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THE EFFECT OF TEACHING SENTENCE
PATTERNS ON THE WRITTEN SENTENCE
STRUCTURES OF GRADE TWO CHILDREN

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THE EFFECT OF TEACHING SENTENCE
PATTERNS ON THE WRITTEN SENTENCE
STRUCTURES OF GRADE TWO CHILDREN

BY

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the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to ascertain if the ratio of capitalized and punctuated modified T-units to the total number of modified T-units (capitalized, punctuated, or otherwise), found in the narrations of grade two students, would differ between an experimental and control group as a result of teaching specific punctuated and capitalized noun-verb sentence patterns.

Two matched groups of nineteen students were formed, based on the analysis of modified T-units in the pre-experimental narrative writings of an open area classroom. The experimental group was taught combinations of the noun-verb pattern for six weeks. At the end of that time the narrative writings of the two groups were compared.

The results, analysed by means of a sign test, led to the conclusion that the teaching of punctuated and capitalized noun-verb sentence patterns did not seem to have a significant effect on children's narrative writings.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It has been well documented that school age children are competent in the use of oral language. "By the age of thirty-six months some children are so advanced in the construction process as to produce all of the major varieties of English sentences up to a length of ten or eleven words."¹

However, these same school age children have not been shown to be as proficient as writers of the language. Although they are orally competent upon arrival at school, most must be taught how to express the English language in written form. It is the task of the school to help the child transfer his thoughts from the oral sphere to the written form. The majority of children require instruction in this task. In general, children need help in learning how to write sentences and this study explored one way of trying to facilitate the task by utilizing a sentence pattern which has been found to be in a high frequency paradigm in both the

¹Roger Brown and Ursula Bellugi, "Three Processes in the Child's Acquisition of Syntax," in Language and Learning: Investigations and Interpretations, ed. Dolores Burton (Cambridge: Harvard Educational Review, 1972), p.39.

oral and written syntactical patterns of grade two children.²

Significance of the Study

A great majority of primary children have been shown to have problems writing complete capitalized and punctuated sentences, as evidenced by Harris³, Hunt⁴ and Mazur⁵. The "Back to basics" movement which has surfaced in educational circles seems to be a reflection of a felt need that there must be a balance between viewing a discipline as art (a creative act) and as skill (mechanics and knowledge).

Because of the sentence-writing problem mentioned above, this study attempted to experiment with a method of teaching a specific capitalized and punctuated sentence pattern. Other studies, such as those by Hunt⁶ and Loban⁷, have experimented with maturity of sentence constructs; but

²Roy C. O'Donnell, William J. Griffin and Raymond C. Norris, Syntax of Kindergarten and Elementary School Children: A Transformational Analysis (Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1967), p.74.

³Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones and Lowell Schoer, Research in Written Composition (Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963), p.37.

⁴Kellogg W. Hunt, Grammatical Structures Written at Three Grade Levels, (Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1965), p.52.

⁵Chet Mazur, Young Writer's Error Tendency (-:ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 134 987, 1976).

⁶Hunt, Grammatical Structures Written at Three Grade Levels.

⁷Walter Loban, Language Development: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, (Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English, 1976).

none have dealt with the surface structure correctness of sentences nor with narrative writing. It is these two features that made the present study different from others.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to ascertain if the teaching and practicing of sentence building, by means of teaching specific capitalized and punctuated noun-verb sentence patterns, would result in the increase of these sentence patterns in the written narrative compositions of a sample of second grade children.

Statement of the Hypothesis

The study was designed to answer the following question:

Will the ratio of the capitalized and punctuated modified T-units⁸ to the total number of modified T-units (including those lacking capitalization or punctuation), found in the narrative writings of grade two students, differ significantly between the control and experimental groups as a result of teaching specific punctuated and capitalized sentence patterns?

Statement of Theoretical Framework

The study was based on four main premises. The first was that the noun-verb sentence patterns used for instructional purposes would account for much of children's

⁸Hunt, Grammatical Structures Written at Three Grade Levels, p.21.

writing. Everetts⁹ found that the most frequently used patterns in written syntax at all grade levels from grades two to six were the subject-verb-object pattern and the subject-verb pattern. O'Donnell¹⁰, in a study of both oral and written syntax of children from grades kindergarten to seven, found that most of the main clauses in language production conform to the subject-verb to subject-verb-object patterns. In fact, these two patterns accounted for approximately eighty percent of all T-units of the three younger groups of children.

The second premise was that two of the most common errors found in children's writing (grades one through eight) were the omission of initial capital letters and the omission of terminal punctuation in their sentences.¹¹

The third premise held that simple sentences are most common in narration. This premise was based on a study done with third grade children.¹² Therefore, narrative writing was the preferred mode of writing used for examining the use of simple sentence structures.

⁹Eldonna Everetts, The Nebraska Study of the Syntax of Children's Writing (-:ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 013 814, 1967), p.40.

¹⁰Roy C. O'Donnell, William J. Griffin and Raymond C. Norris, Syntax of Kindergarten and Elementary School Children: A Transformational Analysis (Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1967), p.74.

¹¹Chet Mazur, Young Writers' Error Tendency.

¹²Louis V. Johnson, "Children's Writing in Three Forms of Composition," Elementary English 44 (March 1967), p.267.

The fourth premise was the belief that the teaching of, and practice in using, particular sentence patterns would result in a greater production of these patterns in the children's narrative writings. This assumption was based on the studies done in sentence combining. Miller and Ney's study¹³ with grade four students resulted in a greater use of the structures practiced in their writing. Mellon¹⁴ and O'Hare¹⁵ showed how the procedures practiced by their students were utilized in their written sentences. It was hoped that the patterns taught in the present study could be meaningfully tabulated by the means of a modified T-unit¹⁶ ratio count.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to a very small sample (N=38) of grade two students, chosen from a second grade open area classroom. The sessions were short (twenty minutes) and

¹³Barbara D. Miller and James W. Ney, "The Effect of Systematic Oral Exercises on the Writings of Fourth-Grade Students," Research in the Teaching of English 2 (Spring 1969).

¹⁴John C. Mellon, Transformational Sentence-Combining: A Method for Enhancing the Development of Syntactic Fluency in English Composition, (Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1969).

¹⁵Frank O'Hare, Sentence Combining: Improving Student Writing Without Formal Grammar Instruction, (Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1973).

¹⁶Hunt, Grammatical Structures Written at Three Grade Levels, p.21.

lasted for a minimal period of time (six weeks). The results, therefore, were able only to suggest possible directions of exploration in the teaching of correctly punctuated and capitalized sentence structures.

No measurement of ability or achievement level was taken in the belief that the average classroom contains a wide variety of levels of achievement. If a method was to be viable, the author felt it should be applicable to the "average class".

Two matched groups were formed by pre-testing their narrative writings and analysing them for ratios of modified T-units. The experiment was also limited to a certain type of writing, the narrative mode. This restriction was placed on the experiment because narrative writings of primary aged children have been shown to contain the greatest number of simple sentences when compared to descriptive and expository writings.¹⁷ Most other related experiments in syntax were not controlled for a specific mode of writing, or were expository.

The sentence pattern involved was the simple noun-verb pattern and its expansions. It was chosen first of all because Paul Roberts begins his programmes with this pattern.¹⁸ Secondly, it is a pattern shown to be frequently

¹⁷Johnson, "Children's Writing in Three Forms of Compositions", Elementary English, p.267.

¹⁸Paul Roberts, Understanding English, (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1958), p.182.

used by young children.¹⁹ As a result of this, for the purposes of evaluation, the structures involved were limited to a very definite pattern, as defined by the study.

The scope of the study did not allow for the evaluation of rhetorical effectiveness. As pointed out by Smith, ". . .there is a part of language that can neither be directly observed nor measured, and that is meaning. In contrast to surface structure, the meaning of language . . . can be referred to as deep structure."²⁰ The design of the study limited measurement to the physical surface structures of the patterns. The study was concerned with the correctness of syntax and mechanics, as one of the many steps in the composition process, as opposed to syntactical maturity and meaning.

Delimitations of the Study

The experiment was designed within the bounds of certain delimitations. First, due to timetabling of the classroom involved, the number of lessons and length of lessons was kept short. Second, a heterogeneous open area classroom was chosen to facilitate the choosing of two comparable groups. Third, only one sentence pattern, the noun-verb (subject-predicate) paradigm, was utilized in the study, necessitating an age group which most commonly used such a

¹⁹O'Donnel, Syntax of Kindergarten and Elementary School Children: A Transformational Analysis, p.74.

²⁰Frank Smith, Understanding Reading, 2nd ed. (U.S.A." Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978), p.71.

pattern in its writings. The primary area provided an appropriate age level. This particular pattern was chosen because it had been shown to account for much of young children's writing.²¹ Pilot work on the study also substantiated such a claim.

To facilitate the optimal use of the above sentence pattern a written mode which would encourage usage of the noun-verb pattern was employed. Lois Johnson's study of third grade children²² suggested that narration would be a suitable mode. Therefore, narration was the mode of writing utilized by the children in the experiment.

A fifth delimitation was that variables such as I.Q., reading ability, sex and socioeconomic status were not controlled. The grouping of the sample was based solely on scores derived from pre-test written samples.

Sixth, a very simple analysis of the data, a sign test, was applied, which indicated if a significant difference existed between the control and experimental groups.

Because this study was considered as being only a first step in learning to write correctly written sentence structures complete with capitalization and punctuation, two more delimitations were applied. One was concerned with the act of composing. The author recognized that sentences

²¹O'Donnell, Syntax of Kindergarten and Elementary School Children: A Transformational Analysis, p.74.

²²Johnson, "Children's Writing in Three Forms of Composition", p.267.

are not composed in a vacuum. However, for purposes of the study, evaluation had to be confined to the performance of the children in producing a mechanically correct structure. The rhetorical aspect and processes involved in composing were ignored. According to Roulet, "For the same reason you cannot hope to extract an atom from a piece of wood by cutting it into ever smaller pieces."²³ so you cannot get deep structures by ever analysing a surface structure entity. Therefore, the study was limited to an analysis of surface structure.

Definition of Terms

1. Modified T-units. The term T-unit or "minimal terminable unit" was used by Hunt as an index of the level of maturity in children's writing. He used it to refer to sentence-type units, having only one main clause, which ". . . would be minimal as to length, and each would be grammatically capable of being terminated with a capital letter and a period"²⁴ For purposes of the following study, the term T-unit, as defined by Hunt, has been limited to exclude all but those units having a noun-verb pattern, in a subject-predicate order. It may or may not have a subordinate clause attached to it. Because of these restrictions, the T-units have been referred to as modified T-units.

²³Eddy Roulet, Linguistic Theory, Linguistic Description and Language Teaching, Trans. C.N. Candlin (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1975, p.41.

²⁴Hunt, Grammatical Structures Written at Three Grade Levels, p.21.

As this is one of the more common patterns used at this age level, the modified T-unit should account for a large majority of the children's written sentences. The studies of Evertts²⁵ and O'Donnell²⁶ provided reason to believe that this would be true.

2. T₁ unit. For the purposes of this study, this term referred to modified T-units which were complete with initial capitalization and end punctuation.

3. T₂ unit. This term referred to modified T-units which were either not capitalized, not punctuated with end punctuation, or were missing both capitalization and punctuation.

4. T-unit ratio scores. This term referred to the ratio of capitalized and punctuated modified T-units (T₁) to the total of all the modified T-units, whether capitalized and punctuated, or otherwise (T₁ + T₂).

$$\frac{T_1}{T_1 + T_2} = \text{T-unit ratio scores}$$

5. Sentence pattern. This referred to a modified T-unit pattern, containing at least a noun and verb, in a subject-predicate order.

6. Fragments. This referred to incomplete sentences, with either the noun or verb left out.

²⁵Evertts, The Nebraska Study of the Syntax of Children's Writing, p.40.

²⁶O'Donnell, Syntax of Kindergarten and Elementary School Children: A Transformational Analysis, p.74.

7. Other sentence patterns. This term was used to refer to the other types of sentence structures in the children's written samples, such as exclamations and questions.

8. Teaching. In the context of this study this term referred to the whole method used in teaching the experimental group. It included both oral and written practice on the part of the students, plus some direct teaching on the part of the instructor.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

Introduction

This study was an attempt to experiment with the teaching of written sentence patterns and the concept of "correctness" of surface level structures. Therefore, a discussion of sentence patterning, differences between oral and written language, and modes of teaching grammar becomes relevant. Research into grammatical competency, pattern usage, modes of writing and common syntactic errors is considered. Also, some studies into sentence combining and syntactic measurement are examined. A concluding statement suggests that the field is bereft of research specifically related to the present study but that various elements of many experiments combined to formulate the present study.

Sentence Patterns

The idea of teaching sentence structure, by means of sentence patterns, has been practiced in the past. The use of patterns began with structural grammar and has continued into the present transformational generative grammar. Paul Roberts prepared many grammar books based on sentence patterning.¹ Many other books have also been prepared,

¹Paul Roberts, Understanding English, (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1958,) p.182.

using common sentence patterns and practice exercises.² Why were sentence patterns used? Because:

...they constitute the backbone and central nervous system of the language. There are not very many of them. Moreover, they are the same in speech and in writing. The important point here is that all native speakers already know these basic patterns and use them automatically in speaking. Logically and psychologically, then, this is the best place to begin to improve student writing.³

Ruth Strickland gave further weight to this point of view:

The best starting point may be a sentence a child used (after, of course, it has been reacted to in terms of its purpose). The sentence, cut down to its basic subject and predicate, forms an irreducible minimum which can be called the Kernel, nucleus or core.⁴

Strickland found that the simplest, but not necessarily the most common pattern, is the noun-verb pattern. The second simplest pattern, and the most common, was the noun-verb-noun pattern.⁵ Two other common patterns found by her were the noun-verb-noun-noun pattern and the noun-linking verb-noun

²Helen E. Lefevre and Carl A. Lefevre, Writing Patterns (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1967).

