

THE MAGIC BOXES: PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES TOWARD BLACK AND STANDARD ENGLISH

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This paper is concerned with the development of attitudes in pre-school children toward Black English (BE) and Standard English (SE). The attitude study described here is part of a larger study dealing with the acquisition of language awareness in young children.⁽¹⁾ The discussion of attitudes will be presented first within the context of a discussion of the development of language awareness in pre-schoolers.

The Literature

It is a tenet among many sociolinguists that children do not become aware of dialect differences until about the time of the onset of puberty. Labov (1965) talks about social perception as the third stage in the acquisition of spoken English:

The third stage (social perception) begins with early adolescence, as the child begins to come into wider contact with the adult world. The social significance of the dialect characteristics of his friends becomes gradually apparent to him as he becomes exposed to other speech forms, even while he himself is still confined to the single style of his own vernacular. (Labov, 1965:91).

Much of the social dialect literature has provided models for the investigation of sociolinguistic awareness, particularly in terms of attitude studies and speech identification studies. While these studies have greatly contributed to our understanding, they have generally been designed for adults and older children.

It has been demonstrated that adults and older children can identify an individual's social class and/or race on the basis of certain stigmatized features of the language variety spoken. Shuy, Baratz, and Wolfram (1969) included 286 sixth graders in their study of sociolinguistic factors in speech identification and found that

even sixth graders can identify black speakers 79.7 percent of the time and can identify white speakers 74.3 percent of the time. Baratz (1969), in a study utilizing sentence repetition tests and speech identification, found that children as young as third-grade level can perceive racial differences in speech.

In addition to such studies of speech identification, there have been numerous studies measuring the somewhat larger area of attitudes toward speech varieties, illustrating that adults and older children make pejorative evaluations about an individual whose dialect may have certain variables. Some of these have employed Osgood-type semantic differential scales comparing polar adjectives to elicit stereotyped attitudes toward speakers, based on the dialect used. (Shuy, Baratz and Wolfram, 1969; Williams, 1973; Tucker and Lambert, 1967; Bouchard-Ryan, 1969). Shuy (1970) points out that middle-class sixth-graders use the differential scale as ably as eleventh-graders or adults.

While that may be so, it is questionable that pre-school children could understand the type of gradations necessary in such a scale. However, this does not and should not foreclose the area of exploration of the attitudes of pre-school children toward language differences. What Shuy's statement points out is that the major studies in the social dialect literature have addressed themselves to adults, and more recently, to older children, and that they have used scales of measurement appropriate to the referent system of adults.

While the social dialect literature has not dealt with sociolinguistic awareness from the viewpoint of its acquisition and development in young children, the child language acquisition literature generally represents the reverse situation. It provides research dealing with the acquisition and development of language in young children, but its limitation is that it has not dealt in a systematic way with the development of sociolinguistic awareness in young children.

Much of the child language acquisition research has involved longitudinal

studies of linguistic development in the young child (Brown, Cazden and Bellugi, 1968; Miller and Ervin, 1964; and McNeill, 1970). There also have been efforts by Lenneberg, Piaget and Menyuk to establish developmental schedules of language acquisition in children. Menyuk (1971) cites the period from two to five as that in which the child applies his representational ability, defined as the ability to differentiate signifiers from significates, to an increasingly larger range of phenomena. It is during this period, and well before the end of it, she says, that the child achieves his basic mastery of the syntax of the language. (It is certainly conceivable that during this period of developing language strategies and slightly beyond it, the child is developing sociolinguistic perceptions of his own variety of language as well as of others).

Though studies in the child acquisition literature have dealt with dialect differences, they have generally described how the language production of lower-income blacks differs from that of middle-income whites at various stages of acquisition. There have been studies that deal with comprehension ability of children of various socio-economic classes and different races (Eisenberg, Berlin, Dill and Frank, 1968; Osser, Wang and Zaid, 1969). However, comprehension ability was related to intelligibility of particular linguistic utterances, rather than the direct measurement of children's attitudes, even though it is probable that inability to comprehend in the "other dialect" could be related to attitudes.

Hymes' concept of "communicative competence" (1971) has been explored more recently in the area of child language acquisition. Cazden (1972) defines it as follows:

Communicative competence has two aspects. It includes both knowledge of linguistics (in the more usual and narrow sense of syntax, phonology and semantics) and knowledge of the social world and of rules for using language in that world so that speech is appropriate as well as grammatical and creative within both linguistic and sociolinguistic rules. Together, these aspects of communicative competence are realized in the child's actual speech behavior, or performance. This performance includes

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(1) The original study (Rosenthal, 1973), *The Acquisition of Children's Awareness of Language Differences*, was a doctoral dissertation at Georgetown University. A revised version of the original study, including material here, will appear early in 1976 in a joint publication of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Early Childhood Education.

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both speaking and comprehending.
(1972:3)

The existing literature in both social dialect studies and child language acquisition has not yet really accounted for the development of social awareness of language differences in young children. It is suggested here, based on my study of 136 pre-school children (Rosenthal, 1973) that such social awareness develops between the ages of three and six, that its beginnings occur within the major developmental period of the language acquisition process and that the concept of communicative competence must be expanded beyond language use to include sociolinguistic perceptions of language varieties as a major subcategory. More succinctly put, sociolinguistic awareness of dialect differences may be an aspect of communicative competence.

The Population Groups

From November, 1972 through March, 1973 a total of 136 monolingual children between the ages of 3:0 and 5:11 were interviewed. The children were chosen from two strikingly different populations.

