corruption of the language. They believe that language itself can be in crisis and that words, as a body, can suffer from corruption despite the continued demythologizing by NCTE over the decades (see Chapter II, section five).

When teachers were asked this question in terms of their students, their replies are somewhat contradictory. When asked whether their students' language had become increasingly
**TABLE 6**

FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF RESPONSES TO ITEMS IN CONTENT AREA FOUR:
ATTITUDES TOWARD LANGUAGE CHANGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Of Those Responding:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%Agree   %Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. In the years that I have taught English, my students' language</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>51 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has become increasingly careless.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Language has never been so abused as it is today.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21 79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. We are confronted today with a linguistic crisis brought on by</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41 59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the poor quality of English being spoken.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Slang poses a threat to language.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. In the years that I have taught English, my students' language</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>60 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has remained about the same.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Language has never been as well used as it is today.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11 89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; Don't know = Don't Know or Unclear; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree,
  Percentages showing those agreeing (Agree's and Strongly Agree's) and those disagreeing (Disagree's and
  Strongly Disagree's) were computed from the total of those responding positively or negatively; these
  percentages do not include those responding in the middle category.
careless, 51% agreed (item 4). When asked whether it had remained about the same, 60% agreed. This pattern of response is difficult to interpret since at least 9% of those responding are saying that their students' language has both become increasingly careless and remained the same! The large percentages here may reflect feelings about "youth in general" or "today's society" as well as feelings about language abuse itself.

E. THE SURVEY AS A WHOLE: ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

This section contains some information about the study that doesn't fall under one subject area category or another. It reports the results of the replicated item analysis with the final population data, reports the analysis of the demographic variables and considers the unity of the instrument as a whole.

The replicated item analysis. The data from the final population (N = 124) was subjected to the same sort of item analysis as was the pretest data. The results of this second analysis are contained in Table 7. Two items (nos. 12 and 16) were omitted as a result of this second analysis because, as "weak items" they lessened the reliability of the scale of which they were a part. Another item was repeated (nos. 5 and 40) and provided one indication of measurement error.

The second analysis showed these Kuder-Richardson coefficients of reliability for the four sub-scales: .87, .84, .83 and .81 respectively. This degree of reliability is close to that
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Area One</th>
<th>Content Area Two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item No.</td>
<td>Item-No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item-To-Total r</td>
<td>Factor Loading</td>
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reported by Ford for his language attitude measures\(^9\) and is deemed sufficiently high to establish the internal consistency of all four sub-scales.

**Analysis of personal and professional variables.** In addition to responding to the 43 statements on the final survey instrument, teachers were asked to indicate their age, sex, number of years teaching, nature of current teaching assignment, undergraduate major, amount of education and number of grammar, linguistic or history-of-the-language courses taken. These variables were tested in order to determine whether they could explain attitude differences. None of them proved reliably significant at the .05 level or less in explaining these differences.

There are many possible reasons for a failure to find a significant relationship between levels of the variables and attitudes. One certainly is that these variables do not make a difference in attitude. Other reasons include the large amount of missing data and, in some cases, the relatively few number of individuals in some levels of the variables. The population was not diverse enough (or large enough) to reliably measure some variables. Also, at least one of the variables requested -- the number of grammar, linguistics or language history courses taken -- could not be accurately obtained by merely asking teachers for it.

Many teachers indicated that they couldn't remember. Some apparently interpreted these courses as including literature courses or interpreted the request for the number of courses as a request for number of credit hours. In any case, information provided in response to this request was especially suspect.

Teachers seemed more hesitant in supplying this personal and professional information. Judging from several outspoken marginal notes, they felt a desire to keep their attitudes private and felt that separating their responses to survey items from personal data was one way to do this. Consistently throughout the study teachers showed great interest in the subject of the research -- those who responded to both versions of the survey as well as those interviewed. Sometimes their interest was expressed as anger, indignation and frustration and sometimes -- more often -- it was expressed as enthusiasm, support and curiosity. Often it seemed as though the survey items were hitting a raw nerve. I received many scrawled notes in the margins of survey forms. My general impression was that teachers cared.

The unity of the instrument as a whole. The four dimensions of the instrument were originally validated separately and measured for reliability separately. Nonetheless, it was clear from the similarity of items designed to measure different dimensions that, in fact, they probably measured the same attitude. For example, item 20, "Language that varies from standard English is deficient," is obviously related to item 8, "English teachers should never use
slang in the classroom," although these items were originally assigned to different dimensions. The item-to-item analysis lends support to their relatedness. It indicates a correlation of .5 between them.

The obvious question is, to what extent do the four dimensions measure larger underlying dimensions. In order to answer this question, total responses to dimensions for both the pretest and final surveys were correlated. The results, recorded in Table 8, show a moderate to high correlation between scales. This substantial correlation suggests that respondents who score "conservatively" or "liberally" on one scale would be apt to score similarly on another.

This would mean that, for example, a teacher who views English as having a single, monolithic structure would tend to emphasize correct language form and formal styles, find non-standard dialects problematical and be concerned about the general decline of the language. This also means that the positive and negative sides of the four dimensions are properly aligned since none of the correlations in Table 8 are inverse correlations. It makes some sense, then, to refer to someone with the attitudes sketched above as "conservative" and someone who would view English as having several standards against which language could be judged, who would recognize the importance of informal language and effective communication as a goal, and who would see diachronic
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<td>1.00</td>
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* Pearson Product Moment Coefficients of Correlation
language change as natural and healthy as "liberal." These patterns of responses have been referred to throughout this dissertation in this way.

The relatedness of the dimensions was further investigated by means of a factor analysis. The factor analysis indicated 6 underlying factors as accounting for most of the meaning but they were difficult to interpret. It is interesting to note, however, that a very high proportion of the variance (.47) was explained by the first factor. This suggests that there is one factor that underlies about half of the items. There is, it would appear, a good deal of overlap among dimensions.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A. SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to develop a survey instrument that would describe secondary English teachers' normative attitudes toward language variation. The development of the survey instrument was motivated by the abundance of speculation about, but the lack of factual knowledge of teachers' attitudes toward language norms in general and toward certain sorts of language variety. The increasing interest in language attitudes among English educators and researchers has also made this study of particular importance.

Items for a Likert-type instrument were developed using a series of teacher interviews and a review of the literature. The survey instrument measures teacher attitudes toward standard English, formal and informal language, the emphasis on form or function in English instruction and language change. Each of the four content areas were thought of as different, although possibly overlapping, dimensions of meaning. Their dimensionality was established by submitting them to a panel of experts in language learning and to a statistical item analysis of a pretest version of the survey completed by 124 teachers. The panel of
experts rated items for relevancy while the statistical analysis was used to identify irrelevant items as well as ambiguous items. The final survey version contained forty items that were used to describe the attitudes of the final research population: the 175 secondary English teachers in Columbus, Ohio, public schools, 70% of whom responded to the survey. Their responses are recorded on Tables 3-6 in the preceding chapter.

In addition to describing teacher attitudes in terms of the four content areas, these demographic and professional variables were explored in order to see if they might explain some differences in teacher attitudes: age, sex, years teaching, nature of current English assignment, undergraduate major, amount of education and special training in language. There was no significant difference found in the language attitudes of teachers at the different levels of these variables. Finally, the degree to which the four dimensions overlapped was explored. A high correlation was found between the subjects' responses in one content area and their responses in the others. A factor analysis of the 41 items bore out this similarity.

B. CONCLUSION

It has been stated that "... the teacher's starting point for dealing with the dialect problems of their students lies in the area of attitudes toward language." If one interprets the phrase

1Stokes, Dialect and Teaching, p. 2.
"dialect problems" as problems using one's dialect, this claim is quite a broad claim. If we see attitudes as mediational influences, they do seem to be fundamental. And, if we plan to deal with problems through attitudes, a description of those attitudes is a reasonable place to start.

The description provided by this study goes a long way to discourage most categorical generalizations about secondary English teachers' language attitudes. The study revealed that these attitudes varied across the population surveyed and from area to area. None of these strawmen, which one encounters in the literature, were found to exist in the teachers as a group:

- the presumption of a single common and uniform language which ignores the fact and implication of differences within it

- a commitment to an exaggerated pure or correct standard English

- a vision of nonstandard forms as impossibly gross or barbarous

- a lopsided interest in formal speech; that is, a preoccupation with the formal aspects of language to the exclusion of its incidental aspects

or

- a fear that language is being corrupted by widespread abuse (although this last "strawman" did take on some life)

However reassuring these general findings are, there is a great possibility that some of these extremes of attitudes do exist in individuals. Each content area produced a split among

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teachers. The split was reflected in the means of respondents to each content area (see Table 9). The split, however, needs to be interpreted on an item-by-item basis or by observing patterns of related responses.

**TABLE 9**

**MEANS OF RESPONDENTS TO CONTENT AREA**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Area</th>
<th>% Agreed</th>
<th>% Disagreed</th>
<th>Content Area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>that there is not a single, monolithic English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>that informal language is important in English instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>that function should be emphasized over form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>that the language is not being corrupted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some items in the survey served to shed light on teachers' specific policies and practices -- as when they were grading error-filled papers or confronted by incorrect speech in the students' recitations or considering whether to alter their own speech to suit the classroom (item 35, 10, 34). Other items shed light on their views of their own role as English teachers. Half of the respondents saw themselves as guardians of language standards and correctness. Half saw themselves as champions of standard English. Most saw it as part of their job to make students aware of their incorrect speech forms and most saw their teaching effective
communication as a primary goal and teaching correct grammar and usage as an important, but secondary goal (items 7, 9, 14, 27, 36, 42, 43). The remaining items asked teachers to directly reveal their attitudes toward language variations. They were asked to reveal their judgments, assessments and expectations with regard to certain variations.

Sometimes the findings can be seen as qualifying other findings. It is therefore useful to see them in relation to each other or to another's position. Some of the items come into an interesting focus, for example, when contrasted with George Orwell's declaration that, "It [the defense of the English language] has nothing to do with correct grammar and syntax, which are of no importance as long as one makes one's meaning clear." Only a minority of English teachers took as strong a position as Orwell, but a majority appreciated some degree of this sentiment. They recognized, if not that grammar and syntax were unimportant, at least that effective speech depended on much more. There appeared to be another minority that felt more conservatively that speech must be correct to be effective, that writing must be letter-perfect to avoid being misunderstood, that only standard English should be spoken in the classroom, that papers filled with errors in usage, spelling and punctuation never deserve a passing

grade and that teaching effective communication is not more important than teaching correct grammar.

Additional findings are reported in summary form below. They are those which the researcher saw as most significant. Their significance is not statistical or even determined by numerical majority. Sometimes findings about a minority of teachers seem particularly important, as, for example, when 28% of the respondents indicated that effective communication did not depend upon attention to linguistic standards. This important minority is apparently acknowledging that there are standards other than linguistic and that effective communication depends on more than language. Simple as this is, more English teachers could probably benefit from such an insight.

Here, then, is the list:

1. A surprisingly large percentage of respondents (41%) feel confronted by a linguistic crisis brought on by the poor quality of English being spoken.

2. A significant minority (30%) see the spoken language as a corrupted and imprecise form of written language.

3. Most teachers (87%) consider the standards for judging usage found in grammar books and usage manuals to be absolute standards.

4. Most teachers do not see nonstandard dialects as inconsistent or illogical although some nonstandard dialects are seen as inferior in their expressive and communicative powers.

5. Most teachers see dialect variation as itself good.

6. While most teachers see informal English as important, they are wary of slang in the classroom -- both the teacher's and pupils'.
7. A sizable minority (36%) see formal English as a more adequate variety of language than informal English.

8. One-fourth of the respondents discourage students from using informal language.

9. Most teachers feel they should call attention to students' incorrect speech forms even though it is possible to be an effective speaker and writer without absolute correctness. Noteworthy minorities (37% and 25%) disagreed with the last qualification.

10. Most teachers would not correct student speech during class discussions.

11. Most teachers would not give a failing grade to papers filled with usage, spelling and punctuation errors if the idea developed were sensible.

12. Most teachers would not limit classroom talk to standard English.

This study has implications for teacher training and for in-service staff development work. Teacher educators may well wonder about the range of attitudes revealed by the study. The personal and professional variables examined in this study were unable to explain this range. What does explain it? Does the work of the psycholinguists and sociolinguists mean that what we've called the very conservative attitudes of some teachers are outmoded and unenlightened? Are these attitudes subject to change? In what ways?

Since fewer and fewer new English teachers are being hired in schools with declining enrollments, there will be more concern for the in-service development of English staffs. Those concerned with this staff development should find some support in the attitude of English teachers to the extent that their attitudes are similar to those in the Columbus secondary schools. They should
have some support for turning attention to the importance of the social and personal contexts of communication and the different standards these contexts imply. Attention to these contexts is important for the reason Labov suggests:

Though native speakers of a given dialect show an extraordinary ability to interpret the grammatical rules of another dialect, they do not necessarily show the same ability in dealing with the broader aspects of communicative competence . . . [with] differences in forms of politeness, ways of mitigating or expressing anger, or of displaying sincerity and trust.  

This concern for people in social groups and for the interaction of language and value systems is one that will valuably supplement the traditional attention to correct forms, to grammatical, syntactic and usage rules. It is also a concern that has the potential to alter current evaluative methods of student performance for the better.

Staff developers should also find support for encouraging an appreciation of the multi-dimensional diversity of language variation. This appreciation might lead to a creative use of all styles -- formal and informal -- in teaching. Skill in using the range of styles may become a conscious goal as well as an effective means for achieving the other goals of English instruction. There would appear to be an attitudinal basis for much enlightening staff development work.

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APPENDIX A

TRANSCRIPTIONS OF INTERVIEWS

In transcribing interviews from cassette tapes, it is hard to avoid realizing how much of their quality is lost. Disfluencies that are normal to speech and virtually transparent to listeners are awkwardly intrusive in the written transcript. One realizes that oral pauses, rates of respiration, rhetorical stress and certain phonological irregularities create a rhythm of articulation that cannot be captured in writing through mere punctuation. And this is to say nothing of the nonverbal component of spontaneous communication! The transcriptions do not attempt to capture the speech rhythm or quality. Although false starts are recorded, such fillers as "ah" are not. Nor is any effort made to transcribe dialectic or ideolectic variations in the subject's phonology. The content of responses, more than their style, is important here.
Interview A1

I: What changes in your students' language would you like to see?

S: Changes I would like to see in the students are an improvement in usage in such instances as, "Him and me went to the movies." I would prefer to hear them say, "Joe and I went to the movies," or "We went to the movies." I don't expect such formality as, "He and I went to the movies," but ... In instances like that I would like to see changes. Another change that I would really enjoy is a growth in the size of their own personal vocabularies. I think I see that happening in the new program we have this year. I'm optimistic about that. And I think that covers it.

I: What language do you find acceptable or unacceptable?

S: Well, it depends on the situation. I really enjoy language very much and I enjoy seeing it in different dress the way I enjoy seeing people in different dress or the way I see them using different kinds of behavior depending upon the situation. I like slang, for example. I enjoy using it myself in certain kinds of circumstances. I can enjoy hearing the youngsters use it in very informal conversations around informal school situations. I enjoy using it myself in informal situations. But, there are circumstances where I think the situation requires a formal language and standard language where I find slang in full usage and substandard language really unacceptable and, in situations like that, I think they should know -- call it a second language if you wish -- I think they should know formal language. Does that make sense? (pause) Yes, ok.

I: Ok, the next one. What do you understand to be standard English?

S: My understanding of standard English is that it is the kind of English that we find in most of our textbooks, in the most responsible of our printed media, in rather formal addresses and in the kind of formal papers that the students themselves produce. My conviction is that most students are going to have a practical experience throughout their lifetime themselves through the public media which shows every indication of continuing to use a somewhat standard, formalized language. Many of them say they want to go on to school and study. In that case, they're going to have to deal with textbooks that use a rather standard, formal language. That's the language I consider to be standard and that, I think, they need to know.
I: Do you see teaching standard English as a part of your job as an English teacher.

S: I certainly do. Yes.

I: Do most of your students need instruction in standard English?

S: Yes they do.

I: What sorts of variation from standard English do you find most troublesome?

S: Well, mainly those that were indicated by my answer to your first question -- usage and diction are challenges for them to face. They need to know a great deal about usage in standard, written English much more than they need to know, say, about conversation or spoken English and they need, as I said, to increase their working vocabulary, some basic understanding of some grammatical concepts -- such as what constitutes a complete sentence, for example, would be a very helpful thing for some of them to know.

I: Thank you,------

Interview A2

I: What changes in your students' language would you like to see?

S: I would like to see them more careful in their speech habits as far as the auditory is concerned -- the "-ing" endings, the "-d's" and the "-t's", final consonants -- because I find that there is a carry-over between an omission at the spoken level and their ability to spell and therefore be accurate writers. Also, I would like to see their vocabulary considerably broadened because I find that many times their writing is dull or perhaps even stagnated because they're using the same words again and again. And in the classroom situation, I see them really struggling for words and they just don't have a wide enough vocabulary to accommodate their needs. As a goal, I would like very much to have students become interested in language, interested in the words themselves and their origins and perhaps in that way, if they can develop a greater interest in the language itself, that they will become better students with a broader vocabulary and therefore better writers and efficient readers.