³Wallace L. Anderson, "Structural Linguistics: Some Implications and Applications." English Journal 46 (October 1957):414.

⁴Ruth G. Strickland, The Contribution of Structural Linguistics to the Teaching of Reading, Writing, and Grammar in the Elementary School (-:ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 003 375, 1964), p.18.

⁵Ruth G. Strickland, "The Language of Elementary School Children: Its Relationship to the Language of Reading Textbooks and the Quality of Reading of Selected Children," Bulletin of the School of Education Indiana University 38 (July 1962):30.

pattern. Most of the literature reviewed categorized sentence patterns into the above mentioned four basic patterns. The basic sentence pattern seemed to be the suggested ideal starting point for teaching syntax to children and provided the base for this study.

Oral and Written Language

There is a difference between oral and written language. One is produced within a social context, while the other is brought forth in relative isolation. Terry Radcliffe has synthesized the results of many studies which support the idea that speech produces more ideas, elaboration of ideas, relevant ideas, and more total words, phrases and sentences per unit of time than written language. Also, oral language is richer, less abstract and fuller than the written word.⁶ "The discrepancy is caused by the child's proficiency in spontaneous, unconscious activity and his lack of skill in abstract, deliberate activity."⁷

Oral language and written language differ in form.

According to Vygotsky:

Written speech is a separate linguistic function, differing from oral speech in both structure and

⁶Terry Radcliffe, "Talk-Write Composition: A theoretical model proposing the use of speech to improve writing," Research in the Teaching of English 6 (Fall 1972):191.

⁷L.S. Vygotsky, Thought and Language, trans. E. Hanfmann and G. Vakar (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1969), p.100.

mode of functioning. Even its minimal development requires a high level of abstraction. It is speech in thought and image only, lacking the musical, expressive, intonational qualities of oral speech.⁸

From the above point of view, the problem of teaching sentence writing becomes one of providing children with a base so that the conventions of writing, which differ from speech, may be employed. John Carroll emphasized that:

Apparently the problem in teaching the child to write grammatically is one of teaching him that the conventions of . . . writing demand more stringent observance of grammatical rules than ordinary speech. Thus we do not literally teach grammar, for the pupil already knows this; rather, we teach the special conventions and standards of written expression.⁹

By researching differences in oral and written syntax of second graders, Harris also concluded that ". . . children may acquire the syntax of writing as a dialect somewhat separate from the one they speak."¹⁰

The views stated by these authors are crucial because the present study was based on the belief that differences between written and oral language are manifest and that the conventions of the written word must indeed be taught to overcome the differences.

⁸Ibid., p.98.

⁹John B. Carroll, "Psycholinguistics and the Elementary Language Arts," in Language and Reading, ed. James Walden (Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1969), p.10.

¹⁰Mary McDonnell Harris, "Oral and Written Syntax attainment of Second Graders," Research In The Teaching of English 11 (Fall 1977):131.

Teaching Grammar

Teaching of "grammar" for the express purpose of achieving correctness has not been favourably received in the past years. Most of the research has shown that the instruction in formal grammar had little effect on the correctness of student composition.¹¹ However, most of those studies were based on the teaching of grammatical terminology, rather than actual practice in usage.

Many recent studies, which have relied heavily on practice and "doing", rather than on learning terminology of sentence building, have had much different results in terms of improvement on quality of output.¹² Some people have informally experimented with teaching sentence patterns in which capitalization and punctuation was included, as a way of dealing with run-ons and fragments. Ruth Bertsch¹³ tried this with high school students. She taught them seven basic sentence patterns and had them analyze their writings for these patterns. One informal study by T. Hilfman¹⁴ experimented with sentence expansion techniques in grade two written work. Some of the experimenters found that the use

¹¹Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones and Lowell Schoer, Research in Written Composition (Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963), p.37.

¹²Frank O'Hare, Sentence Combining: Improving Student Writing Without Formal Grammar Instruction, (Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1973).

¹³Ruth E. Bertsch, "Linguistic Birds and Sentence Structure," The English Journal 51 (January 1962):46-49.

¹⁴Tillie Hilfman, "Can Second Grade Children Write More Complex Sentences?" Elementary English 47 (Feb. 1970):209-214.

of patterns have provided "...a simple framework within which to develop a complete thought."¹⁵ The present study was inspired by the above-mentioned works which involved practice, capitalization and punctuation and use of sentence patterns, for both high school and primary age children.

However, people who have tried teaching by means of patterns, have usually included in their methods the visual and auditory aspects of sentence patterning. That is, patterning is presented in a manner that provides for much oral practice in the same patterns. The two following studies gave the author the idea for using colour as an added input item used in the methodology. Barbara Graves, in "A Kinesthetic Approach to Building Language Power"¹⁶ described how Robert B. Ruddell used not only listening, plus the oral aspect, but he also introduced the kinesthetic element. He had the children manipulate coloured cubes which represented the various form classes.

Robert Scott¹⁷ also tried teaching grade ones how to understand English sentences by means of colour-coded word blocks. He hoped to encourage the idea of the importance of

¹⁵Jackie Mallis, "An Experiment with the New Grammar," English Journal 46 (October 1957):427.

¹⁶Barbara W. Graves, "A Kinesthetic Approach to Building Language Power," Elementary English 49 (October 1972):818-822.

¹⁷Robert Ian Scott, "Teaching Elementary English Grammar with Color-coded Word-Blocks," Elementary English 45 (November 1968):972-981.

word order, and the need to end every sentence with punctuation.

Oral Competency

Because the oral aspect of language is so important it must be attended to if learning is to take place. "Whenever usage learning occurs, the learning should be based upon oral methods, . . . The pupil must hear and say the standard form, . . ." ¹⁸ This emphasis on the oral aspect is due in part to the idea that children are already equipped (syntactically) to speak our language. Therefore, an oral base is a convenient and viable starting point from which to begin. The present study employed this very starting point.

The research was clear in showing that the majority of children come to school competent in the ability to use most sentence structures of the English language orally. A few structures are still in the process of being acquired. Paula Menyuk ¹⁹ examined the syntactic rules used by children from preschool through first grade. She used a transformational model of grammar to describe their grammar from under three years of age to over seven, as used orally. It was found that almost all the basic structures used by adults to generate their sentences (orally) are in the grammar of the

¹⁸Walter Loban, "Oral Language and Learning," in Oral Language and Reading, ed. James Walden (Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1969), p.108-109.

¹⁹Paula Menyuk, "Syntactic Rules Used by Children from Preschool Through First Grade," Child Development 35 (1964): 533-546.

below three year old child. She showed clearly how early language is categorized and used in terms of grammatical rules.

Carol Chomsky²⁰, in studying the acquisition of syntax in children five to ten, concluded that some syntactic structures are still being learned at the ages of seven and eight. She interviewed forty children, kindergarten to grade four. She was interested in the child's ability to comprehend certain structures. Some structures, from the point of view of understanding, which are more complex, are acquired later. Active syntactic acquisition is taking place up to age nine. Also, there is the primacy of the active sentence being understood before the passive. These two studies clearly uphold the claim of the present study that children are not in need of instruction in oral sentence structure (syntax) as the oral syntactic structures are already present.

Pattern Frequency

The types of sentences that children use, both orally and in their written work, has been researched. It has been found that the frequency of various patterns differ, depending on whether oracy or writing is involved. Strickland²¹ found that in oral speech, the most commonly used sentence pattern

²⁰Carol Chomsky, The Acquisition of Syntax in Children from 5 to 10, (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1969).

²¹Strickland, The Contribution of Structural Linguistics to the Teaching of Reading, Writing and Grammar in the Elementary School, p.30-31.

was the subject-verb-direct object pattern. Next in frequency was the subject-linking verb-predicate, and last the subject-verb pattern. This sequence of pattern frequency was also supported by Strang and Hocker²². However, as these studies examined oral patterns, they were not directly related to the present study, even though they were done with an appropriate age group.

Another study, by Eldonna Evertts and others, explored the written syntax of children in a sample of five hundred children, from grades two to six. The results of the research showed that the following patterns were heavily relied upon, in their written work, at all grade levels²³: most frequently used was the subject-verb-object pattern, followed in frequency by the subject-verb pattern. The next in order of frequency were the linking verb patterns. It was interesting to note that the linking verb is used more frequently in oral speech, rather than written speech. Also, in this study, the grade two pupils used the subject-verb-object pattern, without adverbial modifiers, most often.

O'Donnell, in studying both oral and written syntax of one hundred eighty children (K, 1, 2, 3, 5, 7), found that most of the main clauses in language production conform

²²Ruth Strang and Mary Hocker, "First-Grade Children's Language Patterns," Elementary English 42 (January 1965): 38-41.

²³Eldonna Evertts, The Nebraska Study of the Syntax of Children's Writing (-:ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 013 814, 1967), p.40.

to the subject-verb or subject-verb-object patterns.²⁴ They accounted for about eighty percent of all T-units of the three younger groups of children. The same patterns accounted for about eighty-five percent of those used in both speech and writing in grades three, five and seven. Only about ten percent of the T-units used linking verb patterns. There was a significant increase in the oral use of subject-verb patterns from grade one to two. Also, the subject-verb pattern was lower in frequency in writing than in speech.

Not until grade three were there overall increases in the three major types of constructions used in sentence expanding and combining. It appears that the subject-verb and the subject-verb-object patterns, as a basic unit of syntax, are important in both speech and writing, and should be attended to by the teacher.

These two studies were relevant to the present study in that they aided the author in ascertaining that the noun-verb or noun-verb derivative sentence pattern would be most appropriate, in terms of frequency of usage by grade two children, to the present study.

Modes of Writing

Studies on styles of writing proved informative. Two were done with grade three children, an age level which made

²⁴Roy C. O'Donnell, William J. Griffin and Raymond C. Norris, Syntax of Kindergarten and Elementary School Children: A Transformational Analysis (Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1967), p.74.

the studies relevant to the present study and pointed out the value of employing narrative writing in the experiment. John Perron²⁵, in a study of one hundred fifty-three children at three ability ranges, in grades three, four and five, found that syntactic complexity differed according to the different modes of writing employed. The level of syntactic maturity was greatest for argumentation and least for description. In between these two was exposition, in that order.

Lois V. Johnson²⁶ explored third grade writings of narration, description and explanation. The conclusion was that simple sentences were most common in narration while most complex sentences were used in explanations. To measure the use of simple sentences, narration appeared to be the written mode that should be evaluated, as most simple sentences occur in this type of writing. The present study incorporated this finding by using children's narrative writing as the means of obtaining data.

Common Syntactic Errors

A review of the research on common errors in elementary aged children's written syntax also brought to surface some interesting observations. The three most common errors

²⁵John D. Perron, Written Syntactic Complexity and the Modes of Discourse (-:ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 139 009, 1967).

²⁶Lois V. Johnson, "Children's Writing in Three Forms of Composition," Elementary English 44 (March 1967):265-269.

in children's writing seemed to be the use of run-on sentences, and the omission of terminal punctuation and initial capitalization.

The Harris study described in Braddock's book²⁷, was done with twelve to fourteen year olds and listed many common errors in their writing. One of the errors was that of failure to provide for full stops in punctuation; another was the failure to use capital letters; and a third was the misuse of various parts of speech.

Hunt²⁸, in comparing fourth and twelfth graders, found that fourth graders used three times as many co-ordinate conjunctions and almost five times as many "ands".

In a third study, Chet Mazur²⁹ took six pupils from each grade, grades one to eight, and analysed their compositions for errors. The three most frequent errors of the younger writers were, in order of greatest frequency: omission of capital letters, no terminal punctuation at the end of sentences, and the use of run-on sentences. The idea of teaching a basic noun-verb sentence form, with special attention being paid to the elimination of some of the most frequent areas of writing errors, laid the foundation for the present study.

²⁷Braddock, et al., Research in Written Composition, p.73.

²⁸Kellogg W. Hunt, Grammatical Structures Written at Three Grade Levels, (Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, (1965), p.52.

²⁹Chet Mazur, Young Writers' Error Tendency (-:ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 134 987, 1976).

The types of errors children make in their writing reflect a need for instruction in the use of basic sentence forms. Strickland indicated that, "The run-on sentences characteristic of many young children and the choppy or incomplete sentences of others are evidence of need for help in putting ideas together into well-knit and logical sentence schemes."³⁰

Value of Formal Grammar

Braddock³¹ explained how Harris inquired into the function and value of formal grammar (traditional grammar) to children twelve to fourteen years old, over a two year period. One group studied and applied terms of formal grammar while the "direct method" group had direct practice in writing. They corrected errors by example and imitation. He concluded that the study of grammatical terminology had little effect upon the "correctness" of the writings as based upon a set of criteria he established.

Bateman and Zidonis³² attempted to ascertain if children could apply the transformational rules (not traditional) of a generative grammar in their writing. They

³⁰Ruth G. Strickland, "Implication of Research in Linguistics for Elementary Teaching," Elementary English 40 (February 1963):170.

³¹Braddock, et al., Research in Written Composition, p.70.

³²Donald R. Bateman and Frank J. Zidonis, The Effect of a Study of Transformational Grammar on the Writing of Ninth and Tenth Graders (Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1966).

wished to see if those taught transformational rules would increase their ability to use a variety of sentence structures. The study involved grades nine and ten over a two year period. The study showed that the experimental group did increase the proportion of well-formed sentences they wrote, and they wrote more complex sentences while not sacrificing grammaticality. They concluded that the study of a systematic grammar, which is a theoretical model of the process of sentence production, is the logical way to modify the process itself. The problem, they contended, had been that previously there had been no adequate theory of language.

