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SYNTACTIC MATURITY  
AS AN ELEMENT OF  
CLASS DIALECT

By  
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A DISSERTATION

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## Chapter I

### PURPOSE AND REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

The purpose of this study is to find out whether syntactic maturity is an element of class dialect by discovering if there is any correlation between non-standard usage and syntactic immaturity in the language of 95 fifth-grade white children in Cullman, Alabama.

Many investigators of language have indicated that there is another dimension of the grammatical description of dialect besides that of usage, but they disagree on what to call it and whether or not it is a part of a class dialect. McDavid, quoting Fries, implies that it is class-connected when he writes that "identifying the overt stigmata of underprivileged dialects and providing opportunity to learn a privileged variety of speech is not going to solve the problems of these minorities by itself. In his American English Grammar, Fries pointed out that the most striking characteristic of 'Vulgar English' was its impoverishment, in grammatical structure as well as vocabulary."<sup>1</sup> Loban, on the other hand, sees

it as a problem that transcends class lines. For "children not handicapped by social dialect" the main problem is not usage, but clarity of communication. For children speaking a social dialect he finds both problems, labelling one "usage" and the other "coherence."<sup>2</sup>

Two writers are more specific in describing this other dimension. Basil Bernstein uses the terms "restricted" and "elaborated" codes of language. These he considers elements of differing social dialects, and he provides the syntactic constructions by which they can be distinguished.<sup>3</sup> Kellogg Hunt considers the ability to control syntax to be a product of maturity; moreover he has devised quantitative methods by which the degree of control can be measured.<sup>4</sup> His quantitative, objective indexes of syntactic maturity are surprisingly close to Bernstein's verbal descriptions, although Bernstein is describing an element of social dialect, while Hunt is describing levels of syntactic maturity and correlating them with intellectual superiority. Because the method used in the Cullman study to describe this aspect of grammatical dialect is primarily borrowed from Hunt, the term syntactic maturity is also borrowed, although Bernstein's findings will also be considered.

Regardless of the label, this element of language is one that English teachers at least have always been aware of, knowing that it is possible to remove all

nonstandard expressions from a student paper and still have one that is "impoverished," or "restricted," or "immature." The need for a measure other than "correctness" has been illustrated by Francis Christensen's Notes Toward a New Rhetoric, particularly in the essay "A Generative Rhetoric of the Sentence."<sup>5</sup> But although his rhetoric has a grammatical base, it is still rhetoric. The purpose of the Cullman study has nothing to do with either rhetoric or stylistics. The purpose is to measure as objectively as possible syntactic maturity and to find out if it is an element of social dialect, as nonstandard usage is.

Two hypotheses seem equally logical. One is that a socially "disadvantaged" person in a culturally "deprived" environment will learn his impoverished grammatical structures along with nonstandard forms. The other is that since syntactic maturity and mental maturity go hand in hand, as Hunt shows, the intellectually superior person will show superior syntactic maturity, regardless of the nonstandard varieties of language his environment has taught him. In order to determine which hypothesis is acceptable, or whether there may be a reconciliation of the two, this study examines the oral and written language of the fifth grade students in West Elementary School, in Cullman, Alabama, extracts the items that can clearly be labeled nonstandard, rather than regional,

and determines the syntactic maturity of the group, measured by the method described by Hunt. It will then be determined what correlations exist between syntactic maturity, nonstandard usage, and mental maturity.

To find out what has previously been written on this subject, two areas of research must be examined, one concerned with usage, particularly as it relates to this geographical area, and one concerned with the measurement of syntactic development. It has been assumed so far in this study that nonstandard usage is evidence of a substandard social class. This assumption can be based not only on research, but also on the traditional effort to eradicate the nonstandard forms by English teachers. It might be argued, however, that pronunciation too should be considered. But the growing trend to accept pronunciation differences as fact rather than unfortunate peculiarities, and the growing difficulty in determining just what speakers enjoy prestige make it less and less easy to apply pronunciation as a criterion in separating social dialects. Consequently, even though McDavid in his chapter on "American English Dialects" in Nelson Francis's The Structure of English says that social differences appear in pronunciation particularly in the South, it seems safer to stay with the rest of his statement: "Social differences in language are usually most apparent in

morphology and syntax."<sup>6</sup>

The problem of establishing exactly what forms and constructions are conceded to be nonstandard requires more careful investigation and definition. First of all, it is widely recognized that each person may speak several dialects, each with its own standards of usage. Of the many descriptions of the levels of usage, that given by Martin Joos in The Five Clocks<sup>7</sup> has been used to make explicit some of the boundaries that must be recognized in a definition of usage. By using his four "usage-scales," age, style, breadth, and responsibility,<sup>8</sup> certain limitations become obvious. Since the Cullman study uses fifth-grade children, usage will naturally be that of the child. Here it may be proper to quote Hunt's definition of "maturity" since his phrase syntactic maturity has been borrowed. It "is intended to designate nothing more than 'the observed characteristics of writers in an older grade.' It has nothing to do with whether older students write 'better' in any general stylistic sense."<sup>9</sup> In the category of style, Joos subsumes both consultative and casual under the label colloquial,<sup>10</sup> which has been adopted arbitrarily in this study for both oral and written language, although evidences of an awareness of the difference between the two have been noted. Since the usage-scale breadth,

according to Joos, "measures breadth of experience and of self-limitation,"<sup>11</sup> a fifth-grade child is apt to be limited in experience to a provincial usage. The category responsibility is most closely concerned with the forms and constructions commonly considered non-standard. Joos considers that the community establishes the conventions of language used by its "responsible" people;<sup>12</sup> consequently it is necessary to go to a second kind of research, that of the regional language, to determine a standard for "good" or even "fair" usage on this level.

According to Mencken and McDavid in The American Language, "Next to New England speech, the American dialect that has been most studied is that of the Southern mountains [a southwestward thrust of the Midland speech of Pennsylvania, with some infiltrations from Lowland Southern]."<sup>13</sup> Many of these studies, however, deal with pronunciation, which has already arbitrarily been eliminated from consideration, except where it will impinge on morphology. Others are concerned with tracing the origins of typical forms or providing word lists derived from various regions, neither of which contributes greatly to the problem of distinguishing regional "good" from regional "nonstandard" syntax. Of greatest help are the works derived from the Linguistic

Atlas, particularly Kurath's Word Geography of the Eastern United States<sup>14</sup> and Atwood's A Survey of Verb Forms in the Eastern United States.<sup>15</sup> Even though the Linguistic Atlas has not yet investigated northern Alabama, the forms and pronunciations it describes as belonging to South Midland speech also describe North Alabama speech. Consequently, the distinctions Atwood makes between types of informants and the forms that they use help to make similar distinctions in the language under consideration. In addition, the research of William A. Stewart<sup>16</sup> and of Gordon R. Wood<sup>17</sup> is relevant and adds support to the statement that North Alabama belongs to the South Midland dialect region.

At the risk of seeming brash, and without belittling in the least the quantities of information available in such investigations on specific items of regional usage, it does seem that this study can itself provide information about what is "good" usage within this region. Rather than defining social levels by the language used, it seems more accurate to categorize this particular language by the level of the people who use it. There is available for the children whose language is being studied information about the birthplaces of their parents and grandparents which makes certain their being truly native to this region. Moreover, the educational level of their parents is known, as well as their occupations. With

this information it should be possible to make social class groupings, and to discover what is characteristic of the usage of each group.

But even though regional good use must be taken into account, and in spite of the fact that the emphasis today is on accepting regional differences, it is still true that there is a world outside of this region which will judge the social level of language by its own standards and which is apt to consider anything Appalachian as backward. For this study, which uses fifth-grade children as its informants, regional good use is almost all that can be expected. Yet it is necessary to compare it to nonregional, in order to know how limited the usage may be, and for this comparison other references are needed. One could start with Fries' American English Grammar<sup>18</sup> but for a summary of what research has disclosed up to 1962 it is more efficient to use Margaret M. Bryant's Current American Usage<sup>19</sup> and Webster's Third New International Dictionary. Very much to the point are the specific lists of nonstandard usages published by Robert C. Pooley<sup>20</sup> and Raven I. McDavid.<sup>21</sup>

The research dealing with the measurement of syntactic control has been reviewed so often and summarized so extensively through 1966 that it seems unnecessary to do it again, particularly since, with a hindsight developed from reading Hunt's monographs, one recognizes that until

recently the measurements were based upon sentence length, although no definition was given for a sentence. An extensive review of research is given in Dorothea McCarthy's "Language Development in Children,"<sup>22</sup> in which she provides tables comparing the results obtained by ten investigators measuring mean length of sentences in spoken language<sup>23</sup> and comments on the "unfortunate" fact that because of varying methods and terminology the results are not really comparable.<sup>24</sup> Yet she never mentions the problem of determining the confines of a sentence. Other reviews of research can be found in John Carroll's article, "Language Development" in Encyclopedia of Educational Research<sup>25</sup> and in Lester E. Harrell, Jr.'s "A Comparison of Oral and Written Language in School-age Children,"<sup>26</sup> which does recognize the problem. Hunt refers to other reviews but singles out for summary and analysis the conclusions reached by La Brant and McCarthy,<sup>27</sup> in order to "correct and modernize the summary of syntactic development studies as set forth by Dorothea McCarthy a decade ago."<sup>28</sup> Finally, an elaborate analysis of related research is found in Syntax of Kindergarten and Elementary School Children: A Transformational Analysis, by Roy C. O'Donnell, William J. Griffin, and Raymond C. Norris,<sup>29</sup> in which the studies are classified according to their derivation from traditional grammar, structural linguistics, and transformational grammar. This study takes note of the attempts to define

a sentence by phonological units and the development by Loban<sup>30</sup> of a measure similar to Hunt's, which he calls a "communication unit."

The need for a unit of measure by which language can be segmented objectively in such a way that users of the method will come to the same results has been illustrated in other studies. Besides Loban's "communication unit," there is a "Type I" unit, described by Margaret E. Ashida in her unpublished dissertation "Form, Syntax, and Statistics: A Quantitative Approach to Written Composition."<sup>31</sup> She divides a text into six types of units, the first of which closely approximates Hunt's measure. Then in response to an article in College Composition and Communication by Paul Rodgers<sup>32</sup> in which he calls the unit simply a clause, she points out that "Professor Leslie T. Whipp, grappling with comparable perplexities at the University of Nebraska, has coined the term "ellie." She concludes that "from various perspectives, Professors Hunt, Whipp, and Rodgers, and I have demonstrated that this beast, whatever its name, is important in syntactic and rhetorical research; and part of the task of corralling and taming it to our uses involves, I should think, some basic agreement on what to call it."<sup>33</sup>

Hunt calls it a T-unit. Since his methods of measurement are fundamental to this study, it is necessary to summarize his research at greater length. He takes

as a starting point the results of the last thirty years of investigation of measures of syntactic maturity and lists three of Dorothea McCarthy's conclusions, the validity of which he proceeds to disprove. She has stated 1) that sentence length is "the most widely used index"; 2) that clause length "remains 'fairly constant' in grades four to twelve"; 3) that "sentence length increases as children mature because they learn to add more subordinate clauses. Adding more clauses is what lengthens sentences."<sup>34</sup> He then tested these theories by applying to the writing of average students in grades four, eight, and twelve "three of the conventional measures": mean sentence length, mean clause length, and the subordination ratio (proportion of dependent clauses to main clauses).<sup>35</sup> The results showed that sentence length, although it did increase with each grade, was an ineffective measure when applied to individuals because of the tendency of younger students to achieve length by undesirable means: excessive coordination with and and run-together sentences. Contrary to McCarthy's findings he discovered that mean clause length, derived by dividing the number of words by the number of clauses, also increased, as did the mean subordination ratio, both "with a higher level of significance than for sentence length."<sup>36</sup>

Hunt then developed a new syntactic measure.

The investigator reasoned that if clauses get longer with maturity, and if the frequency of subordinate clauses per main clause also increases with maturity, then the syntactic units which consist of one main clause plus whatever number of subordinate clauses happen to be attached to or embedded in that main clause will increase too, and the increase can be expected to result from both tendencies and can be expected to exceed that for either tendency by itself.<sup>37</sup>

This new measure, or syntactic unit, is a "minimal terminal" unit because it is the shortest unit that can be "terminated" with the usual signs of the sentence, the capital letter and the period. Hunt dubbed it the T-Unit, and, as he expected, found it to be a significant index of maturity. As he points out, the T-Unit is "objective and unambiguous,"<sup>38</sup> as the sentence is not. In addition, for this study it is valuable because it provides a tool with which to segment oral language into measurable units, since it is possible to divide, with agreement among investigators, oral discourse into "one main clause plus whatever number of subordinate clauses happen to be attached to or embedded in that main clause."