Population A consisted of 90 upper class urban/suburban white children attending a private nursery school and a private day school kindergarten within the same community. There were 30 children in each age cohort of three-, four-, and five-year-olds, each containing 15 boys and 15 girls.

Population B consisted of 46 lower class semi-rural black children in a public day care center and a public kindergarten, both within the same community. Though Populations A and B were in the same SMSA (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area) of Washington, D.C., they were not part of the same neighborhood community. In population B there were 30 children in the five-year-old cohort (15 boys and 15 girls). However, only ten four-year-olds (six boys and four girls) and six three-year-olds (three boys and three girls) were available.(2)

The two population groups were strikingly different in almost every respect; race, class, urban/suburban setting versus semi-rural setting. One reason for the choice of such polar

groups was to define the outermost ends of the continuum of the developmental process of language awareness. Thus, it was important to find out when young whites at one socioeconomic extreme and young blacks at the other begin to develop sociolinguistic perceptions of language differences. Another reason for the choice of these populations was to find out what similarities there might be within the developmental stages of language awareness. It takes little imagination to predict gross differences between the two groups, one advantaged, the other decidedly disadvantaged. But the similarities would be even more interesting. A third reason for the choice was linguistic. Each group consisted of speakers of one of the language varieties being investigated. It was felt that the evaluations and perceptions being measured were all the more pertinent if each population group spoke one of the varieties involved. The perceptions and attitudes then might indicate those which they have formed toward speakers of the "other variety".

Three Aspects of Language Awareness

The study examined and classified language awareness as having three aspects: discrimination, categorization, and attitude preference. Discrimination was defined as the ability to distinguish between the two varieties solely on the basis of the linguistic variables involved. Categorization was defined as the ability to categorize people according to racial stereotypes on the basis of which variety is used (speech identification). Attitude preference referred to the expression of attitudes and value judgements toward representative speakers of each variety of English.

The independent variables of population group, age, and sex were examined for the effect on the dependent variables of discrimination, categorization, and attitude preference. A series of three tasks was constructed in order to determine whether these pre-school children do discriminate, categorize, and express specific attitudes toward the two varieties. The results of the first two tasks will be presented only briefly here. A fuller description of these two tasks is beyond the scope of this paper, which deals primarily with an extensive discussion of the attitude study (Task III).

Task I was designed to investigate

same/different discrimination ability of the children and consisted of five subtasks. The results of these subtasks indicated a continuum of discrimination types, from grossest on the concrete level of pictures to finest for discriminations involving two varieties of the same language. Task I also indicated the most stable developmental pattern of discrimination for Population A, namely, that discrimination ability between languages develops between the ages of three and four and that discrimination between two varieties of the same language develops between the ages of four and five.

Task II examined categorizations of the children in terms of their identification of Black English as spoken by blacks and Standard English as spoken by whites. There was no significant difference between Populations A and B in their categorizations of BE speakers as black. Population A made such speech identifications 78% of the time and Population B did so 71% of the time. (This is similar to results found by Shuy, Baratz, and Wolfram in 1969 with sixth graders.) Though there was no significant difference between the populations as a whole in their categorizations of BE speakers as black, there was a great difference between the five-year-olds. Those in Population B categorized BE speakers as black 73 percent of the time. Among the five-year-olds in Population A, this figure rose to 92 percent.

A lower proportion of each group categorized SE as being spoken by whites. Population B made such categorizations 59% of the time, and Population A did so 72% of the time (not significantly different from its 78% figure in categorizing BE speakers as black). While there was a significant difference between the two populations, the developmental pattern in both populations was parallel for their categorizations of the SE stimuli. The three-year-olds in both groups scored highest in their respective populations; then scores dipped at age four; at age five the scores moved up again.

Task III, the attitude study, is the principal focus of this paper. It indicated that pre-schoolers have already formed attitudes toward Black and Standard English. Both populations were in agreement in terms of their higher socioeconomic and linguistic evaluations of the Standard English speaker, but they differed significantly

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(2) Any generalization about the three- and four-year olds in Population B will have to be considered in light of the smaller size of this particular sample.

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in terms of their personal preference for the Standard English speaker. Population B "liked" the SE speaker significantly less than Population A did. Also, highly pejorative attitudes were expressed, particularly by Population A, toward the BE speaker.

The Need for a Research Model Appropriate to Young Children

The purpose of the attitude study was to determine whether pre-school children already have become socialized to attach certain value judgments and attitudes toward each of the two varieties: Black English and Standard English.

To test this, it was necessary to develop a type of measurement appropriate to the level of the children. This seems obvious enough, but past research efforts had tested children's sociolinguistic perceptions using adult models. Often, they found that children couldn't perform the required task.

Labov (1966), in his Subjective Reaction test, analyzed subjects' evaluations of the occupational suitability of individuals based solely on their speech. The speech of the stimulus speakers to be judged represented the social stratification of five linguistic variables found in New York City English. The job hierarchy was designed to reflect the socioeconomic hierarchy and ranged from television personality to factory worker. Labov wrote, "In case respondents had some reservations on particular items [on the job scale], it was explained to everyone that the Index was to be thought of as a continuous scale running from perfect speech at the top to terrible speech at the bottom..." (p. 410). The youngest children Labov used in his study were in the 8 to 15-year-old group but they did not do as well as the older age groups. In pointing this out, Labov stated that he had evidence to indicate that people below the age of 19 or 20 have not yet acquired full sensitivity to the socially significant dialect features of their community. (p. 421).