I: Thank you. What language do you find acceptable or unaccept-able-- student language?
S: As a personal preference, I find swearing and obscenities very distasteful. There are times when I feel the students have a need to express some sort of frustration and only something on the level of a four-letter word seems to suffice. But, as a student matures, I find that there is less and less profanity, as they're better able to express their feelings in a language that is, you know, more acceptable to me, one with which I am more comfortable.

I: Thank you. What do you understand to be standard English?

S: I would say language that observes what we consider grammatically correct sentences. If it were written language, then, of course, I would be looking toward words that are suitable and have some sort of unity from one sentence to another and they're not all disjointed. Acceptable language has to be broken down into the occasion or the need for which it is being used. By that I mean that colloquial expressions and current fad terms are perfectly all right at the spoken level and informal gatherings among students or even in student-teacher relations. But there are times I find it is unacceptable -- for example, the misuse of the word "like" -- just as a throw-in at the beginning of every sentence. I do find that that is substandard practically at all levels because it is used so commonly and is abused so frequently that it carries over into the student's writing or into his or her formal speech as well and that, I think, is substandard. I think that will suffice.

I: Sure. Do you see teaching standard English as a part of your job as an English teacher?

S: Yes, I do.

I: Do most of your students need instruction in Standard English?

S: Yes, I think so, not only for rules, but I think that they need to develop some understanding of the philosophy behind the rules -- why certain things go together and why things do not go together. And they need the instruction to a point where they are comfortable in what we call "standard English" becomes just everyday language to them, that they then are better able to communicate later in business or in further academic work at the college or postgraduate level.

I: What sorts of variation from standard English do you find most troublesome?

S: I've already mentioned the word "like." Very often what I call broken words where students are looking for the correct word and, as they think, they verbalize, they're filling in with "well" and "and/or" in a stumbling sort of process. At the written level,
I find that students frequently write "alot" when they mean two words, the term "a lot." If they must use it, it should be written as two words, but I find that there are many other ways of expressing that term -- "to a great degree," "to a large extent," "many," "frequently," and, again, I think that this reflects the limited vocabulary of the students. And we get constant repetition of set phrases such as "a lot" because the student doesn't have the mastery of the language to be able to give a varied use of words in both speech and writing.

I: Thank you, ________.

Interview A3

I: What changes in your students' language would you like to see?

S: Well, I'd probably like to see their formal writing change -- alright? -- just what they put down on paper. A little less typical, of the way they speak to each other, for instance, "gonna," "coulda," "shoulda," that kind of thing. And I think probably I'd like to see an awareness -- even if they didn't always write it that way if they were sure that they were aware of the difference, I think I would be more pleased about that, too.

I: All right. What language do you find acceptable or unacceptable?

S: Well, it all depends on the circumstances. I find unacceptable when they're speaking, of course, any kind of crude references -- things like that. And when they're writing, I find unacceptable the same kinds of slang and jargon that I wouldn't object to when they're speaking.

I: Thank you. What do you understand to be standard English?

S: I understand standard English to be English which is preferred by educated people, people who know the different between a double negative and the proper way of stating a phrase, who can use "accept" and "except" properly -- I suppose, just anything that is grammatically correct. I think that would be standard. I would include even slang in standard English because slang is kind of a faddish thing. I consider fad words to be standard.

I: Do you then see teaching standard English as a part of your job as an English teacher?

S: Absolutely. There's no question.
I: Do most of your students need instruction in standard English?

S: I would say most of them do. Surprisingly enough, I think there's a small percentage that doesn't need it and I think they're the ones who come from homes where standard English is spoken. I mean, normally, I would say that everyone needs it, but I have found that that's not necessarily true.

I: What sorts of variation from standard English do you find most troublesome?

S: The ones I mentioned before. The ones that really distort words to the point where they're spelled differently, they look differently. I think I could almost tolerate an "ain't" or double negative more than I can tolerate "cuz" for "because" and I don't know why -- I can't tell you why I feel that way. I think because things like "ain't" are becoming more acceptable in more and more places but the other distortions just are not.

I: Thank you, ________.

Interview A4

I: Now, the first question is, what changes in your students' language are you interested in seeing as an English teacher?

S: Just a little more formality. So many times the transfer from how they say a word to how they write a word -- in spelling, in diction, in punctuation, all of that -- you know, we can get away with it -- I mean it just makes it sometimes very incoherent and I just think when we speak to somebody, that there should be a more formal structure to the written use of the language.

I: What language do you find acceptable or unacceptable?

S: I'm not sure I understand the question.

I: Okay, when you're working as an English teacher, what language of your students do you find either acceptable or unacceptable? These questions are deliberately open-ended so you may have to interpret them some.

S: Okay, in speaking in class, I guess the thing that I really stress is for students to be as clear and concise as possible and to use words and idioms that will get their message across. And then, what I'm trying to do is to make them do the same thing when they're writing.
I: Okay, What do you understand to be standard English?

S: I don't like that terminology. I really don't. I — to me standard English is the use of the language that communicates best as opposed to a regional breakdown or old English or new English breakdowns or whatever — whatever communicates anything the best way.

I: Do you see teaching standard English as a part of your job as an English teacher?

S: I think they should be cognizant of standard English, but I think we should stress the language that is the best for them and that — for me, that serves my purposes and my goals as far as reading and writing English — my goals for the students, I mean.

I: Do you think most of these students need instruction in standard English?

S: Yes, they need to know the terms that they can use and I think they need to know all of the options that are open to them and I think it's the teacher's job to expose them to these options and standard English is one of them.

I: What variations from standard English do you personally find troublesome?

S: I guess, mostly in writing. I can live with oral variation, but in writing anything that clouds up the material, and anything that is unclear, anything that is incomplete. Standard English stresses being complete. So many times in writing there are things that are incomplete, I don't mean only sentences, I mean thoughts and ideas and that's what I have a great deal of difficulty with because it just breaks down communication which is, I guess, what I stress.

Interview A5

I: The first question is what changes in the students' language would you like to see?

S: I would like to see their language become more animated, become less dull. They seem to be using the same words all the time; for example, the student that was in the class we were just in continually uses the word "load." If he doesn't believe something, "It's a load." He uses it for people: "Jimmy Carter's a load."
Maybe from context, I could figure "load" out, but he won't explain it to me. I think he uses it as a catch-all phrase. I don't think it's very specific for him. So, their language is pretty dull. I'd like to see that improved.

I: What language do you find acceptable or unacceptable?

S: I guess all language is acceptable except for profanity. I don't want to hear profanity and I deal with that in various ways depending on when and where, but I don't know if you caught that just now -- a person in there said it very softly -- said something sucked and I looked at him. I was going to throw this one out. Oh, he just did a whole apologizing thing and said, "I mean, it's not that good." I don't know if I'm as strict as I should be. I don't know what stand to take. I'm comfortable with the stands I do take. I don't want to hear profanity. They know it and they'll cut it out. Slang terms in writing, of course, is unacceptable. In speaking, I usually point to it -- words like "ain't" and "ah" are some of the things I always correct -- nicely -- but I always correct them.

I: Do you see teaching standard English as a part of your job as an English teacher?

S: I really do think so. That is the standard by which the world judges them. When they're doing job interviews, when they're writing them or speaking somewhere, no one's going to be impressed with an "ain't" or a "gonna." I see the need more than ever for some sort of standard.

I: You've answered this in part, but what do you understand to be standard English?

S: I guess I consider standard English speaking without cliches, speaking without profanity and speaking without slang and speaking correct grammar, correct usage.

I: Do you think most of your students need instruction in standard English?

S: I definitely think they need instruction, especially since they are bombarded with nonstandard English all the time in advertisements, on television -- "Shop Rite" -- R-I-T-E, "tonite" -- N-I-T-E, "Koffee Kup" -- KK -- yes, they definitely need it.

I: What sorts of variation from standard English do you find most troublesome?
S: Again, it's the cute kind of usage and cute spellings that really bother me; kids don't see it as cute; they see it as acceptable.

Interview A6

I: What changes would you like to see in your students' language?

S: Okay, when kids come to me initially, I look for -- I look at where they're at. You can do that in a number of ways. We have little writing assignments that we ask kids to do for us and you can tell almost instantaneously where a kid is coming from and that is -- and, of course, as a teacher you have a good memory in terms of where a kid is -- and, again, you simply make a mental note or, with the way we use journals now, we can keep tabs on his or her progress. As we're going -- we have this comp. I course that we have -- and as we're going eighteen weeks, we can go back and see where a person has been and where he or she is at the present time. And, also, when a person has some language skills, they're readily apparent when you read their paper right away or deficiencies -- they're readily apparent and that, of course, as we are getting to know kids better in our new program, it's starting to formulate certain questions in my mind. Just why is this young lady, is this young man, why is he so much more skilled with his language, with her language than other people? And, naturally, as a teacher you want to try to help the kids with as much as possible. Again, I'm starting to form hypotheses in discussion, through discussion, in trying to help kids more and by helping them more, by helping their parents more, we can say, "Hey, Nina, why are you such a good reader? You're not especially affluent and your whole family does really well academically." And, "is there a reason? Can you give me some answer? Talking to the so-called good students, the good language students, I'm able to -- I want to put these kinds of things together and maybe when we have better dialogue with parents in the future, we can give them more tips than we are presently doing so we can help them and, of course, help the kids out and, of course, make our jobs easier to do and super public relations. Additionally, that's how I get at many of the quiet kids and how I'm able to kind of get at what's in their heads. And, of course, there are verbal answers that we get in class all the time. And, as I said, I'm always so cognizant of humor and the manipulation of language to create humor and, of course, the kid as receptor to pick up humor and, of course, as the sender to transmit it to me and the other kids in their class. Also, with the use of language is the way language can be used to intimidate people. Again, sometimes the kids are not cognizant of it, but I certainly am and I want to make this -- if they don't understand what they are doing, I want to bring it to a
level of consciousness so they understand just what they are doing with their tongues. I see this most — especially with this name calling kind of thing — I see it most pronounced with so-called slower kids — which of course is not true — with the so-called slower kids who, with a low self-concept kind of thing, are trying to put other people down maybe to make themselves feel good, that kind of superiority or what have you. But, those are basically the three areas that I'm really quite aware of.

I: What language do you find acceptable or unacceptable?

S: All language is acceptable. Again, we ask people to communicate and there's . . . we don't want to turn kids off. And, as I said that, I noticed I just slurred "want to" and said "wanna" turn people off, but we simply do not. Our job is to build kids up, to fortify them. But, we talk about standard language, standard English—nonstandard English, not a great deal but substantially so that they understand that there are not dialects, but simply certain languages that we speak. One is not superior to another but one is -- the standard one is agreed upon language to help us communicate as well as we possibly can. Communication is, of course, extremely difficult and we want to facilitate that as much as we can. If we don't understand each other, then that is stupid.

I: What do you understand to be standard English?

S: Again, we have experts in each and every field. In this case, we're talking about language experts -- people who are involved in the arts, in literature, in writing, what have you. They are our experts and they are our experts at this particular moment at this particular time who are telling us what is standard English and, of course, these experts change as does our language. We recognize this and we know that language, as I say, is dynamic and changing. But, again, we must be able to talk to each other and that's why we look to the experts for that. The experts, of course, with particular points do disagree. Some experts find a point very minute and insignificant and, of course, there is disagreement with particular points, but that's okay, too.

I: Do you see teaching standard English as a part of your job as an English teacher?

S: Yes, standard English is simply one of my jobs. It's -- along with a tremendous emphasis in 1977 -- when we're getting shouted at so much by the media and other places, standard English along with the reading and the writing and the vocabulary, usage, spelling — all of these — it's simply part and parcel. On occasion, it's kind of a separate unit kind of thing, but it also is incorporated into so much else of what we do in terms of standard English.
I: Okay, Do you see your students as really needing instruction in standard English?

S: There are tremendous levels and, again, I -- we talk about the nonstandard and in my particular instance there are some kids being bussed in from Hartford, black kids being bussed in and in their particular instance, they use the kind of the black language, the black patois, and that deviates significantly from the standard white, middle-class English which we are accustomed to. We are extremely careful, at least I am and I hope the other English teachers are because we've talked about it, we are extremely careful not to put any kid down for not speaking English. And our point is to not only bolster the black kid, but bolster any kid whose parent does not speak standard English so that he does not think that we are frowning on him or his heritage or anything like that and all we're simply doing is simply pointing out to the kid that there is a need for a language and, again, I'm being repetitive here, for us to understand each other. And, again, there have been tremendous problems in other countries. In India, for example, I think there are like thirteen different languages. In Italy, not so many years ago, there were a tremendous amount of dialects. In Africa there are, again, I think, at least ten different languages and this obviously poses a communications problem between these people. And the kids see this, they understand it and we talk about it. And, in our discussion class, invariably a kid will come forth with a proposal, i.e. why don't they have one language? And they listen to that and there is a chord basically and they understand the need why they should have one and we call it simply one language and, then, from there, we take them into a standard language and they understand that to use a standard language is not to reject his nonstandard language. Again, the emphasis is on not one being better than the other language, standard being better than the nonstandard language. We're really careful with our language when we talk about that. It was kind of cute on occasion someone accused me of being prejudiced because we were talking about black language; i.e. something is "bad" which in the black language means something is "good." And, again, you can hear the problems if someone isn't aware of the way a black man or kid is using that. But, someone accused me of being prejudiced simply because I was trying to point out the nonstandard use of the black people. We also used copies of Russians, Armenians and a couple of other people who use English as a secondary language and had them speak and the kids got a big chuckle out of that.

I: Did you use any Polish?

S: No, I didn't use any Polish. I don't know why not; I just didn't have access to it. Still, in my ear because the Greek was spoken with the English in my house, occasionally I will make
kind of significant language *faux pas* and again, it's because I've heard the misuse of language, the nonstandard use of English so many times, that it comes to the floor often times and it's simply funny. I chuckle about it, but I am embarrassed about it on occasion because I'm not supposed to make mistakes.

I: I'm really sympathetic.

S: Everyone does that, Mary. That's the terrific scope of English. Because we have these huge books on usage and if any teacher -- the width of English is staggering and if any teacher thinks he or she will not make some kind of usage mistake, I simply would say to put a tape recorder in front of your mouth.

I: Are there any sorts of variation from English that are particularly troublesome to you?

S: Again, I have a problem with the word "troublesome" because that is a pejorative -- it's indicating that -- you know -- I guess I'm bothered by -- and I'm not and as I said before -- I accept or try to accept as much as possible and if I can catch the kids and they can understand what we're trying to do -- standard and, not standard versus nonstandard, but standard and nonstandard -- then it's not troublesome *per se*. It's just that the kids understand that they must -- in order to work with the rest of the world -- they must be aware and use standard English in order to function as well as they possibly can. And, it doesn't mean if they use standard, it's a rejection of their heritage, it's a rejection of their parents or a rejection of anything. It's simply -- if you will -- a second English language -- one being the one that is used most often.

Interview A7

I: The first question is, what changes in your students' language do you look for as an English teacher?

S: In teaching, for instance, a usage unit, I try to see them adopting some of what we're calling a standard, more formal type of language. Just now we're working on "lie" and "lay." If I can get them to distinguish between those two verbs and to start using it in the writing they do for me in class and maybe hearing them talking among themselves or even just to me, making that kind of distinction, then I'm going to feel that I'm getting some place.

I: What language do you find acceptable or unacceptable in your students?
S: I understand that they're used to speaking in slang and using nonstandard English, but I like to require as much as possible in their answering in class and in their written work for me, that they use standard — formal or informal — but, avoiding slang or anything like "ain't" and so on.

I: What do you understand to be standard English?

S: Standard English would be what would largely appear in the grammar books, what would largely be used in more scholarly writing. I guess I'd probably go along with most of the definitions that I've read even in the textbooks that the students use.

I: Do you see your job as an English teacher as teaching standard English?

S: I think it's a part of it. It may not even always be a direct thing. As much as possible, I try to use standard English to expose them to it, realizing that in many cases they may not have been exposed to much of it. But I think they should know it. Some of them are going to be required in a very practical sense to use it later on in writing. They're going beyond high school level.

I: Do you think that most of the students need instruction in standard English?

S: Yes. I guess there's just an emphatic yes.

I: Great. What sorts of variation from standard English do you find most troublesome?

S: I guess I don't know exactly what you mean by that. I don't think I could classify it one way or another. It's not simply teen-age jargon. It's not necessarily what they may hear from their parents. It's a combination of things that simply don't fit in with what we have been used to teaching from the grammar books.

Interview A8

I: The first question is, as an English teacher, what changes do you look for in your students' language?

S: I don't think I know exactly what you mean.

I: Well, often English teachers are thought of as helping students speak or write English and I'm wondering if, as you work with students, you look for certain changes in their speech or in their writing.
S: Well, of course, what we're aiming at is to try to improve...
I find that there is... we can look for more improvement
in writing. Speech patterns are formed, as I'm sure you're pretty
much aware of, by what the students hear at home and among their
peers. I do the newspaper and I find that some of my... even
my editors use the word "ain't" and when I ask why, the answer
is, as we heard this morning if you were there and saw that film...

I: I did.