The concept of the T-Unit brought about a redefinition of the subordination ratio, the ratio of subordinate clauses to main clauses. When the ratio is figured by dividing the number of all clauses, subordinate and main, by the number of main clauses, or T-Units,

it provides an arithmetical bridge between clause length and T-Unit length. For any

body of writing. . . , the clause length (number of words divided by number of clauses) multiplied by this new ratio (number of clauses divided by the number of T-Units) equals the T-Unit length (number of words divided by number of T-Units).

This Hunt calls the "subordinate clause index," one not more valid than the old index, but more "convenient."<sup>39</sup>

A fourth index which Hunt provides measures the amount of coordination by figuring the number of T-Units per punctuated sentence, a ratio for which he suggests the names "main clause coordination index," or "T-Unit coordination index."<sup>40</sup> Naturally this is not obtainable for oral language, which cannot be punctuated objectively into sentences. But for written language it is the bridge between length of T-Unit and sentence length. It is the only one of the four indexes that goes down with increased maturity.

Using these four indexes--clause length, subordinate clause index, T-Unit length, and main clause coordination index--Hunt investigated first the written language of students of average IQ in grades four, eight, and twelve, and in the second study made a comparison of sentence structures of average and superior students in grades four and twelve, and of skilled adults. The figures obtained "provide a record of development from grade to grade."<sup>41</sup>

However, they also provide an insight into the

nature of the development, as well as an "instrument for the quantitative study of language development."<sup>42</sup> Hunt points out that

T-Unit length is a significant measure of both chronological and mental maturity in writing at least during the public school years. It is a more valid measure than sentence length and should replace it in all serious studies covering that developmental range.

However, T-Unit length appears not to be the best single index at the extreme ends of the developmental continuum. In the early grades the subordinate clause index is a better index of mental maturity. In the later grades and for adults, clause length appears to be the most valid index. Even so, T-Unit length is useful because it allows an appraisal of the relative influence of the other two factors.

At this stage one gets the impression that as human beings develop, they attempt to learn, and do learn to organize larger and larger bodies of syntax--information--into their syntactic units. Furthermore, number of words per T-Unit is at least a rough measure of this body of information--of syntax. It is not supposed that older students add more words, but instead they combine their words and structures into larger units.

In the early grades this combinatory impulse is manifested mainly by an increase in the number of clauses subordinated to main clauses, and only slightly by an increase in clause length.

During the middle grades, increases occur in both respects.

By the later grades the law of diminishing returns has set in for the subordinate clause index, but not for clause length. Clause length for twelfth graders of superior IQ is distinctly greater than it is for their average classmates. And skilled adults are still farther ahead of average twelfth graders.<sup>43</sup>

Hunt also adds an analysis of the subordinate clauses used, discovering that it is the adjective clause that

increases with maturity,<sup>44</sup> and an analysis of the ways in which the length of the clauses is increased by nominals.<sup>45</sup> This last kind of analysis has been carried further in the previously mentioned study by O'Donnell, Griffin, and Norris, who have analyzed kinds of sentence-combining transformations used by kindergarten and elementary school children. This latter study also provides data for the fifth grade, for both oral and written language, thus giving additional data with which to compare the results of this investigation.

One other study is relevant both because it uses Hunt's methods and because it deals with usage. Richard L. Graves, in his "Language Differences Among Upper- and Lower-Class Negro and White Eighth Graders in East Central Alabama"<sup>46</sup> has compared the language of upper class whites and Negroes and lower class whites and Negroes, both vertically and horizontally. He finds that social differences are greater than racial differences in all the indexes of syntactic maturity and that in usage "there is a large variation between children from upper-class homes and those from the lower class."<sup>47</sup> Since he finds that lower class children have less syntactic maturity and also more occurrences of non-standard forms, it would seem that Graves has already proved what this study sets out to do. The problem

lies in the fact that Hunt's conclusions equate syntactic maturity with intellectual ability, but the lower-class children investigated by Graves had mean IQ scores running from 18 to 33 points lower than the upper-class groups, a fact that would seem to doom them to syntactic immaturity regardless of their social class. The present study includes some children with high IQ's from lower-class homes whose language can at least be investigated individually.

It is obvious that this study depends heavily upon the methods and the findings of Hunt. Furthermore, in his "Suggestions for Further Research" he writes that "Surely we ought to find out whether the students now called disadvantaged ever achieve full syntactic maturity. If different investigators employ replicable measures, the information accumulated through their efforts will eventually become norms."<sup>48</sup> The use of the word "disadvantaged" is ambiguous, perhaps purposefully so: it is not clear whether Hunt refers to the socially "disadvantaged," the intellectually "disadvantaged," or both. At any rate, this study, using "replicable measures," will attempt to find out if those whose usage can be considered "disadvantaged" are also those whose syntax is immature. If so, syntactic immaturity can be established as an element of a class dialect.

## Chapter II

### THE LANGUAGE SAMPLE

The language samples used to investigate the relationship between syntactic maturity and nonstandard usage were obtained from fifth grade children at West Elementary School, in Cullman, Alabama, in early November and late March, so that both halves of the school year, 1967-1968, were covered.

Certain aspects of the choice of informants perhaps need explanation. The town of Cullman, fifty miles due north of Birmingham, in north central Alabama, has two qualities that help to eliminate possible variables. One factor is that there are no Negroes in Cullman, nor have there been any since the town was settled in 1873, with the obvious consequences of a non-integrated school and a language free from the influences of Negro dialect, if there is any. The elimination of Negro dialect makes more precise the definition of the language under consideration, even though the informants number approximately 100.

This precision is further enhanced by the stability of the community. Cullman has had no great influx of industry or army installations. The town was founded in 1873, when five families came from Cincinnati to settle a colony "here in the woods."<sup>49</sup> Their origin was largely German, as their names show. Besides Johann Kuhlman, the founder, there were representatives of families named Schering, Betz, Strahl, Reed, Alberding "and a Mr. Renie Van Lobstein, of French descent and a bachelor."<sup>50</sup> But although the founders were German, in 1877 and 1878 "there came a number of Scotch-Irish, whose forbears originally came over to North and South Carolina from Scotland and Ulster, had drifted down the Atlantic seaboard, and finally settled in Marietta, Jonesboro, Newnan, and other little North Georgia towns."<sup>51</sup> In 1880 immigrants were recruited "in the characters of Bavarians, Saxons, and other nationalities direct from Germany."<sup>52</sup> According to this source, "very few Germans came after 1880."<sup>53</sup>

The double influence of the German and American backgrounds can be seen in the histories of the early newspapers and churches. A newspaper, Staats-Zeitung, was founded in 1873, printed in German and English in "contiguous columns." It was moved to Warrior, 25 miles south, in 1875, to Birmingham in 1877, and back to

Cullman in 1878. In 1880 it was merged with The Southern Immigrant, founded in 1875, and became the Alabama Tribune,<sup>54</sup> printed entirely in English.

The first churches were Catholic and Lutheran, both founded in 1874, no doubt by the Germans, but the Georgia immigrants show their influence in the founding of a Baptist church in 1878 and a Methodist church in 1881.<sup>55</sup>

Bright quotes the Cullman Tribune of June 26, 1928, as saying that the feeling against Germans after World War I caused the German language to be dropped from the high school curriculum, although it was reinstated as an elective in 1935. He concludes that "today [1937] German speech and habits acquired in typical German homes are literally smothered out by the schools."<sup>56</sup> It seems only logical to assume that the English learned by German immigrants was that spoken by the people coming from the north Georgia towns. Certainly the pronunciation and usage are similar today.

The population figures substantiate the homogeneity of the inhabitants after 1880. In 1885, 6000 lived within a radius of 15 miles. In 1930, the population was 2786; in 1940, 5074. In 1959 the land area was doubled by legislative act,<sup>57</sup> and the population doubled to 10,869. In 1966, it was estimated at 15,000.<sup>58</sup>

This estimated fifty percent growth in seven years

does indicate progress. It may be attributed to industries that have provided employment enabling the people to remain in Cullman. The development of industry has brought into the area people from other regions, but mainly on the managerial level. The bulk of the workers are native-born.

To make sure of the native backgrounds of the fifth grade students under consideration, questionnaires were sent to their parents, asking for their birthplaces, the places in which they received most of their education, the places in which they have lived, and the places they consider the home towns of their parents--the children's grandparents. This information accounts for six forbears for each child. Of the 69 that responded, 407 forbears were accounted for.<sup>59</sup> Of these, 276 were born in Cullman County, 60 were born in one of the contiguous counties, and 44 elsewhere in Alabama. A breakdown of the figures is shown in Table 1. For contrast, three children show only New England and Middle West backgrounds.

Cullman, then, provides a regionally homogeneous group, a fact that helps to solve certain problems in collecting enough language for an analysis of syntax. An investigator who uses one informant can make certain of his local origins; in this case it seems possible to use a large group which is nevertheless representative.

The choice of children rather than adults as informants was made for similar reasons. To examine syntax, blocks of discourse are needed, and the questionnaires used to elicit dialectal forms and pronunciations are insufficient. Yet such questionnaires have the advantage of ensuring the elicitation of specific elements which the investigator needs for comparison. When longer blocks of discourse are used, the investigator loses a certain amount of control and has to do the best he can with what he gets. To make up for this, it seemed necessary to obtain as wide a variety of language as possible from many informants, thereby avoiding idiolects and syntactic habits, and hopefully discovering significant features of the language by noticing their repeated occurrences. To secure a large group of adults who would provide matched written and oral samples would be difficult. But school children can be a captive group. And most important, for children there are figures for purposes of comparison, whereas those for adults are given only for Hunt's "superior adults."

Although the age level of the informants must be taken into account, it is not considered a barrier. According to Paula Menyuk, "all the basic structures used by adults to generate their sentences can be found in the grammar of nursery school children."<sup>60</sup> The study

Table 1

The Geographical Background  
of the  
Children Providing the Language Samples

<u>Birthplace of parents and grandparents</u>		<u>Number of parents and grandparents</u>
Cullman County		
6 forebears	(26)*	156
5	( 9)	45
4	( 6)	24
3	(13)	39
2	( 5)	10
1	( 2)	<u>2</u>
Cullman County Total		276
Counties Contiguous to Cullman County		60
Elsewhere in Alabama		24
Other Southern States		28
Georgia	10	
Tennessee	7	
Kentucky	6	
Louisiana	2	
South Carolina	1	
Texas	1	
Virginia	1	
Non-Southern States		19
Illinois	3	
Massachusetts	3	
Minnesota	3	
Indiana	2	
Maine	2	
Ohio	2	
Kansas	1	
New York	1	
Pennsylvania	1	
Vermont	1	
Total		407

\*Figures in parentheses represent the number of children reporting in each classification.

made by O'Donnell, Griffin, and Norris corroborates Menyuk's findings and extends them to older children.<sup>61</sup> And Hunt shows that as early as the fourth grade superior students are measurably ahead of the average in syntactic maturity.<sup>62</sup>

The choice of the fifth grade was made partly because its schedule, in a team-teaching situation, was flexible enough to permit the entire grade to become the captive group, and its four teachers were interested enough to participate in the project themselves by interviewing the children for the first oral sample.<sup>63</sup> In addition, the fifth grade fulfilled the requirement that an early grade be used, so that the school would not have had time to influence too much the dialects learned at home. Hunt considers the fourth grade "a good place to begin" because "by the fourth grade most average children are ready to write."<sup>64</sup> By the fifth grade, more fluency should produce even more words.

This particular school is a Title I school, which means that it serves "educationally deprived" students. One of two elementary schools in Cullman, it is located close to a government housing project, but it serves also a new residential section. It is a city rather than a county school. However, it is difficult to call Cullman children "urban," considering the term's usual

connotations. By using the entire fifth grade, the problem of securing an accurate sample was eliminated. The enrollment during the year ranged from 104 to 107. Of these, 95 were present for and are represented in all four samplings of language, and in the interest of completeness the study was limited to these 95. The median age of the children in May was 11 years, 2 months, and the average verbal IQ at the same time was 101.94.

If the language was to be characterized by the kind of people who used it, it was necessary to examine the social structure of this group. To do this, "The Revised Occupational Rating Scale from Warner, Meeker, and Bell's Index of Status Characteristics" was used, as it is given in Delbert C. Miller's Handbook of Research Design and Social Measurement,<sup>65</sup> which states that "The Index of Status Characteristics presents a comparatively objective means of determining social class position." It further comments that "The Occupation Scale is the best single predictor of social class position within a seven point range. The high correlation it exhibits with the evaluative participative method of social class position . . . commends occupation as a single dimension. Researchers will achieve a high degree of predictive efficiency by the use of the one scale."<sup>66</sup>

Using this scale, it was possible to classify 92

of the 95 children into seven social classes. Class I includes professional men, such as lawyers, doctors, dentists, and others with "postgraduate training," as well as "proprietors and managers" of large businesses. Seven of the Cullman group fall into this class, mainly from the professional group. Class II includes professionals with less training, managers of smaller businesses or department managers of large businesses. Eight of the Cullman group belong to this class. Class III, including minor professionals, minor officials of businesses, secretaries, and higher clerical workers, accounts for 10 in this group. Class IV, comprised of minor clerical workers, skilled manual and service workers, provides 13 of the group. Class V, consisting of medium skilled workers and service workers such as barbers, practical nurses, dime store clerks, and beauty operators, is the largest of the Cullman categories, accounting for 35 of the group. Class VI, including semi-skilled workers, assistants to carpenters, watchmen, taxidrivers, waitresses, and gas station attendants, describes 15 of the Cullman group. Only two fall into Class VII, heavy laborers, janitors, and migrant farm laborers, and because this class is so small it has been included in this study with Class VI.<sup>67</sup>

Obviously the greater portion of the group being

studied belongs to the lower classes. Classes I through IV include only 38, whereas Class V alone includes 35. If standard usage were defined as that most commonly used, the usage of Class V would prevail. But, as indicated in Chapter I, standard usage is established by the "responsible" people of the community. In this study, Classes I through IV have been accepted as "responsible" because the usage ratio, the number of "deviations" per one hundred words, increases sharply in both oral and written language between Classes IV and V. Moreover, this division is paralleled by a sharp decrease in the amount of education of the parents, as Table 2 shows.

