

Sociolinguistic Methods

In the ELL Classroom

Yakima, Washington

A Special Project

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FACULTY APPROVAL

Sociolinguistic Methods

In the ELL Classroom

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Approved for the Faculty

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this experimental study was to determine whether English Language Learner (ELL) students would improve their acquisition of the English language from the use of selected sociolinguistic instructional techniques and methods. To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected literature was conducted, essential baseline data were obtained and analyzed, and related conclusions and recommendations were formulated. Data analysis supported the hypothesis that students who received selected sociolinguistic methods in ELL instruction accelerated in English language acquisition.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background for the Project

Even things without life, ...unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or played? So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance. Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me. (I Corinthians 14:7-11, The Holy Bible).

As alluded to in the above statement from The Bible, language was always essential and fundamental to all understanding.

Success in our economy has been based upon the right to work as hard as one wanted in order to climb up the ladder of success. Successful people contributed to our societies economy and everyone came out ahead. In past decade's hard work was not always the great equalizer as cultural traits such as language placed limits on how far one could climb.

More recently, America's school systems have been criticized as responsible for a growing academic achievement gap between students of differing ethnic backgrounds. In response, in 2002, President George Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) mandating higher academic achievement for all students. This governmental action has greatly changed education in America. Schools were ordered to test

students yearly at each grade level against national standards and report those outcomes to state and national governments. Schools were also asked to review and analyze graduation rates and to reduce the number of dropouts (Shannon & Bylesma, 2003). America's schools responded and were on an upward trend. Higher standards were expected of all children, including those with special needs. This included the English Language Learner's (ELL's). No Child Left Behind also necessitated the development of fluency in English for those learning English as a second language (ESL) (Feinberg, 2002).

English language learners have made up the fastest-growing group in our schools today (Lachat, 2004). As stated by Garcia (1996):

“Today 1 in 3 children nationwide is from an ethnic or racial minority group, 1 in 7 (14%) speaks a language other than English at home, and 1 in 15 was born outside the United States. The linguistic and cultural diversity of America's school population has increased dramatically during the past decade” (p. 54).

According to Lachat (2004), approximately 55% of those students learning English as a second language were born in America to families that spoke a different language at home. Another 45% of ELL's were foreign born.

Statement of the Problem

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), English Language Learners were not acquiring three years of English

proficiency as measured by benchmarks for students after having been enrolled in school for three years. Further, ELL teachers have been known to incorporate sociolinguistic methods in their teaching, and students who spoke a language different than English at home increased to more than 6,000,000 between 1979 and 2003. Although the total number of U. S. students increased by 19% from 1979-2003, those identified as speaking a language different than English at home rose 161%. Primary-level ELL's represented 47% of the total ELL population and numbered 1,300,000 children (Kinder, 2002).

One purpose of Title III of the NCLB Act was to provide financial support to both state and local educators to help ELL's improve their achievement in core subjects, not merely in English proficiency (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002).

According to Lara & August (1996), ESL students had been excluded in standardized testing. As a result, ESL's were not accounted for and did not receive the educational benefits that the reforms in education provided (August & Hakuta, 1997). Many diagnostic tests have been used that have supported the fact that the ELL's scored far below expected standards. Teachers have complained often of spending up to 1/3 of their time on remediation daily to help students prepare themselves to understand subsequent instruction.

If current teaching methods were not changed by adopting new approaches in ESL classrooms, teachers would be guilty of having set these students up for failure and for falling further behind in content areas. To prevent this from happening and to equalize educational opportunities, sociolinguistic instructional methods have been widely adopted in ELL classrooms.

The problem which represented the focus of the present study may be stated as follows: Did students who received selected sociolinguistic methods in ELL instruction accelerate in English language acquisition?

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this experimental research study was to determine whether ELL students would benefit from the use of selected sociolinguistic instructional techniques and methods. To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected literature was conducted, essential baseline data were obtained and analyzed, and related conclusions and recommendations were formulated.