By these studies, it appeared that practice in using grammatical rules was much more effective than simply learning rules. Although these studies were carried out on older children, the principle involved could be applied to younger children, on a simpler level.

Sentence Combining

Miller and Ney³³, in a year long study of fourth graders, studied the effect of oral practice in combining sentences. Structures were written on the board, read orally, then the sentences were combined and read orally and in unison. The same type of structure was then practiced in

³³Barbara D. Miller and James W. Ney, "The Effect of Systematic Oral Exercises on the Writings of Fourth-Grade Students," Research in the Teaching of English 2 (Spring 1969):44-61.

writing and orally. The experimental group seemed to be superior in using more of the structures practiced in their writing. The methodology involved in the present study also utilized oral practice.

Two studies have been done recently on "sentence-combining" in which supposedly greater sentence complexity and maturity resulted from practicing expansion of sentences, with disregard for the grammatical rules involved. The investigators' had maintained that a transfer of complex sentences to the student's own writing would result. Although the studies involved children much older than second graders, the underlying principle of practicing the generating of sentences could be applied to younger children.

The following two studies concentrated on the promotion of syntactic fluency by means of practicing the combining of separate kernel sentences into single, more complex structures. Mellon³⁴ tried this type of experiment with two hundred forty-seven seventh graders. He examined three groups: "no grammar", traditional parsing and sentence combining. He contended that practice alone, disregarding the learning of grammatical terms, accounted for the "sentence-combining" group having grown in syntactic maturity. Some researchers, such as O'Hare, felt that his presentation of "notions" of base rules, kernels and simple transformations

³⁴John C. Mellon, Transformational Sentence-Combining: A Method for Enhancing the Development of Syntactic Fluency in English Composition, (Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1969).

amounted to "grammar" being taught. The important result was, however, that the experimental group did show growth on all twelve factors of syntactic fluency.

Frank O'Hare³⁵ modified the above study by controlling for the factor of formal grammatical instruction. He also used sentence-combining practice, controlling for grammatical terminology and found results similar to Mellon's.

The key to the present study was found in a quote from Mellon: "...the general notion that the language practice facilitated by the grammar, rather than the learning of grammatical formulations themselves, is the factor which assumedly influences maturity of sentence structure."³⁶ The difference is that this study concentrated on correctness rather than sentence maturity. At this point, the author was not so concerned with maturity or complexity, as correctness. Rather, as a first step, the beginning simple (kernel) sentences should be correct, before being expanded into more mature, and hopefully, "correctly" combined sentences.

Syntactic Measurement

In the following definitive studies by Hunt and Loban, punctuation and capitalization were ignored as a means of

³⁵ Frank O'Hare, Sentence Combining: Improving Student Writing Without Formal Grammar Instruction, (Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1973).

³⁶ Mellon, Transformational Sentence-Combining, p.10.

identifying the "sentence". Rather, they used such devices as "T-unit" or communication unit to divide the child's written thoughts into meaningful units for purposes of evaluation.

Hunt³⁷ used the T-unit (minimal terminal unit), which contained one main clause plus subordinate clauses attached or embedded. Hunt, in a study to explore syntactic structures, used the T-unit length as an index of maturity. He studied nine boys and nine girls each, from grades four, eight and twelve. He used a sample of one thousand words of writing from each of them. He felt that the T-unit length was the best index of grade level; that the clause length was next best; and that the punctuated sentence length was the least adequate. He found that the short T-unit is characteristic of young writers and that the number of subordinate clauses per T-unit increased with higher grades.

Walter Loban³⁸ did a longitudinal study of children, from which he chose a sample of three sub-groups, based on social, economic, intellectual, ethnic and sexual factors. He analysed both their written and oral language for many variables. He used the "communication unit" for measuring sentences. It was, in effect, a group of words not further divided without loss of essential meaning. It was the

³⁷ Hunt, Grammatical Structures Written at Three Grade Levels, p.21.

³⁸ Walter Loban, Language Development: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, (Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English, 1976).

independent clause and its modifiers.

Because the sentence structures that Loban and Hunt were measuring were quite complex, it was necessary for them to devise an adequate syntactic measurement device.

Evertts³⁹ designed and explored the use of an objective measure to describe children's use of syntax in written communication. She stated that no distinction was made between surface and deep structure for purposes of measurement. Evertts recognized, as well as the present author does, that "...meaning lies beyond the mere sounds or printed marks of language, and cannot be derived from surface structure by any simple or mechanistic process."⁴⁰ The syntactic component of a grammar has both a deep structure (semantic interpretation) and a surface structure (phonetic interpretation). However, for purposes of the present study, measurement was limited to surface structures and not deep structure, or transformations.

The present author employed a modified T-unit, which contained only a noun-verb (subject-predicate) pattern, as a basic measure. The author was aware that "the art of writing

³⁹Eldonna L. Evertts, "An Instrument for the Syntactical Analysis of Children's Compositions," edited by Kenneth S. Goodman, in *The Psycholinguistic Nature of the Reading Process*, pp 201-235, edited by Kenneth S. Goodman (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1968).

⁴⁰Frank Smith, *Understanding Reading*, 2nd ed. (U.S.A.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978), p.71.

involves more than skill in syntactic control. To stop with measuring syntax alone would leave other important areas of evaluation untouched. The T-unit needs to be complemented with qualitative measures..⁴¹ It was not within the scope of the study to evaluate the other important areas mentioned above, such as meaning and the composing process. That limitation was recognized and accepted and no other qualitative measures were used. Rather, "correctness of form" was the sole measurement.

Concluding Statement

A review of the literature and research revealed limited sources of studies similar to the present one, because the present one concentrated mainly on form and correctness, rather than maturity of sentence structure. Also, studies after 1977, which would have been relevant to the present study, were few. The fact that related material was lacking, proved to be a reason in itself for carrying out the present study. The purpose of this section was to provide an overview of studies that were available and explain how particular elements of the various studies provided a basis for the present study.

⁴¹Sara W. Lundsteen, ed. Help for the Teacher of Written Composition: New Directions in Research (Illinois: National Council on Research in English, 1976), p.54.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to ascertain if the teaching and practicing of sentence building by means of teaching specific sentence patterns with accompanying capitalization and punctuation would result in the increase of the use of these sentence patterns to the written narrative compositions of a sample of second grade children. This chapter describes the sample used and how the data was collected and analysed. The statistical procedure which was used is described along with a description of the teaching method.

Statement of the Hypothesis

The hypothesis to be tested was stated in the Null-hypothesis form. The ratios of the capitalized and modified T-units (T_1) to the total number of modified T-units (including those not capitalized or punctuated - $T_1 + T_2$) found in the narrative writings of grade two students will not differ significantly. The comparison was made between the control group and a matched group receiving experimental treatment.

Sources for Data

The group of children for this study was drawn from a heterogeneous second grade, open area classroom at Wayoata School, in Transcona, Manitoba. The presiding teachers had the class divided into three groups for purposes of reading: a top, a middle, and a low group. Three reading series were employed. The top readers used the Ginn Integrated Language Program¹. The middle group used the Ginn and Company Starting Points in Language Arts², and the low group used the New Open Highway Series³.

Not all of these series taught sentence structure as part of their integral program. The New Open Highways Series was quite phonics-oriented and dealt negligibly with sentence structure. This reading series was used by the low group. The Starting Points program was an integrated program involving four interdependent functions of language, listening, speaking and writing, which were to be taught simultaneously. The program definitely provided for work in sentence

¹Martha Kambeitz, Guidebook for the Level Three Program Rockets Away, (Toronto: Ginn and Company, 1969).

²Martha Kambeitz and Carol Roth, Teacher's Guidebook for Starting Points in Language Arts Level Three (Toronto: Ginn and Company, 1977).

³Ida Mae Johnson et al, The New Open Highways Teacher's Edition: A Manual for Use with "Seeking Adventures," (Toronto: Gage Educational Publishers, Ltd., 1974).

awareness by utilizing such elements as punctuation, sentence word order, descriptive words and discrimination between finished and unfinished sentences. Awareness of subject and predicate was begun in level four with "name" words and "doing" words.

The Ginn Integrated Program is an updated version of the Starting Points program and also involved the simultaneous teaching of listening, speaking, reading and writing. It was meant to be a complete language arts program. It contained lessons to develop the sentence concept, awareness of sentence patterning, punctuation and parts of speech such as "descriptive" words.

Therefore, some of the students, at least, were being taught, or being made aware of, some aspects of sentence structure by means of their reading series. The "low" group's reading series seemed to place much less emphasis on this aspect. For the sample, thirty-eight children were chosen, on the basis of their pre-test scores, for a total of nineteen children each in both the experimental and the control groups.

Some pilot work was done ahead of time to assure that grade two children's writings would be appropriate to the present study. Written narratives from grade two students in three different schools were obtained. One of the schools was located in a high socioeconomic area of the city. The writings contained the type of structures appropriate for the experiment. Most of the sentences were of the noun-verb

pattern and the lack of initial capitalization and end punctuation was evident. The author was satisfied that grade two students would be appropriate for the experiment.

Limitations of the Sample

Because the study was limited to one group of grade two students, the sample was not representative of the total population but limited to this group only. The number in each group was small ($N=19$). The variables of socioeconomic status, intelligence and sex were not controlled. The control group contained twelve males and seven females; the experimental group contained eleven males and eight females. Because of these restrictions, any generalizations or conclusions drawn must be confined only to this particular group of students.

Collecting the Data

All forty-eight children in the open area, as a group, were asked to write three separate stories of at least four lines in length for each story. Narration, or storytelling, was used as it is in that particular mode that most simple sentences are commonly used.⁴ The samples were obtained at one week intervals.

The first story was about ghosts, the second story was about a stormy day and the third about a child finding a wish bag. The motivation for the first story was

⁴Lois V. Johnson, "Children's Writing in Three Forms of Composition," Elementary English 44 (March 1967), p.269.

provided by playing a record of scary, haunted house sound effects. The children were asked to write a story about being in a haunted house. Motivation for the second story was provided for by the classroom teachers, on the occasion of a snow blizzard. The teachers' directions were the same as the investigator's. The teachers knew that the stories were to be narrative in nature.

The motivation for the last story was provided by the investigator. A handsomely decorated velvet drawstring bag was presented to the class as being magic. It was suggested that a child found the bag and could have his wish granted. They were then asked to write a story about a child finding the bag. The only directions were that the stories be at least four lines in length and that they did not have to concern themselves with spelling. These three samples acted as a pre-test, in the sense that the experimental and control groups were formed on the basis of the data from these samples.

At the end of the experiment, all the children in the open area were again asked to write three separate narrations, at three different times. The directions were the same. The topics were about the lightbulb that never turned off, bringing a baby home, and the day all the snow melted. The author provided motivation for the first story with a picture of a light bulb, asking what might happen if there was a lightbulb that would never turn off. The motivation

for the second and third stories were provided by the classroom teachers. This was necessitated by the fact that the investigator was giving birth to a child at that point in time and was not able to be in the classroom. Obviously, this incident provided the motivation for the second story. The third story, about the snow melting, was motivated by a wish to have an exceptionally long winter end. The teachers followed the same procedures as for the first set of stories.

The first twenty-five words of each story (including the words up to the end of the last T-unit in the group, even if it exceeded twenty-five words) were analysed. Therefore, each child provided three seventy-five word written samples both before and after the study.

Analysis of the Data

The first twenty-five words of each story provided a sample of an average of seventy-five written words for each student, both before and after the study, for the control and experimental groups.

The first set of samples served as a pre-test to form two matched groups. Then the writings of the children in the two groups were analysed from the post-test sampling. The samples of writing were analysed with respect to the numbers of modified T-units contained in each. As previously stated, modified T-units, for purposes of this study, referred to minimal terminable syntactic units (main clause) which contained a noun-verb pattern, in a subject-predicate order, and may or may not have had a subordinate clause attached to it.

The total numbers of two types of modified T-units were being recorded: those which had both initial capitalization and end punctuation (T_1) and those which were missing either initial capitalization, end punctuation, or both (T_2). See Appendix A for examples of analysis of student writing. From those scores, a ratio of the modified T_1 units to the combined totals of the modified T_1 and T_2 units for each student was formed:

$$\frac{T_1}{T_1 + T_2} = \text{T-unit ratio score}$$

The results were then converted to decimal scores and referred to as T-unit ratio scores.

Treatment of the Data

The scores of the seventy-five word samples, obtained before the study took place, were used to form two comparable groups. A control group and an experimental group were formed on the basis of the pre-test T-unit ratio scores:

$$\frac{T_1}{T_1 + T_2} = \text{T-unit ratio score}$$

Matched pairs were formed. Each pair had one experimental group member (y) and one control group member (x) who had identical scores. When there were more than two members with identical scores, the pairs were randomly selected. A total of nineteen pairs were selected. The others were rejected as not having scores which could be matched. The nineteen sets of scores are shown on Table 3.01.

The seventy-five word samples of the two groups, obtained at the end of the experiment, were analysed for their T-units ratios. See Table 3.02 for the post-experiment T-unit ratio scores. The results were submitted to a sign test to determine if the differences between the two groups were significant in nature. Table 3.03 shows the comparison of the pre-test and post-test T-unit ratio scores within the control and experimental groups.

The Sign Test

The method of analysis used in the study was a sign test, used to determine if the differences between pairs of observations are significant in nature. The basic rationale involved is that "...if two groups of related subjects are contrasted when the Null-hypothesis holds true, there should be approximately half of one group judged better or greater than the other group. If a markedly greater proportion of one group is favored, the sign test detects the existence of a significant difference."⁵

A sign test is a procedure by which matched pairs are contrasted so that one member of each pair can be identified as superior (by a plus or minus value) to the other. However, there is no decision as to the degree of superiority. When the Null-hypothesis holds true, there should be approximately

⁵W. James Popham and Kenneth A. Sirotnik, Educational Statistics: Use and Interpretation, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1973), p.275.