The procurement of the first language sample was designed to give the child the greatest amount of freedom. The entire group, under the direction of their teachers, first wrote an essay on their choice of one of four topics suggested by the teachers: "The Dog That Could Sing," "Walls," "Going Shopping," and "The Street Where I Live." With these topics the material could be narrative, expository, or descriptive. There was no time limit. The average length was 146.4 words. The papers were given to the investigator unedited.

During the following week, the four teachers used tape recorders to interview each child for five minutes. Although these were designed as unstructured interviews,

Table 2

## Usage Ratio and Educational Level of Parents

by

## Social Class

Class	Number	Usage Oral	Usage Written	Years of Mother	Years of School Father
I	7	.207	.435	15	16+
II	8	.218	.540	14.33	15.43
III	10	.229	.924	12.14	12.22
IV	13	.396	.769	11.33	12.09
V	35	.659	1.257	9.82	9.86
VI	19	.769	1.67	8.60	9.41

the ingenuity of the teachers in avoiding simply "Yes" and "No" answers led them to ask questions concerning five topics: what the child did during the summer; a recent class field trip to Florence, Alabama, to see a planetarium; a school Halloween carnival; "trick or treat" activities on Halloween night; or "tell me about your family." This sample produced the largest number of words, an average of 317,431. These tapes were given to the investigator, who transcribed them without punctuation.

A trial analysis of this first sample proved valuable for pointing up the problems involved and suggesting changes for the next sampling that would increase the scope of the language elicited. The first step, the elimination of certain kinds of sentences, revealed the necessity of agreeing with other investigators about details, so that the results would be comparable. In general, all investigators have agreed to strike out what earlier investigators called "mazes," which Hunt calls "garbles"--"any group of words that could not be understood by the investigators."<sup>68</sup> Hunt is more specific than others in spelling out other constructions that should be stricken. Having defined a clause as "a structure containing a subject (or coordinated subjects) and a finite verb (or coordinated finite verbs),"<sup>69</sup>

he points out that imperatives, most questions, answers to questions, and sentence fragments do not qualify "as clauses under a literal interpretation of the definition given in this study." Consequently "they are excluded more to make the syntactic analyst comfortable than because they affect his results appreciably."<sup>70</sup> Comfortable or not, the analyst avoids controversial matters of interpretation by sticking to the literal definition, and the objectivity of the investigation is increased. Hunt also removes direct discourse and direct quotations, the first because it unnaturally shortens clauses and increases the number of noun clauses, and the latter because it does not reflect the "syntactic competence of the writers."<sup>71</sup>

The experience of the trial analysis of the first sample strongly supported Hunt's reasoning. Fifth graders, like the fourth graders he reports on, tend to write narrative which is full of direct discourse, greatly increasing the number of noun clauses and thus shortening average clause length. The results distorted individual scores. One child with a high IQ wrote a clever description of a confused family shopping trip largely in direct discourse, with the result that his scores on syntactic maturity were far below average. With the direct discourse removed, his scores fell more into line.

The removal of sentence fragments brought about

problems in the analysis of oral language. Hunt was dealing with written language in which the fragment is less common. But in the interest of objectivity and to obtain comparable results, this investigation excluded sentence fragments from both oral and written samples. However certain observations about fragments influenced the techniques used in the collection of the second language sample. It was noticed in the trial investigation that sentence fragments frequently fell in the first part of a child's discourse, and that the elimination of certain kinds of questions by the interviewer could eliminate some fragments. For instance, the question "why?" almost invariably elicited a natural fragment beginning with "because." The substitution of "explain that to me," or "tell me about that," would suggest that a child start at the beginning of his reasoning, hopefully with a declarative sentence.

One other type of material very frequent in oral language had to be added to Hunt's list of items to be excluded. This is what may be called "filler," words or phrases used mainly to avoid silence. All investigators of oral language speak of the false starts, repetitions, and sounds usually represented by "uh." In addition, this investigation removed the ubiquitous "well" and, more important, the very frequent "you know"

that would have to count as a clause, although it is really a timetaker that is almost like a gesture. Listening to the taped language one realizes that "and" is frequently a "filler" as well as a coordinator, particularly when combined with "uh," but since it sometimes can be considered syntactically necessary, it was decided again to avoid subjective decision and include the word. Moreover, "and" is very prevalent in fifth-graders' written language too, so that a high incidence of coordination can be considered characteristic of this language and should not be disguised.

With deletions taken care of, the next step of the trial analysis, the segmentation of the material into T-Units, was simplified. Since syntactic maturity is concerned more with the amount of subordination than the kind, it was decided to classify subordinate clauses into three kinds, noun, adjective, and adverb, and to omit further subclassifications. Hunt's analysis of the adverb clause, particularly the criterion of movability,<sup>72</sup> was adhered to. Because relative frequency of the three kinds of clauses may have some connection with growth toward maturity, a count of the three kinds of clauses was made. Hunt points out that the frequency of adverbial clauses in the writings of younger children may result from their tendency to write narrative material.<sup>73</sup> This

suggested that the second collection of language samples might be organized so as to encourage other kinds of discourse.

Thus the trial analysis proved valuable in clarifying the methods of analysis and suggesting the manner of collecting the next sample. Even though this investigation was conducted by one person, so that there might seem to be less opportunity for variations of interpretation, it was considered necessary to set up specific rules. Over a period of time, even one investigator can make different decisions. More important is the fact that this analysis had to use comparable methods to secure comparable results.

The experience of this first collection of material led to certain decisions about the second that would produce language intended to complement the first sample and not merely to increase it. To eliminate the variable of subject matter, a method used in several previous studies was adopted: the use of a film as the stimulus for both oral and written language. The O'Donnell study had eliminated the influence of the film's language by cutting off the sound. The Cullman study used a film<sup>74</sup> produced with music but without dialogue. Finally, the interviewers' procedure was planned not only to provide all children with the same

questions, but also to use the experience of the first interview.

As a result, the spring language collection was obtained by somewhat more structured methods. The children were shown the selected film in groups of four. The film begins with the statement on the screen that there would be no words but that the viewers would see a story and be asked to tell it afterward. This was read aloud as it appeared on the screen to make sure that each child received the instructions. Immediately after the eight minute film, each child went to one of four interviewers for a tape-recorded session. Following this, each child was given typed instructions, which were also read to him, about writing his account of the film. This he wrote immediately after his taped interview.

Although this summary sounds as though narrative language would again be emphasized, the actual story of the film was minimized both on the film and in the interviews. The film presents a picture of a hunter walking through a forest in the fall and shooting a bird; then in the spring he sees a deer family, starts to shoot, but puts his gun away. The actual telling of the story consumes very little time. The seasons are indicated through foliage, wildlife, and weather, and aspects of all three are used repeatedly as symbols. Therefore there

is much opportunity for explanation, interpretation, and difference of opinion. In addition, the interviewers were aware of the problem and were given questions to ask to keep the child talking and to steer him away from merely repeating the story. They were asked not to vary from the wording of their typed instructions.

A comparison of some of the results of the two language samples indicates nothing very conclusively, except to suggest, perhaps, certain techniques for eliciting words from children, and to establish the fact that, no matter how the words are elicited, and regardless of the subject matter, the frequency of the kinds of clauses remains the same for fifth-grade children.

The first oral sample was twenty-five per cent longer than the second. This may be attributed to the fact that the children were led to talk about themselves by teachers they knew. The first writing sample, however, was about seventeen per cent shorter than the second. The increased length of the second written sample may be explained by the fact that the subject matter had already been developed orally. Or, perhaps, fluency had been increased by repeated writing practice since the fall sampling.

The amount of subordination was estimated by figuring the ratio of the number of clauses to the number

of words in each sample. There is no appreciable difference between the two oral samples. The figures are .0238 and .0290. The first writing sample was slightly more complex: .0400 compared to .0307. In all four samples adverb clauses appeared most often, followed by noun clauses, with adjective clauses a poor third. This proportion agrees with all the developmental studies that have been made of children's language. Hunt's figures show that the adjective clause is "a highly significant index of both chronological and mental maturity."<sup>75</sup> If this is the case, the second oral and written samples are less mature than the first pair, as the figures in Table 3 show. However, Hunt also states that the number of adverb clauses appears to be a significant index of mental maturity in the fourth grade.<sup>76</sup> If this is true, the second written sample shows the greatest maturity.

It would seem, then, that if an investigator desires fluency, he should let children talk about themselves, led on by interviewers they know, but write about subjects they have previously discussed. And the language freely produced will have more maturity, if adjective clauses are an index, although nothing changes the relative frequency of the three kinds of clauses to any appreciable extent.

Table 3

## Percentages of Kinds of Clauses in Cullman Samples

	First Oral	First Written	Second Oral	Second Written
Noun	28	33	42	25
Adjective	22	25	9	12
Adverb	50	42	49	63

## Cullman's Totals compared to Hunt's

	Cullman Oral and Written	Cullman Written	Hunt's Written Average	Hunt's Written Superior 4th-graders*
Noun	31	28	37	32
Adjective	17 1/2	19 1/2	20	24
Adverb	51 1/2	52 1/2	43	44

\*Percentages from Sentence Structures, p. 62.

Because children, as well as adults, are obliged to use language in both free and structured situations, and because of the variety of complexity elicited by the two situations, it is considered that the two sets of language samples do to a certain extent complement each other, and the total of 83,599 words which remained after the exclusion of the material previously described were considered the corpus to be analyzed for usage and syntactic complexity.

## Chapter III

### USAGE

When the language samples had been collected and culled of the material syntactically irrelevant, an analysis was made of the usage, and judgment was suspended about what was standard language in Cullman until it was discovered who used what forms.

The procedure was to cross-file the results of the analysis, using a work sheet for each child and a card for each kind of suspected deviation, thereby making available a description of the usage of each individual as well as a profile of the usage of the group. Then, since class levels had been determined, it was possible to describe the standard and nonstandard usage by noting the forms used mainly by the children of Classes V and VI and to figure for each child his usage ratio, the number of nonstandard forms per hundred words.

In presenting the results of this analysis, an attempt was made to classify morphology and syntax separately, but problems arose that made it impossible

to maintain neat boundaries between the two. Consequen-tly, the notations have been organized by parts of speech. The results show that the biggest problem concerns verb forms, and among verbs, be provides the greatest opportunity for deviation from standard English. It also illustrates that morphology and syntax refuse to be separated.

#### The Verb

Fifty-four of the 95 individuals in this study did not conform to standard practice in the agreement in number of subject and be. On the surface, this appears to be a problem of syntax, but an analysis of the context shows that for a large group it is a matter of morphology. There are only eleven failures in agreement with verbs other than be, and then usually with compound subjects with a final singular form of noun or pronoun probably influencing the verb form. This indicates that agreement is not a real problem of syntax for this group, which understands both the concept of plurality and the usual methods of indicating it for both nouns and verbs. For the past of the verb be, however, was is the accepted form in all persons and numbers. This variation is not found in the present tense; there is no occurrence of is with other than third person singular, except after there.

However, it must not be concluded that was is the standard form in all circumstances, and that were is never used. Of this group of 54, seven always use the form were with plural subjects, except after there as an expletive, when the singular seems to be required, in the same way that the singular form is used after expletive it. Another group of eleven also uses the were-plural, but uses was after there when the verb is followed by a compound noun phrase, the first element of which is singular. Obviously, this group considers were the proper form, but fails to recognize the plural nature of compounds.

This confusion, of course, occurs in the best of spoken language when the speaker fails to anticipate the construction of his sentence. Here it appears in both spoken and written language. It may also be true that the use of was after there is characteristic of the language of children who have not yet learned the intricacies of adult standard English and still speak what comes naturally and analogically. There sounds singular and appears, like it, in the subject position; consequently a singular verb form is used. But regardless of the complications introduced by there, a group of 36 exists for whom the only form of be in the past is was.