S: "Because everybody says 'ain't.'" So it's hard to fight
something like that and I've found that's pretty much true. Now,
a lot of these kids can pretty much turn it on and off -- some
of what we call the better students. In other words, Suzie
last year would say "ain't" and when she would be in certain
situations, she would not say "ain't," but, nevertheless, she was
saying "ain't." So... and I did ask her why. "Well, that's
the way everybody talks." But she was conscious of it. Now,
most kids aren't conscious of it and it's just why they hear. So,
although they are corrected, I've found that really when someone
says, "Well, he don't have to do nothin'," to try to correct that
in speech... you can correct it, you can make him say it over,
but it lasts, you know, as long as they're saying it. But in
writing you presumably can make them more conscious of the fact --
particularly since you do a draft and then you redo it and then, if
something's wrong, and they have to rewrite it, they've done it two
or three times and, hopefully, we reach a point where they stop to
think about it as they're writing it -- maybe the first time or
even the second time and don't have to wait for that third time
to correct it. So I look for more improvement in their writing
patterns. I try to help them with speech and, of course, point out
and go through the bit about, "Well, what difference does it make,
if I'm going to be a mechanic, what kind of language I use?" and
come back the "well, you have two or three people applying for
a job, the average employer will notice some speech and will take
a person -- particularly if you're dealing with the public in
any way -- so we try to wipe out... as tape recorder. When
kids hear themselves... hear themselves on the recorder --
and they're fascinated with taping and hearing themselves --
that... that probably has a lot more effect on them than
my saying, "Don't say that. This is what it should be." But to
hear themselves say it back often has more effect than anything
else. So we do some things like that as far as... But, then,
I don't know how much actual effect it has long range. That's
something we haven't been able to check on it and, as I say, by
the time we get them -- I get them in the tenth grade at the
earliest -- and speech patterns... patterns from different
parts of the country are formed and if you hear somebody say,
"poosh" and "boosh," you know about what area and you know that this is what they've heard, and in their part of the world, it's right. So you try to do what you can, but you . . . I don't look for as much in speaking as I do in writing. In writing, I think you can make some progress. And it's something that . . . even if you get at something more permanent in writing. Now, I don't know if that's what you want. I would have really been . . . . But it's just like he said in . . . .

I: It's fine. It's marvelous. Someday I want to talk with you more about it. The second question is, what language do you think of as acceptable or unacceptable and here I'm thinking of everything except profanity.

S: That I find personally? or do . . . .

I: In your students' language in your class.

S: That I find or that other students find?

I: That you find.

S: Well, any mistake that is made, I notice it. In fact, I was probably one of the few people they flashed . . . well, a lot of people didn't see it, but when they flashed that beginning thing on, they spelled "judgment" wrong. (laughter) And . . . so . . . I mean . . . I can notice these things, but mainly I would try . . . the things that really bother me are the . . . you know, as I said, the "ain't" and the "he don't's" and the "ain't got nothin'" bit and so on, but the fact that someone says, "Does everyone have their homework?" It's wrong, but it doesn't bother me in their speech because you're really being too picky in view of the background of most of these kids. I do it. I don't know whether, when I was in high school, I said everything correctly or not either. I'm sure I don't even now -- more so perhaps than a lot of people who aren't dealing with it day by day -- but it's the overall thing, the view . . . and I have found also . . . . I've been here for twelve years time. Things are said in the classroom by the kids which I don't really blink too much about anymore that ten years ago . . . if somebody'd said, "stick it," you know, and "up," and so on, I would have really been . . . . But, it's just like he said in the film, these kids grew up with this kind of thing and it wasn't until -- I have four children of my own -- and it wasn't until I actually started listening -- I don't know what song it was -- something about that pot -- I actually listened to the words and it wasn't until I actually listened to the words of some of the records and on the radio that I realized what those records were saying. Because, up until then, it'd just been a bunch of noise. I don't like that kind of music and I don't belong to the Lawrence Welk bubble stuff, but I like nice music and I like
symphonic music. And, this other was a bunch of noise. My kids grew up with the Beatles and, you know, they weren't too bad in what they said. They didn't really get raunchy like, you know, it just . . . . But, anyway, they know, as I said, they know in my class that they can't cuss. To me there's a difference between cussing and swearing and . . . (public address announcement interrupts) Anyway, it simply doesn't bother me as much and I don't correct it as much, but they do know there are certain things they can't say. And I had one kid come in not too long ago and I corrected someone — a girl came in with another girl and used the name of the Lord in vain — to put it in an old-fashioned term — and I said, "I don't want to hear that." Her boyfriend came in a little later and said, "Are you against free speech? She can't say what she wants to?" I said, "This is my classroom and I have certain rules and she can talk to me about school, she can talk to me about a lot of things, but she cannot do that." So they accept these things and as far as language . . . now I know you're not particularly interested in cussing, swearing and this sort of thing, but it has changed in the things that are acceptable now. Well, I don't know if they're acceptable, but . . . . I cannot correct everybody all the time and so there are just certain things that . . . the other things bother me. I still don't like references to anatomy and so on, but I don't actively correct this kind of thing. There again, this is what they're exposed to.

I: What do you understand to be standard English.

S: I suppose what I understand to be standard English is what I grew up with. And even though "ain't" might be in the dictionary, to me, that's not standard English. We have very few terms of our total school population, very few Black students, even though they may have some words that they use in their own area and perhaps with their own friends, they don't seem to use them much in the classroom. I have very few expressions that have come up that I haven't heard the others . . . all of us use. Standard English, to me, as I said, trying . . . well, some new words have crept in, but nothing of the fad type of thing. I don't consider that standard English. We have people who come from out of state who have had some expressions that I might not consider standard, but are considered standard in their area. And I find, too, that after they have been here a while, they then to . . . everybody begins to talk pretty much like everyone else, at least the with . . . . Now what they do in a social situation . . . . I see them a lot at games. I go to football games. I go to basketball games, some wrestling matches, dances and so on. But even there, they're not so much, you know, socializing as . . . . It's not a social situation where it's a party or something — that I don't know. I'm not involved in that, but I find that there's very little that I don't understand. Of course, I have a lot of contact through the newspaper. If I see an article and I don't understand what some
one kid has written in a story, I ask him because I'm responsible for the total result of the paper. Mr.______ does not censor in any way. If I ask him for an opinion, he'll give it. But most times, he never sees the newspaper until he's given his copy. So I'm really responsible for the overall . . . . I always remember, a couple of years ago, someone said in a question and answer . . . referred to "roach." And to me a roach is something that crawls on legs and I let it go through and it wasn't until a few weeks later that I realized what this student was actually referring to has to do with the drug situation. And so I may keep on top of some of these expressions because I have to and if I don't know what they mean, I ask and if a kid will not explain what it means, it's out. So . . . but still, to me, these are expressions that come and go and standard English is still the English I grew up with.

I: Do you see it as part of your job as an English teacher to teach standard English?

S: Yes, because I think if it's something that's lasted as long as I have, it's going to last a long while. As I said, new expressions will creep in, new words which are . . . are perfectly all right. As far as fad expressions, maybe ten years from now "ain't" will be out and, then, years ago, "ain't" was not in. So I feel that it's part of my job, yes, to teach it . . . standard.

I: Do most of your students need instruction in standard English?

S: If you're referring to . . . do you mean by standard English saying, as I said, "he don't's" and so on. Is that? . . . I would regard that as not standard English. Yes, they do need quite a bit. There are many, many expressions that are not standard English. They really need a lot. And I'd . . . the most I can, as I said, with speech, but writing is where you see -- actually see -- the most results.

I: The last question is, in whatever way you yourself define informal language, what part does that have in your teaching?

S: Well, I use some of the common expressions, not to try to be one of the boys or one of the girls because . . . . I try to keep on top of things. As I said, I still have teenagers of my own at home and perhaps this also helps because . . . . Like when my younger daughter came up to me a year ago . . . maybe months ago . . . and said, "Well, we got to book now." To me, a book is something you open and you read. I said, "You have to book?" and it was very gently explained to me that that means, they've got to go. Okay, so I was perhaps more aware of that and, I mean, I wouldn't say it myself, but some expressions I find myself using. I use now, "Don't leave your things here while we're down in ERC or you'll get 'em ripped off." I find myself saying things that I hear and
the students will accept some things and yet if I tried to use
an expression maybe that was connected with drugs, about which I
know very little, or drinking or things like that, I'd probably
make a fool of myself trying to really be "with it," I guess you'd
say. So certain expressions from repetitions -- and some of them are
really expressive, I use and I accept. On the whole I try to dis­
courage it as much as possible. One thing that drives me crazy
right now: someone will say to a next door student, "Let me see
your pencil." If somebody says that to me, wanting to borrow some
... borrow my pen to write a name on a paper, I hold it up, "You
saw it," and put it back down. "Okay, I'm done." I say I always
feel like sticking a toothpick in you to see if you're done. You're
finished. You're not done. That's something that comes out of the
oven and when this . . . why can't you say let me borrow your pen­
cil?" But that's a very common expression now -- something I
wouldn't say because I think it's ridiculous and it does not express
what the student really wants to say. I would use some expressions
and others, but, on the whole, I would try to teach away from it.

Interview A9

I: The first question is, what changes do you look for in your
students' language?

S: In their written language, their oral language or both?

I: Both.

S: My kids say I'm such a crab because I'm always saying "Don't
say, 'done did' Don't say 'ain't.'" And they keep going to
dictionaries. I've really noticed this a lot this year. The kids
keep bringing in dictionaries. I'm really delighted to know they
know what one is. And they keep showing me that the word "ain't"
is in the wor . . . in the book. And I keep saying, "Of course
it's in the book. It's been in the book since I was in third grade
which puts it right back to the dark ages."

... need to become aware that the environmental language that they hear
every day that we allow and even encourage to be used in songs and
music -- the things that most affect them -- in commercials --
"You done that good," or "You did that good," or "The product works
good," -- that sort of thing instead of "Something's done well," so
that they become aware because most of my students have a great deal
of difficulty distinguishing on a grammar test or even in their
reading between what is acceptable, standard English and what would
be required of them if they had anything in their job that would
require them to give an impression of their company by their voice
on the telephone, for instance, or by their interview with a supplier, even to their factory or whatever and I don't think kids realize how... how much their language affects their promotability and so on. So I try to make them aware and it's a very, very difficult problem, especially in a school like ours. Our district looks very middle class and it's not. It's... there's some upper middle class, but very little. Most of it is lower middle class and upper lower class and the environment that the kids come from encourages them. And what I started to say about advertisements and music -- I mean when Barry Manilow gets down to "I ain't got somethin' or other," then you know that the music business has gotten to a point where standard American English is no longer required and, as a matter of fact, we play to that, we feed that attitude of using incorrect grammar in music and that... that my point -- that the kids get more affect... affected by what they see and hear in the electronic media. You were in the movie this morning, weren't you?

I: Oh, yes.

S: That was a super movie and I think he was making some really valid points. I can see... even now, some of my friends are former students that are now out of school and even as really good friends and people who spend time together, I have some of them that are just murdering the English language, but then slowly as they get into their careers, they become more and more aware and they begin to hear the difference and, also, as they get older, they begin to listen to the news and other things where there is correct grammar used and they begin to hear what's wrong... And I think that's what I work for the hardest and I know that's really a long-winded answer.

I: Oh, that's all right. It's very useful. What kind of language would you consider acceptable or unacceptable in your class?

S: Well, I guess I'm an unorthodox teacher because, in many ways, I let many things slide. The idea of screaming at a kid because he's eating a sucker or chewing gum just drives me bananas and screaming at a kid in the hallway because he has a hat on just drives me wild... just wild. But, the one thing that I will be quite strict on -- not to the point of humiliating the kid, but usually, in a teasing manner, I begin to teach them by correcting them constantly over and over again. So that if we have established a good relationship in the classroom, they become aware of their English errors and I don't allow them to say, "I done did." It's just not acceptable in the classroom and they know that and they sort of grin at me and say, "Oh yeah," and then they say it right. And when I started with these students three years ago, most of them were going, "I don't understand. What do you want me to say? Why don't you want me to say. 'I done did this?'" and they couldn't hear it and now they're
beginning to. Of course, I realize that it's a process of matura
... maturing, but it's also a process of being aware of something.
So, I will allow all sorts of other things in terms of behavior,
but I will not tolerate incorrect grammar because I ... I think
it's important. I ... those kids have come to expect that an
English teacher should correct their English so if I don't, they
think that what they're doing is correct and they don't stop to
think whether it's correct or not. They just accept the fact
that, "Well, she never corrects for saying that so it must be all
right to say it. I don't want them to go on a job interview and
humiliate themselves and discover after they've said something,
"Oh, God, he doesn't talk like that!" You know, "I just blew it!"
And we did, as a matter of fact, we did have a really nice girl
here in school who was interviewing with Battelle and the inter­
viewer called here and the job was going to be a terrific job, just
wonderful for her and she would have been dynamite at it as far as
her personality and so on and her appearance. She would have given
a good appearance physically, but the man called and said, "Is this
standard? Is this the way the kids out there talk? Because I don't
know whether I could stand going through the number of months it
would take me to teach this girl how to talk right so that she
didn't embarrass me every time she picked up the phone and trans­
ferred a call to me." And he didn't hire her. And he liked her very
much. And she was a terrific girl. But, you see, isn't that sad!
And that girl's whole future went down a step and it will continue
to go down a step until she finds a level where they'll accept it
and they're not going to accept it at Sears or Penneys. You know,
if they're planning on going any place past the sales clerk ... .
We're very career conscious in this school because we have very few
kids who go on to college.

I: What do you understand to be standard English?

S: Standard acceptable English, well, I guess I expect the kids
to know how to put a simple sentence together and make it a complete
sentence and I expect them to be able to make agreement in number
work with the verbs and nouns and so on. And I don't care whether
they know whether something is a preposition in a prepositional
phrase -- I do if they're doing that exercise, but as far as con­
structing a sentence I know they don't have to know, "Oh, that word
I just put down is a preposition and it has to be followed by either
an article or an object. They'll do that automatically if I give
them enough basis for it and if they get enough basis for it in
their reading. But we were just talking about making tests for our
kids for ... and we're all arguing about what has to go in that
post-test in order to get a good representation of what the kids
should know and what they do know and really having trouble as
teachers coming to agreement on that so I don't know that I can give
you a very thorough answer. We're sitting in there arguing about
what a tenth grader should know by that time. And one of the teachers finally said, "You can't expect us in one year to teach kids something that they haven't been able to get since kindergarten," and that's true. If our kids have gotten this far and all of the school process has not taught them to hear correct English as it's used on the nightly news which is, if you listen to the nightly news, they use large words from time to time, but it's aimed so that the average fifteen year old ought to be able to understand it and realize -- they don't use enormous high flung ideas except Eric Sevareid when he's doing a commentary or somebody like that when they're doing a commentary, but the general news is aimed so that the average American can understand it with a high school education or less. If my kids can talk . . . like the kids to talk like Walter Cronkite, I'd just be tickled to death. No, but I expect them to know agreement and number and that kind of thing and not make glaring errors.

I: I gather, then, that you see it as part of your job to teach standard English?

S: Yes, definitely.

I: Do most of your students need instruction in standard English?

S: Oh heavens! Oh, my God! I should say so! Our . . . I taught in an inner city high school for three years. Seventy-five percent of my students went to either a vocational school or college and a large percentage of those kids went on to four-year colleges and I realize that seventy-five percent is an enormous percentage but in a mostly Black school -- ninety-eight percent Black -- there were good programs and if you start with the kids young enough, you can get them ready and, again, the values of the fifties, "My kids are gonna have it better than I did." All of my parents in that area, with the exception of maybe five percent, their parents came up from Magnolia, Arkansas and other areas of Arkansas on cattle cars, literally, at the beginning of the Second World War to work in the factories because they just . . . all the factory people were gone and so all these women and younger men and older men were brought up that way and settled in that area of Michigan that I was teaching in and now they have very middle class values as far as education and so on is concerned . . . concerned for their children and I really was appalled when I came here and I realized that in this lily-white environment were maybe twenty-five percent Black students who come from, as a matter of fact, who almost all come from upper middle class families that my students in Muskegon, Michigan were better-spoken, harder workers and more ready even though they were in an inner city environment where I finished my last year by having a shooting and two of my students killed in my classroom -- not killed -- shot in the classroom.
And in that environment my students were more prepared to go out into life and be able to talk the way they needed to talk to advance themselves into any career they wanted to go into than the kid... and, again, that's a long-winded answer, but I have very definite opinions about this sort of stuff. I have those two really drastically different teaching situations in my background and if I had to choose I would... I think most people would be surprised that I would go back to my Black school in a minute only because the kids were motivated because their parents expected them to be motivated and the people here do not expect the kids to go on to college and they're perfectly happy if they get a job at GM or... and that's fine if that's going to satisfy that person, but if it's not... what if this kid as the potential to be the next Walter Cronkite or the next professor like the man we watched this morning who has a good mind and it will never be developed beyond that... the place where they laugh and say, "Well, we're from the West Virginia hills, and what do you expect from us? We... we don't want any more." I'd like my kids to know that they have potential and the nice thing about that Black school and that very, very inner city environment was that most of those kids knew if they took advantage of what they had around them and what was offered them after high school, that they had every reason to believe that they would have four times the life their parents had had and their parents had done damn well and they had every reason to believe that they could achieve that and that nothing would stop them. And if they listened to me and they listened to the other people that were there in every field, they were going to come out all right. And I noticed also that most of the teachers in that school, whether they were teaching music or history or anything -- math -- were quite demanding of the kids, that they turn in papers unless they were grammatically correct and punctuated and so on and some of the teachers in the school are terrific about that, but in the schools that I've run into from time to time since then, I realize what a really remarkable school I must have been in. The people care that much.