We, as investigators, must discriminate between what we want to measure and the medium of measurement itself. It is conceivable that the social hierarchy of occupational status is simply not in the referent system of young children, but that they can still perceive socially stigmatized dialect

features and can evaluate speech as better or worse. We must devise measurements which young children can relate to and then we can correlate those results with adult performance.

The Magic Boxes

With such an effort in mind, I set about to construct what shall be referred to as the "Magic Boxes". The front and back views of the Magic Boxes are illustrated in *Figures 1* and *2*. These were two identical cardboard boxes which were spray-painted red and decorated, identically, with

blue ears, blue eyebrows, and blue noses in a way intended to appeal to young children and to avoid any connotation of race. The children were told that these boxes talked. (Each box had a hidden cassette recorder on the bottom shelf in back.) They were told that one Magic Box was named Kenneth and the other was named Steve. Personification of the boxes was considered important, since younger children tend to personify most inanimate objects.

Voicing

The pre-recorded cassettes were

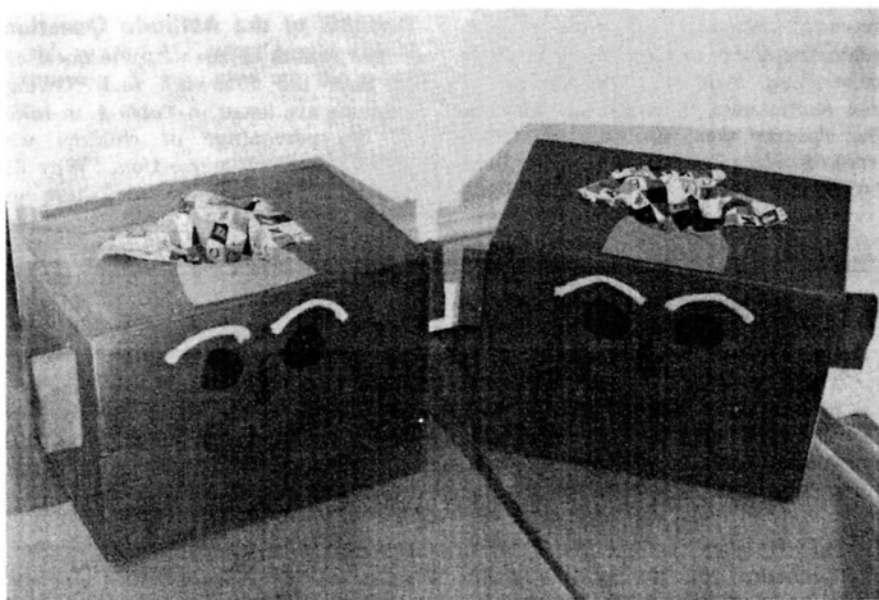


Figure 1

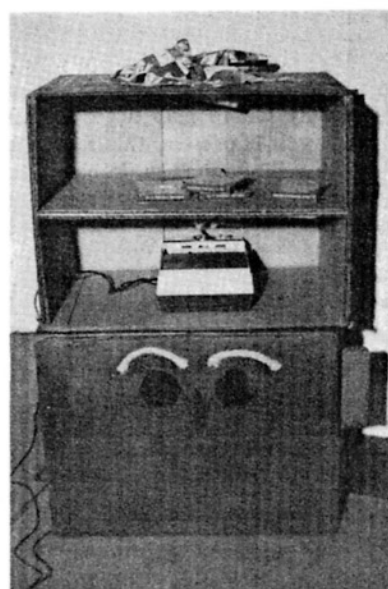


Figure 2

voiced by two 17-year-old males: Steve Schecter, who spoke Standard English, and Kenneth Jones, who spoke Black English. The speech samples were not spontaneous, but were improvised from a script written by the voicers. Steve and Kenneth did not translate each other's speech. They attempted to say the same thing semantically, but in a way characteristic of the particular variety they were representing. The two samples differed characteristically in pronunciation, intonation, and vocal quality as well as in syntax.

Procedure

The attitude study was done in two parts, a "Taking" subtest and a "Giving" subtest. Each subtest represented a series of attitude questions designed to elicit evaluations and attitudes of personal preference toward the speakers of the two varieties. Each subtest also forced a behavioral choice of tak-

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ing a present *from* or giving one to one of the magic boxes.

In the "Taking" subtest, it was explained that both the Kenneth box and the Steve box had presents they wanted to give to the children; that each Magic Box was going to tell them about its presents; that they were to listen to each Magic Box "talk" (the order of presentation was randomized); and that, after answering some questions, they could take their present from the Magic Box of their choice. The presents were identical boxes of crayons placed on a shelf inside the boxes and could be obtained by reaching inside the box through a hole surrounded by cloth at the top. The children were not told what the presents were or that each box had the same presents. The directions,

speech stimuli, and attitude questions for this subtest appear in *Figure 3*.

In the "Giving" subtest, the children were given two small pads of paper and were told that one was for them and that one was for them to give to the Magic Box of their choice. Again, they listened to each box talk (this time, each Magic Box voice said why it wanted the present), responded to another set of attitude questions, and made the behavioral response of giving the pad of paper to one of the Magic Boxes. *Figure 4* represents the directions, speech stimuli, and attitude questions for the "Giving" subtest.

Analysis of the Attitude Questions

The results of the attitude questions in both the "Taking" and "Giving" subtests are listed in *Table 1*, in terms of the percentage of children who chose Steve. (The question, "Why did you pick him?" is excluded here and

will be discussed later in this paper in terms of attitudes expressed anecdotally.) The questions are broadly characterized as those which are directed at evaluation of socioeconomic status and need or linguistic status (Questions 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9) and those which are directed at personal preference (Questions 2, 4, and 8).