TABLE 3.01

MATCHED T-UNIT RATIO SCORES OF PRE-TEST WRITTEN
SAMPLES OF BOTH EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS

Student Number	Experimental Control	
	y	x
1	0	0
2	0	0
3	0	0
4	0	0
5	0	0
6	0	0
7	.1	.1
8	.1	.1
9	.1	.1
10	.11	.11
11	.13	.13
12	.18	.18
13	.2	.2
14	.23	.22
15	.3	.3
16	.5	.5
17	.5	.5
18	.8	.8
19	1.	1.
<hr/>		
Total	4.25	4.24
<hr/>		
Mean	.22	.22
<hr/>		
S.D.	1.30	1.30
<hr/>		

one-half of one group judged better or greater than the other group. On the basis of chance there should be an equal number of plus and minus differences. If one group is greater in proportion than the other, the sign test will detect the existence of a statistically significant difference.

Further qualitative analysis was done in five areas:
on the relationship between reading group placement and post

TABLE 3.02
POST EXPERIMENT T-UNIT RATIO SCORES
FOR EACH OF THE MATCHED PAIRS

Student Number	Experimental Control	
	y	x
1	.29	0
2	.09	.2
3	0	0
4	.33	0
5	.73	0
6	.25	0
7	.13	0
8	0	0
9	.77	.5
10	.8	.38
11	.17	.2
12	.09	.2
13	.58	.2
14	.09	.67
15	.22	.27
16	.22	.82
17	.7	0
18	1.	.7
19	.36	.8
<hr/>		
Total	6.82	4.94
<hr/>		
Mean	.36	.26
<hr/>		
S.D.	3.79	2.58

T-unit ratio scores; on the difference in number of T_1 's and T_2 's between the experimental and control groups pre- and post-experiment scores; on the comparison of pre-test and post-test T-unit ratio scores for boys and girls; on the percentage of T_1 's found in the total number of T's both before and after the experiment; and an analysis of the number of sentence fragments and other sentence patterns

TABLE 3.03

COMPARISON OF PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST T-UNIT RATIO
SCORES OF BOTH THE CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS

Student	Control Group		Experimental Group	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
1	0	0	0	.29
2	0	.2	0	.09
3	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	0	.33
5	0	0	0	.73
6	0	0	0	.25
7	.1	0	.1	.13
8	.1	0	.1	0
9	.1	.5	.1	.77
10	.11	.38	.11	.8
11	.13	.2	.13	.17
12	.18	.2	.18	.09
13	.2	.2	.2	.58
14	.22	.67	.23	.09
15	.3	.27	.3	.22
16	.5	.82	.5	.22
17	.5	0	.5	.7
18	.8	.7	.8	1.
19	1.	.8	1.	.36
Total	4.24	4.94	4.25	6.82
Mean	.22	.26	.22	.3589
S.D.	1.30	2.58	1.30	3.79

used in the samples by the children.

Method

Time and Setting

The experiment took place over a period of six weeks. During the time of experimental instruction the control group was allowed to work on other schoolwork not related to sentence composition. The experimental group was removed to a separate room each time for instruction. There was nothing unusual in this because

the children were accustomed to going to different rooms for different subjects. The group met three times during a six day cycle for a total of six weeks. They met on days one, four and six for a period of twenty minutes each time. The experiment covered a total of fifteen lessons. As was stated, written samples of writing were obtained both before and after the experiment.

Teaching Procedure

The teaching method was one of moving from the concrete and experiential understanding to the more abstract process of writing. As many devices as possible were employed to help in classifying the various parts of the sentence pattern being taught.

Learning Stages

Each new part of the pattern being learnt was developed through three stages: oral, visual and written. In the oral stage, the part of the pattern being learnt was dramatized by the children. After that, oral practice was provided. The next stage was the visual stage, in which the various parts of the patterns were assigned colour values (for the sake of facilitating classification). Also, the children were encouraged to depict their view of the patterns through pictures or were provided with pictorial representations. In the third stage, the written stage, the children produced and wrote their own samples. The order of these three Stages were always followed for each new part of the sentence pattern introduced.



Lesson Plan

There were fifteen lessons. Each lesson adhered to the following format:

1. Review of the previous work, if any.
2. Introduction and preparation for presenting the new material.
3. Development of the Idea by moving from the concrete to the abstract.
4. Reinforcement or practice to fix the new idea.

Lesson Content

The sentence pattern taught was the noun-verb, subject-predicate pattern. The various parts were taught in the following order:

- nouns
- verbs
- noun-verb
- article
- article-noun-verb
- adjective
- article-adjective-noun-verb
- adverb
- article-adjective-noun-verb-adverb

Initial capitalization and end punctuation was stressed at all times. To assist in classification, the various parts were assigned colours. The parts and their colours were represented on a simple wall chart which was developed as the lessons progressed. The parts of speech were represented

by the following colours: (See Appendix C)

noun - green
verb - red
article - yellow
adjective - blue
adverb - orange

There were a total of fifteen lessons, each one following the format of four elements: Review, Introduction, Development of Idea and Reinforcement. The fifteen lessons are presented in Appendix B.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study attempted to ascertain if the teaching and practicing of sentence building by means of teaching specific patterns, complete with accompanying initial capitalization and end punctuation, would result in the increase of the use of these complete sentence patterns in the written narratives of a sample of second grade children.

The hypothesis to be tested was stated in the Null-hypothesis form. The ratios of the capitalized and modified T-units (T_1) to the total number of modified T-units (including those not capitalized or punctuated - $T_1 + T_2$) found in the narrative writings of grade two students will not differ significantly. The comparison was made between the control group and a matched group receiving experimental treatment. The results of the study are presented in this chapter.

Sample

A total of thirty-eight grade two students from a heterogeneously grouped open area classroom were used for the study. Half became the control group and the other half the experimental group. The two groups were formed into

matched pairs on the basis of their pre-test T-unit ratio scores. The experimental group was taught three days out of a six day cycle for approximately six weeks. Each lesson was twenty minutes in length. The experimental group was taken to a separate room each time while the control group remained in the classroom to work on school work unrelated to language arts.

Content

The experimental group was taught the parts of a specific sentence pattern, the noun-verb (subject-predicate) pattern. The pattern was always taught as being a complete unit, in conjunction with correct capitalization and end punctuation. This pattern was chosen because it is one of the most frequently used syntactic patterns at this age level. The lessons dealt with nouns, verbs, articles, adjectives, adverbs and how these elements combined into various noun-verb patterns. At all times, initial capitalization and end punctuation were stressed as elements of a complete sentence.

Method

The method involved the development of the content by stages. Each aspect was first developed orally by dramatization and oral practice. The items were then visualized with the aid of colour codes and actual pictorial representations. And last, the more abstract process of writing sentences was

obtained through actual writing and creating on the part of the child.

Rationale

Children at this age group use an excessive amount of run-on sentences and connectives, such as "and", in their sentence writing. They also frequently omit initial capitalization and end punctuation¹. The purpose of this study was to determine if these error tendencies could be minimized in their narrative writings by the teaching of a common syntactic pattern, the noun-verb pattern, complete with initial capitalization and end punctuation, as one complete unit. The narrative mode of writing was chosen to encourage the greatest number of simple sentences². The noun-verb pattern was chosen because it has been shown to be a high frequency paradigm of young children³. Also, as evaluation was limited to surface structures, simple patterns facilitated the measurements involved.

Data

Seventy-five word samples of narrative writings of the whole open area classroom were obtained prior to the beginning

¹Chet Mazur, Young Writers' Error Tendency (-:ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 134 987, 1976).

²Lois V. Johnson, "Children's Writing in Three Forms of Composition," Elementary English 44 (March 1967), p.267.

³Roy C. O'Donnell, William J. Griffin and Raymond C. Norris, Syntax of Kindergarten and Elementary School Children: A Transformational Analysis (Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1967), p.74.

of the experiment. Written samples were again obtained at the end of the experiment. Both pre- and post-narratives were analysed for the number of modified T-units they contained. A ratio of the number of capitalized and punctuated T-units (T_1) to the combined number of uncapitalized or non-punctuated (or both) T-units (T_2) plus the capitalized and punctuated T-units (T_1) was found and converted to a decimal score:

$$\frac{\text{capitalized and punctuated T-units } (T_1)}{\text{capitalized and punctuated T-units } (T_1) + \text{uncapitalized and/or non-punctuated T-units } (T_2)} = \text{T-unit ratio score}$$

From the first set of scores, nineteen matched pairs were formulated to form the basis of the experimental and control group. The second set of scores, for both the control and the experimental groups, were submitted to a sign test.

Sign Test

The dependent samples sign test is a test for matched pairs in which one is identified as superior to the other by a plus value. It is based on the hypothesis that there are, on the basis of chance, an equal number of plus and minus differences. Therefore, if one group of values is greater in proportion than the other, the sign test should reveal if the difference is significant.

n = number of pairs in the sample

S_1 = number of times the less frequent sign is observed

α = level of significance

S_1 must be less than or equal to the critical value which is significant at the given α level. In the sample given (see Table 4.01) there were nineteen pairs. The scores represented the students' post-experiment T-unit ratio scores. Two scores were ignored (numbers three and eight) as they had no plus or minus values. That left seventeen scores. Of the seventeen, ten had a plus value and seven had a minus value. S_1 (the number of times the less frequent sign is observed) must be less than or equal to the critical value which is significant at the given α level. From a table of critical values of S_1 ⁴ the critical value which is significant was looked up. For an "n" of seventeen, the minuses, at the five percent level, for the one-tailed hypothesis, would have had to be less than or equal to the number four.

Results

The S_1 was seven, not less than or equal to the critical value of four (see Table 4.01). Therefore, the obtained value of seven resulted in a failure to reject the Null-hypothesis that the distribution of plus and minus signs differ significantly from equality. The one-tailed probability reached a level of only .315. The Null-hypothesis stated that the ratios of the capitalized and modified T-units (T_1) to the total number of modified T-units (including those not

⁴Robert Fried, Introduction to Statistics, revised ed. (New York: Gardner Press, Inc., 1976), p.281.

capitalized or punctuated - $T_1 + T_2$) found in the narrative writings of grade two students will not differ significantly. The comparison was made between the control group and a matched group receiving experimental treatment.

TABLE 4.01

POST EXPERIMENT T-UNIT RATIO SCORES AND ACCOMPANYING
SIGN TEST VALUES FOR EACH OF THE MATCHED PAIRS

	Experimental y	Control x	Difference	Value
1	.29	0	.29	+
2	.09	.2	-.11	-
3	0	0	0	0
4	.33	0	.33	+
5	.73	0	.73	+
6	.25	0	.25	+
7	.13	0	.13	+
8	0	0	0	0
9	.77	.5	.27	+
10	.8	.38	.42	+
11	.17	.2	-.03	-
12	.09	.2	-.11	-
13	.58	.2	.38	+
14	.09	.67	-.58	-
15	.22	.27	-.05	-
16	.22	.82	-.6	-
17	.7	0	.7	+
18	1.	.7	.3	+
19	.36	.8	-.44	-
Mean	.36	.26		
S.D.	3.79	2.58		
n = 17		S ₁ = 7		
α = .05		Critical value = 4		

Teaching and having children practice a specific noun-verb sentence pattern, complete with initial capitalization

and end punctuation, did not result in a statistically significant increase in the use of the same pattern in children's narrative writing. Therefore, the alternate research hypothesis could not be accepted. The ratios of the capitalized and punctuated modified T-units (T_1) to the total number of modified T-units (including those not capitalized or punctuated - $T_1 + T_2$) found in the narrative writings of grade two students will not differ significantly. The comparison was made between the control group and a matched group receiving experimental treatment. Tables 4.02 and 4.03 present the pre- and post-test raw scores for the T-unit ratios.

Other Qualitative Data

Other data was qualitatively analysed. Five areas were examined: the relationship of reading group placement to T-unit ratio scores; the number of T_1 's and T_2 's in pre- and post-test samples; relationships of the number of T-units before and after the experiment; a comparison of pre- and post-test ratio scores with the sex of the students; and the number of sentence fragments and other sentence patterns in pre- and post-test samples of both experimental and control students.