I: My last question is a little bit different. In whatever way you define "informal English," what part does that play in your English teaching?

S: Well, okay, I think informal English can... I usually teach the kids if I'm going to use the term "informal English" what I have been using -- the term "environmental English" -- that they match. I tell the kids, when you are standing by your locker, you're not going to stand there and say, "My, we read Shakespeare today and we did this and we did that. Oh, isn't that nice? Oh, this is really very proper." I don't expect them to talk like that. I wouldn't talk... I don't talk to my friends like that. As a matter of fact, sometimes I have to be
careful, as I say, because I do have friends that are former students -- five or six years, that sort of thing. If I say to them and they're still close to the school, if I say to them in a casual conversation, "Well, you ain't no way gonna get that," they don't realize I'm kidding. They don't realize that I'm joking and that I'm using environmental English. They don't realize that I talk differently to my parents and that I talk differently in every situation and so do they. And all I . . . the thing that I answered in the very first question is I want them to know the difference, so that they are never put into a position where they're totally embarrassed because suddenly they realize, like a light turning on for the first time in their life, that they have used the wrong kind of language in a particular situation that meant the world to them. I can . . . my father is an uneducated man and he's done very well and he's worth a lot of money now, but I know what my father feels like when he is put into a situation with all his friends who are doctors, lawyers and oil well men, which he is, and I know that he lives on tenterhooks in those situations that he not make an English error that's going to show how little education he has had compared to his wife who has a Master's . . . who got her Master's during the depression from the University of Michigan and compared to all of his friends who are doctors and lawyers and that sort of thing and professional business men who had every advantage in the world. And, what I'm getting at here, is that a grown man like that is very proud and the kids don't realize that until it's too late and suddenly they're already there -- they're fifty years old and it means the world to them that they not humiliate themselves and, suddenly, they realize that they've been humiliating themselves for years and letting people think they just didn't have very many smarts. All I want my kids to know is the difference. When they use environmental English, when they use informal English, it's perfectly proper. And I don't mind hearing Barry Manilow using incorrect English because I know what's right and I can accept that casual thing. The only thing that makes me sad about this is that the kids grow up and they think, "Oh, Barry Manilow, he's sort of conservative. He's not Rush. He's not Kiss. He's not Boston and so if he uses that kind of language, that must be right." If our advertisers who -- millions and millions of dollars into advertising every year -- use informal English in their ads, our kids figure . . . they have sort of this idea that advertising agencies in three-piece suits make up those ads. And they figure, if that's what it is . . . . They don't know that television and music and all that stuff is aimed at a twelve-year-old mind. And that's sad because they're twenty-five years old and facing a personnel director and making a fool of themselves and realizing it all of a sudden -- becoming aware of it as the man sits there and doesn't let the clouds go over his eyes. He lets his face show that he's shocked at the behavior or the level of achievement
that that person can do orally or written. I've known people who were dynamite in factories -- dynamite -- and the personnel director wanted . . . I know of one in particular, the personnel said, "This man is great. He's been here for twenty years. Let's put in a supervisor's job. What's he doing in the line?" What he was doing in a line . . . (public address announcement interrupts)

I: I missed the very last thing you said, "What he was doing on the line was . . . "

S: He was there because he could not read and write and when they gave him the supervisory job, he had to have job orders written out and he had to know . . . he had to be able to write down and to read the instruction from the other supervisor or foreman or whoever it was above him and he had to say, "Okay, on this press and on this die, we've got to have so much pressure and we've got to have this much chemical going in of this chemical and that chemical and if we don't mix it right, it's going to screw up the whole product and this was in a factory where they had vinyl and foam and cheesecloth being all pressed together and the chemicals used to press them together. Those are the kinds of things you use for seats on tractors and Honda seats and things like that. And there's also all sorts of other products made with that kind of vinyl. You've seen a million things like that.

I: Oh, sure.

S: Okay, this man, who's a dynamite guy and his personality, his leadership ability and everything should have sent him to the front of the line years ago. And here's my friend, twenty years old says, "Gee, why didn't anybody ever use this man?" And then he hauls out the records and he finds that the man lied about having a high school education. He had a third grade education. And the first day -- the first two days on the line -- twenty thousand dollars worth of material was ruined because the poor man could not read the work orders and all he had to read were numbers and a few letters. Now, how pathetic that was! This man was doomed forever! And suppose that he had gone through ten years of school or had gone all the way and graduated. And still, there are people who've come out of the schools who can't read or write. And I realize that's not who we're talking about, but you transfer that situation from the man who can't read to the man who can't express himself and he can't be promoted into a leadership position even though he might be the most talented man in that room. If he can't teach he can't lead and if he can't express himself well enough, if he's going to embarrass the company every time he talks to an outsider . . . everyone that works with him's going to accept him. That's fine. They've been working with him for years. They're used to the way he talks. But if they send new people in
or he suddenly has a little part of his job where he has to talk on the phone and make orders and things like that, he's lost. And that's very important to me that the kids . . . .

I: Well, thank you very much.

**Interview A10**

I: What changes do you look for in your students' language when you're teaching English?

S: What changes?

I: In the classroom. Are you in any way interested in changing their speech or writing?

S: I guess, I've begun to teach -- just to make things manageable for myself -- I've begun . . . I've begun to teach that there's . . . there's an oral and a written language system and we will learn the written system in this classroom because that's the system that you need to know more about or that's probably the one you're least skilled in so that's the one we're going to work on.

I: Is there anything in your students' language that you find unacceptable -- apart from vulgarity?

S: Well, sometimes I don't even see vulgarity . . . . Vulgarity is acceptable . . . acceptable to me at times depending on the situation. I'm . . . I'm not offended by anyone's language but since I get paid to teach standard English, that's what I teach. I think I've pretty much unhooked myself from feeling I'm superior to anyone else because I use better grammar than someone else. I think in writing I don't like students to use slang because I see slang as a cop-out. You can't be precise with what you have to say if you use slang. So I do think in some instances slang is very ineffective -- it just depends. I . . . you know . . . I think what I try to do is make my students aware of in what situations English that is not standard will be unacceptable because they will get a penalty for that if they're not aware of it.

I: What do you understand to be standard English?

S: The usual definition -- language that's . . . that's used by most educated people.

I: Do you see teaching that as part of your job as an English teacher -- teaching standard English?
S: Yes.

I: Do most of your students need it?

S: Yes, as long as there are going to be penalties for not using standard English; well, then, it seems to me that we need to teach it. I don't . . .

I: You don't have any trouble with that?

S: Another thing is that's what I've been trained to teach so I'm not sure, you know, whether it was useful or not. I don't know. It might be very useless for all I know, but that's what I've been trained to teach so I probably do it for that reason, too, and then I build up this big system of why I should, you know . . . why I should be teaching it because that's what I trained to teach.

I: Also, I'm interested in knowing if, however you define "informal language," if that has a role in your class?

S: When we're talking, we use slang and informal slang and I usually try to point out if they make a grammatical error, but slang is used quite a bit. I try to limit my use of slang in the classroom situation. I have sophomores write a slang dictionary from the current use of slang as they use it themselves. Then that gives me . . . that gives me something to point to and say, "Now, don't use any of these words when you write." And it's fun for them to do.

I: It sounds great.

S: And I make them define the slang terms in standard English which is a little . . . which makes them precise, I guess -- that could be the idea of it.

I: Thank you very much.

**Interview All**

I: My first question is, when you're teaching English what kinds of changes do you look for in your students' language?

S: What kind of changes do I look for in the students' language?

I: Either spoken or written.

S: Only . . . I will tolerate certain improper uses until I've taught it. Once I teach something like double negatives or verb
tense and subject-verb agreement — that stuff — once I've taught it, then I don't tolerate any misusage of it. I expect them to use it correctly and if they don't, I will correct them. Other things I will let slide until I teach it.

I: Okay ... what kind of language do you find acceptable or unacceptable in a classroom?

S: Almost anything is really acceptable as long as they're not profane ... all that with it. Like I said with the other question, it's ... it's simply ... I want them to ... to communicate effectively and often times that doesn't simply mean, "I ain't got no pencil" and that stuff. Even though I get the idea, they're not getting across correctly and effectively and that's what I'm trying to stress to them ... is not that they can get their point across, but they're going to be in situations where they're going to have to do it and convince somebody and impress somebody or whatever and they've got to know how to go about doing it the correct way and that's what I try to stress.

I: What do you understand to be standard English?

S: What do I understand to be standard English? That's one heck of a question because it's two different definitions for me and for the students. I was taught and brought up under, you know, very correct usage was drilled and drilled and drilled when I was young ... correct usage and everything else. But nowadays, "I seen the cat" is almost standard usage or "I ain't got none." I don't accept it, but as far as the kids are concerned, you know, the majority of the population uses it, it becomes standard. That stuff is standard now for them. It's not for me at all and I try to correct them ... at least, my approach in teaching it is, "This is the correct way to do it. This is my job in this classroom ... is to teach you the correct way. Whether or not you use it is another story." But I at least teach them the correct way and I use the correct way as an example and, hopefully, they pick it up and if not, there's not all that much I can do about it.

I: Do you see ... well, you've already really answered this ... do you, then, see it as part of your job to teach standard English in the classroom?

S: Definitely.

I: And do ... do most of your students need this instruction?

S: Drastically. They need it very badly. They've had very little of it before from what I can tell and it's too late, really, once they're in high school to begin teaching them correct sentence
formation and just verb tense and things like that or whether to use an adjective or adverb or whatever it is — even little things like that that they have not had before and have gotten by for fourteen, fifteen or sixteen years using their own methods . . . their own ways that at home have been accepted and everything else. So many kids say to me, "Why do I have to learn it? My parents let me talk like this. They talk like this. Why can't I talk like this? Why do I have to be different?" And it's a tough thing to explain to the kid and to get him see the difference. That, as far as he's concerned, his . . . his English is standard, his English is correct because it's what he's been brought up on just as my English is what I've been brought up on. There's a difference there.

I: However you define "informal English," does that have a place in your classroom?

S: Yes, informal English, as far as I'm concerned, is conversation, dialogue. One thing I really try to stress to the kids because they have trouble with it is the difference between their verbal English and their written English. And, when they're writing something, it has to be complete sentences — it's much more formal. In conversation, people talk in spurts. They don't use complete thoughts, complete sentences — all that stuff. And there's a big difference there. Where I try to get them . . . informal language is fine just in casual conversation, but in writing, you can't just simply jot down ideas, get the cohesiveness involved in a paragraph and unity and good sentence structure and one flowing into the other and all that stuff. Instead of a two-way communication kind of a thing, it's only one way when you're writing something. There's a big difference there that I try to get them to see.

I: Great. That's it.

Interview A12

I: The first question I have is, in your teaching, what changes do you look for in your students' language — oral or written?

S: Do you mean in the period of the year or just when I have them?

I: Right.

S: I'd love to see the improvement, but I don't see it. They feel that I speak differently because I'm a teacher and the way that they speak is fine because all of their friends understand
them. Their friends talk that way. I do correct them. I do point out errors. I do repeat what they say, hoping that they'll hear the mistake and, normally, they hear it. They'll say . . . if they make a mistake, "He don't" and I'll say, "He don't" and they'll say, "All right, he doesn't" but normally they do come back with, "But you're an English teacher so you do speak this way, too." It's only their small group that speaks that way, but they don't seem to believe it and, I think, you see in the commercials and advertisements that they're starting to speak that way in those. And, so, the kids find reinforcement there for their language.

I: What kind of language, from your point of view, is unacceptable or acceptable in your classroom?

S: I accept any language. I like to try to point out that perhaps they're wrong. If a student does use the "he don't's" regularly in his conversation, I'll finally stop trying to change it because it's going to, I think, stifle him in the classroom. He's going to stop talking. But if there's some kind of outburst with the incorrect verb mainly -- the "he don't's" the "ain't's" "we ain't," "we was" -- that kind of thing, I do try to correct. If there's just some kind of a thing . . . an outburst where he says, "But we ain't done that yet," then I try to correct him. If he's talking, giving some kind of reaction to a question I've asked, I won't correct him because then he might stop halfway through and say, "The heck with it." As far as things like noun and pronoun agreement and that kind of thing, I don't stop and correct for that. That's a little hard for them to understand. Now in writing I do correct all of that. I don't let that pass.

I: What do you understand to be standard English?

S: That language that is usually printed and spoken by the media -- I imagine that would be my interpretation of it.

I: Do you see that as your job as an English teacher?

S: I'm not sure I understand.

I: Do you see your job as teaching standard English?

S: Yes, trying to . . . to present to them that their language is not standard and that doesn't make it wrong, but that it is not standard.

I: And do you see most of your students as needing instruction?

S: Yes, I do. But I see very little change over period of years. Now I do have . . . one student I did see come back this year. He's a freshman now in college. And just in that time he's
been in college, I can see a marked improvement. And, I think, he was with peers so much who did use improper agreement and improper verbs, it was just common with him and improper adverbs and he was talking about how well he was doing. And last year he would have said, "I'm doing good." But now, he's doing well, good verbs, agreement with the noun and everything and so, I think, that when a lot of them get out there, they realize that while it was okay at home, there's a whole big world out there that it isn't acceptable in. But I don't see much change in the time that I have them.

I: Okay. Also, however you define "informal English," does it have a role in your classroom?

S: I'm sorry, formal or informal?

I: Informal.

S: However I define informal English . . . I'm trying to decide some kind of interpretation there or definition. Yeah, I accept it, certainly. I guess that would mean that it has a place there. I don't want to try to make them conscious so much that they won't talk. I do want to make them aware that they're not using necessarily the correct English all the time, but I want them to talk and if it means they're going to use poor or not standard English, then that's fine. Just so they're talking and trying to develop some ideas.

I: Okay, thank you very much.

Interview A13

I: I was interested in what changes in your students' language you look for as an English teacher -- either in their spoken or written language?

S: What changes . . . in the use of their . . . . A larger vocabulary is what I'm basically looking for. I hear "a lot" a lot of times and a great deal of time they simply will use the easiest thing . . . the one . . . there's one word that always comes to mind, "A lot went on the other day." As far as "a lot" is concerned . . . . They'll say "kids," "guys." They're not specific and so I try to give them words for "a lot." I looked in the Thesaurus and I put down twenty-six different words you can use instead of "a lot" to say the same thing.

I: Okay, what language is acceptable or unacceptable in your classroom?
S: That's pretty vague. I don't know how to answer that.

I: Okay, a lot of these questions really are purposely very general and if you... you don't have to answer them or interpret them but some of them really demand that if you're going to. And so, any interpretation's okay. Many teachers, obviously, most of us would have different answers to these questions. They're so broad. What do you understand to be standard English?

S: English that's understood by everyone... by the majority of the people. I think everyone should... well, that is what I want in the classroom. I understand other things that they say. Naturally, you have to as a teacher. But I feel with Black students and the ethnic background -- anything like that -- they have to be able to speak and they have to be able to write and spell the common language... the common English language because if they don't, they're going to lose in the outside world.

I: Do you see teaching standard English, then, as a part of your job as an English teacher?

S: Very definitely. This is... I consider that first and foremost the job is to teach standard, acceptable English -- to put endings on words. The one thing I've noticed for people of different ethnic backgrounds -- basically Blacks around here -- is that they've never heard... heard of "-ed" on the end of a word. It just does not exist. Endings do not exist and although it's fine for them to use that, if they're going to make it in the world, if they're going to expand from their own corner of the neighborhood, then they're going to have to learn what everyone else learns.

I: Do you think that most of your students need instruction in standard English:

S: Very definitely. They all do. It is the biggest shortcoming. You're hitting on a sore point of mine because I find that standard... that is why I like to teach English. I feel a great need for... People just simply must be able to communicate with each other. And as long as they... well, slang... it's fine for a high school, but it just doesn't make it in the world. So...

I: Also, however you define "informal English" or "informal language," does that have a part in your classroom?

S: It certainly does. I have to use... it's imperative that I use some sort of informal... what I would consider... I would define that as being slang or popular terminology. I have to use it to define some words I'm introducing. Let me see if I
can jus . . . use the very . . . oh, I can't think of it. I was introducing a word the other day which has to do with taking advantage of people. What word am I thinking of? -- tip of the tongue phenomena here.

I: "Rip off" . . . that's not quite it though.

S: I'm thinking of a . . . well, of a formal, a proper word.

I: Oh, it's a proper word for "taking advantage of?"

S: To manipulate or something like that. Yes, I think it was "manipulate." And I said . . . very typical of the students will say, "I've been used. He used you." And so I use that to teach "manipulate."

I: Interesting.