Questions 2 and 8 are the same and were included in each subtest as a reliability check. (Initially, Questions 2 and 8 were intended to elicit evaluations of linguistic status. However, during pilot testing, it became clear that many of the children were interpreting, "Which box sounds nicer?" to mean "Which box do you think is nicer?" rather than "Whose speech sounds nicer?") Thus, Questions 2 and 8 were considered expressions of personal preference and Question 3 was constructed, on the basis of the children's comments, to elicit evaluations of linguistic status.)

The percentages in *Table 1* indicate that Question 3 received the highest total percentage in the choice for Steve ("Which box talks better?"). Here, 79% of all children felt that Steve, the SE speaker, talked better than Kenneth, the BE speaker. It is interesting to note that Question 1 ("Which box has nicer presents?") received a total response of 73% for Steve. Populations A and B were in close agreement on both of these evaluations, 82% of Population A and 74% of Population B thought that Steve talked better and 72% of Population A and 74% of Population B associated nicer presents with Steve.

This agreement is striking, particularly in view of the fact that there was a significant difference (at the .05 level of confidence) between the two populations in their personal preference for Steve. 72% of Population A liked Steve better while only 54% of Population B liked Steve better. Personal preference here obviously also affected the behavioral choice of taking the present. Only 54% of Population B actually took their present from Steve, while 76% of Population A took their present from him. (Significance was found here again at the .05 level of confidence.)

The areas of agreement and disagreement between the two population groups reflect a certain tension between the categories of socioeconomic need and linguistic evaluation vs. personal preference. For example, despite

Directions:

Interviewer: Do you see these funny boxes? Do you know what they do? They talk and they have presents. This box is Kenneth (or Steve) and this box is Steve (or Kenneth). Kenneth has a present he wants to give you and Steve has a present he wants to give you. But you only get to pick your present from one of the boxes. Let's listen to them talk now and then you can decide which one you want to take your present from.

Speech Stimuli:

Kenneth: Hi. My name Kenneth. I go school in Washington. I got nice present. You'll like this a lot. It nice and fun to play with. Bet you can't guess what it is. I give you a clue. It got about five color. You ain't never got a present like this before. You play with it a long time. My friend, he got one. He play with it all the time. He like it a whole lot. You gonna take this present, ain't ya?

Steve: Hi. My name is Steve. I go to school here in Washington. I have a very nice present for you. It's really fun to play with. In fact, I'd bet that no one has ever given you a present this nice. Can you guess what it is? Here, I'll give you some clues. It has about five colors and it will last you for a long time. My friend has one. He plays with it all the time. He likes it a lot. You're going to take this present, aren't you?

Attitude Questions:

- Interviewer:*
1. Which box has nicer presents?
 2. Which box sounds nicer?
 3. Which box talks better?
 4. Which box do you like better?
 5. Which box do you want to take your present from?
 6. Why did you pick him?

FIGURE 3. Directions, Speech Stimuli, and Attitude Questions for the "Taking" Subtest.

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Directions:

Interviewer: I have a surprise for you now. It's a pad of paper to use with your crayons. I have one for you to keep and one for you to give to the Magic Boxes. But you know what? They both want it. Let's listen to them and you think about which box you're going to give this other pad of paper to.

Speech Stimuli:

Kenneth: Ain't you gon give me the paper? My sister, she'd like to have it. She real good drawer. If you give me the paper, my sister, she be real happy.

Steve: Aren't you going to give me the paper? My sister would like to have it. She's very good at drawing. If you give me the paper my sister would be really happy.

Attitude Questions:

Interviewer: Which box wants it more?
Which box needs it more?
Which box sounds nicer?
Which box do you want to give it to?
Why did you pick him?

FIGURE 4. Directions, Speech Stimuli, and Attitude Questions for the "Giving" Subtest.

the fact that 74% of Population B evaluated the SE speaker as having higher socioeconomic status (nicer presents), only 54% actually took their present from Steve. This appears to be affected by the fact that their personal preference for Steve is not terribly strong and is in conflict with their evaluation of Steve as having nicer presents. Also, despite the fact that 74% of Population B children thought Steve talked better, it is clear that this did not make them like him any better.

In Question 7 ("Which box needs it more?") both populations were in close agreement in their evaluations of the BE speaker as being more needy. 58% of Population A and 63% of Population B (bear in mind that the percentages in Table 1 reflect the choice in terms of Steve) felt that Kenneth needed the pad of paper more than Steve did. Yet 57% of both populations ended up giving their presents to Steve. This behavioral choice reflects a tension between categories here particularly for Population A, since 72% of Population A liked Steve better, but only 57% of the "A" children actually gave their presents to Steve. Their choice

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TABLE 1. — Percentage of children choosing Steve (the SE speaker) in response to the attitude questions.

Question	Total Children	Populations			3-Year-Olds			4-Year-Olds			5-Year-Olds		
		A	B	Diff.*	A	B	Diff.*	A	B	Diff.*	A	B	Diff.*
√1. Which box has nicer presents?	73	72	74	2	77	83	6	63	70	7	77	73	4
—2. Which box sounds nicer (in Taking subtest)?	64	64	65	1	70	67	3	53	60	7	70	67	3
√3. Which box talks better?	79	82	74	8	87	100	13	73	50	23	87	77	10
—4. Which box do you like better?	66	72	54	18	77	50	27	63	60	3	77	53	24
√5. Which box do you want to take your present from?	68	76	54	22	80	33	47	67	50	17	80	60	20
√6. Which box wants it more?	55	57	52	5	50	83	33	57	60	3	63	43	20
√7. Which box needs it more?	40	42	37	5	47	33	14	33	50	17	47	30	17
—8. Which box sounds nicer (in Giving task)?	62	60	65	5	67	67	0	50	70	20	63	63	0
√9. Which box do you want to give it to?	57	57	57	0	60	50	10	47	70	23	63	53	10

* = percentage point difference between cohorts.