It would be neater and simpler if the problem could

be dismissed with this classification. But it must be recognized that some individuals use was most often, but slip an occasional were into their language. A diligent search has been made to discover a system behind this double usage, but no explanation can be found to cover it, other than the supposition that for some children both forms are heard and understood, although one form has precedence. Perhaps it is the result of reading; perhaps schooling is beginning to take effect. Certainly in part this double usage may be attributed to the fact that the children already have two languages in the fifth grade, an oral and a written. A count shows that was appeared as a plural in the two oral samples 35 and 36 times, respectively. In the written samples the corresponding frequencies were 13 and 26. Since only 54 children used this form, obviously some used it in more than one sample. But constructions like the following are not uncommon:

. . . we was when we weren't. (Oral)

There is just about three sets of woods and there are pretty houses. (Written)

When these deviations were classified according to the social class of the children using them, it was found that 50 of the children using the was-plural belonged to Classes V and VI, and the four others used

was only with there. Consequently, all varieties of lack of agreement of subject and be have been considered non-standard constructions and form one of the items included in figuring individual usage ratios.

The somewhat indiscriminate use of was and were posed a problem in figuring the usage ratios. Each non-standard form was counted against a child only once, no matter how many times he used it. This was necessary in order not to penalize a child for using a particular form frequently, in contrast to the child who by chance did not use it at all. The problem was solved by arbitrarily disregarding the were-plural when both forms appeared in one child's language.

Another problem with be that is frequently discussed by commentators on usage is its omission before predicate nouns and adjectives, and before participles. This problem occurs only three times in oral language, and four times in written. In all but one case, it is a one-time occurrence; otherwise the child uses be consistently. Two of the oral occurrences can be explained away. For instance, one contains what seems to be a colloquial appositive:

The only trouble about me I always get tackled.

And in the clause,

. . . if they just not doing anything to you,

the matter is complicated by the fact that the child consistently pronounces there as they, so that to him the sound /ðeɪ/ is equivalent to there or they're, and the verb is not omitted. The third oral example is an outright omission:

His name Tippy.

The problem with written examples is that these children omit words frequently, so that without corresponding evidence in oral language the omission of be does not seem to be a pattern. Considering the frequency of its occurrence, it is not surprising that be should be omitted four times. In the first of the examples an article is also omitted, an illustration of a habit of writing, rather than of syntax, as is the spelling of the second sentence:

When dog happy it sings

Ther a corner in the walls

It really not a street it a mad block

That why I like to go shopping.

There is one example of the omission of a relative and be, again a construction that sounds like a colloquial

appositive:

I got about ten hundred of them my favorite.

All omissions of be have been considered nonstandard, although because of the infrequency of the occurrence of this omission the results are affected very little.

A description of the nonstandard forms for verbs other than be can best be accomplished by means of a listing. Table 4 shows the nonstandard forms and the number of children using them in each of the four samplings. To avoid subjective interpretation, all occurrences have been noted, even though some which occur only once seem like childish analogical forms. It is evident that nonstandard forms of see, come, and do appear most frequently, although this may in part be caused by their frequency of use.

The fact that 68 children used one or more of these verb forms indicates that this language is almost standard for this group, but the children above Class V avoided these forms with the exception of the verb forget. It seems customary in Cullman to pronounce the present /fɔ:gɛt/ like the past /fɔ:gət/. Since there is no evidence of this form in written language, it should probably be considered a characteristic pronunciation rather than a morphological form.

Table 4

Frequency of Nonstandard Verb Forms  
in Four Language Samples\*

Verb Form	Oral-1	Written-1	Oral-2	Written-2	Total
ain't	2				2
begin (past)			1	2	3
blowed (past)	1				1
come (past)	11	4	13	0	28
came (part)			1		1
creeped			2	4	6
don't (3rd p.)	6	2	2	1	11
do (3rd p.)	1				1
done (past)	1	1		1	3
drinked (past)	1				1
feeled (past)				1	1
forgot (pres)	7			1	8
go-went (part)	3	1		1	5
give (past)	3	1			4
heared (past)				2	2
hung-ed (past)	1				1
keep (past)	1				1
knowed (past)	1				1
learned (taught)	1				1
rung (past)	2				2
run (past)			3	1	4
runned (part)		1			1
ran (part)	2	3			5
saided (past)				1	1
seen (past)	11	7	11	10	39
saw (part)	2		1	3	6
sung (past)	1	1			2
singed (past)		1			1
sing (past)		2			2
stold (past)		2			2
stole (part)	1				1
snuck (past)			1	1	2
taked (past)	1				1
taken (past)	1				1
took (part)	1	1			2
tore (part)			1		1
throwed (past)	1		3		4
thow (past)		1		2	3
throw (past)		1			1
tieded (part)				1	1
wore (part)	1				1
Total	64	29	40	31	164

\*Each number represents the number of children who have used the form, not the number of times it was used.

This description of nonstandard verb forms shows little that is surprising. The same results have been reported by many investigators, including Walter Loban, who quotes Charters' findings of fifty years ago showing the same nonstandard forms for the same verbs.<sup>77</sup> It does indicate, however, that this part of the dialect is non-regional nonstandard, what Mecken called "Vulgar" English.

There is some evidence that the school has been at work to eradicate these long-standing nonstandard forms, although not always successfully. One child twice edited the standard form out of his sentences:

He saw--he seen these birds.

He saw--he seen them.

Another, who used no other nonstandard verbs and who does not belong to a lower class, wrote

He must have saw him.

One child changed a nonstandard form to a standard one:

And I seen these animals--and I saw these animals.

Several children used standard and nonstandard forms interchangeably, without any discernible pattern, sometimes in consecutive sentences:

He seen there was nothing in it. When he turned around he saw some deer.

He saw some turkeys and he seen a deer.

Again, in figuring the usage ratio, the standard form has been disregarded if the nonstandard form appears.

The school's success is indicated in the fact that ain't was used only twice in all four samples. On the other hand, sit was used only twice in all four samples. The standard principal parts in Cullman are set, set, and setting, used transitively and intransitively. The verb lay is used in the same way. In oral English, there was no occurrence of lie, except perhaps in the past; but since lay was followed by down, it was impossible to determine the exact form. In written English lay as past was used once and then in a rather "literary" sounding sentence:

The bird lay dead on the ground never to move again.

This was written by a child who also used had went, I seen, and I done. Because the use of these two verbs cuts across class lines, they have not been considered indicators of nonstandard use in this language.

Also considered regional and not a problem of non-standard usage were deviations in the use of the present participle, which occurred preceded by a- four times in oral samples and twice in written. Five of the children

were from lower class backgrounds, and one was not. The two examples that follow illustrate class differences in the form of the main verb, rather than in the participle:

My brother keep a-sneakin

The hunter kept a-goin

Both are from oral samples. The suffix -ing is omitted only in written language, most often with sing, and so infrequently that it is considered a problem of spelling rather than of morphology.

The omission of the dental suffix is another problem of verbs frequently associated with nonstandard language. No count has been made of such omissions in oral language in this study because the suffix is frequently inaudible in standard as well as nonstandard language. But the prevalence of this omission in written language indicates its occurrence in oral language too. And the figures in Table 2 showing more nonstandard forms in writing than in speech probably reflect the fact that no count was made of this problem in oral language, although this discrepancy may also result from the fact that the language was edited for "garbles."

Thirty children omitted the dental suffix in writing, although again these same children sometimes used the conventional inflections for the past and the past

participle. The inconsistency did not necessarily depend upon the kind of consonant cluster involved. The same child would write the past of ask as ask him, but also write walked ten miles and stopped to rest. However, Table 5, giving the list of verbs from which the suffix was omitted, shows that the problem most frequently concerns words ending in stops. In this list the following word is also included to show that in this sample, at least, the initial sounds of the following words are immaterial. They are divided about equally between vowels and consonants. The omission of the dental suffix is class-connected in this group, and this became one of the indicators of nonstandard usage.

The omission of the inflectional ending of the third person singular is not a problem in this study. This may be because very little of the language is in the present tense. Only three examples were found. These are considered nonstandard usage.

Only slightly more prevalent is the problem of lack of agreement in number between subjects and verbs other than be. Only nine children evidenced this problem, two of them twice. Of the eleven illustrations, four are with compound subjects, and four are with the verb have. The construction with compound subjects is understandable; the verb is influenced by the singular

Table 5

List of Verbs Used Without Dental Suffix  
in  
Past Tense or Past Participle Form

/-d/	/-t/
aim at	like the
close and	like to
kill it	cock it
rain and	jump in
show a	
spill all	knock over
	drop on
change his / (h)iz/	
	look and
surprise to	stop at
pull down	
dream that	pick a
	walk away
pile high	
awaken from	
name Mr.	
open my	

form of the second element of the compound. But with the verb have the problem, as with the verb be, may involve not agreement so much as a different set of forms used by a small minority. The four examples do not provide a complete paradigm:

the police has caught  
it have animals  
dresses that has ruffles  
we has some

The other verbs so used are hold, sense, and go. This is considered another example of nonstandard usage.

The omission of have as an auxiliary, a construction frequently noted in nonstandard speech, is not a problem of written language in Cullman, which offered only one illustration, but it is common in speech. However, since this study accepts the colloquial level for written English, this construction is accepted also. McDavid notes that "in standard oral English many educated speakers may omit the /-v/ reflex of have."<sup>78</sup>

Unstressed have is frequently represented orally by /ə/ or /əv/, sounds which are carried over into written language and spelled a or of, as in he coulda or he might of. This obviously shows a lack of understanding of the verb phrase, but since spelling has been disregarded in

this study, this form has too. Moreover, it seems to have little relation to class dialect.

Done as an auxiliary appears only once, in a sentence in which it is overshadowed by other problems:

There's animals that he can't shoot that they done stare at him. (Oral)

What is impressive about auxiliaries in this language is not their nonstandard forms or omission but the frequency of occurrence of catenative verbs that function as auxiliaries, although they do not behave grammatically as auxiliaries do. Martin Joos calls them "quasi-auxiliaries,"<sup>79</sup> and points out that they can themselves be used with auxiliaries, and require a do-form in the negative.<sup>80</sup> W. F. Twaddell calls these verbs "catenatives"<sup>81</sup> and points out some of the same restrictions.

No count has been made of the percentage of verbs that are catenative, so that the statement that their occurrence is frequent is a subjective one. It can be substantiated in part by listing those most frequently used. All are standard in southern colloquial English and their existence noted by many investigators. Among the most common is fixing, as in "he was fixing to go hunting" and "he's fixing to go to training school," a construction that signifies future intention. It is frequently followed by but, so that the verb then gives

the impression of planning that was frustrated.

Another catenative often used is get. Its habitual use is illustrated by the following example of oral language:

The only thing about it is that we got to be in the new room and never get to change classes and we get to get up and we stretch our knees when we do that and get to see some of our classmates out in the hall and talk to them.

More frequently this construction is used in the negative. A tally of its use in the first oral sample showed a seven to one proportion of negative to positive use. Again, as in fixing to the result is a modification of the following infinitive that produces overtones of frustration. "We didn't get to go," a clause used many times, carries the implication not only of not being able to go, but of being stopped by some unnamed, unopposable authority. This may be a reality of children's life and thus a part of their language. However, experience shows that it is also a part of adult language, used at any time one wants to disclaim responsibility, implying circumstances beyond one's control without having to name the circumstances, as in "I didn't get to study my lesson," or as in a sentence spoken by a southerner with a Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary: "I didn't get to go to your concert last night, but I hear it was real

good."

A third catenative typically southern is liked, frequently written without the dental suffix. In some phrases it is repeated so often it seems to be a frozen expression, as in "it liked to kill me" and "she like to scare me half to death." However it is used in other expressions to limit the following infinitive in an adverbial sense of almost. It can be used with rather complicated structures, as in "I like to have got ran over a lot of times."

These three catenative verbs have certain limitations, perhaps fixed by their meanings. Fixing is confined to the progressive aspect, get is never used in the progressive, and liked appears only in the simple past. With other, less regional catenatives, tense and aspect seem less limited. All of the verbs usually named in this class appear, but the one most commonly used is start. When this verb is used with a following but, as it frequently is, it approximates the same modification as fixing, implying not an action but an intention, as in "he started to shoot but he didn't."

An attempt to use stop as a catenative, in contrast to start, produces an unintended meaning, as is illustrated by the following:

And then he started to shoot it and then  
he stopped to shoot it.

The implied meaning in the context is "he did not shoot it." This same construction is noted by Twaddell:

A construction with verb + 'to' + verb can be identified as a catenative by a negative criterion: Consider the two sentences: 'He started to eat. He stopped to eat.' Parallel to the second sentence there is a grammatical English sentence, with the same truth value, containing 'in order to': 'He stopped in order to eat.' But there is no such same-truth-value parallel for the first sentence: \*'He started in order to eat.' Thus, if verb + 'to' + verb can be replaced by verb + 'in order to' + verb with the same truth value, the construction is not catenative.<sup>82</sup>

This is a fine point of syntax not noticed in the illustration from Cullman. But another difference is carefully observed: the difference between start followed by an infinitive and start followed by a gerund. Thus many children began the description of the film with "The hunter started walking. . ." meaning that the action was begun. But they did not use the gerund with shoot. The hunter did not start shooting; he started to shoot. The action was intended, but not begun. These children recognize the difference in meaning implied by the two constructions.