S: I think you have to or they'll just say, "Well, it's too long to spell and too many syllables to remember." So I'll just say, "Hey, why don't I just say, 'I've been used?'" So you have to do that. And getting back to your earlier question, you must when having to grade papers . . . you know having them do papers . . . you must draw a line somewhere as far as concerning . . . using slang or not or you are, in fact defeating your own purpose of teaching correct English because, hey, if I can write a paper with all this jazz in it instead of writing a paper using correct common or, you know, new vocabulary, then I'll write it the old way because they can do it in five minutes.

I: Well, thank you very much.

S: Okay.

Interview A14

I: When you're teaching English, what changes do you look for in your students' language?

S: I like to see a change in their vocabulary, a growing vocabulary, a more erudite vocabulary. I like to see a growing sense of the value of words in the way they manipulate the language. Particularly among the older students, you can work on a sense of style. Of course, if they have specific problems with what would be considered here substandard speech, we would try to help them overcome those, at least, when they should speak on a better level or at least what would be a more acceptable level.
I: What language would you consider acceptable or unacceptable in your classroom?

S: Do you mean just in ordinary class discussion and that kind of conversation?

I: Conversation or written.

S: Well, I think, in general conversation we accept most levels of conversation although it doesn't particularly vary in this school. So we don't have quite the problem. When it comes to written expression, I try to lead them to more formal expression so that they will be ready for more formal writing in college.

I: What do you understand to be standard English?

S: I would say standard English . . . I can best describe in more traditional terms . . . I would say that in which verbs and subjects tend to agree, pronouns and antecedents, they have a sense of the difference between words that are frequently confused such as "effect" and "affect" and we're still working on that bugaboo "lie" and "lay," "sit" and "set."

I: Do you see it as part of your job as an English teacher to teach standard English?

S: I see that as a definite function, particularly in this community because they wish the students to have a command of standard speech. They don't have any problem understanding substandard either and as long as they recognize the various levels and, we hope, when to employ them or, at least, so long as they know how to communicate on a formal level, we've done our job. I don't think we need to absolutely force them to, particularly in speaking.

I: Do you find that many of your students need instruction in standard English?

S: Only in the areas of "lie" and "lay," "sit" and "set," "between you and me" and possibly with "who" and "whom," but those are the basic areas with some problems with pronoun-antecedent agreement, but basically they speak what I would consider to be standard English.

I: Good. My last question is, however you define "informal English," does it have a place in your classroom?

S: In their communicating with me and with each other, of course . . . sure, but the important thing is to get them to communicate. Now, I rarely correct their oral expression. Once in a while I may do it privately, particularly with pronunciation or something of
that sort, but I would rarely correct a misuse of a case or something like that in a class situation. I might speak to the person privately if he's a person who really needs to know the difference. On their written expression, I... particular... if they have time to write and to reread and rewrite, I am more concerned about it.

I: Okay. Thank you very much.

Interview A15

I: As an English teacher, what changes do you look for in your students' language?

S: I want them to be grammatically more correct in their oral English as well as in their written English. I would like them... I strive to assist them in being comfortable with language. In addition, I strive hopefully to teach them the importance of having a large word reservoir such in order to tap and... and, again, I think that makes them comfortable in all situations when they understand, you know, a large number of words, kinds of words, even different kinds of dialects. And, finally, I suppose, hopefully, my goal is they can achieve a level of both accuracy and correctness that they will... and I will always go back to the situation... always will be comfortable in whatever group or academic setting that they find themselves in.

I: Fine. Is there any language that you consider acceptable or unacceptable in the classroom?

S: The only... well, by language do you mean what?

I: Their speech... in their writing... .

S: In terms of diction, of course, and you know, over colloquial terms or phrases or vulgate language I show disapproval of and I always remind them and I don't send them, you know, out of the classroom, but I always remind them the one thing they have to learn is consideration for other people and though it offends some and doesn't offend others, we have to learn to be considerate of other people. So that's about the only language as such that I don't approve of in the classroom.

I: What do you understand to be standard English?

S: I suppose I'd interpret standard English as being, I suppose, colloquial in nature... that which is spoken most frequently or that which is most commonly spoken or written and transcribed as such in written English.
I: Do you see it as part of your job to teach standard English?

S: I try to do that, you know, again, I don't know if we're using the same terms, but we look very carefully at the different levels of writing: the formal level, the informal level, the colloquial, the vulgate levels. In doing that, yes, I think that's a primary mode of communication . . . that they . . . and a big goal of mine . . . that here . . . this is correct English as such and consequently there are derivations of that which you should be familiar with. In many cases, they are because you're going to encounter people in all kinds of, you know, settings and situations which will speak in different ways, using different kinds of words and assembling these words in different kinds of ways. So, consequently, again in order to be comfortable and in order to be knowledgeable in those those situations and primarily in order to effectively communicate, you have to be familiar with the different levels.

I: Fine. Do you see the students here as needing instruction in standard English?

S: I would say, basically, that would . . . that is not my thrust. They, I think, they deal with it comfortably and that is not my great emphasis as such.

I: Also, however you define "informal English," what place does that have in your class?

S: An important place in that that is the level at which they will write and, in many cases, speak. That will be the only level at which they will be most frequently encountering in the different kinds of situations, particularly noting the people in situations that they're already in which reflect that. They'll find themselves in those situations many times in their lives and so there should be some emphasis as such on it.

I: Okay, that's it. Thank you.

Interview A16

I: Okay, the first question is, as an English teacher, what changes do you look for in your students' language?

S: I would expect that in their speech to me they may express themselves more in their everyday language using fragments, using some of the terms that perhaps are considered slang whereas in their writing I expect them to pick up our formal usage.
I: Okay, is there any language in your classes that you consider either acceptable or unacceptable?

S: Yes, I do not expect students to use slang terms that are negative or to say anything that would intentionally hurt anyone because of the overtones that are used or the expression.

I: Okay, what do you understand to be standard English?

S: There's standard spoken and there's standard written and I do make the distinction so it would depend what the student would be doing at the time.

I: Do you see it as part of your job to teach standard English?

S: Yes, even though basically I'm testing for the formal English. I expect to help them in their spoken work as well because that's what they're going to do the most of. So I give them time to have talking in class or out, in front and help them with things they might not know how to properly do.

I: Do your students here need instruction in what you consider standard English?

S: No, not too many of them here at ________.

I: Okay, also, however you define the term "informal English," does it play a role in your classroom?

S: Yes, very much it does. I even use informal language with my students. I think . . . think they're attentive at times when I do and, you know, with that sense of humor or some of their terms, they can respond better to me.

I: Okay, thank you very much.

Interview A17

I: The first question is, as an English teacher, what kind of changes do you look for in your students' language?

S: What kinds of changes do I look for? What do you mean by changes?

I: Well, changes either in their spoken or written language?
S: Okay. What I'm looking for . . . I guess I don't really look . . . what I'm intending to do is to change most of their ways that they write. Their spoken language I don't really work on that much other than to say sometimes, "I think it would be better . . . people would respond to you differently if you spoke differently and that's about the extent of it. I don't have any formal this-is-your-speech or whatever. In writing with the tenth graders, just getting them to a point where they can write a whole sentence. And that isn't always real. I mean, I can look for that for a long time and become very discouraged because it isn't going to happen. And I don't know what the answer is with that. But I want them to get to a point . . . hopefully if they fill out an application and they say, "Well, what are your interests?" that they can put down something besides just, "Well, I like swimming." I mean, I would like them to be able to do more than that. So that . . . I guess that's what I'm looking for with them and that's a different focus probably than you're going to see with teachers that teach a different level.

I: Okay, is there any language in your class that you consider unacceptable?

S: The only thing that is unacceptable is, I would say, profane language and I guess that everyone has their . . . their limits. I mean, they can swear as long as they don't use some of the really bad ones. But I've been known, on occasion, to get to a point where I've used curse words, not at them, but in reference to something that, maybe, I'm excited about or, you know, I can't . . . it's incredible to me and I explain them . . . explain to them how I feel. But that's about the only limits.

I: What do you consider to be standard English?

S: I guess standard English would be . . . it's hard to describe. It's . . . it's . . . it's talking in correct tenses; it's using subject-verb agreement correctly; it's using superlatives correctly -- that's standard English to me. I guess it becomes a little bit more of a problem when it gets on the written page for me. My ear is not as offended as my sight is. When I see it, I become absolutely affronted, but when I hear it, it's a lot easier to take because it doesn't have to be . . . it doesn't have to be standard. So standard-what-they-say and standard-what-they-write, I mean they probably wonder why I don't yell at them when they talk.

I: Right, right. Do you see it as part of your job to teach standard English?

S: Unhuh, in the . . . in the idea that somebody along the line is going to really expect them to do that and even if that's just enough for an employer to take a look at an application and say,
"Well, this person is literate." Even if the kid has to work in a factory, even if the kid is behind a cash register, I think it's... an employer wants to see some evidence that there is some basic kind of knowledge behind this person. So that's why I think it's important to them.

I: Do you find that most of your students need instruction in standard English?

S: In the written, definitely. And it's... I think they can talk much better, I mean, I think they can talk in complete sentences but they can't duplicate it themselves. So I think it's important for them, yeah.

I: Okay, however you define "informal English," does that have a role in your class?

S: Informal English is probably what they do the most of. When... they have a newspaper that they read every week and they get a magazine every two weeks. And when they respond to those, most of the time it's informal. It is... they can write in fragments if they want. That's fine. They make the distinction between formal and non-formal when I explain it. Like I might have to say, "This is a letter you'll be writing. This must be in standard English. You'll have to work really hard. This is a homework assignment on your magazine. This can be informal." So I make the distinction. I don't know how long it will take them before they can make it.

I: Okay, thank you very much.

Interview A18

I: The first question is, as an English teacher, what changes do you look for in your students' speech or writing?

S: As a result of being in my class?

I: Right.

S: Okay, I look for wider and more precise vocabulary. I look for less... fewer sweeping generalizations and statements made without anything to back up... evidence to back up... to back up what they have to say and as my big thing, better sentence structure, more subordination of ideas, showing relationships among ideas rather than just isolated factual kinds of things.

I: Is there any language in your class that you consider unacceptable?
S: The closest thing to unacceptable would be illogical, as far as how they express the idea, as long as they feel that the language they are using is the most precise, if they have to fall into jargon sometimes or slang or even borderline street language, I don't care as long as it expressed their ideas. When the time comes to write it up, I would expect that they would stay within a much narrower range.

I: What do you consider to be standard English?

S: Standard English depends on the situation. There's one standard in Time magazine. There's another standard that I would expect sixteen-year-olds to use. But for the most part, it's English that would be understood clearly and accepted by the vast majority of the population. And that's awfully general, but . . . . There's esoteric language that students could use that most people wouldn't understand. There's also language that is so completely dialectical that most people couldn't understand it.

I: Do you see it as a part of your job to teach standard English?

S: No, I'm concerned with teaching clear communication. Now, if a student feels that a slang expression or street term really conveys his idea, okay, use it, then another sentence that says, in other words . . . . Rephrase it in a way that will communicate. I'm really concerned with communication, not teaching standard. I do try to teach my students, though, that there are standards that apply in certain situations and that, for example, when they go for a job interview, they must adapt their language to the situation or they, in turn, will suffer.

I: Okay, do you think that your students need instruction in standard English?

S: I think they need instruction in the fact that there are different situations calling for different language. And when I ask them for a research paper, I expect a certain level of language. When they write poetry—which we do in poetry class, they need a very sense-oriented vocabulary and there are levels of appropriateness depending upon the situations. If nothing else, I can teach them that there are the levels and that there are different situations and that they jolly well better think before they use.

I: Okay. However you define "informal language," what role does it have in your class?

S: A very large role because when I'm speaking very directly to my kids, I use very informal. I do not lecture in a formal way and I have been known to use very questionable terms when, in fact,
that fits particular . . . . If I'm talking about a character in literature who has a very careless attitude, I would not hesitate to say, "He doesn't give a damn about anything." And I don't think that shocks my kids. I'm very informal in the way I teach and it would be hypocritical to use very formal language. However, my kids have heard me talk in more formal situations and they know that I adapt my language. I expect them to, too. When we have class discussions, they get into it . . . and very agitated language.

I: Thank you very much.

S: Okay, that's it!

Interview A19

I: My first question is, in your English class as an English teacher, what kinds of changes do you look for in your students' speech and writing?

S: Okay . . . okay, in the students' speeches in the way they talk, I suppose, that the way . . . the way that they're able to put together conclusions . . . conclusions which are based . . . are based on evidence from literary pieces or in just from everyday life, conclusions which they've arrived at by considering alternatives carefully, etc. In other words, things which look as though they've shown some sort of logic in their . . . in their thinking. So I would say that in their speaking. As far as their writing, I would say that one of the things I look for is for students to learn to express their ideas in complete ideas, to have a basic sense of sentence structure which most of us feel kind of intuitively for those of us who are English teachers but which for some students, it just doesn't. So I would say, to learn to express ideas in complete thoughts and, once again, to learn to express ideas with a minimal amount of awkwardness and partly in writing and I think that's a real problem. High school students are frequently very . . . their writing is very . . . it can be very disorganized because they don't feel at ease putting things down on paper -- it doesn't come easily. So some ease in speaking and some ease in writing as a first step and then the organization and then the logical progression of thoughts. Okay.

I: Is there any language that is acceptable . . . unacceptable in your classes?

S: Any language that's unacceptable? I would have to say language which is either offensive to others or language that is insensitive to others. Offensive language I would find very
toler . . . very difficult to tolerate language which I thought
was just . . . language which was offensive as far as four-letter
words, etc. As far as other kinds of language, I would say, I
would probably individually consult with somebody who I thought
used language which I thought was hurtful to another person. I
was going to say, as far as correcting students who use words
like "ain't," etc., I don't make a big point about it because
it just . . . it becomes . . . more of a . . . it tends to take
away the attention from usually the on-going classroom activities
and it tends to focus it on a fairly minor point which can be . . .
which can be argued many different ways. I then . . . I just
don't pursue those kinds of things. But I would pursue something
which was insensitive to another person or which, I thought,
might be embarrassing to myself or another person -- in other words,
something that might be said for shock value.

I: Fine. What do you understand to be standard English?

S: Well, that's a toughy. It's really difficult and I heard . . .
I overheard the previous teacher mention a couple of things which
I'm in agreement with. Standard English can vary depending on the
situation and I think that one of our biggest tasks as teachers
is to help students to realise that different, so to speak, lan-
guage sets or mind frames are appropriate for different places.
And as far as standard English, I think to give the lock . . . the
answer . . . lock-myself in and say it's the kind of standard
English taught in English books really denies other situations
where the English spoken is standard to them. So I really can't give
a real satisfactory answer on that.

I: That's fine. Do you see it as part of your job to teach
standard English, then?

S: Yeah, I think it's part of my job to let kids know of
standard English because of the . . . because the kids are going
to be in situations where — and, by standard, I assume we could
mean grammar-book type English — I assume that . . . my students
are going to be in situations where they need to be aware of that
and so in order for me to prepare them for those situations, yes,
I think they need to be aware of it. They need to be aware that,
when they write formal letters of application or when they write
college papers or when they're in particular situations, not like
on a Friday night, you know, out to get a hamburger with a friend
. . . is that is the need as apparent then, but I think they need
to be aware of it because there are situations, very definitely,
where . . . where they're going to be using formal English.

I: Do you think most of your students need instruction in formal
English . . . or standard English, I mean?
S: I . . . the strange thing of it is that in a school system like this, most students already have a good sense of what standard English is. It's just the fine points that trip them up and the fine points are ones that I'm not really so certain all the time that if we teach them that they remember them because . . . I think they tend to fall back to what they already know. So, as far as, do we need to teach it to them? — I don't know. Research says it doesn't help them in their writing . . . to teach grammar doesn't help them in their writing. I'm . . . I really don't know the answer to that. It's a . . . it . . . it is a part of our curriculum and I do teach it. I really just don't know . . . I am unable to figure out how much good it does. It may . . . it may do okay on the test — on subject-verb agreement that week, but I don't know in the future if it clicks in as much as it ought to.

I: Great. However you define "informal English," what role does it have in your class?

S: Probably just . . . informal English is probably the kind of conversing that goes on between students or between students and myself. Probably their informal English is probably more laden with slang terms or contemporary terminology. But I feel that in order to relate to students, I have to have a bit of that also. So I probably use informal English not to the degree that they do, but I'm sure . . . but I use it too. So, I think it's . . . it . . . it's important because it is, in a sense, their language and we're trying to make education meaningful to them so obviously we have to do it in something they're familiar with.

I: Okay, thank you very much. I appreciate that.

Interview A20

I: The first question is, as an English teacher, what changes in your students' language do you look for — both their speech and writing?

S: Changes in what way?

I: Well, changes as a result of their being in your class.

S: I think probably one of the things I look for most is precise diction. I find, that they are very careless. They use phrases like "kind of" and "that sort of thing" and "you know." And one of the things I consciously work on in speaking is to get them to be precise and along with that I work on vocabulary development. Then in writing at the tenth grade level and in
Comp II, I'm considerably interested in their developing some sophistication in their style — going from the simple sentence to the complex, going from a two-sentence paragraph to a six and a seven . . . . These are the big changes I'm watching for.

I: Is there any kind of language that is unacceptable in your English classes?