√ = questions directed at the children's awareness of economic status and need or linguistic status.

— = questions directed toward the children's expression of personal preference.

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appears to have been affected by their socioeconomic evaluation of Kenneth as being more needy.

The age cohorts listed in *Table 1* illustrate somewhat confounding results for the four-year-olds. In Population A, the general pattern is that five-year-olds seem to favor Steve approximately to the same degree that the three-year-olds do for almost all the questions. The Population A four-year-olds, however, tend to favor Steve 13 to 17 percentage points less in every question with the exception of Number 6. And, indeed, in Question 9, they not only favor Steve less, but 53% of the Population A fours want to give their present to Kenneth. This was the only age cohort where the majority wanted to give their present to Kenneth.

In Population B, the position of the four-year-olds is somewhat more ambiguous with regard to their choices for Steve or Kenneth. In Questions 1 and 2, they favor Steve slightly less than the threes and fives in Population B, while in Question 4, they appear to like Steve slightly more than do the threes and fives. Yet only 50% took their present from Steve. In Question 3, where 74% of the total Population B appears to think that Steve talks better, the four-year-olds in Population B split 50-50. Their position as to which needs it more (Question 7) is also ambiguous, although 70% of the Population B fours gave their present to Steve.

It is difficult to say definitively what is taking place with the four-year-olds. On the one hand, the four-year-old cohort in Population B had only 10 children and their ambiguity may be an artifact of the small sample. While the Population A fours had 30 children, there was a particular situation of the four-year-old group within the pre-school which may explain the tendency to favor Steve less. There were two lower-middle class black boys in the school who were almost 6 (they were not included in the Study). Many of the boys in the four-year-old group emulated them, since they were older, bigger, and could do more things well than most of the four-year-old boys. The Population A fours, then, might have associated Kenneth with the two black boys in the group and hence tended to respond more favorably to Kenneth.

Another explanation of the four-

year-old data in both populations is that this group was going through a transitional stage in the formation of attitudes and their difference from the threes and fives simply represents a normal dip often encountered in the learning process. (See Haggerty and Bowen, 1973.) This dip at the four-year-old level is also reflected in the Categorization Task, in the children's identifications of SE as spoken by whites. It is interesting to note that in Population A the difference in the mean score on the total test is greater between four- and five-year-olds than between five-year-olds and adults. More research may be needed here to determine whether the four-year-old level does represent a transitional stage in the development of awareness.

With regard to sex differences, the nine attitude questions yield some interesting, though inconclusive evidence. *Table 2* illustrates the responses to

the questions for males and females in each population. According to the percentages, there is something more female about identifying with one's own race. Population A females favored Steve in every question more than Population A males did. In Population B, the females tended to favor Kenneth while the males tended to choose Steve. Even in Question 1, where both populations chose Steve by substantial majorities (72% for Population A, 74% for Population B), there were sex differences which were masked by the total percentages. In Population A, 82% of the females thought Steve had nicer presents, compared with 62% for the males. In Population B, the situation was almost the reverse, with 82% of the males choosing Steve and only 67% of the females choosing him.

For the behavioral choice of taking

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TABLE 2. — Majority percentage responses to the attitude questions, by population and sex (per cent correct answers).

Question	Population A				Population B					
	Total	Male	Female		Total	Male	Female			
	K	S	K	S	K	S	K	S		
1. Which box has nicer presents?	72		62		82		74		82	67
2. Which box sounds nicer? (in Taking task)	64		60		69		65		77	54
3. Which box talks better?	82		76		89		74		73	75
4. Which box do you like better?	72		69		76		54		55	54
5. Which box do you want to take your present from?	76		71		80		54		64	54
6. Which box wants it more?	57	51			64		52		64	58
7. Which box needs it more?	58		64		51		63		68	58
8. Which box sounds nicer? (in Giving task)	60	51			71		65		77	54
9. Which box do you want to give it to?	57	53			67		57		59	54

Note: K = Kenneth; S = Steve

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a present, the females of Population A still favored Steve by nine percentage points more than the males (80% to 71%). In Population B, the split between male and female was almost a complete reversal of majorities, with 64% of the males choosing Steve and 54 percent of the females choosing Kenneth. A similar reversal of majorities occurred in Population A for Question 9, the behavioral choice of giving a present. Here, 53% of the males gave their present to Kenneth and 67% of the females favored Steve.

In Question 6 ("Which box wants it more?") there is a reversal of majorities in both populations. In Population A, 51% of the males favored Kenneth and 64% of the females still favored Steve. In Population B, 64% of the males favored Steve, but the majority of females (58%) still chose Kenneth.

The averages for all nine questions show that the females of Population A were closer to the males of Population B in terms of their preference for Steve. The female average for Population A was 72% favoring Steve. The males in Population B favored Steve 65% for all nine questions. In Population A, the males favored Steve only 58% and appeared closer to the Population B females who favored Steve only 54% for all nine questions.