Delimitations

The study was conducted in the Yakima School District during the Winter of 2006 and Spring of 2007. Participants included in the research project were enrolled in the writer's (Sandra W. Rowan) classes at Washington Middle School in Yakima. Only students in Level I and Level

II ESL courses were included. No texts were used and all testing materials were published and provided by the writer. Data were obtained from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) website and the Yakima School District Assessment Office. The literature reviewed was current primarily within the last five years. The Internet, Proquest, Teachervision, Reportcard, elibrary, and Crede were used.

Assumptions

The researcher made several assumptions about the students included in the study. First, the researcher (Sandra W. Rowan) assumed that all students within the Yakima School District wanted to learn and that they were capable of learning if given the proper support. Second, the researcher assumed conditions in the classroom could have been changed in ways that would have contributed to student success. Third, the assumption was made that all students could have accelerated in the time spent in English acquisition. Finally, it was assumed teachers wanted to improve their teaching, and that they would benefit from recommendations formulated as a result of the present study.

The researcher was such a teacher in search of being more successful. For that reason, this experiment seemed appropriate to do. A review of selected literature was done, data was obtained from outside

sources, experiments were performed, and conclusions were drawn.

Recommendations were formulated for use by ELL teachers.

Hypothesis

Students who received selected sociolinguistic methods in ELL instruction accelerated in English language acquisition.

Null Hypothesis

There was no significant difference in language acquisition for English Language Learners as seen in given tests after the implementation of certain best practices from the field of sociolinguistics.

Significance of the Project

The present study was timely when considered in the context of the Washington State requirement that students in the class of 2008 were previously required to pass the 10th grade Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) before high school graduation (Holayter, 1998, <http://www.newhorizons.org/trans/holayter.htm>). English Language Learners were overrepresented in those failing that assessment. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was enacted requiring all districts to have students meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) proficiency levels by the year 2008.

English Language Learners have seen high dropout rates. They have had to contend with discrimination and bias toward immigrants and have had lower expectations for their achievement academically. Whether this

was real or perceived, socioeconomic, linguistic, and cultural differences have been scrutinized (Kogan, 2001).

To combat the disregard for the inherent value in students' first language, experiences, and culture, it was necessary for teachers to develop new approaches to instruction that would value that diversity within their classes. Accordingly, teachers needed to find new ways to involve ELL's in meaningful discussions and activities (Waxman & Tellez, 2002). As stated by these authorities, "Positive learning environments that support students' needs and validate alternative cultural perspectives" (p.4) were called for. To accomplish this, (Feinberg, 2002) urged adequate training for all classroom teachers that had ESL students. In-service training for teachers was also recommended by Waxman & Tellez to ensure they were current on research concerning effective instructional methods for ELL's.

The present study was also intended to contribute to the growing body of research concerning ELL instructional strategies, which may prove useful to teachers working with those students. Finally, providing teachers and school districts with new information concerning effective ELL instructional strategies may prove helpful in meeting AYP proficiency levels mandated by the NCLB act.

Procedure

The procedure employed in the present study evolved in several stages as follows:

1. During June of 2006, the researcher sought and was granted permission to undertake the study from her principal (Mr. Lorenzo Alvarado) at Washington Middle School (WMS).
2. After ensuring Mr. Alvarado's support for the project, the researcher was directed to Mr. Greg Day, YSD Director of Assessment, who approved the study and provided the researcher with forms needed for data collection.
3. Students involved in the experiment were given parent permission slips to participate in the study.
4. During the winter of 2006 and spring of 2007, the researcher organized participants into experimental and control groups, and proceeded with data collection and analysis.
5. During April 2007, research was completed and related conclusions and recommendations were formulated.

Definition of Terms

Significant terms used in the context of the present study have been defined as follows:

Adequate Yearly Progress. Measure of whether or not a school met the criteria set forth by the No Child Left Behind Act. Twenty-nine benchmarks must be met or passed in reading, math, and attendance in order to pass AYP.

Benchmarks. State identified qualities in students of different grade levels.

Bi-lingual education. Instruction that provided significant amounts of reading and content-area teaching in the child's first language (Slavin & Cheung, 2003).