S: I listen to all of it. I cor . . . I try to guide away from it. I am of the school that believes that you don't descend to the level of the street, you bring the level of the street up to you. Particularly in the English classroom, I'm not fooling myself. I know that I have them one hour a day and these other influences have them eight or ten. However, as I tell my students, it's just like being dressed properly . . . dressed appropriately to an occasion. They can talk one way at Tommy's Pizza House and another way when they're talking to their parents' friends. I do emphasize the effect that there are appropriate ways to speak but you can easily go down but you can't easily go up unless you've learned some of the fine points.

I: What do you understand to be standard English?

S: What do I understand to be standard? I would say probably the standard . . . what for me becomes standard is a lot of what's used in publication or speaking. I would think that news broadcasts, particularly our standard English as we'd like to think of it, and probably a popular magazine that does a lot to establish a norm is Time.

I: Do you see teaching standard English as a part of your job as an English teacher?

S: Very definitely. I do . . . as I said, I make a point of saying to them, that's fine at Tommy's but it's not fine under different circumstances and know the difference. I think I distinguish even with the English Ten's on that point.

I: Do you think that most of your students need instruction in standard English?

S: No, in this particular set up I find very few. I've taught in schools where it was different. But, here, they come to us hearing standard English. Fine points — "It is I" is something they're not familiar with — well, that's borderline anyway. "If I was you," we hear a lot of. But the "he don't" and we just don't hear that in this school.

I: Okay, my last question is, however you define the term "informal English," does that have a role in your class?
S: Yes, in that when they're talking to me, when they're answering a question and really intense, if they slip into the informal -- I myself sometimes slip into the informal in the minutes that they're coming into the classroom. And they have . . . students have commented to me that when you get up in front of the room and start talking like a teacher, so I must shift perhaps more than I realize sometimes. But, yes, I use slang, a lot of colloquial expressions when I'm talking. When I am quote lecturing unquote, then I'm very precise, probably more than informal -- slightly formal.

I: Okay, thank you very much.

Interview A21

I: The first question is, as an English teacher, what kinds of changes in your students' language do you look for -- both spoken and written?

S: Well, when you say, what do I look for, I would have to interpret that to mean, what changes do I try and program into them. In speaking, not too much. I let them talk to me in just about any way because if I start criticizing what they say to me then they become a little self-conscious of what they say to me unless it's just in a kidding manner in a casual conversation they make some kind of agreement error . . . something. But in written work, quite a bit. I progressively tighten up on them and by the end of the year -- I'm speaking now of sophomores primarily -- by the end of the year, I am quite critical of what they put on paper and I don't mean . . . . I don't want to be interpreted to mean "critical" in a negative sense, but "critical" in that they must really be in control of what they're doing on the written page.

I: Okay, is there any language that is unacceptable in your classes?

S: Other than profanity, no.

I: Okay, what do you understand to be standard English?

S: Well, I don't know that I can really speak to that too intelligently. I would say standard English is probably what you see and hear most often in ordinary situations -- magazine articles, newspaper articles, conversations. That's what I would interpret it to be.
I: With that interpretation, do you see it as part of your job as an English teacher to teach standard English?

S: I don't think so. I think that my job as far as teaching and language development is concerned is to work on more formal. As far as teaching, I figure that they already do the standard . . . if I'm interpreting standard correctly . . . if that . . . if I see that correctly, they've already got that down pat and my job is to make them aware at least of what formal English is. Whether or not they ever use it, that's . . . that's another whole question.

I: My next question really follows up on that. However you define "informal language," what kind of role does that have in your classes?

S: That depends really from class to class and from subject to subject. For instance, I teach a course called Reading for Pleasure and Profit which is for students that absolutely hate English and, of course, it follows that they are not successful in English too. And I am just very informal with them on all levels -- writing, speaking. I see my job in that class as to find a way that I can say, "Let's look at a poem," and they don't all fall down and die. So for me to expect them to speak in some very formal way or to write in a very formal way on what is the theme of this third stanza I just don't . . . it just wouldn't work very well. I could impose it and we could get it done, but that's not really my goal in a course like that. But in a course like English Ten where I take the opposite tack where I feel it's very important that they be able to express themselves in a formal way, I'm a lot more rigid about what I expect. And students know in a very short order what . . . how they are supposed to talk, what do you expect of them. And so, as I said at the beginning of the question, it's very much on an individual basis. I don't have one sweeping philosophy for every situation.

I: Thank you very much.

Interview A22

I: The first one is, as an English teacher, what kinds of changes do you look for in your students' language?

S: You mean when I teach with what I teach them?

I: Right. Exactly. As a result of your teaching.
S: Well, of course, the improved grammar . . . and I teach in English Ten and Composition so I'll talk mainly about English Ten. Just in their improving the grammar from what we are studying and the vocabulary and just a more mature style that they associate with what we've been studying in literature.

I: Is there any language that is unacceptable in your classes?

S: Well, yes, I mean, they can use the colloquial level, but not below that and they generally don't. I mean, among themselves they do, but they don't think I hear it. And then, but, otherwise, they speak rather formally.

I: What do you understand to be standard English?

S: Do you mean spoken English?

I: Well, it can . . . any way you'd like to explain it. That's a term that many, many people describe differently.

S: Well, of course, I differentiate from the formal to the colloquial to the slang and the vulgate. And generally they use between the colloquial and the formal when they're reciting and speaking within class. With each other, it's strictly colloquial and slang, but not vulgate.

I: Do you see teaching standard English as a part of your job as a teacher?

S: Oh, yes.

I: Do your students need instruction in standard English?

S: Yes, some, of course, much more than others depending on their environment, but generally speaking, I think it's quite good and their background.

I: However you define the term "informal English," does that have a role in your class?

S: It's just a step about colloquial, which they use more in their discussions. In their writing, it's strictly on the formal level . . . but . . . it's . . . I don't know how to explain it because you go through the types of sentences they use, but no slang in it.

I: Okay, thank you very much.

S: Is that it?
I: The first question is, as an English teacher, what kinds of changes in your students' language do you look for — both spoken and written?

S: Well, in their language, I want to see them improve in their — I think you're going to find this an unusual answer — in their ability in feeling comfortable with what they say — to me that is the . . . that is my most important goal. And I had an experience with a very shy girl only today. Because I'd said in class we didn't have too many more days to go. What's happened was . . . she's a very shy, a very quiet girl and she cut lose on a poem analysis today and I said after class to her, "I was really pleased with all you had to say today. You really did a nice job with that section of the poem." And her answer was — which really made me feel good — was that she felt totally comfortable in saying what she had said in front of a lot of people. I get a lot of kids who don't communicate -- period. It's not that they are unable to speak or to write, but it's to speak with comfort and to feel good about what they say.

I: Great. Is there any language that you consider unacceptable in your classes?

S: Yes, I do not want there to be any use of any language that would offend anybody in the class and occasionally I'll have somebody say something out . . . the four letter words and I generally correct it by saying, "Look, I'm sure there are some people in here that would find that kind of usage distasteful and in class here I find it distasteful too and I would ask you to never say anything that would offend anyone in the class."

I: Okay, what do you understand by the term "standard English?"

S: Well, that's a toughy. Standard English seems to come up in our particular book in our district here. Standard English kind of comes up, from what I understand, from what's used in the book in composition. We all try to kind of cooperate on what we reinforce in the classroom and fortunately or unfortunately, I don't know which it is, whatever textbook we adopted, that's the standard English that you use all the time. What I really perceive standard English, for myself, that language which at an expository level of writing is considered acceptable.

I: Do you see it as your job to teach standard English?
S: Yes, I try to reinforce it. I don't try to cram it down throats but I do . . . and I've had students who come back to me — I deal a lot with vocabulary — and I've had many students who've come back and said, "Thank you for stressing this."

I: Well, how much need for teaching standard English is there in this particular school?

S: Here, for us? I would say it depends on what program you're in. For example, in the adjustment program you're dealing with kids who . . . they have a difficult time writing a sentence. They have some limited language facility and we have kids who are really in very advanced programs and some of the fine points they're going to get chewed up down the track for the kind of education they're going to try . . . going to be pursuing. And you try to adjust and hit that, depending upon what particular course you're dealing with.

I: Also, however you define "informal English," does it have a role in your room?

S: Well, first of all, I would say that informal English is . . . I would equate that colloquial speech and I encourage the students in the class — again this gets back to comfort of, you know, speaking as they would speak and to me that's more important than . . . . If a student is speaking, reciting, and makes a grammatical error, very seldom will I stop the discussion and correct their usage. They're talking . . . I would say here in our school we have kids who come, for the most part, from pretty good homes and their usage is very good. I taught in one farm district, rural district, and the "me and him" was prevalent. And I just have not found that here since I've been teaching here.

I: Thank you very much.

S: Is that all there is to it?

I: That's all there is.

Interview A24

I: The first question is, as an English teacher, what kind of changes do you look for in your students' language?

S: Changes from when they first walk into the classroom?

I: Right.
S: Until they leave the classroom . . . Primarily clarity of speech and writing which means that it is easy to understand what they are saying or what they are writing and those things occur when you have good sentence structure, when you have a fair amount of grammar — those are basic. You also hope . . . I hope that the student is able to be personally expressive in his language. He's not only giving bits and pieces of information in a clear way, he's also being able . . . he's also able to express himself in his language. He's developing a style of language. And by "style" I mean a personal approach, not just a structural approach. Basic structure is necessary; it's important, but so is style and the emphasis is . . . is on those two.

I: Okay. Good. Is there any language you consider unacceptable in your class?

S: Not at the beginning unless it's just totally ununderstandable -- you can't understand it at all. Then I have to, you know, sit down with the student and find out what some of the problems are. To begin with I accept the student's writing ability until I come to know that student better. I then start to emphasize the two main areas that I already said that I emphasize. And that comes through a series of reinforcements for good language and direction away from improper language. You run into . . . you run into definite problems usually with the students at this level -- fragmented sentences, a lack of organization within the paragraph structure, no identification of the thematic statement at the beginning of the paper and those things need to be taught. When they are taught, students sometimes learn or gradually learn what they are.

I: What do you understand to be standard English?

S: "Ain't got no couth," I guess. I don't know if there's a standard English. That's a very debatable question. It depends on . . . I've travelled quite a bit and I have been in many parts of the country and standard English is different. It's like asking what is normal within a normal day. You know, it's kind of . . . it's difficult to say. I do not see a . . . a standard language that we are teaching all students to acquire. That is not important. It is important that I am able to understand what the students are attempting to say and that needs clarity which does have some structure to it. But style doesn't always rely upon a set grammatical structure.

I: Okay, okay. Whatever you define "informal English" as, do you see that as having a role in your classroom?

S: Oh, definitely. When you're conversing one-to-one with students, you use informal language. And I know that my language
changes when I'm talking to different students and it's almost become a secondary thing now. And I'm not exactly mimicking them, but I'm hopefully communicating with them through the language I use. It's not an attempt to be buddy-buddy with them; it's an attempt to develop communication and hopefully they identify that and are not put off by an overly forced language.

I: Okay, thank you very much.

**Interview A25**

I: The first question is, as an English teacher, what kinds of changes in your students' language do you look for -- both in their speech and their writing?

S: I guess I do. Their writing first: I do teach grammar and I do have them do a lot of writing and the writing improvement I like to see is . . . I like to see is . . . I like to see their punctuation improve and in order to do that, they have to understand clauses and phrases within English sentences so that's the first thing I look for. Can they write a compound sentence? When I do my writing unit, after we've done introductory grammar and so forth, can they write a compound sentence and punctuate it properly? And can they write a complex sentence and have the proper punctuation in there also. A lot of kids in high school still only write in simple sentences. So those kids I like to see expand into being able to do a compound sentence and complex sentences and compound-complex sentences if they're finally able to do that. A lot . . . a lot of their language . . . they don't have a capacity for that. I guess, they don't hear it in their peer group. They don't hear it from Mom and Dad. They don't read, so their language is kind of inhibited. I noticed a lot of them . . . their writing language . . . probably their speaking language would be the same. I guess, really, my emphasis is in the writing. I have done . . . I did do a speech unit . . . my student teacher did a speech unit this year. I have not . . . I will do one from now on, but in the past I've not done that because the kids feel so uncomfortable with it, but that's not a good reason to do it. So I'm going to do that. But I am pretty heavy in the writing, and, getting back to what I was talking about, I like to see those kids who are inhibited in their language be able to write compound and maybe even complex and compound-complex (if they can do that) sentences, properly punctuated and get rid of the run-on and all those kinds of things that . . . that they . . . that they can't do and then they do incorrectly. Then there are those kids who are able to think this way and talk this way, but they can't punctuate this way . . . so . . . like with the compound sentence have your
coordinating conjunction with a comma before it and introductory and subordinate clauses followed by commas and basically that's as far as ... I have sophomores ... I try to take my sophomores if they can do that ... clauses and phrases and marks of punctuation and this does expand their language and you can tell when they begin writing what it's like and whether they improve or not. They don't like it though. By in large, they'll tell me, you know, it's just not fun and they don't like to do it but, nonetheless, I tell them we have to do it: that's what English is all about. So ... in their writing, I guess, that's about what I can tell you right now for sure which is what I look for. Spelling is their worst error, though. Now that'd be more writing than speaking skills, I suppose.

I: Is there any language in your classroom that you would consider unacceptable?

S: I suppose ... do you mean like swearing?

I: That ... anything.

S: Yeah, I would consider swearing inappropriate language for the classroom and it does occur and more and more. I noticed when I first started teaching, my first few years through now, there's a lot more casual swearing goes on boy to girl, girl to boy and boy to boy, girl to girl. It seems much more acceptable on their standards to ... to swear. And I tell them I'd just soon not hear that. If they talk that way in the hallway or on their own time, that's fine, but I try to discourage it, really. Other kinds of language ... oh, by and large, when they talk to me or when they talk out in class and are trying to express themselves, no, I don't say ... I don't say, "Now you just ... you just said, 'I feel badly,' and do you know that it should be 'I feel bad' and not 'I feel badly' because 'feel' is a linking verb?" No, I don't do any of that. I have. When we are doing grammar and it comes up right in context, I do ... I just did that the other day, as a matter of fact, because it helped with the lesson. By in large, no, I don't correct grammar in class as they speak out, you know, to answer a question or give a report or talk with me in a friendly way. No, I don't.

I: What do you understand to be standard English?

S: Well, I guess, proper usage as I was taught in college. I guess standard English is that scholarly English that everyone has decided on as being correct and, of course, I do believe that in their home context and with friends, the proper standard English is what everyone else is speaking and I do realize that and see it that way. But, I think, as an English teacher, it's incumbent
upon me to make them realize that there is a style of English
that is more acceptable in a formal situation — a job interview,
speaking with your pastor perhaps or minister, giving a speech
or a report where it's expected that you use more formal English and
try and say things in the best way possible. And, I guess, I kind
of see standard English in that light. Here in school, in writing
reports and maybe giving a formal speech, but with your friends and
your parents and your peer group, acceptable language is what
everyone else speaks -- the language which you can best communi­cate
and understand each other because spoken language to me is
communication and understanding so whatever does that best is the
proper language. For example, the nigger dialect. That's their
proper language in their peer group and maybe at home with Mom and
Dad. And even though it might be viewed as substandard English
in one aspect, it's standard and acceptable in the proper context,
I guess is what I'm saying, and that there's other contexts where
maybe that wouldn't . . . that wouldn't serve their best interests
like in a job interview, for instance.

I: Right. Right.

S: So I guess I see standard English as . . . as being that.

I: Great. Do you see it, then, as part of your job to teach
standard English?

S: Oh, yes, I do. Yeah.

I: Do you find that most of your students need it?

S: By and large at ______ most of these kids come from a
white middle-class background and their parents are middle class
workers -- even college teachers here at ______ or ______.
And for the most part, maybe fifty percent anyway -- I'm just
guessing, I don't know -- they come from a pretty sophisticated
background and well-spoken background and have a good language
capacity when they come to school . . . a lot of them, a good
writing and speaking language capacity. But I have taught in the
city school system before and . . . where you gave ethnic groups
and it's a . . . standard English is like a foreign language to
them and it's extremely hard . . . extremely hard . . . very, very
hard if they haven't learned standard English in any way, shape
or form growing up, it's very hard even to . . . even to teach
them a proper context for standard English and to get them to use
it — very, very hard. It . . . really, I see it . . . just like
teaching a foreign language. It's extremely hard.

I: My last question is a little bit different. However you define
"informal English," does that have a role in your class?
S: Sure, when we're talking on friendly terms and trying to express ourselves and communication is important. Right... yes, it does, yes.

I: Okay. Thank you very much.

Interview A26

I: The first question is, as an English teacher, what kinds of changes do you look for in the students' language?

S: I don't think I really concentrated in changes in their language... you mean just speaking?

I: Speaking... or written.

S: Oh, written. Well, written I expect quite a bit. So many of them have a tendency to write with slang and I really try to push that they get away from the slang and write formally and try to emphasize the difference between the writing that... that at sometimes it is appropriate but at other times, it's not and we need to try to get away from that. As far as their speaking abilities, I really don't stress a whole lot. I don't know, I guess, I don't do much with that. I probably should.

I: Is there any language in your class you consider unacceptable?