It has been generally thought that females tend to be more conservative in terms of language attitudes and that they prefer the more formal variants. However, the data here appear to indicate that such female conservatism is reflected not in a preference for formal variants, but rather in terms of a preference for their own variety. This is, however, only suggestive since all *chi* squares that were applied to the sex differences were found not to be significant at the .05 level. The percentage data can, then, only indicate possible trends and an area of interest that would be important for further research with larger sex-differentiated cohorts.

Discussion of Attitudes Expressed Anecdotally

In addition to the specific answers to the nine attitude questions discussed above, many of the children in both population groups made spontaneous comments with reference to the behavioral choice of taking or giving

a present. The attitudes expressed by the children, generally in answer to the question, "Why did you pick him?" give further evidence to support the claims made earlier that these preschool children have already formed attitudes toward Black and Standard English.

These attitudes were expressed anecdotally and are not quantified here. However, they are listed in Table 3 (for the "Taking" subtest) and Table 4 (for the "Giving" subtest). In these comments, the children have culled forth other images and stereotypes which they associated with representative speakers of each of the dialects. These projections and associative attitudes, which they have obviously internalized, do not normally occur in the more controlled, comparative questions as seen in the nine attitude questions. However, they pro-

liferate here in the anecdotal responses of the children to the open-ended question, "Why did you pick him?" (Note that not all of the children answered this question. The comments listed in the tables were those of all children responding.)

In looking at Table 3, we find that some of the comments in Population A relate to the children's projections of the physical size or appearance of Kenneth or Steve. Kenny and Brian thought Kenneth was bigger. Michael liked Steve's face better and Jessica thought Steve looked better. This is particularly interesting, since the size, shape and physical appearance of the red boxes with blue noses and eyebrows were identical. Indeed, the only difference between the Magic Boxes was the difference between the BE and SE speech stimuli.

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TABLE 3. — Comments of the children in the Taking subtest in response to why they chose either Kenneth or Steve.

Population and Age	Child	Took Present From	Comment*
B 5:8	Tony	Steve	I like him cause he sound nice (pointing to S). I don't like him (pointing to K).
B 5:2	Timothy	Steve	It better to take dat one (S) dan dat one (K), cause dat person dat take dat (S) is better off.
B 5:7	Deborah	Steve	cause he talk better.
B 4:8	Marian	Kenneth	cause he my friend and I wan take it from him.
A 5:11	Bobby	Steve	I can't understand K. I like his name, but I don't like the way he sounds, so I'll take my present from S.
A 5:8	Michael	Steve	I think he talks better and I like his face better.
A 5:6	Kenny	Steve	cause he's bigger.
A 5:5	Brian	Kenneth	cause he's bigger.
A 5:11	Jason	Kenneth	cause K talks better. He talks cool.
A 5:2	Dave	Kenneth	cause K is a black guy and I like black boys.
A 5:8	Maryellen	Steve	cause S talks clearer.
A 5:6	Jessica	Steve	cause S talks nicer and he looks better.
A 4:6	John	Steve	cause S has more gentle talk.
A 4:4	Jeffrey	Steve	cause I don't wanna take it from the girl (refers to K as the girl).
A 4:4	Amy	Kenneth	I think I want my present from K, if he doesn't bite.
A 3:3	Peter	Steve	K talks silly. My daddy doesn't talk like that.
A 3:3	Tammy	Steve	Cause S is good. K is so bad, cause he broke my Mickey Mouse.

*Note: S = Steve, K = Kenneth.

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Other comments in Population A express pejorative attitudes toward Kenneth. Peter thinks Kenneth talks silly and says his daddy doesn't talk like that. Bobby says he can't understand Kenneth and doesn't like the way he sounds. Amy thinks Kenneth might bite and Tammy thinks Kenneth is bad and associates him with breaking her Mickey Mouse.

Some of these images coincide with racially stereotyped images in adult society such as characteristically identifying blacks as being bigger, being harmful, or being unintelligible and identifying whites as looking better or being more gentle (John). Indeed, they occur so often in adult society they are almost classically trite.

In Population B, the children generally chose Steve based on the fact that they liked his speech, or, in one poignant case (Timothy) the choice was based on an association of upward mobility with Steve. His comment, indicating that the person who takes the present from the SE-speaking box is better off, is dramatic evidence of the social awareness of language differences. This child, at age five, has already been socialized to think that "white is better" or that the road to higher socioeconomic status is paved with Standard English.

In Table 4 (containing the comments expressed in the "Giving" subtest), the attitudes toward the speakers of the two varieties are similar to those already expressed in the "Talking" subtest. In the "Giving" subtest, both Magic Boxes referred to the fact that their sister was good at drawing but no mention was made of Steve's or Kenneth's drawing ability. (See the speech stimuli in Figure 4.) Yet the children in both populations referred to the drawing ability of Steve or Steve's sister as better and of Kenneth or Kenneth's sister as poorer (Population B: Charles; Population A: Matt, Debbie, Steffie, Elliot). This, too, looks like a projection of already socialized attitudes toward the stereotypes of ability for whites and nonability for blacks. The fact that some children made such associations consistently, in spite of the facts presented in the speech stimuli, is further evidence that they were associating such attitudes with the speech variety being used and that they were evaluating the representative BE speaker in a pejorative way and the SE speaker in a

TABLE 4. — Comments of the children in the Giving subtest in response to why they chose either Kenneth or Steve.