Other variations of the catenative are occasionally noted. For instance, the verb go appears as a catenative occasionally, but usually the construction is changed to one with a compound verb with go. For example the

catenative is used in the sentence,

The hunter went to go out in the country,

but the construction is usually

He went and got a flower,

in which went adds little to the meaning.

It is not unusual for the infinitive to be preceded by an intrusive for, not necessarily indicating purpose, especially after the verb want:

He picked up his rifle for to shoot, but he didn't.

He wanted for the baby to live.

All of these uses are considered regional variations, not nonstandard, since they are typical of this group regardless of social class.

Also regional is the use of certain verbs in regional constructions or with specialized meanings, listed here not because they add information to the regional dialect, but because they help to place this language in the South Midland area. For instance, come is used with an expletive it, rather than there, in expressions describing weather:

It came a storm.

It come a rain storm.

Then it just might have come a summer rainstorm.

Favor is used instead of resemble or more colloquial  
looks like or takes after:

I favor my daddy and she favors my mother.

In this region one takes, not catches cold.

Mother thought we'd take a cold.

Take is also used with down, as in

We taked down that dirt road.

Take in some instances is supplanted by carry:

Then Mother carried us riding.

Look for is used with two different meanings, look for-  
ward to and take care of:

I'm looking for my twenty-sixth. The  
twenty-sixth is my birthday.

He knowed that the baby deer wouldn't  
have nobody to look for him to help him out.

Wants in is standard, at least in discussing dogs:

When he wants back in he'll come up. . .

An interesting weakening of the phrase "to death" is  
illustrated:

The baby would starve to death and die.

In this survey of verb usage in Cullman, certain elements have been omitted. No mention has been made, for instance, of the many varieties of poorly-formed verb phrases, such as

I liked the hunter and I didn't him to.

These have been ignored in some cases because they are considered part of the age dialect and in others because they were induced by the language of the interviewers.

Although the interviewers in the second sampling were asked not to vary the prescribed wording, it was recognized that toward the end of the procedure when the instruction sheets had been memorized, certain variations were creeping in, particularly in the phrasing of one question that had been awkwardly worded to begin with, in an effort to avoid a sentence fragment in the answer. Thus, "Do you like this film without words, or do you think it would be better with words?" became "Do you like this film like it is, or do you want words with it?" This phraseology brought a number of responses that included the clause "like it is," as a kind of echo-response. When it was realized that the question had already been varied, the investigator began to change her own phraseology to find out to what extent echoes

could be elicited. When the last part of the question was phrased "Would you have liked the film better if it had had words," it produced three different kinds of echoes:

- . . . if it hadda had sound,
- . . . if it has words,
- . . . if it had have had words.

Aside from justifying the use of a film without dialogue, this showed that the past perfect was beyond the capabilities of most fifth-grade children.

It must not be concluded that such forms are considered standard in Cullman, but that they are not the kind of "syntactic maturity" that this study is interested in. The purpose of this survey of verb usage was not to discover how many mistakes were made, but to differentiate between standard and nonstandard usage in this particular group, so that it could be discovered if those who use nonstandard language also use sentence structure that is immature. For this purpose the verb constructions that have been established as important shibboleths are the use of was for were, lack of agreement in number between subject and verb, the use of nonstandard principal parts, and the omission of the dental suffix.

### The Noun

The use of the noun shows few variations, all of which are considered part of either regional or childish dialect rather than nonstandard language. It has already been stated that the concept of plurality and its noun marker are well understood. This is not to imply that there are no omissions of -s plurals, but rather that no child omits the plural consistently. It is almost always a one-time occurrence. Since this omission was not heard in oral language, it was considered a result of careless spelling in written language. There are some exceptions that are regional. The plural of test was spoken once with an extra syllable. One word, animal, recurred in the singular form. Twenty-three nouns occurred once each without -s plurals; this word occurred six times. This brings up the possibility that it is considered a plural form in the same way that words for specific animals are frequently used with no plural suffix. Deer, a word that was inescapable in the second sampling, was used indiscriminately with and without an -s, even by the same person. Deers was more prevalent in oral language, deer in written. Quail appeared twice with an s; partridge appeared only twice without one. Turnip was used once in the plural, and there was one occurrence each of three singular units of measure: nine

mile, three year old, three foot. In general, however, the plural forms are indicated by -s.

In the second sampling, it was interesting to note the different nouns used to describe the bodies of water that appeared in the film. Pond is more common than lake for still water. For running water, creek is preferred over river by a count of nine to five.

The genitive form of the noun is also formed in the standard way. Only two examples of missing s-genitives occurred, and in one of these the standard form was used once, the nonstandard twice. The difficulty that careless writing produces is illustrated by this case: "Billy's father" appears once; then the phrase becomes "Billy father," and finally "Billy further."

Although the s-genitive is used consistently, there is some confusion about possessive forms, but of the sort that can be attributed to childish language. Thus one finds

This man's parts of his body. . .

This little baby's deer's mother. . .

None of these characteristics of nouns were considered nonstandard. The deviations were infrequent and not class-connected.

### The Personal Pronoun and the Demonstrative

A discussion of pronouns can be limited to problems of case in compound subjects and nonstandard forms of reflexives.

A compound subject with an objective form of a pronoun as the first element was used twelve times in the first oral sample; ten of the illustrations began "me and. . ." Two of them were in the third person: "her and her husband. . ." The construction was corrected once: "There's Bill and me - I."

In the first written sample, there are six examples of the "me and. . ." construction, one of which also uses "I and my mother would go. . ." The second pair of language samples contains no illustrations of this use, no doubt because the subject matter did not permit it.

It is tempting to call this childish language, which experience indicates it is, but the two efforts to use the nominative pronoun in nominative position, both made by middle class children, suggest that some force has been at work to eradicate the construction as nonstandard, and it has been so considered. The frequency is not high enough to make a great amount of difference.

The form hisself appears four times, all in the speech of lower-class children. One illustration is typical of the inconsistency of all of this language:

he dried his self of oul by himself.

The analogical form of the reflexive pronoun has been considered nonstandard usage.

One repeated construction that characterizes this oral language is the redundant subject, a noun followed by a pronoun, as in

The hunter he started. . .

It was used by 43 children in the oral samples, but only by four in the written. At times the redundant pronoun seems to be one of the "fillers" of oral language, but it is such a characteristic syntactic habit, and one that so sharply differentiates the spoken and written languages that it was not deleted as grammatically irrelevant, as was done in the O'Donnell study. Because it is used by all classes of children, it was not considered nonstandard.

Another characteristic pronoun use frowned upon by grammarians is the ethical dative. Like the redundant pronoun, it is more typical of oral language; it was used in oral samples by 17 children, but in written language by only two. Again, because it was used by all classes, it was not considered nonstandard.

The demonstrative is discussed with the pronoun because it too is subject to problems of case and because it appears in a habitual construction. Eight children

use them instead of those, as in

. . . he would shoot them deer.

The characteristic inconsistency appears in one illustration which contains both "all them stars" and "all those things." Them is also used with the word all, either modifying a deleted noun or, perhaps, as the object of a deleted preposition:

Custer and all them was gone.

At any rate, the use is nonstandard.

The habitual construction in which the demonstrative appears is the substitution of this for the indefinite article a, as in

This hunter he started. . .

A tally of this usage shows that 60 children used it in oral language, but only nine in written. Again it is not nonstandard because it crosses class lines.

When one considers that the figures given here represent the number of times the constructions were used, one realizes the frequency with which the redundant pronoun and the indefinite this appear and the extent to which they color the oral language. The two constructions seem to be used concurrently, and together with the use

of was in the plural, they are the most characteristic markers of oral language. The result is to give this language a more "vulgar" tone than the figures perhaps indicate. Yet these forms cannot be considered non-standard, as no doubt they are not regional. The only pronoun and demonstrative forms considered nonstandard are the use of the object form in compound subjects, the use of hissself, and the use of them for those.

#### Adjectives and Adverbs

Adjectives and adverbs are used rather infrequently. The use of the adjective form for an adverbial function is nonstandard for this group, except for the use of good for well, which is common among all classes. Again standard and nonstandard forms will appear in one child's language, but consistent use of standard forms is characteristic only of upper class children. Almost all of the illustrations of nonstandard use come from the written samples; adverbs of manner seem to be avoided in the spoken language, except for intensifiers.

The standard intensifier among all classes is real. Occasionally really is used, but more as an intensifier of an intensifier than as a standard form. Thus one child who uses "real pretty" and also "throwed" in an oral example intensified real both by stress and suffix in saying "it was really pretty."

A frequent expression used as a qualifier is the phrase kind of in the sense of rather, pronounced and frequently spelled as kinda. That it is considered one word is evidenced by the fact that it is movable and can appear after the word that strictly speaking is the object of its preposition, as in

one of them was in spring, kinda

In two instances it follows regional use in adding an adverbial suffix, as in

it was kindly warm

Sort of, or sorta, is used in the same way, in either position.

Closely allied in meaning is the clause it seemed like, frequently used without the subject it. This too appears at the end of the clause it modifies and is used as though it were a single-word adverb seemslike:

The man was mean seems like

It was a long way home it seemed like.

Occasionally (it)look(ed)like was used in the same way.

He came up on some turkeys it looked like.

These constructions are avoided in written language

of upper-class children, but are common in the speech of all class levels and were considered regional rather than nonstandard. They did pose some problems, however, in figuring the subordination ratios. It seemed like is a clause, and as such would affect the number of clauses per sentence; it can also be interpreted either as a parenthetical clause or as a main clause with the preceding clause the object of the preposition like. But it can also be considered a "filler" in oral language, particularly when preceded and followed by a long pause. The problem was solved by treating it as a clause only when it was used as the beginning of a sentence. When it followed the sentence it was treated as an adverb, somewhat equivalent to seemingly. This permitted the parenthetical clause to be limited to complete T-units.

Certain adverbs frequently used reveal language habits of all classes rather than nonstandard use. Thus a favorite adverb with rather elastic meaning is mostly, used to mean almost, mainly, or usually:

They showed the stars and mostly all the planets  
Mostly all I did was lie down  
Mostly everything has words in it.

Sometimes this construction is supplanted by the most:

I like to do spelling the most but I have

trouble with arithmetic the most.

The word back is used rather than again in a construction that seems to be analogical to more common colloquialisms:

It started getting back winter.

Then he started walking back off.

Then it cleared back up.

This usage crosses class lines and was not considered nonstandard.

Adjectives, like adverbs, are used infrequently. Most striking was the consistent use, in both oral and written samples, of the adjective formed by adding the suffix -like to a noun or an adjective. Thus a prepositional phrase with like is reversed to form a compound and placed in pre-nominal position, resulting in an abbreviated comparison:

this chicken-like thing

a quail-like thing

island-like place

mink-like animal

house-like thing

net-like hickey

bank-like thing

The fact that the noun modified is frequently thing or its equivalent indicates that perhaps this is a way around a lack of vocabulary. But sometimes the same suffix is added to an adjective, so that it seems to be an adverbial qualifier:

It was dense and gloomy-like

First it was sunny-like.

Again this construction is considered standard.

There were occasional unorthodox comparisons of both adjectives and adverbs:

That's the funnest one I've went to

I learn more quicker in Math

These were used by children of lower social classes and so were considered nonstandard, but their use was too infrequent to affect the results appreciably. Other than this, the only adjectival construction considered nonstandard was the use of the adjective form for the adverb, except for the words good and well.

#### Function Words

An analysis of function words and the constructions in which they are found uncovers both regional and non-standard usage. The double negative is common, but is limited to the language of the lower classes, and largely

to their oral language. There were 30 children who used it in oral samples, but only six in the written. Again there is inconsistent usage. The same child who uses this construction will pass up obvious opportunities to employ it, as in

I didn't win nothing there and my grandmother wanted to try it and she didn't get anything.

Problems arising from there as an expletive affecting the verb have already been discussed, but one other problem is connected with expletives. Four children use it where there would be expected:

In the beginning it was the hunter  
If it was no walls. . .

This treatment of the expletive appeared only in the language of the lower class children, and although it is not numerically important it was considered non-standard usage.

Nonstandard use of articles appears only in written samples and is limited to a confusion in the use of a and an. Since this is a use dependent upon phonological factors, it seems obvious that in written language the children do not hear what they are writing. Consequently even the upper class children will write "an collie" or "a open place." Since this construction is not heard

in the oral language, it was considered a problem of writing, rather than of usage, and ignored in figuring a usage ratio.

