

Twin Cities as the nucleus of a conference in Minnesota. COMPAS was already well known throughout the Midwest. In the succeeding decade the Faculty Committee has been fortunate to engage local writers and editors without whom the Conference could not exist. Students repeatedly express enthusiasm for the individual contributions of these professionals whom they wish to emulate. Students are judgmental too. Their observations to their teachers shape succeeding programs. Michael Dennis Browne, Jill Breckenridge Haldeman, Phebe Hanson, and Wendy Knox have been featured speakers and critics several times. The following writers, some of whom have been present for two years, have helped to make the Conference a success: Michael Burris, Marion Dane Bauer, Terry Brown, David Bane, Pierre de Laittre, John Fenn, Jean-Marie Fisher, Alvin Greenberg, Keith Gunderson, Ruth Hammond, Garrison Keillor, Deborah Keenan, Stanley Kiesel, Robert Kearney, Leon Knight, Eileen Kuehn, "Little Bit" Editors, Larry Lindsay, John Minczeski, David Mura, Charles Norman, Barton Sutter, Susan Toth, Mark Vinz, John Whitman, and Dexter Westrum.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHING THE GRAMMATICAL SIGNALS OF MODERN ENGLISH

by C. Lamar Thompson

Certain grammatical signals in Modern English have developed since our Anglo-Saxon forebears spoke the language. Low German and Norse were their primary languages. The signals that evolved are more or less assimilated by children as they mature in the language. The objectives of a teaching unit on these signals are twofold: 1) To reinforce the concept of language clues or signals; and 2) To discover the signal systems of English. Selected activities for teaching these objectives are suggested in this paper.

Activity One

Have the students organize the following constructs:

1. $\frac{9}{0} \text{ I } - \bigcirc =$

2. $\begin{matrix} \nearrow \\ \nwarrow \end{matrix} \nearrow =$

For the first construct, they may draw a face, for the second

construct a star. Many other possibilities will become evident as they search for meaning. Help the students to observe that the parts take on significance as they relate to a whole structure.

The first two structure signals in English are word order and structure words. Ask the students to organize the following into a meaningful sentence: The, the, the, the, the, car, may, high-

way, girl, on, on, or, sidewalk, not, street, run, but

Note that word order and structure words are needed to give coherence to lexical words. Note also, however, that another factor comes into play in the following construct:

Activity Two

The argulic zorflies are flinking a premouder in the rufmicks trendenciously. See if the students can recognize this third signal (word position) which contributes to lexical meaning in the example sentence above. Ask them the following questions about the sentence:

1. What words do you immediately recognize?
2. What is the subject?
3. You do not have to prove it, but is this a sentence?
4. Is there a verb? Identify the verb word. How do you know?
5. What can you tell about the "premuoder"? What or whom are the "zorflies" flinking?
6. What can you tell about "rufmicks"?
7. What can you tell about "trendenciously"?
8. Does this sound like a sad sentence? What words have sounds that suggest a line of action?
9. Substitute real words for the "berbly" ones.

There are three basic language structures which must be considered. These indicate ancestry of language; they include: 1) agglutinative structure, 2) synthetic structure, and 3) analytic language.

Agglutinative language, as shown in the following example, involves compounding or affixation:

Santali - "dal" + ocho-akan-taken-tal-tin-a-e

English - He who belongs to him who belongs to me will continue letting him be struck.

Some other languages, though not English to any great extent,

are agglutinative (parts stuck together). Japanese and Korean are two of these. In English, we have some words of this type (dis+trust+ful+ly = not +trust+full+like).

Synthetic language involves inflectional signs. Latin is a synthetic language, and the meaning and relationship between words depends on inflectional affixes. Consider the following example:

us = Masculine, singular, nominative

em = object of the verb

Johnus hit Billem'

Billem hit Johnus'

Johnus Billem hit'

Hit Billem Johnus'

Billem Johnus hit'

Hit Johnus Billem'

Note that the inflectional affixes are so designated that any arrangement of word order yields the thought "John hit Bill."

Modern English is an analytic language (there are only seven inflections in modern English) and therefore depends upon structure words to build relationships between lexical words.

Activity Three

Help the student develop an inflectional system that will allow the following word arrangements and yet convey one meaning only:

- A) John gave little Bill one peanut.
- B) John gave Bill one little peanut.
- C) Bill gave John one peanut little.
- D) Little peanut one John gave Bill.

There is enough similarity in the Indo-European family of languages to allow us the privilege of classification. Note, for instance, that the word mother in English becomes: 1) moter-Lithuanian; 2) mathair-Celtic; 3) mater-Latin; 4) meter-Greek; 5) matar - Persian; and 6) matar-Sanskrit.

Activity Four

The students might compare the following in languages other than English: 1) night, 2) brother, and 3) two.

Modern English is a descendent of the Low German. German languages are characterized by strong and weak classification in: 1) verbs, 2) adjectives, and by 3) fixed stress rather than variable stress. This last, fixed stress, is common only to the Germanic branch of the Indo-European family

Activity Five

Ask the students to determine which of the following is from a Germanic source:

- 1) Derive / derivation / derivative / derivational
- 3) Friend / befriend / unfriendly / friendliness

Old English was a highly inflected, synthetic language. Genders were grammatical rather than logical, and nouns were strong or weak depending upon whether the stem ended in a vowel or a consonant. Adjectives were inflected, and even the article "the" had eleven different forms.

The major grammatical distinctions between Old English and Modern English occurred in the Middle English period. Inflections were lost and word order was established; natural gender replaced grammatical gender. By Chaucer's time, word position had largely replaced inflection as the dominant structural signal.

English is English because of several types of signals working simultaneously to allow meaningful communication. Students should be allowed to discover these signals--lexical, grammatical, and phoenemic. They should realize that spoken language is primary and written language only approximates it imperfectly.

Activity Six

Have the students determine which of the following sentences are English. Which elements in each are non-English?

- 1) The boy ate the apple.
- 2) Apple ate The the boy.
- 3) Some murkles, while riffing on the smurk, baskered a krimb, and were snutcheoned by the arkle lither.

Note that signs play a large part of English meaning. Once students are aware of the necessity for and the importance of the history of language study, all of the work of teaching English is facilitated by their ability to synthesize and categorize whatever task they are performing on a given day.

TRADITIONAL TEACHERS NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS

Minneapolis Community College
Saturday, April 7, 1984

OBJECTIVES

This workshop is designed to:

- * examine how "old school" teachers can become computer literate.
- * explore potential and current computer applications in secondary and post-secondary developmental education.
- * provide lab demonstrations with available computers and software.

PRESENTERS

- * Mary Schwalen, Control Data Corporation
- * Tom Boe, Minnesota Educational Computing Consortium (MECC)
- * Margaret Rauch, St. Cloud State University
- * Craig Hansen, University of Minnesota
- * Elmer Mattila, Minneapolis Community College and MECC

TOPICS

Topics will include:

- * the technological impact of computers on education
- * examples of software that work in reading, writing, and mathematics
- * how to evaluate software
- * demonstrations ranging from word processing to computing for the visually impaired

FEE

\$22.00, includes registration, coffee, lunch

This workshop is sponsored jointly by the Minnesota Post-Secondary Reading Council and the National Association for Developmental Education. A detailed brochure will be available in January.

For More Information Contact:

Cecil Fillenworth, MPSRC
Route 2
Rice, Minnesota 56367
(612) 255-3146 (Bus.)

Val Brown, NADE
Minneapolis Community College
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55403
(612) 341-7095 (Bus.)