S: Foul language. Really I've had quite a few occurrences with that this year. So many kids... I don't mind if a kid slips every now and then, but when it gets to be a reoccurring thing, I try to say, you know, "I understand why you're doing it, but we can't let it happen any more. We have to try to curb it and see if we can find a more appropriate language for public. Now, if you do that on your own, that's your business, but while you're in here, I'd like you to try to speak correctly rather than using foul language."

I: Okay, what do you understand to be standard English?

S: I used to term that as "formal English"-- mainly just speaking correctly according to grammar and all that kind of stuff. But with anymore... my interpretation of standard English is just what you speak. I try to recognize all the dialects as not being wrong or slang as not being wrong but as being different and that there are times for appropriate usage of that and that there are times that we need -- especially with writing -- not to use slang or whatever but to try to get onto the correct, formal, standard
English for writing. But otherwise I try to look at the different languages as being different -- not wrong or right.

I: Do you then see it as part of your job to teach standard English?

S: Especially for writing, yes. But as far as for speaking, no. The main thing I try to stress is communication. If they can communicate and can get their ideas across in their own language, fine. But as far as writing, I think they need to be aware of a standard form that everyone should have a contact with so that everyone, no matter whether they're from the West coast or from the East coast, could read it and understand it.

I: Do you think that most of your students need instruction in standard English?

S: Yes, for writing . . . basically for writing I think it's important then. But for speaking, I'm not so sure that they really need it because I find that even . . . you may teach it until you're blue in the face and they're not going to use it.

I: However you define the term "informal English," does that have a role in your class?

S: In communication, yes . . . just the way they talk. Then I stress that they communicate their idea . . . that they organize their ideas effectively and not to be concerned about whether they use the correct grammar [loud noise from the hallway] . . . typical reaction around here. But I think in communication I more or less want them to organize their ideas and get it across and if they use incorrect grammar, it bothers me at times because I'm sensitive to it and I may try to correct something that is major, but, yet, I don't stress it to a point where they're going to feel awkward to communicate. Like one of my biggest pet peeves is for somebody to say, "He don't." It really bothers me and I won't put down their idea or that . . . I don't want to correct them to a point where they will say, "Well, I'm not even going to try to say it." And a lot of kids will say, "Well, forget it, I won't even try," and I don't want that to happen.

I: Okay, thank you very much.

Interview A27

I: As an English teacher, what kinds of changes do you look for in your students' language?
S: With relation to their exposure to literature, I expect them, through reading, to pick up a large vocabulary, sentence style, structure, a sensitivity to the language, sensitivity to the different kinds of words and their levels of meaning on many different levels — semantic, textual, functional and so I expect just as thoroughly the reading, the conversation with their classmates and with me to improve.

I: Okay. Is there any language that you consider unacceptable in your classroom?

S: No, I ... because I also teach theater, I ... I'm in a great many things ... there's a great deal of profanity. If the profanity is unnecessary or not needed, it should be edited or, depending on the situation ... so ... . Students ... your language is a reflection of your personality and so I want students to talk like themselves so I know what they are personally.

I: What do you understand to be standard English?

S: I don't think there is a standard English. I ... my feeling is that language is symbolic of what you are as a person. You pick up what you are from other people and so you're going to talk like people who have influenced you personally. Students ... standard English ... I guess I'm not sure what you mean by the question. Do you mean ... ?

I: Well, I'm really ... .

S: Grammatically ... .

I: Well, I'm really interested in what the term means to you. So many teachers that I've talked to have different interpretations of it.

S: Okay. Well, I think there's ... there's obviously a great difference between the spoken and the written. Now, if you're talking written ... the written word ... standard English would be what is grammatically correct. According to the spoken word, I don't really think there is a standard English because language is changing all the time. So I would have to say either I don't understand or I ... what I'm trying to say is that there is not a standard spoken English.


S: Okay?
I: Uh-huh. Also, whatever you understand to be "informal English," what kind of a role does that have in your classroom?

S: What do you mean by "informal English"?

I: Oh, heavens! I want you to describe that one, too. Does the term mean anything to you as opposed to formal English? Does that distinction . . . is that one that you recognize?

S: No, because I think that there are different levels of language.

I: Tell me about that.

S: Okay, okay, I think that formal and standard all apply to the person. All right, for me what I might consider standard English . . . unless you're going to deal on an academic sense . . . . If we start dealing with English in an academic sense, we're going to get in trouble because then it's not going to be a reflection of the personality. Okay. And the important part for me, for students, is that their language reflect what they're feeling, what they're thinking and that it can be communicated to someone else. Okay, so we start setting standards and all students are going to speak the same way so that's why I'm hung up about the term "standard."

I: Okay.

S: Okay. Informal, I would consider it a reflection . . . maybe you're not talking in complete sentences, but who does, you know? How do you judge that? Maybe by standards you want . . . what you're looking for is . . . I'm always impressed by students who are constantly increasing their spoken vocabulary which is going to increase in their writing. I spend a good deal of time in speech classes with -- well, especially in . . . particularly in advanced speech class -- dealing with the impact of language in a communicative message . . . that language is really, really important. Political campaigns, persuasive campaigns always have mottoes, slogans -- "the new frontier," "the great society." Part of it's developing and ear for language. So, and I [unclear] with the question, but by "informal English," I guess I am avoiding because I'm not sure what you mean by "informal." "Informal" I would consider as relaxed, lack of standards, lack of rules . . . that "informal" is communicating how you feel and what you think and not worrying about the way you're saying it. And that would depend on the student I think. Your advanced students should be concerned about how they are saying it. And the lower level students, I'd just be happy just to have them talking. But all students need to be aware of the auditory effects of language.
I: What do you mean by "auditory effects"?

S: Well, I'm . . . in contrast to written language. I mean, they need to be aware of both but I don't think we stress the spoken word enough. Obviously, it's a reflection of my field, but I don't feel that oral communication is stressed enough in the public schools -- and all -- period -- particularly at this high school. And, consequently, it's going to be reflected in the writing because I firmly believe that the way you write is the way you speak. So, the way I teach writing is a very oral approach to it.

Interview A28

I: The first question is, as an English teacher, what changes do you look for in your students' language — either speech or writing?

S: I guess even though I'm teaching courses a lot that really aren't English . . . students don't think that they're English courses -- like career communication skills and that -- I'm looking for still correct grammar, correct usage both in their written word and their oral work and even though we don't stress this too much in class, I try to . . . I correct all mistakes on paper that they turn in and try to correct for mistakes if they're talking in class. So even though they don't consider it maybe a straight English course, I'm still looking for those things and I hope that students improve and are aware of those things throughout the time I have them.

I: Okay. Is there any language which you would consider unacceptable in your English class?

S: I haven't had any students who would use language that I would consider unacceptable. I never . . . I don't hear too much profanity and that in class. There's not a great deal used, I think, in the classroom.

I: What do you understand to be standard English?

S: I guess I consider it to be the language that I learned. The correct-usage type thing with, you know, . . . not using "ain't" and using proper verbs with a singular and plural subject and things like that. I catch students when they . . . or I hear students once in a while using incorrect English like that.

I: And do you see it as part of your job to teach standard English?
S: Yes.

I: Do the students here need it?

S: I think when they talk, they don't do too bad a job really. I don't catch a lot of things when they talk. Their writing . . . sometimes they have more. Maybe I'm more conscious of it in writing than in their oral speech. I'll always correct it, no matter what it is or at least mark it -- maybe not correct it, but mark it so they at least know there's some mistake there and then they can ask me about it if they wonder what's wrong with what they said. But if it's a book review or anything like that they've written, I try to correct mistakes on them or mark mistakes.

I: Okay, however you define "informal English," does that have a role in your class?

S: I guess I would accept informal English more like in . . . in conversations but if they rewrite a formal paper, things like, "It is I." should be used in a formal paper even though in an informal setting or in a discussion, they might say, you know, "It is me." They're not aware of that, but they should be aware of that at least on paper. I think they think it sounds kind of stilted if they talk like that in an informal setting, but if they're writing in an informal way, I think they should use the correct usage.

I: Okay. Thank you very much.

S: That's it?

Interview A29

I: As an English teacher, what changes do you look for in your students' speech and writing?

S: One thing I find is that students frequently write differently from the way they speak. With an English teacher, I think, maybe they tend to be more aware to speak what they would consider better in the classroom although I don't think in my class the kids tend to hide the way they would talk ordinarily. I've heard kids maybe swear or something and then look to see if I heard or say something they wouldn't ordinarily . . . maybe "ain't" or something and then maybe automatically change it where they wouldn't have changed it ordinarily but they looked up and realized where they were -- something like that. But I don't think that, except for their normal tendency to write something down on paper somewhat more formally than they might toss them out
in class discussion, I don't know that there's a big awareness of the different ways that they write and speak. I think in this neighborhood, in this school, the kids speak quite well. I don't hear a lot of strange accents or jargon or something that would be really substandard in any way, you know.

I: Is there any language in class which you consider unacceptable?

S: Unless the child came from a background where that was his language and he didn't know any better, I think there are... yeah, I think there would be a certain standard of... of language that I would expect and that would be unacceptable in the class and I think students who tend to speak very differently from the way the rest of the peers... their peers in the class are talking would very soon come out of their... their pattern of speech. I think there are certain rude things and really off-colored things that kids say that would be unacceptable in mixed company, so to speak. But I don't... on the whole, I haven't heard it, you know. When I did teach summer school and I had a really cultural mix of kids one summer in..., there were kids who spoke very unacceptably and I had to accept their speech because that was the way it was. You just have to work on subtly changing them and not out-and-out correct them in front of the group or something like that. But in this neighborhood, I don't have to impose it all that much on them, but I think there would be a certain level I would expect in class.

I: Okay. What do you understand to be standard English?

S: I think standard English is unfortunately is the language of the media these days. It's... it's the language that is heard clear across the coast. We've got a president now who speaks with a tremendous Southern accent and all that, but I really think it's almost Midwest or not real snobbish Eastern kind of blend. My husband and I crack up, though, at the mistakes the media people make when they pronounce words or say things strangely. I think it more or less is... there is a standard speech now that the media has kind of spread across the country and I think the kids in this school mostly speak what would be that kind of standard Midwest, middle-class, educated kind of speech.

I: Okay. Do you see it as part of your job to teach standard English?

S: Yes, I really do and also to teach what I would call "formal English" in some of the classes that I've had. We had a writer's workshop course where it was really important for kids to know how to not use contractions when they write at times and how to... how to be more formal in structure and things like that. But, yes,
I think either whether I do it out-and-out for teaching, through telling them about it sometimes or just through more or less subtly working on them to use a certain standard of English, I think it is part of the job to teach it.

I: Do you think that most of your students here need instruction in standard English?

S: I think most students here do not because they tend to come from somewhat educated families who speak what I would consider to be standard, communication English.

I: And, also, however you define "informal English," what kind of a role does that have in your class?

S: Well, with a few exceptions, I'm not sure that informal English is so different from . . . in this case with these students . . . from what we're tending to call standard English here. I think, in many cases, it is the same thing. They have certain slang words -- certain things they say perhaps in their, you know, in the commons with their friends that they might not say in . . . out and out in a group discussion in class but I don't think there's really a big gap. Maybe that's unusual, but I don't think there is.

Interview A30

I: What changes do you look for in your students' language when you teach English?

S: Okay, now I'm teaching eleventh grade so let . . . I teach eleventh and twelfth and I teach primarily a mix. I look for several things. I like to see them stretch into an adult vocabulary and I explain to them very carefully this does not mean four letter words, it means a much more sophisticated kind of vocabulary. I try to weed out slang in written and spoken work. I accept slang in classroom discussion. I do not accept borderline, questionable diction. I am very picky about this. I think that a lot of the information they pick up from TV is . . . I'm sorry, a lot of words they pick up from TV are not really socially acceptable and I make it very clear to them I do not want it being used in the classroom. But I make a fetish of it [clears throat], excuse me, so that they need not feel embarrassed about it. They simply understand that my expectations of them are a little bit different. And this seems to make it a little more palatable for them. I'm not being picky individually or at a group, but that I am expecting something a little different out of them.
I: This goes along with what you're saying: is there any language in class that you consider unacceptable?

S: Yes, and I make, again, a big fetish about this. I hate the word "crap." I simply find that totally distasteful. I think it's unnecessary. I think there are other words that can substitute. I do not like . . . well, some of the others. I had a student once who persistently throughout a theme used the word "broad" to refer to his mother and I discovered, when I talked to him about this, that his mother . . . his father always referred to his mother in this way. And that was a little bit sensitive, but I did explain to him that it was not an appropriate term as we were using it in the classroom, and, again, this problem of how do you handle this with parents. But, I think, there are certain words that they should not be using in a social setting, in an adult society, and I think that I have an obligation to help them make the discrimination in levels of words, levels of usage.

I: What do you understand to be standard English?

S: Okay, standard English to me would be the level of usage that is acceptable on, I would say a television news show broadcast interview -- not the kind of thing you find on a talk show. This is a witty kind of thing, but not necessarily standard English. And so I would set my standards at the kind of language that intelligent people -- intelligent adults would use in a serious situation.

I: Okay. Do you see it as part of your job to teach that?

S: Most definitely. It is my obligation to teach this. I know you're leading up to "a Student's Right to his own Language." Yes, he does have a right to that, but he does have to function in the world. He does have to interrelate with society. I see no reason for a student not to be multi-lingual, not to be able to use a number of different levels of language in his life, knowing where certain kinds are more appropriate than others.

I: Do you see most of the students at ________ as needing a lot of instruction in standard English?

S: No, not really. We do have some who have dialect problems -- comes out more in writing than it does in speaking. And I think probably what we're experiencing is a fairly large group of upper-middle income and, well, I would say, upper-middle income background families so that there is a fairly standard level of usage -- not much sentence substandard usage.
I: Right. And, finally, however you define the term "informal English," what kind of role does that have in your English class?

S: A major role. I think that this is how you best relate to students. I . . . I use slang with them. I use . . . I would say, the witty language with them, but, again, they know what my expectations are and they accept my ability to move from one level of language to another. I encourage them to say to me, "I don't understand that word you're using. Stop. Define. Let us into your world." I encourage that kind of thing. Also feeling that I have the right to get down to their level if I need to make a point and so I don't feel at all self-conscious about moving one level to another with them. But I feel that I do have an obligation to stretch them a bit.

I: Thank you very much.

Interview A31

I: As an English teacher, what kinds of changes do you look for in your students' language?

S: Verbal or written?

I: Both.

S: Both. I don't think with . . . with verbal language . . . I think we look for a little more confidence in the way they express themselves. I've got a speaking and listening unit and the kids do one demonstration speech and sometimes I try to work in another speech. So just the fact of being able to get up in front of an audience without nervousness and say that, for the student who has never done any public speaking or has been even shy in class, this forces him or her to do that. So we try to . . . as I say, a little more confidence when they get at . . . .

One of the biggest problems I've always found with students is just volume. And they'll be really loud in maybe talking to their friends or even when they answer a question in class, but when it comes time to do a play or something in class or even do a reading, they tend to clam up. And I think we try to work on that a little bit . . . volume. As far as written language goes, the emphasis in the tenth grade here is on written English -- expository writing. So we look for all kinds of changes. We assume nothing and we're generally right. So, we start with just paragraphs -- the very first unit -- different kinds of paragraphing, taking the time then if they have some really bad grammatical problems, to go over those. Then we move into theme writing after Christmas break and before we do theme writing, if some students
still haven't mastered or at least gotten some confidence in paragraph writing, we go back over that with them, but they too will write a theme. Regardless of how slow the student is, he will write a theme. We've never had anybody, I guess, that if, you know, they were that bad, they wouldn't be in this class anyway. They can all get some rudimentary theme down, some organization. And, of course, kids have different style. With the good student, the above average student, we can work with language in the way of style, not so much as organization and mechanics. I guess that's about it.

I: Okay, fine. Is there any language that you consider unacceptable in your classroom?

S: I guess, depending on the context, yes. Okay. If there's profanity in the story we're reading and it's repeated in class in the context of the discussion, that's fine. But I won't allow a kid to yell, "motherfucker" across the room. That kind of stuff doesn't . . . and they usually don't. I've never had . . . and I guess when it happened, I don't think it's . . . it's not really a discipline problem. It's just a matter of taste. I think we . . . I treat it that way. I don't really send a kid to the office for it or anything like that unless . . . there are cases . . . if it's belligerent and it's repetitious, a verbal assault on myself or any other teacher in the room, then it would be treated a little differently. In general use, no, I usually ask a kid . . . there's a time and a place for every kind of language and they wouldn't talk in the classroom the way they might talk on a basketball court or playing ball or whatever and I guess that's pretty much my restriction there.

I: Okay. What do you understand to be standard English?

S: The way Walter Cronkite talks, I guess . . . standard English. I would say the students . . . they don't speak standard English, but I don't think they . . . I notice we don't have too much in the way of dialects. Our Black students, of course, have Black English -- at least spoken. Most of the students speak high school, teen-age English -- a lot of "ain't's" and "hey, man's" and the faddish language -- whatever the trend happens to be. I guess I would consider standard English what would be acceptable in newspapers, magazine writing, television speaking. I guess that would be the standard you might judge by. Whether that's right or wrong, I don't know.