1) Relationship of reading group placement to T-unit ratio scores

An analysis of the data of the experimental group revealed that improvement of T-unit ratio scores were not

TABLE 4.02

PRE-TEST RAW SCORES OF THE RATIO OF T_1 'S TO THE
COMBINED NUMBERS OF T_1 'S AND T_2 'S

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Experimental y	$\frac{0}{12}$	$\frac{0}{10}$	$\frac{0}{11}$	$\frac{0}{12}$	$\frac{0}{12}$	$\frac{0}{13}$	$\frac{1}{15}$	$\frac{1}{12}$	$\frac{1}{10}$	$\frac{1}{9}$	$\frac{1}{8}$	$\frac{2}{11}$	$\frac{2}{10}$	$\frac{3}{13}$	$\frac{2}{7}$	$\frac{4}{8}$	$\frac{5}{11}$	$\frac{10}{12}$	$\frac{9}{10}$
Control x	$\frac{0}{5}$	$\frac{0}{10}$	$\frac{0}{11}$	$\frac{0}{12}$	$\frac{0}{12}$	$\frac{0}{13}$	$\frac{1}{11}$	$\frac{1}{11}$	$\frac{1}{10}$	$\frac{1}{9}$	$\frac{1}{8}$	$\frac{2}{11}$	$\frac{2}{9}$	$\frac{2}{9}$	$\frac{3}{10}$	$\frac{6}{12}$	$\frac{3}{6}$	$\frac{6}{8}$	$\frac{16}{16}$

TABLE 4.03

POST-TEST RAW SCORES OF THE RATIO OF T_1 'S TO THE
COMBINED NUMBERS OF T_1 'S AND T_2 'S

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Experimental y	$\frac{5}{17}$	$\frac{1}{11}$	$\frac{0}{12}$	$\frac{3}{9}$	$\frac{8}{11}$	$\frac{4}{12}$	$\frac{2}{15}$	$\frac{0}{12}$	$\frac{7}{9}$	$\frac{8}{10}$	$\frac{2}{12}$	$\frac{1}{11}$	$\frac{7}{12}$	$\frac{1}{11}$	$\frac{2}{9}$	$\frac{2}{9}$	$\frac{7}{10}$	$\frac{12}{12}$	$\frac{4}{11}$
Control x	$\frac{0}{11}$	$\frac{2}{10}$	$\frac{0}{8}$	$\frac{0}{8}$	$\frac{0}{10}$	$\frac{0}{10}$	$\frac{0}{10}$	$\frac{0}{13}$	$\frac{5}{10}$	$\frac{3}{8}$	$\frac{2}{10}$	$\frac{2}{10}$	$\frac{2}{10}$	$\frac{6}{9}$	$\frac{3}{11}$	$\frac{9}{11}$	$\frac{0}{7}$	$\frac{7}{10}$	$\frac{8}{10}$

dependent on reading group placement (see Table 4.04). Of the two low group placements, one improved and one remained the same, in T-unit ratio scores. Of the twelve middle reading group placements, six improved, one remained the same and five showed a reduction in size of T-unit ratio scores. Five students were from the high reading group. Of these, two improved and three did not do as well. For each of the three levels of reading groups, the number of students who improved their T-unit ratio scores was approximately equal to the number of students who did not improve.

Similar findings were found for the control group (see Table 4.05). The low group student's T-unit ratio score stayed the same. Of the fourteen in the middle group, five improved their scores, six stayed the same and three decreased their scores. Four students were from the top group placement. Of these, two increased their scores and two decreased their scores. Reading group placement did not seem to effect any difference in resulting T-unit ratio scores. Table 4.06 shows a breakdown of the above data. A breakdown of the sex of the students is included in Tables 4.04 and 4.05.

2) Number of T₁'s and T₂'s in pre- and post-test samples

The number of pre- and post-test T₁ units, that is, the capitalized and punctuated noun-verb patterns, were tabulated for both groups. The mean number of T₁ units per student was also calculated. Tables 4.07 and 4.08 show this information. Almost twice as many experimental students

TABLE 4.04

RELATIONSHIP OF READING GROUP PLACEMENT OF EXPERIMENTAL STUDENTS TO THEIR PERFORMANCE ON T-UNIT RATIO SCORES

Experimental Students	Sex	Reading Group Placement	Pre-test Ratio Scores	Post-test Score	Value of Ratio Scores
1	M	middle	0	.29	+
2	M	middle	0	.09	+
3	M	middle	0	0	0
4	M	middle	0	.33	+
5	F	low	0	.73	+
6	F	middle	0	.25	+
7	M	low	.1	.13	0
8	M	middle	.1	0	-
9	F	middle	.1	.77	-
10	F	middle	.11	.8	-
11	M	middle	.13	.17	+
12	F	middle	.18	.09	-
13	M	high	.2	.58	+
14	M	high	.23	.09	-
15	F	middle	.3	.22	-
16	F	high	.5	.22	-
17	M	middle	.5	.7	+
18	F	high	.83	1.	+
19	M	high	1.	.36	-

M = 11
F = 8

(twelve) as control students (seven) increased their T_1 units. The mean T_1 for the experimental group changed from 2.21 to 4, while the mean T_1 for the control group virtually stayed the same, moving from 2.36 to 2.57. This was important to the experiment as an increase or decrease in T_1 units was being measured. The results suggest that the use of T_1 units was indeed being exhibited. Especially as the mean T_2 's for both groups remained almost the same.

Tables 4.09 and 4.10 show the number of T_2 's found in the

TABLE 4.05

RELATIONSHIP OF READING GROUP PLACEMENT OF CONTROL
STUDENTS TO THEIR PERFORMANCE OF T-UNIT
RATIO SCORES

Control Students	Sex	Reading Group Placement	Pre-test Ratio Scores	Post-test Score	Value of Ratio Scores
1	M	middle	0	0	0
2	M	middle	0	.2	+
3	F	middle	0	0	0
4	M	middle	0	0	0
5	M	middle	0	0	0
6	M	middle	0	0	0
7	F	middle	.1	0	-
8	F	middle	.1	0	-
9	M	middle	.1	.5	+
10	M	middle	.11	.38	+
11	M	middle	.13	.2	+
12	F	middle	.18	.2	+
13	M	low	.22	.2	0
14	M	high	.22	.67	+
15	M	high	.30	.27	-
16	F	high	.5	.82	+
17	F	middle	.5	0	-
18	M	high	.8	.7	-
19	F	middle	1.	.8	-

M = 12

F = 7

pre- and post-tests of both the experimental and control groups. The T_2 units referred to the modified T-units which were not capitalized or not punctuated, or missing both items. The pre-test mean (8.63) and the post-test mean (8.16) for the experimental group, and the pre-test mean (9.05) and post-test mean (8.94) for the control group showed very little difference respectively. Both groups were producing the same number of T_2 's before and after the experiment. However, the mean number of T_1 's for the experimental group

TABLE 4.06

RELATIONSHIP OF READING GROUP PLACEMENT TO PLUS OR
MINUS VALUE OF T-UNIT RATIO SCORES

	T-unit Ratio Score Increase	T-unit Ratio Score Decrease	T-unit Ratio Score No Change
<u>Low</u>			
Experimental	1	--	1
Control	--	--	1
<u>Middle</u>			
Experimental	6	5	1
Control	5	3	6
<u>High</u>			
Experimental	2	3	--
Control	2	3	--
	16	14	9

doubled by the end of the experiment.

Table 4.11 summarizes the preceeding data. The mean number of T_1 's for the experiment doubled at the end of the experiment, suggesting that the experimental group was indeed using more T_1 units than the control group, as a result of the instruction given.

TABLE 4.07

NUMBER OF T_1 'S FOUND IN EXPERIMENTAL
GROUP'S PRE- AND POST-TESTS

Student Number	Pre-test T_1 's	Post-test T_1 's	Value of Difference
1	0	5	+
2	0	1	+
3	0	0	0
4	0	3	+
5	0	8	+
6	0	4	+
7	1	2	+
8	1	0	-
9	1	7	+
10	1	8	+
11	1	2	+
12	2	1	-
13	2	7	+
14	3	1	-
15	2	2	0
16	4	2	-
17	5	7	+
18	10	12	+
19	9	4	-
Mean	2.21	4	

3) Relationship of the T-units to pre- and post-test results

Table 4.12 shows the number of students who either increased, decreased or remained constant in their use of the T_1 and T_2 units. More experimental students increased their use of T_1 units (twelve students) than the control group did (seven students). At the same time, more control students (eight) remained unchanged in their use of T_1 units than the experimental students (two). An analysis of the T_2 units pointed out that the control students increased their use of T_2 units (ten students) more so than the experimental

TABLE 4.08

NUMBER OF T_1 'S FOUND IN CONTROL GROUP'S
PRE- AND POST-TESTS

Student Number	Pre-test T_1 's	Post-test T_1 's	Value of Difference
1	0	0	0
2	0	2	+
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	1	0	0
8	1	0	-
9	1	0	-
10	1	5	+
11	1	3	+
12	1	2	+
13	2	2	0
14	2	2	0
15	3	6	+
16	6	3	0
17	3	9	+
18	6	0	-
19	16	7	+
		8	-
Mean	2.36	2.57	

students (seven students). The data definitely suggests that the experimental group was utilizing the T_1 unit more often than the control group was. Table 4.13 also points this out. The experimental group increased its use of the T_1 unit from 20% to 52% of the total T-units as compared to a percentage increase of only 1.54% for the control group.

4) Comparison of pre- and post-test ratio scores to the sex of the students

In the experimental group the mean score for the males remained almost unchanged (from .21 to .25). The females for

TABLE 4.09

NUMBER OF T₂'S FOUND IN THE EXPERIMENTAL
GROUP'S PRE- AND POST-TESTS

Student Number	Pre-test T ₂ 's	Post-test T ₂ 's	Value of Difference
1	12	12	0
2	10	10	0
3	11	12	+
4	12	6	-
5	12	3	-
6	13	12	-
7	14	13	-
8	11	12	+
9	9	2	-
10	8	2	-
11	7	10	+
12	9	10	+
13	8	5	-
14	10	10	0
15	5	7	+
16	4	7	+
17	6	3	-
18	2	1	-
19	1	7	+
Mean	8.63	8.16	

the experimental group more than doubled their mean score (from .24 to .51). This data could lead to suppositions about the female student's greater ability to grasp and use the concept of sentence patterning. This is especially possible in view of the fact that the males and females both had similar pre-test mean ratios (males = .21, females = .24). See Table 4.14. A comparison of the control group's scores did not reveal any great differences due to sex (see Table 4.15).

TABLE 4.10

NUMBER OF T₂'S FOUND IN THE CONTROL GROUP'S
PRE- AND POST-TESTS

Student Number	Pre-test T ₂ 's	Post-test T ₂ 's	Value of Difference
1	5	11	+
2	10	8	-
3	11	8	-
4	12	8	-
5	12	10	-
6	12	10	-
7	10	10	0
8	10	13	+
9	9	5	-
10	8	8	0
11	7	8	+
12	9	8	-
13	7	8	+
14	7	9	+
15	7	8	+
16	6	11	+
17	6	7	+
18	8	10	+
19	16	10	+
Mean	9.05	8.94	

5) Sentence fragments and other sentence patterns

The pre- and post-test samples were also analyzed for total number of fragments. "Fragment" was used to mean an incomplete sentence in terms of missing a noun or verb. The samples were also analyzed for total number of other types of sentence patterns such as exclamations and questions. Because there were so few other types, they were all lumped together under the heading of "other patterns". The number of fragments is shown in Table 4.16. The fragments of the experimental group were halved by the end of the experiment.

TABLE 4.11

MEAN NUMBER OF T_1 'S AND T_2 'S PER STUDENT

	Experimental	Control
Pre-test T_1	2.21	2.36
Post-test T_1	4	2.57
Pre-test T_2	8.63	9.05
Post-test T_2	8.16	8.94

TABLE 4.12

DATA SHOWING WHETHER STUDENTS' T_1 AND T_2 UNITS
HAVE INCREASED OR DECREASED DURING THE
EXPERIMENTAL PERIOD

T-unit	Students Showing T-unit Increase	Students Showing T-unit Decrease	Students Showing T-unit Constant	Total Students
T_1 experimental students	12	5	2	19
control students	7	4	8	19
T_2 experimental students	7	9	3	19
control students	10	7	2	19

TABLE 4.13

PERCENT OF T_1 'S, FOR BOTH GROUPS, IN THE TOTAL
NUMBER OF T'S BEFORE AND AFTER THE EXPERIMENT

	T-unit	Pre-test	Post-test
Experimental Group	T_1	42	76
	T_2	164	146
	Total of T_1 & T_2	206	220
	% of T_1 's in total number	20%	52%
Control Group	T_1	45	49
	T_2	172	171
	Total of T_1 & T_2	217	220
	% of T_1 's in total number	20.73%	22.27%

The number decreased from eight to four. The number of fragments of the control group decreased, but not as much as for the experimental group.

The data from Table 4.16 would seem to suggest that the instruction given during the experiment aided the experimental group in completing sentences by including both a noun and verb. Some examples of the fragmented type of sentence follows:

TABLE 4.14

COMPARISON OF PRE- AND POST-TEST T-UNIT RATIO SCORES FOR
THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP, BASED ON SEX OF THE STUDENT

	Male Pre-test Ratio Scores	Male Post-test Ratio Scores	Female Pre-test Ratio Scores	Female Post-test Ratio Scores
	0	.29	0	.73
	0	.09	0	.25
	0	0	.1	.77
	0	.33	.11	.8
	.1	.13	.18	.09
	.1	0	.3	.22
	.13	.17	.5	.22
	.2	.58	.83	1.
	.23	.09		
	.5	.7		
	1.	.36		
Total	2.26	2.74	Total 1.93	4.08
Mean	.21	.25	Mean .24	.51

(1) "And at night were the little baby slept."

(2) "and showed my mom"

(3) "you have to a bottle"

Table 4.17 shows the change in the number of other patterns from the pre- to post-test samples. It is important to note that in the experimental group the amount of other patterns was almost eliminated at the end of the experiment, decreasing from fifteen patterns to two. The difference in numbers was suggestive of the possibility that the experiment did have some effect upon the types of patterns written.

Some examples of the "other types" of sentences are:

(1) "what a scary sight"

TABLE 4.15

COMPARISON OF PRE AND POST TEST T UNIT RATIO SCORES FOR
THE CONTROL GROUP, BASED ON SEX OF THE STUDENT

	Male Pre-test Ratio Scores	Male Post-test Ratio Scores	Female Pre-test Ratio Scores	Female Post-test Ratio Scores
	0	.2	.1	0
	.1	.5	.1	0
	.11	.38	.18	.2
	.13	.2	.5	.82
	.22	.2	.5	0
	.22	.67	1.	.8
	.30	.27		
	.8	.7		
Total	1.88	3.12	Total 2.38	1.82
Mean	.16	.26	Mean .34	.26

TABLE 4.16

TOTAL NUMBER OF FRAGMENTED SENTENCES FOUND IN
PRE- AND POST-TEST SAMPLES OF EXPERIMENTAL
AND CONTROL GROUPS

	Pre-test	Post-test
Experimental	8	4
Control	7	5

- (2) "oh no"
- (3) "off you go"
- (4) "open it"
- (5) "So do I"
- (6) "who said that"

TABLE 4.17

TOTAL NUMBER OF OTHER SENTENCE PATTERNS FOUND
IN PRE- AND POST-TEST WRITING SAMPLES OF BOTH
EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS

	Pre-test	Post-test
Experimental	15	2
Control	11	8

Summary

The purpose of the investigation was to devise a way to enable children to increase the number of correctly punctuated and capitalized noun-verb sentences in their narrative writings. Although more children improved than did not improve, the number was not large enough to be of statistical significance.