The position of a particle in a verb-plus-particle construction offered the only example of any influence of German in the language background of these children. All of the examples arose from the description of an important episode in the film shown to elicit the second oral and written samples. At the end of the film, the hunter, after deciding not to shoot the deer, picks a flower, removes from his hat the feather he had plucked from the bird he had shot earlier, and puts the flower in its place. In the description of this incident, most children became involved in a phrase using the verbs picked up and put in, frequently combined with the pronoun it as object. English requires that a pronoun be placed immediately after the verb in a verb-plus-particle construction, a requirement that seems to give trouble, although whether the problem is an element of children's dialect or the result of the German influence is undecided. Only one sentence sounds particularly German, and this is one complicated by the use of the ethical dative:

He picked him the flower up.

Most of the children solve the problem by omitting either the particle or the pronoun:

He took a feather from it and put in his hat.

He took the feather out and put the flower  
and walked home.

So he picked one and put in his hat.

He took the grouse feather out of his hat  
and put a flower instead.

Some transfer the usual order:

He got a pretty flower and stuck in it.

Since this construction crossed class lines, it was not  
considered nonstandard.

The function word used in telling time is invariably  
til, as in "fifteen til seven." This is noted not as a  
nonstandard use, but as one more piece of evidence that  
this language has the characteristics of the South Mid-  
land dialect.

Occasionally the omission of function words results  
in locutions with a British flavor. Three children use  
"stayed the weekend" or "stayed the week." Two use "in  
hospital." All these are from oral samples, and all were  
spoken by lower-class children. Nevertheless, they were  
numerically unimportant and not considered nonstandard  
language.

Also frequent was the use of nonstandard prepositions.  
The use of at with where, in such expressions as "where  
he was at" was surprisingly infrequent, but occurred in

lower-class language occasionally and was considered non-standard. But the one-time occurrence of other unusual prepositions, as in the following examples, was ignored:

Then Steven and I met into her.

It was hanging in a tree out to the lake.

The use of two expressions was so habitual in this language that they lost their usual meaning and for practical purposes became function words. One was the phrase "and stuff like that," used to replace and so forth. It was tempting to consider the phrase merely "filler" and eliminate it from the language, since it most often was used as a sentence trailed away into silence. But it appeared in written language too, where stuff was also used for the general noun things, as in "he always does stuff wrong." The other expression is bunch of, used much more often than the equivalent lot of. Thus "a bunch of tobacco" does not mean "a cluster" or "a gathering" of tobacco, but "a lot of," "a great deal of" tobacco. The word was used normally as in "a bunch of flowers," although this was in a description of flowers still unpicked, but it was also used in such phrases as the following:

a bunch of statues  
a bunch of candy  
a bunch of campouts

a bunch of creeks  
a bunch of pictures  
a bunch of comets  
a bunch of stuff

These expressions were common in upper-class language and were not considered class-connected.

The kinds of subordinators used and their frequency of occurrence can most economically be shown in a table. The nature and amount of subordination has already been discussed in the description of the four language samples. From Table 6 it is evident that the subordinator joining a noun clause is most frequently omitted. In adjective clauses that is most frequently used. The fact that who appears only 22 times, whereas that is used 185 times, is evidence of the way in which that is used as a relative referring to both persons and things. In adverb clauses, when and because account for slightly over half the total number. Like is established as a conjunction: it appears 59 times, in contrast to five occurrences of as if, and none of as though. Concessive clauses are nearly non-existent. Even if and even though each appears once. There is no occurrence of although or though as a subordinator. No doubt all of these facts are reflections of children's language.

The simple subordinators show few deviations from standard English. Two children consistently use whenever for when:

Whenever I first walked in I said Hi.

When ever we got home I started going in the house

Table 6

## Subordinators and Their Frequency of Use

## NOUN CLAUSES

Subordinator	Oral 1	Oral 2	Written 1	Written 2	Total
Ø	105	149	80	51	385
because	1	1	0	4	6
how	11	12	13	5	41
if	4	3	3	0	10
that	17	64	46	20	147
what	38	27	22	14	101
whatever	0	3	0	0	3
when	6	1	4	18	29
where	14	16	7	2	39
whether	1	0	0	1	2
who	8	0	3	0	11
whoever	1	0	0	0	1
why	0	4	7	2	13

## ADJECTIVE CLAUSES

Ø	56	15	44	16	131
after	0	0	1	0	1
like	0	0	0	2	2
that	62	30	62	31	185
what	2	1	0	0	3
when	3	0	0	2	5
where	28	10	22	7	67

Table 6--continued

## Subordinators and Their Frequency of Use

## ADJECTIVE CLAUSES

Subordinator	Oral 1	Oral 2	Written 1	Written 2	Total
which	0	1	3	4	8
who	5	1	4	12	22

## ADVERB CLAUSES

Ø	5	1	0	1	7
adj. + Ø	1	4	0	3	8
adj. + that	0	0	2	0	2
after	21	27	9	6	63
as	3	5	8	40	56
as...as	8	2	4	0	14
as if	0	0	2	3	5
because	69	61	32	124	286
before	13	5	4	4	26
either way	0	0	1	0	1
en-if	1	0	0	0	1
even if	0	0	0	1	1
even though	0	1	0	0	1
if	30	33	28	23	114
in case	1	0	0	0	1
least	1	0	0	0	1
like	5	49	5	0	59
now that	1	0	0	0	1

Table 6--continued

## Subordinators and Their Frequency of Use

## ADVERB CLAUSES

Subordinator	Oral 1	Oral 2	Written 1	Written 2	Total
since	9	1	0	1	11
so...Ø	9	8	4	4	25
so...that	2	2	8	2	14
so that	0	1	0	1	2
such...that	0	1	0	0	1
than	9	0	0	0	9
time	1	0	0	0	1
until/til	9	10	6	10	35
when	133	86	109	76	404
whenever	4	4	4	0	12
where	15	17	3	6	41
whether	1	0	0	0	1
while	7	9	10	15	41

One child consistently uses a correlative construction with when. . . then:

When there weren't no more trick or treaters then we ate some candy

When I put on my face then my mother got some lipstick.

One child uses the form least for lest:

I ate most of it but I saved a lot least I'd get sick.

One child uses the Irish-sounding participle construction instead of a subordinate adverbial clause:

. . . because he thought it would be mean of him if he did and them having a baby fawn.

Typical of the tendency to omit subordinators are constructions merely implying subordinators. Frequently these are constructions involving time. In fact the word time itself seems to be used for the subordinate when:

It was sort of scary time they had Richard back there screaming.

In the following examples, when is merely implied:

It's not raining and it's dry out there they'll get across over there and play football during it.

Everytime we go to somebody's door it stopped raining we got ready to walk again it started raining.

Both subordinator and subject are omitted in one sentence:

Haven't got nobody bigger than me cover-ing me I can catch some.

An interesting functional shift that is well-documented in these language samples is the change of where from a relative adverb to a simple subordinator having an elastic meaning. In 1964, P. A. Erades, in an article in English Studies<sup>83</sup> reports on the use of where in place of conjunctive that, particularly after the verbs see and read. He cites examples from Damon Runyon and Dorothy Parker and considers the use one of the ways in which they subtly depict the ignorant or illiterate character. Hunt discusses the way in which where is used to introduce adjective clauses after nouns denoting place, as well as noun clauses after verbs such as remember, and constricts the adverbial clause to movable constructions.<sup>84</sup> But neither of these discussions indicates that English seems to be developing an all-purpose where; its meaning can shade from the point where a noun vaguely denoting place can be inferred, through doubtful constructions where the inference is more questionable, to sentences that are constructed where the meaning of the conjunction can only be interpreted as so that.

The use of where in noun clauses shows that this group uses the conjunction with the verb show, in addition to see and read, no doubt because their information came from a film:

It showed where its raining.

It showed where they'd told us that we'd have to do the words in our own mind.

There are also sentences in which a noun phrase such as "the place" or "the point" seems to be implied as object of the verb, sometimes necessitating a preposition after the verb:

Daddy's got to where he can pet him.

He's getting now where he'll talk.

We'll straighten the house up where we won't have to do it in the morning.

In sentences such as the last one above, however, where can also be interpreted to mean so that, and it is this meaning that is evident in such sentences as the following:

Mother couldn't find a black skirt for my sister where she could be a pilgrim.

He wanted to be quiet where he could kill the game.

I stuck it in my basket just in case somebody was going to hit me where I could hit em back with it.

This construction is standard. As many children of the upper classes use it, in proportion to their numbers, as lower class children do. At least in Cullman, the responsible people use where as a simple subordinator as frequently as they use it as a relative.

An analysis of the relative subordinators shows two syntactic patterns that are class-connected. One of these is the omission of the relative as subject of the subordinate clause when its antecedent immediately precedes the relative pronoun position. This construction appears in both oral and written language:

It was a guy ran over the wall.

We seen this shark came on a thing on a rope.

They had this big old blackboard said keep out on it.

In contrast to this is the relative clause in which both the relative and the antecedent, changed to a pronoun, appear:

I want to get one of these puppets that you have to teach them how to talk.

Some of those little round things that I touched them.

What I don't get I finish it after I eat.

Although the above patterns are nonstandard, other confusions in relative clauses seem to indicate the fact

that children of this age cannot cope with clauses in which the relative appears in a prepositional phrase or a genitive form. In fact, the subordinator whose does not appear at all. This leads to constructions such as the following:

It had trees that the leaves had come off of them.

The creek that the deers splashed through the water one time.

Other poorly-formed relative clauses abound, but the problem of handling this kind of transformation cuts across class lines and seems to be a problem of fifth-grade language.

A few common nonstandard forms of relatives appear. A small number of children use what instead of who or which:

We took a little boy home with us what was named Robin.

I helped my granddaddy feed their mule what he had from out at St. Barnard's.

This usage is characteristically lower-class. However, one child belonging to Class I uses which rather than who:

There was a man which was a hunter.

But the common relative, for people or things, for subject or object, is that.

A summary of the important constructions considered nonstandard in Cullman is presented in Table 7, which also lists for purposes of comparison Pooley's and McDavid's opinions of the same items. McDavid's list, compiled "partly from the collections of the regional linguistic atlases, partly from more intensive local studies," emphasizes, as he says, "those features of the language that recur frequently and are therefore most amenable to pattern drills. It must not be inferred that other, less well patterned features of English are unimportant as social markers, but only that they do not lend themselves to productive drill."<sup>85</sup> Pooley's list<sup>86</sup> is obviously adapted more to writing than to speech; McDavid's shows greater awareness of the language of the "disadvantaged." The items in the Cullman list are those most important in deriving the usage ratio for each child. In this way an objective measure was obtained, to be used with the objective scores indicating syntactic maturity in order to discover if there is any relation between these two characteristics of language.

Table 7

Items Considered Nonstandard in Cullman  
Compared to  
McDavid's and Pooley's Lists

<u>Item</u>	McDavid	Pooley	Cullman
<u>Verbs</u>			
Unorthodox past forms of <u>be</u>	X	X	X
Unorthodox present of <u>be</u>	X	X	no significant occurrence
Lack of concord with other verbs	X	-----	X
Omission of <u>be</u> before adjectives and participles	X	-----	no significant occurrence
Use of unorthodox principal parts of irregular verbs	-----	X	X
Omission of dental suffix	X	-----	X
<u>Pronouns</u>			
Object form in compound subject	-----	X	X
Analogical reflexive	X	X	X
<u>Demonstrative</u>			
Use of <u>them</u> for <u>those</u>	X	X	X
<u>Adjectives and Adverbs</u>			
Adjective form for adverb	-----	-----	X
Unorthodox comparison	X	-----	X

Table 7--continued

Items Considered Nonstandard in Cullman  
Compared to  
McDavid's and Pooley's Lists

<u>Item</u>	McDavid	Pooley	Cullman
<u>Function words</u>			
Two negative words	-----	X	X
Omission of relatives	-----	-----	X

## Chapter IV

### The Analysis of Syntax and the Correlations of the Results

The analysis of each child's language for syntactic maturity had the same starting point as the analysis for usage: the four language samples edited according to the principles described in Chapter II. The same word count of each child's edited samples was used. And as in the analysis for usage, the results were recorded on each child's worksheet. But there the similarity of the two analyses ends. The objective scores produced by Hunt's methods are derived by almost mechanical operations performed in the manner of the "harmless drudge."

The same procedure was followed for each of the four samples obtained from each child. The material was first divided into T-units and the number of T-units counted and recorded. Next the subordinate clauses were bracketed, classified as noun, adjective, or adverb, counted, and recorded. The classification of clauses was merely a check, devised to compare these samples with each other and with other studies, as reported in Chapter II.

After these counts were made, the various scores were figured for each child on a desk calculator. Since every T-unit contains by definition a main clause, the sum of the number of T-units and the number of subordinate clauses produced the total number of clauses. For the first score, the number of words per clause, the total number of words was divided by this figure. For the second score, the subordinate clause index, the total number of clauses was divided by the number of subordinate clauses. For the third score, the number of words per T-unit, the total number of words was divided by the number of T-units. According to previous research, these three scores are those which increase with increasing chronological and mental maturity.