I: I don't either. Do you see it as part of your job to teach standard English?
S: I think yes, because . . . I guess my theory is this: you have to be able to communicate with other people and the only way to do that is for them to understand what you're saying. So you're going to have . . . have to be . . . and for most people to understand it, if you have a standard way to speak, then most people are going to be able to understand it when you speak or written for a specific audience and a wide audience, you should . . . you sometimes . . . They will be able to understand. It means it's not slang, not colloquial; it's not dialect. It's written in such a way that people can understand it. And so, yes, I'd say we have to teach standard English for that purpose, but I think we have to teach people not to speak like they're from West Virginia or whatever. And when they're writing home to their . . . to a best friend or they're writing to their parents, maybe, or things like that, I think they don't have to use completely standard English; they can use what's familiar to them and their families.

I: Do students here need instruction in standard English?

S: I would say some do, yes. But I would say there are ver . . . quite a few students who are pretty middle class-upper class school and I would say for the most part, good English is probably spoken at home -- standard English. And I don't know if it's absolutely necessary . . . I don't think we have to call it standard English. I mean, I guess that would be the thing.

I: Okay, also, however you define "informal English," what kind of a role does that have in your class?

S: I think informal English is the way we talk in class. It's informal. I don't usually correct a student for saying "ain't" in class, and, I guess, if you can get your idea across in spoken English and most of the students in there . . . their peers . . . they seem to understand each other, I think. Maybe we work, you know, on the idea of the audience, you know, who you're talking to.

I: Okay, thank you very much.

Interview A32

I: The first question is, as an English teacher, what kinds of changes do you look for in your students' language?

S: You mean, from the time that they're in my class until the end of the year? [non-verbal response] Well, I teach speech. Okay. So I expect them to be more articulate and I expect them to be . . . . Are you looking for things they say or more or less just the types of words they use?
I: Both.

S: Both. Okay. I expect them to be much more open and much more willing to grope, in other words, find their way through an answer. I correct them all the time — whenever they come in with, "That ain't right" — that type of thing. I don't necessarily expect that to change because it's such an instantaneous thing. They'll come and say, "That ain't right," and I'll say, "That isn't right," and they'll say, "Okay, that isn't right." And then they'll just go on and I'm not necessarily predicting that they'll change their behavior patterns. I would just like to make them aware that someone's listening to them doing it. Because if I don't correct them, usually one of the other kids does.

I: Okay. Is there any language in your class that is unacceptable to you?

S: Swearing and, as I said, slight grammatical faults I notice in their speech, I pick up and it's unacceptable in so far as I correct it, however, as I said, I don't necessarily expect it to change. They're usually pretty careful.

I: Okay. What do you understand to be standard English?

S: Standard English . . . standard English . . . language that follows the rules of grammar, that does not use slang. Beyond that, I wouldn't put any other limitations on it.

I: Do you see it as part of your job to teach standard English?

S: Yes, I think so, only because it has a tendency to be a pattern that everybody follows. At least, if they have a base, you know, and they deviate from it, they always know where they can go back to.

I: Right. Do you see the students in _________ as needing instruction in standard English?

S: Some not at all. We have really a large cross section here of individuals. And we have both an extremely rural element and children of university professors and people who have moved from other parts of the country and, in view of that, there's a certain percentage that really does not suffer from, you know, learning how to speak correctly.

I: Also, however you define "informal language," does that have a role in your class?

S: Do you want me to define it first? To a certain extent, yes, you know, because a lot of times I hate to, when a student is
speaking -- especially if they're doing it in the only way they know how. Aside from using slang or swearing, if they're doing it in the only way they know how, I hate to stop them, especially if they're trying to get out something that might be a little hard for them to say. And that's especially true in speech classes where . . . or communication classes where you deal with things that might be a little bit more personal. I'm not as likely to jump in and say, "Please stop," and say, you know, rather than . . . .
APPENDIX B: PRETEST SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Dear Colleague,

It is very easy to make statements about how good or bad our students' use of English is. It is quite another matter to say what good or bad English really is. As a part of my dissertation work at Ohio State, I am developing a survey instrument to measure what English teachers consider to be "good English." These pages comprise the first of two pretests of that instrument. They are designed to help me determine which items will reliably measure teachers' attitudes.

I would appreciate your taking the time to respond to these statements.

Mary Moore

DIRECTIONS: Please respond to the following statements by placing an X in the space under the heading that best describes your attitude. Work rapidly since your spontaneous response is sought.

1. All nonstandard dialects are just as complex as the standard dialect.
   DISAGREE STRONGLY   DISAGREE   DON'T KNOW   AGREE   AGREE STRONGLY

2. The spoken language is a corrupted and imprecise form of written language.

3. An English teacher's job is first and foremost teaching standard English.

4. In the years I have taught English, my students' language has become increasingly careless.

5. As a teacher, I should avoid seeing standard English as linguistically superior.

6. Students' command of informal English is just as important as their command of formal English.

7. It is possible to be an effective speaker without using correct English.

8. Language has never been as abused as it is today.


10. There are absolute standards for linguistic performance.
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<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>DON'T KNOW or UNCLEAR</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>AGREE STRONGLY</th>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Studying standard English means scientifically studying the language actually used by native speakers.</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>English teachers should never use slang in English classes.</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>Teaching correct English is only one part of the job of an English teacher.</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>Many problems with the English language would be solved if, like Latin, it stopped changing.</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>Nonstandard dialects are themselves rule-governed.</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>Standards for spoken and written language are very different.</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>Speaking and writing clearly is a more important goal than achieving formal correctness.</td>
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<td>18.</td>
<td>Slang adds much freshness to the language.</td>
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<td>19.</td>
<td>Despite regional dialects in the United States, it makes more sense to speak of a single standard English than of many standard Englishes.</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>There is one best form of English which should be spoken at all times.</td>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>Dialectal variation in language is good.</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>Language forms associated with formal language usage need particular emphasis because students are apt to be less familiar with them than with informal forms.</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>An English teacher should make sure that only standard English is spoken in the classroom.</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>We are confronted today with a linguistic crisis brought on by the poor quality of English being spoken.</td>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>From a linguistic point of view, the elite dialect is arbitrarily accorded more prestige than the non–elite dialect.</td>
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<td>26.</td>
<td>Sometimes vulgarity is acceptable.</td>
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<td>DISAGREE STRONGLY</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>I cannot give a passing grade to a student paper filled with errors in usage, spelling and punctuation—even if the idea developed is sensible.</td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td>The language would become less useful if it did not change.</td>
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<td>29.</td>
<td>Some dialects have less complex structures than others.</td>
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<td>30.</td>
<td>There is no place for variations from standard English in the classroom.</td>
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<td>31.</td>
<td>There is little consensus among educated people in the United States about what features constitute the standard dialect.</td>
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<td>Students should be encouraged not to use slang.</td>
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<td>33.</td>
<td>My students expect me to correct their faulty grammar and usage.</td>
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<td>34.</td>
<td>Slang poses a threat to language.</td>
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<td>35.</td>
<td>The prestige dialect is the one spoken by those with political and social power.</td>
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<td>36.</td>
<td>I like slang.</td>
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<td>37.</td>
<td>Language should be judged by its appropriateness to the situation.</td>
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<td>38.</td>
<td>Nonstandard speech should be eradicated.</td>
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<td>39.</td>
<td>Nonstandard dialects are inconsistent and illogical.</td>
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<td>40.</td>
<td>Dictionaries describe language rather than dictate it.</td>
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<td>41.</td>
<td>Students should be encouraged not to use informal English.</td>
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<td>42.</td>
<td>Our society judges people largely by their correct command of the language.</td>
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<td>43.</td>
<td>Changes in the language are undesirable.</td>
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<td>44.</td>
<td>Standard English is not a matter of logic, but of convention.</td>
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<td>45.</td>
<td>The status of words as obscene depends on the way they are used rather than on the words themselves.</td>
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</table>
46. If students can communicate effectively, the fine points of grammar and usage are unimportant.

47. Educated people agree in their judgments as to the acceptability of certain sentences.

48. All dialects are equal in their ability to communicate.

49. Certain words are obscene no matter how they're used.

50. As an English teacher, I feel it is my responsibility to call my students' attention to incorrect forms in their speech.

51. Change in the language is constant and natural.

52. No dialect is inferior to any other.

53. Under certain circumstances, informal English is appropriate.

54. Language should be judged by its correctness.

55. Educated people agree in their judgments as to the acceptability of certain sentences.

56. Language that varies from standard English is deficient.

57. Using informal language in the classroom is a way of making English meaningful to students.

58. If the message is not letter-perfect, it is apt to be misunderstood.

59. In the years that I have taught English, my students' ability to speak well has remained about the same.

60. No dialect is purer than any other dialect.

61. Under certain circumstances, slang is appropriate.

62. It is fair to say that standard English is the most logical English.

63. Usage is not completely relative. There are some absolute standards that determine whether usage is good or bad.

64. An ability to use English skillfully in informal situations should be stressed in class.
65. Attention to linguistic standards is essential for effective communication.

66. Language change indicates that the language continues to renew itself.

67. Logic should be applied to usage to determine whether or not it is standard English.

68. As an English teacher, I feel that there are some circumstances that call for my use of slang in the classroom.

69. Logic should be applied to usage to determine whether or not it is standard English.

70. Dialectal variations in language are bad.

71. English teachers should stress the fine points of correct usage since slang and colloquialisms come naturally.

72. In the years that I have taught English, my student's command of the spoken language has increased.

73. There are several correct ways to express any given thought.

74. It is very important for students to develop their abilities to use informal English skillfully.

75. The correct language standards can be found in grammar books and usage manuals.

76. Some dialects are more expressive than others.

77. In general, I do not think English teachers should correct students' speech during class discussions.

78. There are several language standards, depending on the situation.

79. Although inappropriate in formal writing, slang may be quite appropriate in speech.

80. Authority for correct usage rests with the dictionary and grammar texts.

81. Some nonstandard dialects are inferior to standard English in their expressive and communicative powers.
82. In general, I think English teachers should correct students' speech during class discussions.

83. I dislike slang.

84. English teachers are guardians of language standards and correctness.

85. Some dialects are inherently more beautiful than others.

86. Colloquial expressions and current fad terms are perfectly all right in informal situations.

87. I try to avoid using slang in my English class.

88. Some dialects are inherently superior in their expressive or communicative power.

89. As an English teacher, I feel that teaching effective communication is more important than teaching correct grammar and usage.

90. Formal English is a more adequate variety of language for communicating than informal English.

91. Bad grammar usually makes speech ineffective.

92. Nonstandard dialects are inconsistent and illogical.

93. Grammar tells us how to use the language correctly.

94. Authority for correct usage rests with skilled native speakers.

95. Language has never been as well used as it is today.

96. It is part of my job as an English teacher to represent standard English as linguistically superior.

97. An ability to use informal English is not as important as an ability to use formal English.
APPENDIX C: FINAL SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Dear Colleague,

This survey is attempting to describe high school English teachers' attitudes toward "good English." Please respond to the following statements by placing an X in the space under the heading that best describes your attitude in general. Work rapidly since your spontaneous response is sought. Your responses will remain confidential and will be reported anonymously.

Although there is some overlap among questions, it will help to have you respond to all of them. The slight repetition of questions is purposeful. Thank you for your help.

Mary E. Moore

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DISAGREE STRONGLY</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>DON'T KNOW</th>
<th>UNCLEAR</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. There is one best form of English which should be spoken at all times.</td>
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<td>2. The spoken language is a corrupted and imprecise form of written language.</td>
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<td>3. It is possible to be an effective speaker without using correct English.</td>
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<td>4. In the years I have taught English, my students' language has become increasingly careless.</td>
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<td>5. Nonstandard speech should be eradicated.</td>
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<td>6. Students' command of informal English is just as important as their command of formal English.</td>
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<td>7. An English teacher should make sure that only standard English is spoken in the classroom.</td>
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<td>8. Nonstandard dialects are inconsistent and illogical.</td>
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<td>9. English teachers should never use slang in English classes.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
10. I cannot give a passing grade to a student paper filled with errors in usage, spelling and punctuation—even if the idea developed is sensible.

11. Language has never been as abused as it is today.

12. Standard English is not a matter of logic, but of convention. *

13. Students should be encouraged not to use slang.

14. As an English teacher, I feel it is my responsibility to call my students' attention to incorrect forms in their speech.

15. We are confronted today with a linguistic crisis brought on by the poor quality of English being spoken.

16. Educated people agree in their judgments as to the acceptability of certain sentences. *

17. I like slang.

18. Language should be judged by its correctness.

19. Slang poses a threat to language.

20. Language that varies from standard English is deficient.

21. Students should be encouraged not to use informal English.

22. If students can communicate effectively, the fine points of grammar and usage are unimportant.
23. It is fair to say that standard English is the most logical English.

24. Using informal language in the classroom is a way of making English meaningful to students.

25. If the message is not letter-perfect, it is apt to be misunderstood.

26. Usage is not completely relative. There are some absolute standards that determine whether usage is good or bad.

27. As an English teacher, I feel there are some circumstances that call for my use of slang in the classroom.

28. Attention to linguistic standards is essential for effective communication.

29. In the years that I have taught English, my students' ability to speak well has remained about the same.

30. Correct language standards can be found in grammar books and usage manuals.

31. It is very important for students to develop their abilities to use informal English skillfully.

32. Some nonstandard dialects are inferior to standard English in their expressive and communicative powers.

33. Dialectal variation in language is good.

34. I try to avoid using slang in my English class.

35. In general, I do not think English teachers should correct students' speech during class discussions.
36. English teachers are guardians of language standards and correctness.

37. Formal English is a more adequate variety of language for communicating than informal English.

38. No dialect is inferior to any other.

39. Bad grammar usually makes speech ineffective.

40. Nonstandard dialects are inconsistent and illogical.

41. Language has never been as well used as it is today.

42. It is part of my job as an English teacher to represent standard English as linguistically superior.

43. As an English teacher, I feel that teaching effective communication is more important than teaching correct grammar and usage.

*Items 12 and 16 were omitted from the final data analysis.*

Please supply this additional information:

Age____  Sex: F_____ M____  Years taught____

Current English Assignment: full time_____ part time_____
mostly literature_____ mostly composition_____ part literature/part composition_____ other_____

Education: Undergraduate Major________________________
Number of English grammar/linguistic/history of language courses____
Last Degree Obtained________________________

Other comments____________________________________
Subtest 1 explores the question: do English teachers see standard English as a single, monolithic structure of "good English" against which student language ought to be judged?

1. There is **one** best form of English which should be spoken at all times.

5. Nonstandard speech should be eradicated.

8. Nonstandard dialects are inconsistent and illogical.

20. Language that varies from standard English is deficient.

23. It is fair to say that standard English is the most logical English.

26. Usage is not completely relative. There are some absolute standards that determine whether usage is good or bad.

30. Correct language standards can be found in grammar books and usage manuals.

32. Some nonstandard dialects are inferior to standard English in their expressive and communicative powers.

33. Dialectal variation in language is good.

36. English teachers are guardians of language standards and correctness.

38. No dialect is inferior to any other dialect.

40. Nonstandard dialects are inconsistent and illogical.

42. It is part of my job as an English teacher to represent standard English as linguistically superior.
Subtest 2 explores the relative importance English teachers place on informal and formal English in their teaching.

2. The spoken language is a corrupted and imprecise form of written language.

6. The students' command of informal English is just as important as their command of formal English.

9. English teachers should never use slang in English classes.

13. Students should be encouraged not to use slang.

17. I like slang.

21. Students should be encouraged not to use informal English.

24. Using informal English in the classroom is a way of making English meaningful to students.

27. As an English teacher, I feel that there are some circumstances that call for my use of slang in the classroom.

31. It is important for students to develop their ability to use informal English skillfully.

34. I try to avoid using slang in my English class.

37. Formal English is a more adequate variety of language for communicating than informal English.

Subtest 3 explores the extent to which English teachers show more concern for form than for function in teaching English.

3. It is possible to be an effective speaker without using correct English.

7. As an English teacher, I should make sure that only standard English is spoken in the classroom.

10. I cannot give a passing grade to a student paper filled with errors in usage, spelling and punctuation -- even if the idea developed is sensible.

14. As an English teacher, I feel it is my responsibility to call my students' attention to incorrect forms in their speech.
18. Language should be judged by its correctness.

22. If students can communicate effectively, the fine points of grammar and usage are unimportant.

25. If the message is not letter-perfect, it is apt to be misunderstood.

28. Attention to linguistic standards is essential for effective communication.

35. In general, I do not think English teachers should correct students' speech during class discussions.

39. Bad grammar usually makes speech ineffective.

43. As an English teacher, I feel that effective communication is more important than teaching correct grammar and usage.

Subtest 4 explores the question: to what extent do teachers' attitudes reflect the perennial fear of the popular press that language is collapsing and to what extent do they reflect the more enlightened awareness that language change is natural?

4. In the years that I have taught English, my students' language has become increasingly careless.

11. Language has never been so abused as it is today.

15. We are confronted today with a linguistic crisis brought on by the poor quality of English being spoken.

19. Slang poses a threat to language.

29. In the years that I have taught English, my students' ability to speak well has remained about the same.

41. Language has never been as well used as it is today.
### APPENDIX E

### TABLE 10

PRETEST ITEM ANALYSIS: ITEM-TO-TOTAL CORRELATIONS AND FACTOR LOADINGS

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