However, that does not mean that the results of the study were not educationally relevant to the classroom. The average T_1 unit (correctly capitalized and punctuated noun-verb pattern) count doubled for each experimental student. Usage of other patterns in the sample writings were almost eliminated in the post-test scoring. Also, almost twice as many experimental students increased their number of T_1 's as compared to the control students. The above data suggests that certain things were happening in the classroom and that perhaps the students were learning something, although not of a statistically significant amount.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This study was an examination into the possibility of reducing the error tendency of young grade two children to omit initial capitalization and end punctuation in their written work by means of teaching them and having them practice correctly punctuated and capitalized noun-verb patterns.

The hypothesis to be tested was stated in the Null-hypothesis form. The ratios of the capitalized and modified T-units (T_1) to the total number of modified T-units (including those not capitalized or punctuated - $T_1 + T_2$) found in the narrative writings of grade two students will not differ significantly. The comparison was made between the control group and a matched group receiving experimental treatment.

Two matched groups were chosen from an open area classroom of forty-eight students from Wayoata School, in Transcona, Manitoba. Nineteen matched pairs were formed on the basis of T-unit ratio scores which were derived from samples of their written narratives. Further qualitative analysis was done on the relationships of reading groupings

to T-unit ratio scores; on differences in pre- and post-test T-units (both the capitalized and punctuated T_1 unit and the T_2 unit which has part or all of the capitalization and punctuation missing); relationships of the numbers of T-units before and after the experiment; a comparison of pre- and post-test ratio scores for boys and girls; and the amount of other sentence patterns in pre- and post-test writings.

For a period of six weeks the experimental group was taught certain specific noun-verb patterns and how to correctly capitalize and punctuate them. At the end of the testing time new written samples of the children's narratives were obtained and again analysed for their T-unit ratio scores. The results were subjected to a sign test to determine if the existence of a statistically significant difference could be found.

The purpose of this chapter is to state the limitations of the study, discuss findings and to interpret the results. Implications of this study are presented and considerations for further research are offered. The chapter ends with a summary and conclusion.

Limitations of the Study

The results from this study should be generalized to only this one particular experimental group of grade two children. The length of time for the study was short (six weeks) and the children were seen only three times during a

six day cycle for a total of fifteen lessons. However, other studies have been shorter. Tillie Hilfman¹ practiced sentence expansion techniques with grade two children for only four weeks with two twenty-minute sessions per week and obtained sentence and clause length increases. Of course, the children involved were bright children. The children in the present study were not screened for variables such as reading ability or sex.

The study was limited by its analysis of only one sentence pattern, the noun-verb pattern. It has been shown to be one of the most frequently used patterns in the written work of young elementary school children. This has been substantiated in studies done by Evertts² and O'Donnell³.

The study concentrated on only one particular mode of writing, the narrative mode. This was chosen as a means of procuring a maximum number of noun-verb sentences. Narrative writing seems to be the type of writing which produces the required sentence patterns⁴. The author found only one

¹Tillie Hilfman, "Can Second Grade Children Write More Complex Sentences?" Elementary English 47 (February 1970):209-214.

²Eldonna Evertts, The Nebraska Study of the Syntax of Children's Writing (-:ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 013 814, 1967), p.40.

³Roy C. O'Donnell, William J. Griffin and Raymond C. Norris, Syntax of Kindergarten and Elementary School Children: A Transformational Analysis (Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1967), p.74.

⁴Lois V. Johnson, "Children's Writing in Three Forms of Composition," Elementary English 44 (March 1967):265-269.

other study focusing on the narration mode and that involved speech.⁵

Another limitation was the smallness of the sample (N=19). Most studies on syntax included a large number of students. The type of statistical analysis, a sign test, did not allow for the measuring of any degree of difference. Also, such a test could only suggest directions that the research might lead to. In this way, generalizations from the results of the study were limited by the statistical procedure necessitated by the design of the study. Chomsky stated that:

"... the syntactic component of a grammar must for each sentence, a deep structure that determines its semantic interpretation and a surface structure that determines its phonetic interpretation."⁶

The author of the present study recognized the existence of these structures but the scope of the study, as an inquiry into the correctness of form, limited analysis to surface structure only. Other authors have developed instruments for measurement of syntax in which no distinction is made between deep and surface structure. Eldonna Evertts instrument of "Syntactical Analysis of Children's Composition"⁷ is an example of such an instrument.

⁵Mike Pope, "The Syntax of Fourth Graders' Narrative and Explanatory Speech," Research in the teaching of English 9 (Spring 1975):219-227.

⁶Noam Chomsky, "Methodological Preliminaries," in Readings in the Psychology of Language, ed. Leon A. Jakobovits and Murray S. Miron (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), p.95.

⁷Eldonna L. Evertts, "An Instrument for the Syntactical Analysis of Children's Compositions," in The Psycholinguistic Nature of the Reading Process, ed. Kenneth S. Goodman (Detroit Wayne State University Press, 1968), p.205.

Discussion of Findings

As the Null-hypothesis had to be accepted, the alternate research hypothesis was not accepted. Contrary to the investigator's hypothesis that there would be a statistically significant difference between the writings of the control group and the experimental group, there was none. True, there was a difference, but not at the .05 level of significance. Only ten of the nineteen children showed an improvement on the number of modified T-units in their writings.

Analysis of other qualitative data revealed some interesting trends:

1. Relation of T-unit ratios to reading placement

The T-unit ratios seemed to function independently of reading group placement. Although the variable of reading ability had not been controlled, the two groups were fairly evenly distributed as to low, middle and high reading group placement (as designated by their teachers). In both the experimental and control groups, approximately half improved their scores and half did not.

2. Analysis of number of T-units

The number of T₂ units (units either not punctuated, not capitalized, or not punctuated and not capitalised) for the control group and the experimental group did not differ when compared to each other and did not differ in pre- and post-test results. However, the analysis of the numbers of

T₁ units showed very different results.

Almost twice as many experimental students (12) as control students (7) increased their number of T₁ units. Also, the mean number of T₁ units per student doubled for the experimental group, and remained constant for the control group. This finding suggested that the experimental students were learning to use the T₁ sentence pattern involved (capitalized and punctuated noun-verb paradigm) but that the information was not reflected in an analysis of the T-unit ratio scores. This is further substantiated by the fact that the percent of T₁'s for the pre- and post-test results of the control group remained unchanged, while the percentage of the T₁'s of the experimental group increased from twenty percent to fifty-two percent.

3. Relationship of mean T₁ scores to the sex of the student

The girls in the experimental group more than doubled their mean T₁ score as compared to the boys in that group. The control group showed no such similar gain. Other studies such as Fox's⁸ and Ciani's⁹ have not been able to show differences in syntactical maturity related to sex. However, this study was concerned only with learning the correct form of one particular pattern.

⁸Sharon E. Fox, "Syntactic Maturity and Vocabulary Diversity in the Oral Language of Kindergarten and Primary School Children," Elementary English 49 (April 1972:495).

⁹Alfred J. Ciani, "Syntactic Maturity and Vocabulary Diversity in the Oral Language of First, Second, and Third Grade Students," Research in the Teaching of English 10 (Fall 1976), pp 150-156.

4. Analysis of other sentence patterns

A fourth interesting observation was that the use of other sentence patterns was almost eliminated in the post-test writings of the experimental group (from a total of five to two) and the total number of sentence fragments (missing a noun or verb) was halved. This finding suggested that the instruction involved in the experiment may have been instrumental in eliminating patterns other than the noun-verb pattern and its derivatives.

Because the results of the study relate to correctness of form, it is often difficult to relate the findings to other studies, which deal mainly with syntactic maturity.

The results of the study were not statistically significant ($P=.315$) but an analysis of relevant data suggested that the results of the study have some educationally significant relevance to the classroom.

Implications and Further Considerations

The study showed that teaching a group of grade two children specific capitalized and punctuated noun-verb sentence patterns made no statistically significant difference in the use of such punctuated patterned units in their narrative writings.

Analysis of other qualitative data, however, had certain implications. A comparison of the scores of the experimental group revealed that the mean number of T_1 units doubled. Also, almost twice as many experimental

students as control students increased their number of T_1 units; and the percent of T_1 's for the experimental group more than doubled. The preceding data suggests that many of the experimental students were learning the pattern (as an analysis of T_1 scores show) but that they were not applying the pattern to their compositions, as shown by the fact that the Null-hypothesis was not rejected.

It may well be possible that through direct instruction the experimental group was increasing its sensitivity to the particular noun-verb syntactic structure. However, the increased sensitivity did not lead to a parallel use of the pattern in their communication skills. O'Donnell and Smith,¹⁰ in a short four week trial of teaching syntactic structures, came to a similar conclusion.

The fact that the T_1 scores of the female students in the experimental group more than doubled their mean T_1 scores as compared to their male counterparts was an interesting outcome of the study. What was the cause? The investigator can only guess. Perhaps female students learn better by this means of instruction than males do. It is an interesting aspect of the experiment which leaves many avenues open to further areas of research.

The use of other sentence patterns had been almost eliminated from the experimental group's post-test writings.

¹⁰Roy C. O'Donnell and William L. Smith, "Increasing Ninth-Grade Students' Awareness of Syntactic Structure Through Direct Instruction," Research in the Teaching of English 9 (Fall 1975), pp 257-262.

The children were definitely making more use of the T₁ units in their writings, often to the exclusion of other sentence patterns.

However, the fact remains that the Null-hypothesis was not rejected, and the experiment did not greatly affect the use of the structures in the children's written work. This result may be attributed to one of two reasons. The study may have failed to show a statistically significant difference either because of the content used or the method employed.

Perhaps the content of the experiment, "grammatical usage", is something that cannot be taught. There is much empirical evidence to show that there is no connection between instruction in linguistic description and the performance of literate skills.¹¹ This present study seemed to have been just one more added piece of evidence. Andrew Wilkinson, in Foundations of Language,¹² points out that traditional grammar learning does not relate positively to the improvement of composition writing of children. Smith and Goodman, in Language and Thinking In School,¹³

¹¹Peter S. Rosenbaum, "On the Role of Linguistics in the Teaching of English," in Language and Learning: Investigations and Interpretations, ed. Dolores Burton (Cambridge: Harvard Educational Review, 1972, p.4.

¹²Andrew Wilkinson, Foundations of Language, (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp 32-35.

¹³Brooks E. Smith, Kenneth S. Goodman and Robert Meredith, Language and Thinking in School (U.S.A.: Holt, Rinehard and Winston, 1976), pp 187-188.

show that research suggests that a knowledge of grammar does not mean it can be applied or transferred to anything. The ability to cite rules does not improve the grammar of written expression.

These findings may be altered by the recent studies of Miller and Ney¹⁴, Mellon¹⁵, and O'Hare¹⁶ into sentence-combining:

. . . Writing behavior appeared to be significantly altered in the direction of more mature syntactic structures. This was so whether the samples were assessed by T-unit measures, frequency of use of specific structures taught, or traditional rating criteria including punctuation.¹⁷

The other reason why the Null-hypothesis was not rejected may have been due to the method employed. In Generative Grammar, Structural Linguistics, and Language Learning the author quotes Fe R. Decanay as saying:

Drills are inherently unnatural, contrived examples of the use of language. This disadvantage can be partially overcome if naturalness of expression

¹⁴Barbara D. Miller and James W. Ney, "The Effect of Systematic Oral Exercises on the Writing of Fourth-Grade Students," Research in the Teaching of English 2 (Spring 1969), p.25.

¹⁵John C. Mellon, Transformational Sentence-Combining: A Method for Enhancing the Development of Syntactic Fluency in English Composition, (Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1969), p.26.

¹⁶Frank O'Hare, Sentence Combining: Improving Student Writing Without Formal Grammar Instruction, (Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1973).

¹⁷Sandra L. Stotsky, "Sentence-Combining as a Curricular Activity: Its Effect on Written Language Development and Reading Comprehension," Research in the Teaching of English 9 (Spring 1975):54.

sequence, and situation are successfully re-created, with an attempt to intensify the experience as an alternative to the vividness of actual participation in real situations.¹⁸

Perhaps the method of teaching was not sufficient in creating the experience mentioned above.

Braine experimented with children aged five to ten with contextual learning in which he felt, at least for learning the kernel grammar, the idea of a generalizing mechanism could be applied to learning word order in grammatical structures:

. . . when a subject, who has experienced sentences in which a segment (morpheme, word, or phrase) occurs in a certain position and context, later tends to place this segment in the same position in other contexts, the context of the segment will be said to have generalized, and the subject to have shown contextual generalization.¹⁹

The author of the present study had felt that a similar "contextual generalization" would have occurred. Obviously, that did not happen.

There is also the problem of the composition process. "Pattern drills require the students to pay attention only to the mechanics of manipulating grammatical structures."²⁰

¹⁸Karl Conrad Diller, Generative Grammar, Structural Linguistics, and Language Learning, (Mass.: Newbury House Publishers, Inc., 1971), p.48.

¹⁹Martin D. Braine, "On Learning Grammatical Order of Words," in Readings in the Psychology of Language, ed. Leon A. Jakobovits and Murray S. Miron (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), p.232.