Population and Age	Child	Gave Present to	Comment*
B 5:11	Charles	Steve	Cause S can draw better than K.
B 5:11	George	Steve	Cause he (S) sound like he want it.
B 5:2	Timothy	Steve	I like him the best.
B 5:10	Darla	Kenneth	Cause I like the way he (K) talk.
B 5:4	Rosalie	Steve	He (S) talk more better. I like the way he talk to me.
B 5:4	Dolores	Kenneth	Steve talk better but I want to give it to Kenny.
B 4:11	William	Steve	I like him (S); dat's why I pick him.
B 4:9	Karen	Steve	Cause S wanna play wif it.
A 5:10	John	Kenneth	He needs it cause he does n't talk clearly, so he needs a pad to write it down. He better write than talk.
A 5:6	Kenny	Kenneth	Cause he wants it more.
A 5:5	Brian	Kenneth	Cause K doesn't have nothing.
A 5:5	Matt	Steve	Cause his sister (S) is very good at drawing.
A 5:11	Debbie	Kenneth	So he can practice drawing and get better.
A 5:9	Julie	Steve	Cause K was begging for it too much, and if you don't beg you'll get it. If you do beg, you won't get it.
A 5:6	Jennifer	Steve	(After choosing S for all other questions, Jennifer said:) Since I said all those nice things about S, I really should give it to K. But I do think S is better.
A 5:5	Steffie	Steve	Cause his sister does very good pictures.
A 5:2	Ann	Steve	Cause I think S is more nicer.
A 4:11	Elliot	Kenneth	Cause his sister (K's) can't draw.
A 4:10	Seth	Steve	(When K says, "Ain't you gonna give me the paper?" Seth said, loudly, "No!")
A 4:1	Skipper	Steve	Well, K is bigger, S is littler. I want to give it to the littler one.
A 4:11	Tina	Steve	I like S, but I'm afraid of K.
A 4:9	Elizabeth	Kenneth	K asked for it nicer.
A 3:10	Sara	Kenneth	Well, K is a girl and S is a boy and I want to give it to the girl.

*Note: S = Steve, K = Kenneth.

praiseworthy way.

Again, pejorative attitudes toward the BE speaker are clearly expressed in Population A, particularly in such comments as John's "He needs it 'cause he doesn't talk clearly, so he needs a pad to write it down. He better write than talk," and Brian's "'Cause Kenneth doesn't have nothing." Tina expressed the stereotypical fear of the BE speaker "I like Steve but I'm afraid of Kenneth" and Julie dispensed some mainstream cultural advice on the social taboo of begging "'Cause Kenneth was begging for

it too much, and if you don't beg, you'll get it. If you do beg, you won't get it."

The anecdotal attitudes expressed here are consonant with those expressed in the specific attitude questions in terms of evaluation and personal preference. They also point out, however, that a variety of judgments and learned cultural stereotypes are rather consistently associated with each speech variety. The speech samples are simply the stimuli for the projection of these attitudes.

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Summary, Conclusion, and Implications for Teaching Standard English

It is clear from the data that pre-school children have already formed attitudes toward Black and Standard English. These attitudes are one manifestation of their awareness of the differences between BE and SE. (Awareness also includes the ability to discriminate linguistically between the two varieties and the ability to categorize people according to racial stereotypes on the basis of their speech.)

The two diverse populations, the upper-class white children (Population A) and the lower-class black children (Population B) were in close agreement in their socioeconomic evaluations of the two dialects. They associated higher socioeconomic status with Standard English in their evaluations of the SE speakers as having nicer presents. They associated lower socioeconomic status with BE in their evaluations of the BE speaker as needing a present more. The two populations were also in agreement in their positive linguistic evaluations of the SE speaker as the one that "talked better".

On the other hand, the two populations differed significantly in their personal preference for the representative speakers of the two dialects. The black children preferred the BE speaker and the white children preferred the SE speaker. In addition, there were expressions of learned stereotyped images associated with both speakers. Many of these were pejorative toward the BE speaker—identifying him as talking silly, being unintelligible, being harmful, having nothing, and not having drawing ability. Most of these attitudes were expressed by the white children, though the comment about non-ability in drawing was also expressed in Population B. The SE speaker was stereotyped as being more gentle, looking better, having better drawing ability, and being the symbol of success (the last idea was expressed in Population B).

These data may be unsettling to many people who might not credit very young children with having such social perceptions of BE and SE. The question of how these attitudes develop may be even more unsettling.

One explanation of how this socialization takes place is that it is trans-

mitted by adults. It is no secret that adults in our society make pejorative and discriminatory judgments toward speakers of BE and that they perceive SE as the prestige variety, associating it with higher socioeconomic status and with linguistic superiority. It has also been shown that adults have a set of stereotyped images of personality characteristics which is evoked by each dialect. This view would suggest that adults condition young children to regard SE as superior and BE as inferior. It is suggested that such conditioning takes place overtly in the school system where such attitudes are still expressed by many teachers. Such conditioning also occurs more subtly through the medium of television as well as through parental influence.

The assumption here is that children have not had experience of their own with the "other" dialect or its speakers and accordingly have not developed attitudes of their own toward either. One question which this explanation raises is whether adults actually do articulate their attitudes about Black English and Standard English to 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old children. Another question that it raises is whether presumably uninitiated children who have not experienced the dialect nor formed attitudes of their own, are susceptible to such teachings by adults. Could adults transmit attitudes to a child about a language or dialect if the child had no knowledge or experience with that dialect and couldn't identify its speakers? It is difficult to see here how any attitudes learned from others could then be successfully and consistently applied to an unknown or unfamiliar entity.