Less important, but interesting for purposes of comparison, are two other scores: the coordinate clause index and the number of words per sentence. The first is figured by dividing the number of sentences by the number of T-units. The second is derived by dividing the total number of words by the number of sentences. The coordinate clause index is the only one of these scores that decreases with maturity. Obviously neither of these scores can be computed for oral language. Moreover, in written language they are of little value, since they seem to measure ability to punctuate in a more or less standard fashion,

rather than syntactic ability. And the punctuation of fifth-graders is erratic; periods appear in expected places at the beginning of compositions, but are dispensed with toward the end.

As Hunt points out in both of the studies earlier referred to, the five items in each set of scores are interrelated.<sup>87</sup> Thus the first item, words per clause, multiplied by the second, the subordinate clause index, gives the third, the words per T-unit. And the third, multiplied by the fourth, the coordinate clause index, produces the fifth, the words per sentence. The last two are available for written language only.

When each child's scores were obtained, the figures for his two oral samples were averaged, as were the figures for his two written samples, so that each child was represented by two sets of scores, one for written, one for oral language, for each of the three variables measuring syntactic maturity: clause length, subordinate clause index, and T-unit length. In addition there was a figure for the coordinate clause index for the written language of each child, as well as his usage ratios for both oral and written samples.

To these were added the Lorge-Thorndike IQ scores, verbal and nonverbal, since Hunt's research had proved a coorelation between the indexes of syntactic and mental maturity. For each of the 95 children there were thus

11 variables.

At this point a computer took over the task. Requested were the means for each score and the correlation between each variable and the ten others.

The resulting means of the scores measuring syntactic maturity are given in Table 8 and compared to the scores obtained by Hunt for fourth-grade written language, the most comparable of his figures, and with those obtained by O'Donnell, Griffin, and Norris for fifth-grade written and oral language. The Cullman usage ratios could also be added, but there are no comparable figures, nor is there any arithmetical connection between usage ratios and the other scores. Moreover, since the purpose of this investigation is to discover if there is a correlation between usage and syntactic maturity, this relationship will be investigated separately. The comparison of the figures derived from this study with those of others indicates that similar methods have produced comparable results and that the Cullman figures are within the range of the expected.

This similarity of results is perhaps surprising considering the fact that the children from Cullman differed from the children represented in the other studies both in social class and in range of IQ scores. Hunt does not indicate social class except by implication. The eighteen fourth graders of his study, "both

Table 8  
Measures of Syntactic Maturity

	Cullman 5th Grade	Hunt's* Average 4th Grade	Hunt's* Superior 4th Grade	O'Donnell's** 5th Grade
Words per clause				
Oral	6.64			
Words per clause				
Written	7.04	6.8	6.8	
Subordinate Clause index				
Oral	1.22			
Subordination index				
Written	1.33	1.26	1.35	
Words per T-unit				
Oral	8.14			8.9
Words per T-unit				
Written	9.36	8.5	9.3	9.34
Coordinate clause index				
Written	2.16	1.49	1.18	
Mean IQ Verbal	101.49			103.5***
IQ Range	65--147	90--110	130---	81--143

\*Hunt, Sentences, p. 35.

\*\*O'Donnell, p. 45.

\*\*\*O'Donnell, p. 30.

average and superior, were from the University School of Florida State University." The average students scored between 90 and 110, and the superior students scored over 130 on the California Mental Maturity Test (Short Form).<sup>88</sup> The study by O'Donnell used 30 fifth graders from a "homogenous neighborhood" of "uniformly white middle class families."<sup>89</sup> Their scores on the Lorge-Thorndike intelligence tests (Form A Verbal), a test used in Cullman, ranged from 81 to 143 in three grades.<sup>90</sup> No range is given for the fifth grade separately.

In contrast, the 95 fifth graders of the Cullman group came from all social classes, and their IQ scores ranged from 65 to 147. Both top and bottom scores were made by children from Class V. The heterogeneity of social class was necessary in order to obtain both standard and nonstandard language. And a wide range of IQ scores, not necessarily corresponding to social class rank, should show whether the correlation between syntactic and mental maturity can be maintained when the socially disadvantaged are included in the study. If syntactic maturity is a part of a social dialect, as is non-standard language, its presence may overcome the advantages of a superior intellect.

### Correlations

The correlations of the number of words per T-unit with the other two indexes of syntactic maturity are given in Table 9. The level of significance for all figures indicating correlations is 1.99. Two facts are immediately apparent. One is that the correlations between words per T-unit and the other indexes are high if each type of language, oral and written, is considered separately. This is, of course, a foregone conclusion if the figures are correctly arrived at, since there is an arithmetical connection between the three. More interesting is the fact that there is no correlation between oral and written language for any of the three indexes of syntactic maturity. The correlation between the oral and written subordinate clause index approaches significance, but the other two figures are wide of the mark. This is the first clear indication of the fact that there seems to be little relation between oral and written syntax of this group.

When the correlations of the usage ratios are added, as in Table 10, the evidence of this fact is extended. It should be remembered that the usage ratio increases with the number of instances of nonstandard forms, whereas the other indexes increase with increasing maturity, so that the negative correlations may be expected. The usage ratios for oral and written language

Table 9

Correlation of Words/T-Unit  
with  
Words/Clause and Subordinate Clause Index

	Words/T-Unit Oral	Words/T-Unit Written
Words/Clause Oral	11.56481	0.07236
Words/Clause Written	0.49654	7.76259
Subordinate Clause Index--Oral	10.50188	1.58272
Subordinate Clause Index--Written	0.12486	6.46599

Level of significance is 1.99.

Table 10  
 Correlation of Usage Ratios  
 with  
 Three Indexes of Syntactic Maturity

	Usage Ratio Oral	Usage Ratio Written
Words/Clause <u>Oral</u>	<u>-1.43957</u>	<u>-0.69781</u>
Subordinate Clause Index--Oral	-0.65026	-0.33690
Words/T-Unit <u>Oral</u>	<u>-1.66251</u>	<u>-0.78958</u>
Words/Clause <u>Written</u>	1.28795	<u>-3.11576</u>
Subordinate Clause Index--Written	-0.45157	<u>-2.53743</u>
Words/T-Unit <u>Written</u>	0.64638	<u>-4.54569</u>

Level of significance is 1.99.

correlate positively and significantly with each other. The figure is 4.23021. Thus it is predictable that a child who uses nonstandard forms in oral language will also use them in writing. But, as Table 10 shows, the usage ratio for oral language correlates with no one of the indexes of syntactic maturity, either oral or written, although the figure approaches significance for the negative correlation between oral usage and oral words per T-unit. In oral language, therefore, syntactic maturity and usage are unrelated.

For the written language, however, all three of the indexes of syntactic maturity correlate negatively and significantly with the written usage ratio. And since nonstandard language was defined by extracting the forms and constructions used predominantly by the lower classes of children in this study, it should follow that syntactic maturity correlates negatively or varies inversely with low social class. This would seem to answer the question posed at the beginning of this study. For written language only, syntactic maturity is an element of class dialect.

It remains to be determined whether or not this element of class dialect affects the relationship between syntactic and mental maturity that Hunt has demonstrated. Table 11 shows the figures for the correlation between

the three scores for syntactic maturity and the verbal and nonverbal IQ scores of the Lorge-Thorndike intelligence tests. The only figures that even approach significance are those for the correlation in the written language between IQ and the number of words per T-unit. It would seem, then, that there is no relationship in this group of students between mental maturity, verbal or nonverbal, and syntactic maturity.

It does not necessarily follow, however, that the presence of the nonstandard dialect in this language causes this discrepancy between Hunt's findings and those of this study. But one other correlation and a look at the scores of the children in the top quartile of the intelligence test scores add evidence that this is so.

The usage ratios, as shown in Table 12, correlate negatively with both verbal and nonverbal IQ scores even more significantly than they correlate with the indexes of syntactic maturity. Yet there is no correlation between these indexes and those of mental maturity. In this study it seems that things correlating to the same thing do not correlate with each other. Although the figures will predict that the incidence of nonstandard usage will vary inversely with both syntactic maturity and intelligence, they will say nothing at all about the kind of relationship between syntactic maturity and

Table 11

## Correlations between Mental and Syntactic Maturity Scores

	<u>Verbal IQ</u>	<u>Nonverbal IQ</u>
Words/Clause <u>Oral</u>	-0.03413	<u>1.40592</u>
Subordinate Clause <u>Index--Oral</u>	0.26562	0.18218
Words/T-Unit <u>Oral</u>	0.40871	<u>1.43157</u>
Words/Clause <u>Written</u>	<u>1.52227</u>	0.86145
Subordinate Clause <u>Index--Written</u>	0.97014	<u>0.39565</u>
Words/T-Unit <u>Written</u>	1.68780	<u>1.26747</u>

Level of significance is 1.99.

Table 12  
Correlations between Usage Ratios and IQ Scores

	<u>Verbal IQ</u>	<u>Nonverbal IQ</u>
Usage Ratio <u>Oral</u>	<u>-4.50774</u>	<u>-4.40557</u>
Usage Ratio <u>Written</u>	<u>-5.38015</u>	<u>-3.57797</u>

Level of significance is 1.99.

and intelligence.

An inspection of the top quartile of the IQ scores shows that this is exactly what happens. If the usage ratios vary inversely with intelligence, a child of one of the lower two classes who ranks in the top quartile should use fewer nonstandard forms than the other children of the same social classes. In this area, his intelligence should to a degree overcome his social class. But if intelligence and syntactic maturity are not related, his position in the top quartile should have no predictable effect on his scores for syntactic maturity. Table 13 shows that the average usage ratios for oral language of the entire group in Classes V and VI indicate twice the errors of the lower class group in the top quartile and more than four times as many for written language.

But the same kind of comparison for the most significant of the syntactic indexes, words per T-unit, shows no such superiority. In fact, for oral language the average of the entire group of lower class students is above that of the lower class children in the top quartile, although again it should be remembered that oral language seems to be a thing apart and should perhaps be discounted. For written language the superiority of the lower-class top-quartile group over other students

Table 13

Scores of Upper- and Lower-Class Children in  
Top Percentile of IQ Test  
Compared with Group Averages

	Averages Top Quartile Classes I-IV	Averages Entire Group Classes I-IV	Averages Top Quartile Classes V, VI	Averages Entire Group Classes V, VI
Usage Ratio Oral	.235	.262	.300	.667
Usage Ratio Written	.180	.714	.341	1.461
Words/T-Unit Oral	8.341	8.210	7.682	8.018
Words/T-Unit Written	9.714	9.384	9.183	9.103

in the lower classes is slight. The difference is only .08. And in spite of their intelligence, the top lower-class children are still behind those in the upper classes. Thus it seems that superior intelligence will partly overcome class handicaps so far as usage is concerned, but that it will not overcome syntactic immaturity. As the correlation figures show, syntactic maturity is related to social class rather than to mental maturity.

If this hypothesis is correct, a further check can be made by examining the scores of the children in the lowest quartile of the IQ scores. Upper class children should carry their higher scores for the indexes of syntactic maturity with them, even though their IQ scores place them in the lowest quartile. In addition, their usage ratios, since these are connected with intelligence, should be higher, indicating more non-standard forms per hundred words, than those of the other children of their class. Table 14 shows that this is so, except for the figures representing oral language, which again will not follow the pattern. Thus the usage ratios for upper class children in the low quartile, while still lower than those for lower class children, are appreciably higher than those for the upper classes as a whole. But the figure for average words per T-unit is only .075 lower than the figure for

Table 14

Scores of Upper- and Lower-Class Children in  
 Lowest Percentile of IQ Test  
 Compared with Group Averages

	Averages Low Quartile Classes I-IV	Averages Entire Group Classes I-IV	Averages Low Quartile Classes V, VI	Averages Entire Group Classes V, VI
Usage Ratio				
Oral	.433	.262	.781	.667
Usage Ratio				
Written	1.233	.714	2.122	1.46
Words/T-Unit				
Oral	8.622	8.210	8.214	8.018
Words/T-Unit				
Written	9.309	9.384	8.988	9.103

the upper classes as a whole, although it is .206 above the figure for the lower classes as a whole and .321 above the lower-class counterparts in the low quartile.

This hypothesis seems to contradict Hunt's findings that superior students have superior scores on indexes of syntactic maturity. The problem lies in the definition of "superior." Hunt defined superior students as those with an IQ of 130 and above. This study used a different IQ test, but the average score for words per T-unit of Cullman students scoring above 130 is also well above the average for the entire group. The score is 10.188, which is .795 above the average. It is interesting to note, however, that this superior group's average score for oral words per T-unit is 8.047, which is .091 below the average for the entire grade. Hunt suggested that "we ought to find out whether the students now called disadvantaged ever achieve full syntactic maturity."<sup>91</sup> One of this superior group in Cullman is of Class V, with an IQ of 147 and a T-unit length of 10.221. If the socially disadvantaged is decidedly superior mentally, it seems he can achieve more syntactic maturity than is expected, at least in the fifth grade. However, for scores lower than 130 maturity and intelligence are not related. Instead, in written language, syntax, like usage, is an element of class dialect. In oral language, there is no discovered pattern.