²⁰Diller, Generative Grammar, Structural Linguistics, and Language Learning, p.41.

However, it is very difficult to separate the mechanics from the composing aspect. Perhaps Hunt had an answer to the problem by using a method of rewriting²¹ in the analysis of syntax. In this manner, the content of the written passages were controlled by the investigator.

Another problem with the method might have been the validity of the T-unit ratio score as an appropriate measure. A Syntactic Complexity Formula²² has been developed to measure the different levels of syntactic complexity, but it was not suitable for the present study. Other than Loban's "communication unit"²³ and Hunt's T-unit²⁴, no appropriate measure was found for analysing "correct" sentence patterns. The T-unit ratio score may have been measuring something other than the students' ability to learn and use the sentence patterns in their writings.

The author felt that perhaps different results might have been obtained had the design of the study been different. Any future research of the hypothesis might consider

²¹Kellogg W. Hunt, "Early Blooming and Late Blooming Syntactic Structures," in Evaluating Writing, ed. Charles R. Cooper and Lee Odell (Buffalo: National Council of Teachers of English, 1977), p.91.

²²Morton Botel and Alvin Granowsky, "A Formula for Measuring Syntactic Complexity: A Directional Effort," Elementary English 49 (April 1972):514.

²³Walter Loban, Language Development: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, (Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English, 1976).

²⁴Kellogg W. Hunt, Grammatical Structures Written at Three Grade Levels, (Champaign: National Council of Teachers of English, 1965), p.21.

certain recommendations for improvement of the experimental design.

One suggested modification of the design would be to have a larger sample selected over a wider population. Also, certain variables could be controlled so as to equalize the sample more closely. Such variables as language arts and reading program backgrounds and writing abilities should be considered.

The design of the study might also have been improved by controlling the time element more closely. In such a limited time the instructor has less recourse to deal with the students who require extra help or who are absent.

Because the class was removed to a separate room each time, the impact of the visual stimuli was reduced to the time spent in that room only and could not be referred to by the students at any other time. Perhaps arrangements should be made to have the visuals on display for a greater length of time.

And finally, perhaps the hypothesis should be limited to test how well children can generate individual sentences, rather than how they use the patterns in their broader writings.

Summary and Conclusions

In summary, the hypothesis to be tested was stated in the Null-hypothesis forms. The ratios of the capitalized and modified T-units (T_1) to the total number of modified

T-units (including those not capitalized or punctuated - T_1 + T_2) found in the narrative writings of grade two students will not differ significantly. The comparison was made between the control group and a matched group receiving experimental treatment.

Selected students from a grade two open area class at Wayoata School were used and the results of their analysed narratives were submitted to a sign test. The results of the sign test failed to reject the Null-hypothesis at the .05 level of significance. Therefore, the alternate research hypothesis that a significant difference would exist between the control and experimental groups could not be accepted.

Analysis of further qualitative data did, however, suggest that on an individual basis, the experimental group did actually increase their usage of the particular sentence patterns involved. There was some educational value of this study for use in the classroom.

The outcome of this study led to the recommendation that further research be carried out under improved design conditions, enlarging the sample, limiting the variables, and narrowing the hypothesis to be tested.

Although the experiment did not result in a significant difference between the control group and the experimental group at the .05 level of significance, it was found that more students improved than did not and in the experimental group the usage of the experimental patterns increased considerably. As a result of these findings, the investigator

has suggested that the classroom teacher may still find the experimental procedures useful for instructional purposes.

APPENDIX A

ANALYSIS AND SCORING SAMPLES

Three samples of
analysed writings

APPENDIX A

ANALYSIS AND SCORING SAMPLES

Sample 1

T_1 Once a open a time there was a haunted house. long long
 a go. T_2 a ghost and a which lived in a hounted house.
 suddley there was a solger

T_1 Amy was walking a long the path. sbinlee a big juble of
 wind. T_2 And so Amy ran home as fast as she coddss

T_2 Once a open a time They was a little boy T_2 he had a wish
 bag T_2 he didn't now what to do with it.

$$\frac{T_1}{T_1 + T_2} = \frac{2}{2 + 5} = .29$$

Sample 2

T_1 One dark and stormy night, I went for a walk. T_1 It was
 raining very hard. T_1 All of a sudden I cam upon a cemetery.
 T_1 It was dark and spooky.

T_1 One stormy winter night I was walking home from a party.
 T_1 It was a very cold night. T_1 It was almost a blizzard. T_2 I was
 going to wear a scarf T_2 but I thought it wouldn't be this
 cold.

T_1 Once upon a time there was a little lost wish bag. T_1 It was
 very sad and lonely. T_1 One day a boy and girl came along.

$$\frac{T_1}{T_1 + T_2} = \frac{10}{10 + 2} = .83$$

Sample 3

T_1 Once upon a time there was a honted house with a wich and a
 goast and a cat and sime scaree nioses. T_2 and one day a little
 girl came to that verry same house

T_1 There was once a little girl named Angela. T_1 One day she
 asked her mother if she could go out side to play. T_2 Her
 mother said yes you may

T_1 Once there was a girl and a wishing bag. T_1 Her mother had it.
 T_2 If you can find what is in this bag you will get what is in
 it for Christman present

$$\frac{T_1}{T_1 + T_2} = \frac{5}{5 + 3} = .63$$

APPENDIX B
FIFTEEN LESSON PLANS

Lesson One

Introduction (no review)

The children were told why we were gathered together as a group. They were told that they would be learning something about "sentences" for the next five or six weeks. They were told that a sentence has two main parts: "who" or "what" was being talked about, and what that person or thing was "doing". Two twelve by eighteen inch cards were produced. One was green and had "who" and "what" printed on it. The other was red and had "doing" printed on it. The instructor faced the children. The green card was placed to the right of the instructor and the red card was placed to the left, so that they were both visible to the class.

Development of idea

The idea to be developed was that "A sentence has two main parts." The visual aspect was the use of the two colour-coded cards and the oral aspect involved the dramatization of sentence examples. They were told, "Let's take an example." A child was picked from the group and asked to stand in front of the green card. Then another student was asked to stand in front of the red card. The example of "Jamie runs." was used. The child became the "who" and the other student was asked to act out the "runs" of the sentence. The next sentence was elicited from the students. It was, "The dog chases the cat." Again the students were asked to act it out in front of the group.

The third step was to have two children secretly make up their own sentences and act out first the "who" part and they both acted out the "doing" part. They stood in front of the appropriate card for each acting out. The idea was then reiterated that when sentences were talked about in the class, the instructor was referring to "who" or "what", "doing" something. They were asked to repeat out loud what a "sentence" referred to.

Reinforcement

They were each given an eight-and-a-half by eleven-and-a-half sheet of paper. Half the paper had a green outline of a square drawn on it and the other half had a red outline drawn on it. They were asked to draw a "who" or "what" in the green square. What that person or thing was doing was to be drawn in the red square.

Lesson Two

Review

The two big cards, one green with "who" and "what" printed on them, and the red one with "doing" printed on it, were placed in front of the students. It was reiterated that a sentence contains two main parts, the "who" or "what" and what they or it was "doing". Then, each student showed the picture he or she had done the previous day and told the class what it depicted.

Introduction

The instructor said, "Let's concentrate on the 'who'

or 'what' now." Just the green card was left up. They were asked if they had ever heard of "nouns". They were told that when we talked about the "who" or "what" we were talking about nouns, and that nouns could be the name of persons, places or things.

Development of idea

The students were asked to give the instructor an example of a person, a place, and a thing. Three columns were placed on the board. The first was headed "persons", the second was headed "place", and the third was titled "thing". Then examples were elicited from the group and written down under the appropriate headings.

Reinforcement

The visual aspect was attended to in the reinforcement. Three large pieces of paper were placed on the wall. One had the word "persons", the next had the word "places", and the third had the word "things". Each child was given three circles of paper, three inches in diameter. They were told to draw a picture of a person on one circle and to glue it onto the first paper. On the second circle they were to draw a picture of a place and put it on the second large sheet. On the third sheet they were to put a picture of a "thing".

Lesson Three

Review

The "who" and "what" were reviewed by looking, as a

group, at some of the pictures put on the circles, and glued to the three green sheets from the previous class.

Introduction

The idea of a noun as a person, place or thing was continued. A few individuals were asked, "What can a noun be?" Then the whole group was asked to repeat, in unison, "A noun can be a person, place or thing."

Development of idea

As a group, worksheet number one (see Appendix D) was examined, and talked about, and worked through orally, putting in the right words in the right places.

Reinforcement

The written aspect was introduced by having the children complete worksheet number two (see Appendix D) by filling in the columns of person, place and things themselves. If they had extra time left over, they could colour worksheet number one.

Lesson Four

Review

A test was given. Each child was given a small piece of paper with the following on it: "A noun may be a _____, _____, _____." After the papers were collected, the "who" and "what" sign was put up again and the children were reminded what a noun is.

Introduction

Next, the red "doing" sign was put up. (Both signs were now left up for the remainder of the lessons.) They

were then told that the instructor would talk about the "doing" part of a sentence, or the verb. It was repeated that the "doing" part of the sentence may be called a verb.

Development of idea (and Reinforcement)

They were asked to close their eyes and think of one "doing" thing. Then each child in turn was asked to come to the front of the class and perform their "doing" action. It was the group's task to guess the action being acted out.

Lesson Five

Review

A correlation was made between "who" and "what" with nouns, and "doing" with verbs by printing it on the board.

Introduction

The instructor said, "We can make a sentence with a noun and a verb." A few examples were elicited by asking for a noun and then a verb. Each time, it was stressed that it should begin with a capital letter and end with a period. It was mentioned, by some students, that other punctuation could be used. However, they were instructed to concern themselves with only periods right now.

Development of idea

Further examples of noun-verb sentences were drawn from the students and put on the board, always with initial capital letter and end period.

Reinforcement

They were given worksheet number three (see Appendix D).

At the bottom of the paper were two lines, ending with a box (in which to put punctuation). They were told to print one noun-verb sentence complete with capital letter and period. After the instructor had seen the sentence and corrected it, they could draw a picture depicting their sentence.

Lesson Six

Review

As a group, the class orally went over the worksheet number four (see Appendix D), supplying the missing verbs.

Introduction

The idea of the noun-verb sentence structure, complete with capitalization and end punctuation was reintroduced. A few children were asked to come to the board to print examples of such sentences on the board.

Development of idea

The beginning of a colour-coded wall chart was introduced. The word "Jim" was printed on a green card and the word "jumps" was printed on a red card. This was followed by a period on a white card. They were placed on the chart to form a sentence (see Appendix C).

Reinforcement

Each child was asked to print, on a piece of paper, five noun-verb (two word) sentences.

Lesson Seven

Review

The instructor went over the noun-verb sentences the students did during the previous lesson. Each child's paper was quickly reviewed to either reinforce good work or point out where there might be improvement.

Introduction

It was stated that an article was something that was used in front of a noun and examples were put on the board.

Development of idea

Worksheet number five (see Appendix D) was examined and discussed orally as a group. Oral examples were elicited from the group.

Reinforcement

Each child had to correctly complete worksheet number six (see Appendix D) by providing the correct noun and adding appropriate drawings.

Lesson Eight

Review

The picture sheet of articles (worksheet number five) was shown again and a review of what the article was was reiterated. The picture sheets of articles, nouns, and verbs (worksheets number five, one and four) were put up for display.

Introduction

Examples of a noun-verb sentence were asked for, to

be put on the board. Then, the instructor presented the "article-noun-verb" pattern by putting it on the board.

Development of idea

The "article-noun-verb" pattern was put on the wall chart (see Appendix C). It contained: a yellow card with "the" on it; a green card with "cat" on it; a red card with "runs" on it; and a period. They were placed on the chart in the form of a sentence. The capital and period were stressed. Then, every child was asked to print a similar type of sentence on the board and to remain at the board until each was corrected.

Reinforcement

They were asked to do worksheet number seven (see Appendix D). The questions were corrected as they did them. The sheets involved the students creating and writing noun-verb and article-noun-verb patterns.

Lesson Nine

Review

First a noun-verb pattern sentence and then an article-noun-verb sentence pattern was elicited from the students. A few were asked to put them on the board and the fact that they had both initial capitalization and end punctuation was pointed out.

Introduction

They were told that an adjective "describes" a noun. A happy face and a sad face were drawn on the board to point

this out.

Development of idea

The students were asked to split into groups of two and think up a contrasting pair of adjective-type words. They were then asked to act out their words for the class. Some of the words thought up and acted out were:

happy - sad
frightened - calm
hot - cold
sitting - standing

Reinforcement

Each child was given drawing paper divided into four parts. They were asked to draw four different pictures of four descriptive nouns and to print the adjective and noun used for each picture (see worksheet number eight, Appendix D).

Lesson Ten

Review

The instructor allowed the group to look at each of the drawings done from last time as a means of reviewing adjectives.

Introduction

The whole class looked at worksheet number nine (see Appendix D) and orally provided suitable words to complete the blank spaces accompanying the pictures.

Development of idea

The sentence "The happy baby smiles." was put on the

wall chart (see Appendix C) and presented as the third pattern for them to learn. The word "the" was yellow, "happy" was blue, "baby" was green and the word "smiles" was red.

Reinforcement

Each child was asked to print one sentence, on the board, like the one put on the chart. They were not allowed to sit down until their particular sentence was correct and included an initial capital letter and end punctuation.

Lesson Eleven

Review

The wall chart of sentence patterns (see Appendix C) was put on the wall for all to see.

Introduction and development of idea

This lesson was basically a review lesson in the following sentence patterns: noun-verb; article-noun-verb; and article-adjective-noun-verb. The students were asked to go to the board and give examples of these three types of sentences. Capitalization and punctuation were mentioned each time.