Code-Switching. As people speak they unconsciously consider their audience and make verbal adjustments.

Content-areas. Subjects studied in school other than the instruction of language.

Control group. The group in a research study that either receives a different treatment than the experimental group or is treated as usual.

Descriptive Research. Determines and reports the way things are. This includes collecting numerical data to test hypotheses or answer questions about the current status of the subject of study.

Diglossia. Languages or dialects used differently according to different social situations.

English Language Learner. A student that was not proficient in the English language. This included spoken, understood, and written language.

English as a Second Language. Used interchangeably with English Language Learner. This included students as well as programs.

English as a Second Language Instruction. Special curriculum and strategies used for English as a Second Language students. The focus was on language rather than content and often used none of the native language (OELA, 2002). Students were frequently pulled out from regular classes and assigned a special room for instruction.

Experimental group. The group in a research that typically receives the new treatment under investigation.

Experimental research. Research that had dependent and independent variables. Observation was done on one or more dependent variables and was observed by the researcher in order to obtain support or non-support for a hypothesis.

First language. Used interchangeably with native language to refer to the language a person first spoke at home.

Inferential statistics. Data analysis techniques for determining how likely it is that results obtained from a sample or samples are the same results that would have been obtained for the entire population.

This allows a researcher to generalize about a population based on information obtained from a limited number of participants.

Language minority student. A student from a home that primarily spoke a language different than English, whether he had some English proficiency, total fluency, or neither (Lachat, 2004).

Level I student. A student who was functioning at a grade level equivalent to a beginning English speaker. He had little reading or writing skills, and communicated primarily with gestures or short phrases. He used very few English words correctly.

Level II students. Students functioning at a grade level equivalent to an advanced beginning English speaker. They used some phrases in English, read highly contextualized texts, and applied some concepts read. They were still unable to use descriptive sentences when speaking.

Mastery. Complete learning as evidenced by performance outcomes.

Native language. Used interchangeably with first language to refer to the language a person first spoke at home.

No Child Left Behind. This Act required annual testing to measure student progress in reading and math, with proficiency by the year 2013.

Realia. Contextual reasoning is used in everyday settings with concrete ties to real-world problems of the students.

Washington Assessment of Student Learning. Tests administered to students in Washington State to assess student proficiency levels in writing, reading, and math. Students graduating by the year 2008 will have had to pass this exam.

Acronyms

AYP, Adequate Yearly Progress

ELL, English Language Learner

ESL, English as a Second Language

NCLB, No Child Left Behind

OSPI, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

WASL, Washington Assessment of Student Learning

WMS, Washington Middle School

YSD, Yakima School District

CHAPTER 2

Review of Selected Literature

Introduction

“Today 1 in 3 children nationwide is from an ethnic or racial minority group, 1 in 7 [14%] speaks a language other than English at home, and 1 in 15 was born outside the United States” (p.113). This caused dramatic cultural and linguistic diversity in the schools of America. In order to educate them, it was first necessary to educate our teachers. Teachers needed to begin to think differently about their ESL students.

Educating students first necessitated educating themselves as teachers who needed to come to a new set of realizations. As stated by Garcia:

“Confronted with this dismal reality, administrators, teachers, parents, and policy makers urged each other to do something different—change teaching methods, adopt new curricula, and allocate more funding” (Garcia, 1996, p. 113).

The review of selected literature presented below addressed the following research topics:

1. History of sociolinguistics
2. Problems identified by sociolinguistics
3. Applied sociolinguistics
4. The job of the sociolinguist

5. Realia
6. Code switching
7. Other sociolinguistic strategies
8. Summary

The literature reviewed was primarily within the last five years of print. The Internet, Proquest, Teachervision, Reportcard, elibrary, and Crede were used.