## Chapter V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study has attempted to find out whether syntactic maturity is an element of class dialect by discovering if there is any correlation between non-standard usage and syntactic immaturity in the language of 95 fifth-grade white children in Cullman, Alabama.

Nonstandard usage is defined as that employed most frequently by the children of the lower classes in four language samples, two oral and two written. When the forms and constructions considered nonstandard had been determined in this manner, two usage ratios were established for each child, representing the number of nonstandard items per hundred words in his oral and written language.

Figures representing levels of syntactic maturity were derived following methods established by Hunt. Three indexes of syntactic maturity in oral and written language were derived for each child: the number of words per clause, the subordinate clause index, and the

number of words per T-unit. These are the three important indexes, increasing from grade to grade, and within grades distinguishing the superior from the average student. In addition, a coordinate clause index was derived, the ratio of T-units to sentences, for each written sample.

Also available for each child were scores for the verbal and nonverbal Lorge-Thorndike intelligence tests. There were thus for each child figures representing 11 variables. Seven of these were indexes of syntactic maturity: words per clause, subordinate clause index, and T-unit length for both oral and written language, and subordinate clause index for written language alone. Two of these were indexes of the child's usage: an oral and written usage ratio. And two were standardized measures of intelligence. These 11 variables were analyzed by computer for the means for each variable and for the correlation of each of the other ten items.

The results showed that the means for the three syntactic indexes were comparable to similar means derived by Hunt and by the study made by O'Donnell, Griffin, and Norris.

The results also showed certain correlations. The three measures of syntactic maturity correlated highly with each other, as they must if they are properly derived, for the oral and written samples separately,

but there was no correlation between the oral and written language in any of the three indexes. The two usage ratios, oral and written, correlated highly with each other. The usage ratio for written language also correlated significantly and negatively with the three indexes of syntactic maturity for written language, but there was no relation between the usage ratio for oral language and the oral indexes of syntactic maturity. Both usage ratios correlated significantly and negatively with the verbal and nonverbal IQ scores. There was, however, no correlation between any of the indexes of syntactic maturity and the IQ scores.

Since the items labeled nonstandard in this study were derived from an examination of the language of the two lower classes, it can be established that the usage ratio represents the dialect of these classes. Thus the figures show that for written language both intelligence and syntactic maturity vary inversely with this class dialect. Yet there is no relation between the indexes of syntactic maturity and the IQ scores.

An examination of the average scores of children in the top and bottom quartiles of the IQ scores corroborates these findings. The average scores of those children in the lower classes whose IQ scores were in the top quartile show that for written language their

syntactic maturity was little above that of the entire lower class and well below that of the upper classes, although their incidence of nonstandard usage was lower than the average for their social class. Similarly, the average scores of those children of the upper classes whose IQ scores placed them in the bottom quartile showed syntactic maturity little below that of the mean for their upper-class group, while their usage ratios showed an above average incidence of nonstandard usage. It would seem, then, that in written language the factor of social class is stronger than that of intelligence, so far as syntactic maturity is concerned, and that syntactic maturity is an element of class dialect. For oral language there is no pattern.

When the very superior students were separated from the group, Hunt's findings were corroborated in this study. If his definition of "superior" is adhered to as closely as possible considering the fact that two different tests of intelligence were used, then the mean scores of syntactic maturity for those children with IQ's over 130 are superior to those of the top quartile. Below this level the IQ scores and syntactic maturity are not related. For oral language no such superiority of the "superior" student can be shown.

This statement leads to the most obvious of the

conclusions that can be drawn from this study: that oral and written language are here two different entities. This was evidenced by the analysis of usage, in which the difference could be established by noting the many items that distinguished the oral from the written language: the frequent use in oral language of was for were, the redundant subject, the ethical dative, the double negative, and this as an indefinite article. In the analysis of syntax the difference can be seen in the lack of correlation between any of the three indexes of syntactic maturity of oral and written language, in the fact that only in the written language is there any relation between these indexes and usage ratios, and in the lack of any syntactic superiority in the oral language of the really "superior" group.

In this study one may conclude that for oral language neither social class nor mental maturity within a grade affects syntactic maturity. Although the studies of both Loban and O'Donnell show that the number of words per oral T-unit does increase from grade to grade, this study seems to indicate that any increase is a result only of increased chronological age. This conclusion is not in accord with Loban's study, in which he finds "on average words per communication unit. . . a large measure of superiority by the High Caucasian group."<sup>92</sup>

However, in his summary of the analysis of "coherence," in which he considers both subordination and the control of mazes, he states that the "high group seems to be no more coherent in spoken style than a random group, whereas the low group is less coherent than the random group," although he qualifies this by adding that the small number of cases may lead to statistical error.<sup>93</sup> But the real problem in dealing with Loban's figures is that his high and low groups have been chosen for verbal proficiency to begin with, by means of teacher ranking. The question of comparable methods for comparable results appears again.

Regardless of the difference in methods, these language differences provide grounds for a further implication: that caution should be exercised in making generalizations about one language based on facts derived from the other. Loban again, discussing written language, states: "Because the socioeconomic rank of the high group exceeds that of the low group, it appears that coherence through subordination is also related to socioeconomic status." He goes on to paraphrase Bernstein's findings that it is environment rather than potential intelligence that determines language structure. He quotes Bernstein's conclusions about working-class forms of speech and moves on to add his own theories about such speakers' avoidance

of "oral performance," which could affect "the related activities of reading and writing."<sup>94</sup> This easy movement between the spoken language and the written seems dangerous in the light of the fact that Bernstein is writing of oral language and that Loban's own conclusions about the spoken style of high groups, that is those with high language proficiency, are not clear-cut.

In the same way, James Moffett uses Bernstein's theories to corroborate his own when he writes:

Bernstein's general hypothesis that forms of social control govern language codes leads to formulations that are especially suggestive when one considers how much the language of disadvantaged students seems to be arrested at a stage that middle-class children go easily beyond. Thus we have fourth-graders writing rings around ninth-graders because the latter's development is constrained by the forms of social controls in their environment.<sup>95</sup>

Moffett's relation of speaking to writing is perhaps justifiable because he considers writing merely a transcription of speech,<sup>96</sup> but it seems that he should at least make it plain that his fourth-grader also speaks rings around the disadvantaged ninth-grader. Again there is the connection of speech and writing that is not evident at least in this fifth grade.

Bernstein keeps cropping up. In Chapter I it was

stated that many of his verbal descriptions of the "restricted" code of language parallel Hunt's objective, numerical descriptions of syntactic structure. Other items parallel the usage described in this study as nonstandard. Approaching language from the psychological standpoint, he has linked syntax to dialect and to social class in Britain. Below are listed his ten characteristics of this language with the parallels in this study, where they exist, added in brackets.

1. Short, grammatically simple, often unfinished sentences with a poor syntactical form. [Hunt's short T-units]
2. Simple and repetitive use of conjunctions ('so,' 'then,' 'because'). [The coordinate clause index is the only one that decreases with maturity.]
3. Little use of sub-ordinate clauses to break down the initial categories of the dominant subject. [The subordinate clause index increases with maturity.]
4. Inability to hold a subject through a speech sequence, so that a dislocated informational content is facilitated.
5. Rigid and limited use of adjectives and adverbs. [See the section on adjectives and adverbs in the chapter on usage, noting the same fact.]
6. Infrequent use of impersonal pronouns as subjects of conditional clauses or sentences. [Cullman children never use impersonal pronouns, so the subject never came up in this study.]
7. Frequent use of statements where the reason and conclusion are confounded to produce a categoric statement.
8. A large number of statements/phrases which signal a requirement for the previous speech sequence to be reinforced: "Wouldn't it? You see?

- You know?" etc. This process is termed "sympathetic circularity." [In this paper it is termed "filler," and posed a problem in counting clauses.]
9. Individual selection from a group of idiomatic phrases or sequences will frequently occur. [See the section on usage particularly on catenative verbs and repeated nouns.]
  10. The individual qualification is implicit in the sentence organization: it is a language of implicit meaning.<sup>97</sup>

Bernstein's "restricted" code is based on psychological and sociological theories of learning that go far beyond the scope of this study. But the culture as well as the language he describes has certain similarities to the one that appears in the language samples of the Cullman group. Bernstein calls it a "special type of unifying sub-culture which renders unnecessary and irrelevant, complex verbal procedures."<sup>98</sup> Furthermore he proposes that

the measurable inter-status linguistic differences between the lower working-class and the middle-class, rather than reflecting differences in innate capacity, result from entirely different modes of speech which are dominant and typical within these strata.<sup>99</sup>

In other research he has elaborated this idea, coming to the conclusion that

either the mode of expression is a cultural function or the lower working-class are genetically deficient in a factor which enables the exploitation

of complex verbal relationships. The latter possibility seems improbable, especially when one considers the normal linguistic environment of the working-class is one of relative deprivation.<sup>100</sup>

Bernstein's statements lead to one more conclusion: a part of this study depends on the results of a single intelligence test. Related to this is the fact that Hunt points out that his conclusions about the relation between syntactic maturity and intelligence are better substantiated by the complex Wechsler test than by the simpler California test he used to determine his superior and average students.<sup>101</sup> Add to this the spate of recent articles questioning the validity of using intelligence tests designed for the middle classes to test children who live in a different environment. But the fact that the measure of intelligence may be questioned does not deny the fact that Hunt's tool, the T-unit, is invaluable in measuring and describing syntax and the difference between syntactic structures in speech and writing.

Perhaps the problem lies in the words used. Bernstein's "deprivation" and Hunt's "syntactic maturity" both imply value judgments. Like nonstandard usage, it may be that this syntax is not less mature, merely different. Just as nonstandard usage grates on the ear of the early Miss Fidditch, so does this kind of syntax.

Yet, like nonstandard usage, it communicates. Like non-standard usage it may be socially profitable to change it in order to change social class. In fact, it may be necessary to change it to progress in any academic or verbally-oriented environment. To be successful, learning prestige usage is not enough because it merely eliminates McDavid's "overt stigmata." The prestige syntax must be learned too. It is suggested that perhaps a better name for syntactic maturity would be syntactic conformity. Whatever it is called, it seems, in the written language of this study, at least, to be, like nonstandard usage, an element of class dialect.

## **NOTES**

NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Raven I. McDavid, Jr., "American Social Dialects," College English, XXVI, No. 4 (1965), 260.

<sup>2</sup>Walter Loban, Problems in Oral English (Champaign, Illinois, 1966), pp. 47-49.

<sup>3</sup>"Aspects of Language and Learning," in Language in Culture and Society, ed. Dell Hymes (New York, 1964), pp. 253-254.

<sup>4</sup>Hunt's first study, Differences in Grammatical Structures Written at Three Grade Levels (Cooperative Research Project 1998, Office of Education, HEW) has been printed in a revised version as Research Report No. 3 of the National Council of Teachers of English, under the title Grammatical Structures Written at Three Grade Levels (Champaign, Illinois, 1965). Further references are to the revised version, hereafter cited as Grammatical Structures. Hunt's second study is Cooperative Research Project No. 5-0313, Sentence Structures Used by Superior Students in Grades Four and Twelve, and by Superior Adults (Office of Education, HEW, 1966), hereafter cited as Sentence Structures.

<sup>5</sup>New York, 1967, pp. 1-22.

<sup>6</sup>New York, 1958, p. 536.

<sup>7</sup>New York, 1961.

<sup>8</sup>Joos, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup>Grammatical Structures, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup>Joos, p. 29.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid. p. 12.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid. pp. 12-16.

<sup>13</sup>H. L. Mencken and Raven I. McDavid, The American Language (New York, 1963), p. 458.

<sup>14</sup>Hans Kurath, Word Geography of the Eastern United States (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1949).

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38 Ibid., p. 9.

39 Ibid., p. 11.

40 Ibid., p. 12.

41 Ibid., p. 15.

42 Ibid., p. 45.

43 Ibid., pp. 45-46.

44 Ibid., Chapter 5.

45 Ibid., Chapter 6.

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47 Graves, p. 110.

48 Hunt, Sentence Structures, p. 80.

49 Cullman Tribune, "March of Progress Edition," 1959, p. 34.

50 Ibid.

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52 Ibid., p. 27.

53 Ibid., p. 25.

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58 Chamber of Commerce brochure, July, 1966.

59 Some questionnaires left blanks unfilled or reported  
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60 Paula Menyuk, "Syntactic Structures in the Language  
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63 This interest was generated by the groundwork laid  
by the Southeastern Education Laboratory, Atlanta, Georgia,  
which had selected this school as a pilot school for its  
studies and had been successful in securing cooperation  
from both parents and teachers.

64 Grammatical Structures, p. 1.

65 New York, 1964.

66 Ibid., p. 102.

67 Ibid., pp. 103-105.

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