Reinforcement

The children were asked to do worksheet number ten (see Appendix D) which involved writing sentences based on the above-mentioned patterns. They did one sentence at a time. The instructor corrected each sentence before they were allowed to do the next one. As the paper was correctly

done the students were individually let back to their home room.

Lesson Twelve

Review

Three children were asked to come to the board and write an example of an article-adjective-noun-verb type sentence. They all correctly did so.

Introduction

They were told that they had one last thing to learn, adverbs. They were told that adverbs describe the verb and tell "how" something is done. The word "walk" was put on the board and they were asked, "How might a person walk?" Several replies were elicited and the pupil giving each reply was asked to act it out. Some of the answers were: slanted; funny; backwards; upside down; sideways; straight. Then the word "run" was given and the same procedure followed. It was mentioned in passing that the "ly" is often used at the end of an adverb.

Development of idea

Worksheet number eleven (see Appendix D), a picture sheet of adverbs, was looked at as a group and oral answers for the blank spaces were elicited.

Reinforcement

They were given worksheet number twelve (see Appendix D). It asked for a written response of verb and adverb combinations. These were corrected one answer at a time,

before the children returned to their class. They were allowed to leave as they completed the worksheet.

Lesson Thirteen

Review

The class was told that an adverb tells what the "doing" part of the sentence is. It tells "how" the verb is doing.

Introduction

Examples of the noun-verb, article-noun-verb, article-adjective-noun-verb patterns were elicited and printed on the board from various students in the group. Then, the last pattern of article-adjective-noun-verb-adverb was placed on the wall chart (see Appendix C). The word "the" was yellow, "small" was blue, "boy" was green, "runs" was red, and "fast" was coloured orange, to form the sentence "The small boy runs fast."

Reinforcement

Each child had to print one of these sentences, both capitalized and punctuated, on a piece of paper and have it corrected by the instructor.

Lesson Fourteen

Review

The whole lesson was a review lesson. The students were given examples of sentences, on the board, using the various patterns of noun-verb, article-noun-verb, article-adjective-noun-verb, and article-adjective-noun-verb-adverb.

Then they were asked to think up their own sentences, write them on the board, and act them out.

Lesson Fifteen

Final Review

All the sentence patterns were reviewed. Then, they did worksheet number thirteen (see Appendix D), which required them to write out examples of the various patterns.

APPENDIX C
COLOURED WALL CHART

Coloured Wall Chart

green	red	white			
Jim	jumps	.			
yellow	green	red	white		
The	cat	runs	.		
yellow	blue	green	red	white	
The	happy	baby	smiles	.	
yellow	blue	green	red	orange	white
The	small	boy	runs	fast	.

APPENDIX D
THIRTEEN WORKSHEETS

NOUNS

worksheet 1

Nouns are the name
of a person, place,
or thing



person



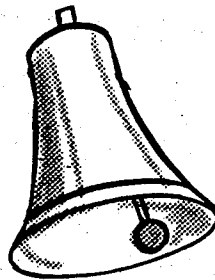
place



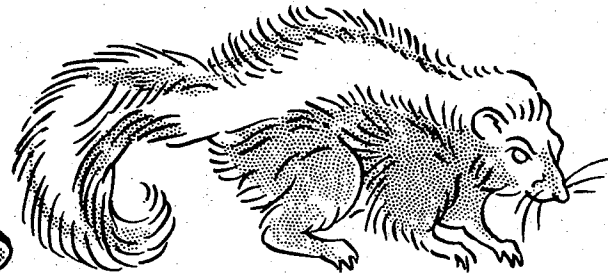
thing



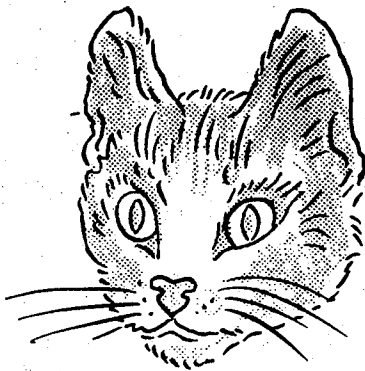
the _____



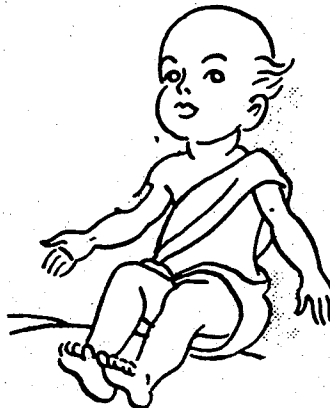
a _____



the _____



a _____



the _____



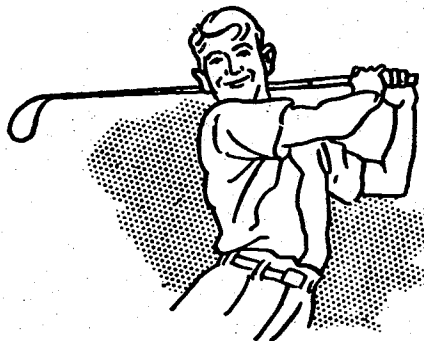
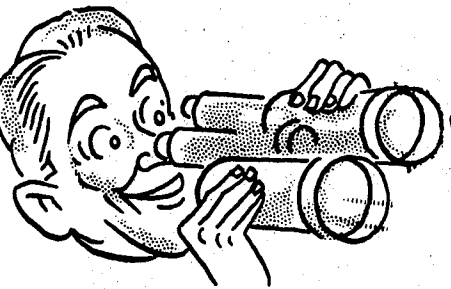
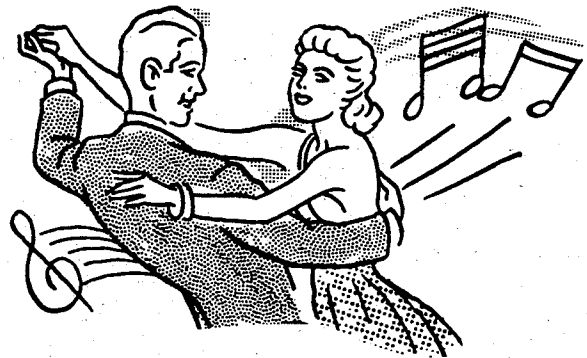
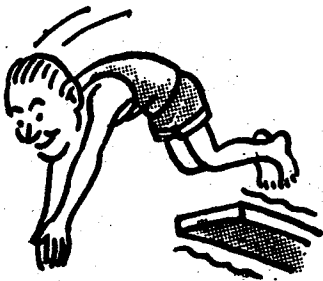
a _____



VERBS

worksheet 4

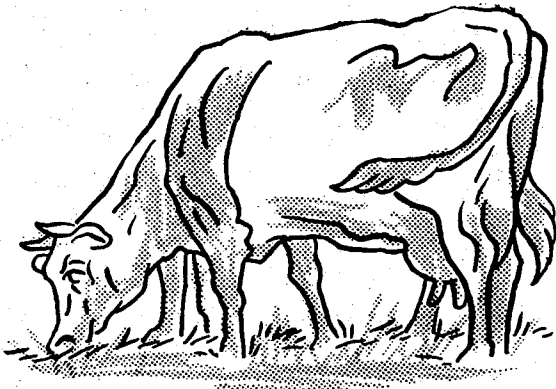
Tells what the person or thing
being talked about is doing.



A
THE
AN

ARTICLES

An article is always used
in front of a noun.



A

cow (any cow)

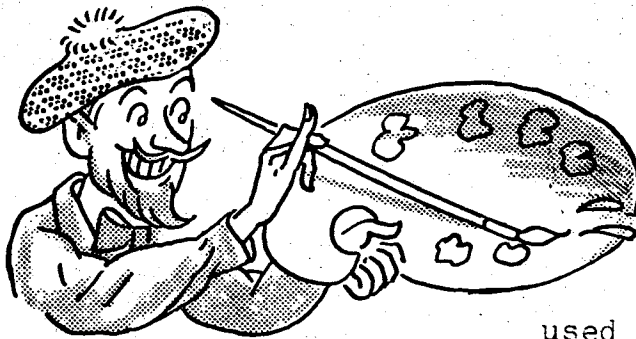


THE

cow being milked
(one cow)

SOME

cows



AN

artist

used before a word
beginning with a
vowel sound (aeiou)

A _____

An _____

Some _____

A _____

The _____

A _____

1.

N

V

2.

N

V

3.

article

N

V

4.

article

N

V

5.

article

N

V

red

ball

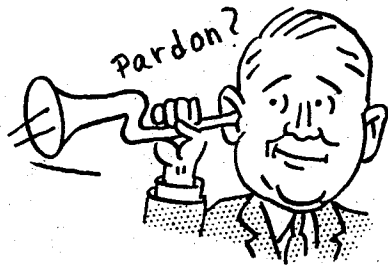
Worksheet 9

ADJECTIVES

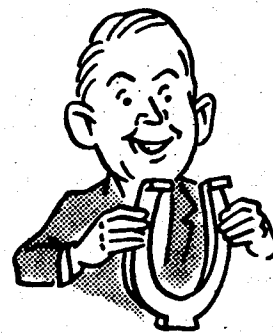
An adjective describes a noun and often changes its meaning.



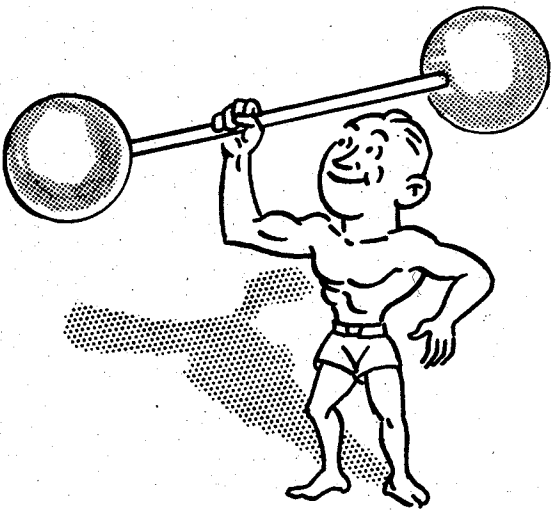
the _____ man



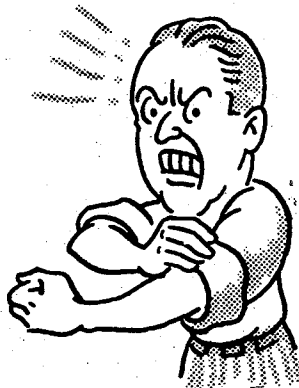
the _____ man



the _____ man



the _____ man



the _____ man



the _____ lady

1. N V

2. article N V

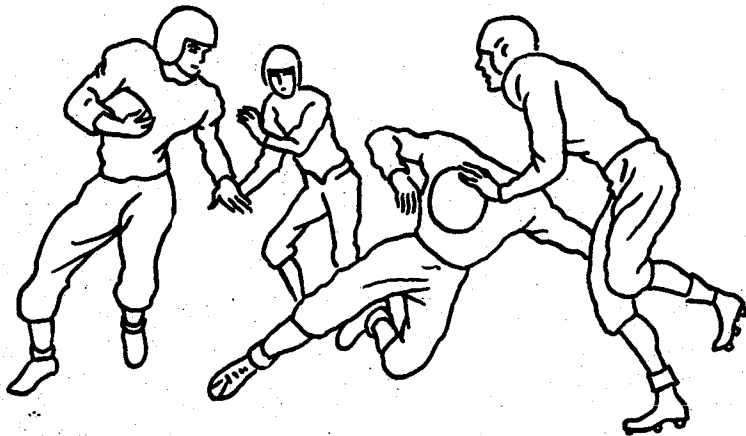
3. article adjective N V

4. article adjective N V

5. article adjective N V

ADVERBS

An adverb tells how, when, where,
and how much.



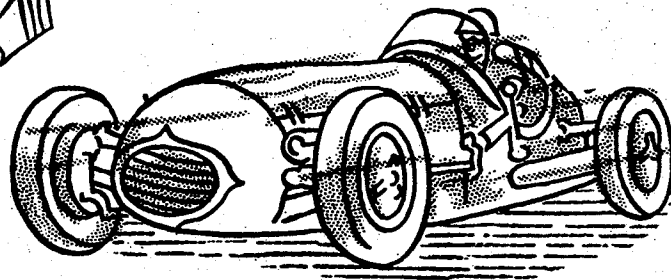
They played _____



She skied _____



The men sang _____



The car raced _____

Worksheet 12

- | | Verb | Adverb |
|----|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. | <u>run</u> | <u>fast</u> |
| 2. | <u> </u> | <u> </u> |
| 3. | <u> </u> | <u> </u> |
| 4. | <u> </u> | <u> </u> |
| 5. | <u> </u> | <u> </u> |

N

V

1.

article

N

V

2.

article

adjective

N

V

3.

article

adjective

N

V

adverb

4.

article

adjectives

N

V

adverb

5.

APPENDIX E
LETTER OF PERMISSION

TRANSCONA-SPRINGFIELD SCHOOL DIVISION NO. 12

SCHOOL BOARD OFFICE

760 KILDARE AVENUE EAST - TRANSCONA, MANITOBA
R2C 3Z4

PHONE 224-1271

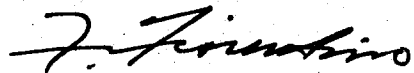
December 7, 1978

Mrs. Rita Stock
637 Oakdale Drive
Winnipeg Manitoba
R3R 1A2

Dear Rita:

Further to our telephone conversation, this is your authorization to carry out your research at Wayoata School as required for your thesis.

Sincerely,



Frank Fiorentino,
Assistant Superintendent.

FF/fr

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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