In examining the data, William A. Stewart (personal conversation) suggests that the early socialization of such attitudes might well come from the children's own experience, rather than through transmission from adults. Stewart points out that when Tammy (age 3:3, Population A) says, "Kenneth is so bad, 'cause he broke my Mickey Mouse", that she is obviously articulating an actual child experience in which a BE-speaking child very probably broke someone's toy. She would, therefore, seem to be making inferences from that experience and associating it with the Black English represented by Kenneth.

Stewart insists that one must deal with the plausibility of direct social experience being one basis upon which

linguistic attitudes are formed — a hypothesis which many sociolinguists seem reluctant to consider.

Whether one argues that these attitudes are transmitted by adults or are the result of direct experience by the child, the fact is that they are there. This has some interesting implications for the teaching of Standard English. The data suggest that some rethinking is necessary particularly regarding the issue of motivation in teaching Standard English. It has long been thought that young blacks don't learn SE because they can't see the value in doing so or because of what Labov calls "functional interference". The data suggest that we must make a distinction between attitudes (such as functional interference) and evaluations.

Kenneth Johnson, in discussing pedagogical problems in teaching SE, describes functional interference as the refusal of Black children to learn SE because it is "white folks' talk". The data support the idea of functional interference insofar as the lower-class black children were significantly different from the upper-class whites in their personal preference for SE. And despite the fact that they evaluated SE as having nicer presents and talking better, they still did not like him any better nor did they want very much to take their presents from him. That is, their attitudes differed from their evaluations regarding Standard English.

Later, in the same article, Johnson eloquently states the commonly held view that one type of motivational problem is due to the fact that young blacks can't see the value in learning SE:

It is especially difficult to motivate younger disadvantaged black children to learn Standard English. Teachers can't point out the vocational, social, and academic advantages of learning Standard English to these children. They just don't understand these advantages. As long as they remain in their segregated social environment (and couple this with their natural immaturity), they will not be motivated to learn Standard English (1969:80).

The comment of Timothy (age 5:2) in Population B suggests that these advantages don't even need to be taught; that they are learned. Timothy's comment in response to why

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he chose his present from Steve indicates quite clearly that he has perceived and internalized the socioeconomic advantages of Standard English.

Timothy: It better to take dat one (Steve) dan dat one (Kenneth) 'cause dat person dat take dat (Steve) is better off.

It would seem from the results of the study described above that in any discussion of motivation in teaching SE, we must distinguish between attitudes of personal preference and sociolinguistic evaluations of Standard English — just as the children do.

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a prior history of use in England and therefore cannot be considered "Americanisms" in the sense that they were innovated or borrowed here. In the interpretation of this chapter, they would be part of the koine vocabulary.

(63) Ethan Allen Hitchcock, *A Traveller in Indian Territory*, 1930, p. 125.

(64) *Ibid.*, p. 51.

(65) P. 132.

(66) P. 89.

(67) *Thirty Years of Army Life on the Border*, p. 383.

(68) Marcy quoted, for example, a Texas hostess, from the dense forest region of northwest Texas:

"Wall, now, stranger, my ole man he ar out on a bar track, but I sort-o-reckon maybe you mought get to stay . . . that thar war narry shaw of vittles in the house barrin some sweet taters and a small chance of corn."

"What my name mought be," "she knowed a heap of Massys (Marcy) in ole Massasip . . . me an him allers 'lowed that them thar Massys was considible on bar and other varmits." (*Ibid.*)

(69) *The Look of the West*, 1860, p. 207.

(70) See especially Chomsky, *Cartesian Linguistics*, 1966. Chomsky defends some of the more profoundly philosophical grammatical traditions of the seventeenth century against the charge of Latinizing the structure of modern languages (specifically French). It is still true, however, that some early grammarians of English, among them Americans, drew unwarranted conclusions about English structure from Latin and prescribed usages in English on the basis of Latin.

(71) "The Methods of American Dialectology." *Zeitschrift für Mundartforschung*, 1963, p. 11.

(72) As a vehicle for spreading a version of high culture to the frontier populations, the Lyceum movement

provided models of "cultivated" English even for those in relatively isolated places.

The spread of the Lyceum system along the line of westward emigration from New England as far as the Mississippi is one tangible evidence of the high level of popular intelligence.

(Bliss Perry, *The American Spirit in Literature, A Chronicle of Great Interpreters*, Vol. 34 in the Chronicles of America Series, 1918, p. 175)

(73) On the Chautauqua as a successor to the earlier Lyceum movement, see Edwin E. Sloson, *The American Spirit in Education*, Vol. 33, Chronicles of America Series, pp. 281f.

(74) For a report of a behavioral test (listeners' evaluations) which showed preference for "Network Standard" on the part of both Southern Black students in a Mississippi college and Northern (mostly white) students in a New England college, see Wallace A. Lambert and G. Richard Tucker. "White and Negro Listeners' Reactions to Various American-English Dialects," *Social Forces*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (June 1969), pp. 463-68.

C. J. Bailey, in a review of my *Black English (Foundations of Language* 11 [1974], pp. 299-309), objects to the concept of Network Standard and points to phonological patterns called nonstandard in my book used on television by "senators and clergy." In fact, an issue-confusing point often raised by those who oppose the teaching of Standard English is that successful politicians (Lyndon Johnson is most often cited) use nonstandard forms. It ought to be obvious to anyone interested in the sociological distribution of language forms, however, that politicians are frequently superordinated figures not subject to many of the pressures (including pressure toward using the standard dialect) which most of the rest of us feel. Politicians and clergymen are, moreover, hardly a large enough group to sway language-engineering considerations very much. The term "Network Standard," as applied to the only serious candidate American English has for a national standard, has been used regularly to refer to the speech of television newscasters.