History of Sociolinguistics

The term sociolinguistics was coined in the 1950's. Prior to that, linguists studied grammar apart from the social lives of the speakers. Sociolinguistics had many ties with sociology, anthropology, social psychology, and education. Though our world was comprised of about 140 nations (Xiaoqian, 2005), there were as many as 5,000 languages (Romaine, 1994). Sociolinguistics was birthed as the study of the relationship between language and society, which included: Studies of particular languages; The people that embraced them; How languages formed for a people; and, What that meant about the people. A language was a part of individuals, but had no meaning or use until it was used in a group. Language was then an institution of a people much like religion or education. Language gave structure to a people (Sociolinguistics International: Language Assessment, 2006). Instead of focusing on the differences, sociolinguists began to look

at basic structural similarities in all languages as seen through the eyes of all humanity to include the particular viewpoint of a culture (Kryatzis, 2004). Traditionally, sociologists also paid little attention to language, but began put more stock in the relationship because of the work of sociolinguists (Romaine, 1994) (Sociolinguistics International: Planning a Language Development Program, 2006). Recently, linguists studied various fields exploring how languages and dialects developed and changed within different registries and classes (Sociolinguistics International: Planning a Language Development Program, 2006). There were some similar thoughts to those of Noam Chomsky and his “Linguistic Competence” theory (Chomsky, 1986). “Linguistic Performance”, another name for sociolinguistics in early years, also acknowledged that knowing a language was much more than just memorizing a bunch of rules of grammar. There were also unwritten rules of knowing your listeners, and what would be appropriate and acceptable speech to them in that given setting. There were rules of etiquette in communication that must have been adhered to. Context also needed following, as well as the social setting (Finegan, 2006). Chomsky’s theory had expanded the thought that grammar was merely a learned patterned that happened cognitively as a useful response to man’s environment. Differences among differing languages reflected the variations in beliefs, values, reference groups, and norms. Unlike work

started by Bloomfield earlier, this study then included communication that was neither written nor spoken. The use of whistles, horns, and drums even became a part of studied speech communities as long as those communities shared rules of conduct and could interpret those sounds.

Problems Identified By Sociolinguistics

No person or community was limited to one way to communicate. People switched registers, dialects, tones, word choices, and even languages easily within conversations to adapt to the need in front of them. To make it even rougher, there were not any written rules to be learned that could have cued them in to when to do those adjustments. Within a newspaper for instance, there were different registers used in different sections. Letters to the editors, the general news portion, and cartoons showed many differences for example (Finegan, 2006).

Sharing the rules with those outside the community was not enough to fully facilitate their communication, however (Kyratzis, 2004). There were many unwritten rules of patterns or pauses or even emphasizes on certain words and phrases that could never have been fully taught but must have been understood. Using irony or sarcasm were examples in the English language. The more a person was competent of a language, the more he understood of how it all fit together in communication. Situations must have been experienced for one to fully prepared to talk, or not talk,

during like times. Fights and ceremonies were good examples of this. For instance, to have read a book about etiquette at funerals in America and thought one was prepared to act in that context would have been absurd. Without being a part of the lives of the guests present, responses could have been very out of place. The same word choices carried different meanings depending on who said them and what the relationship was between the parties. If someone had just suffered the loss of a child to an automobile accident and was told “I’m sorry” by the tow truck operator, this would have held a very different meaning than if the drunk driver who had caused the accident said the same words or even one’s spouse offered comfort through the words once they got home. Even one’s goal as a participant in a word exchange influenced what they heard or said. The channel that was used also affected meaning. Saying, “I love you” in a letter, over the phone, or in person may have had various meanings to the hearer. Studying a culture has provided clues to the ways one should interpret a discourse and has helped to avoid hindrances in understanding or the making of ambiguous messages.

Applied Sociolinguistics

As alluded to be Kratzis, when conversations began, people started slowly with general greetings in an attempt to probe into the level of interpersonal exchange they wished to engage in. At that point, they fished for commonalities of experiences and perspectives. If this was successful,

they began to exchange phrases. They engaged in a rhythm with the other person. The wealth of experiences that were brought with them, helped or hindered during uncomfortable moments in the exchange.

Ethnic identity was formed as they negotiated with the community around them in given situations. At any moment or context they chose from a repertoire of identities they had seen socially and believed would work for them (Romaine, 1994). They wrestled with the labels they had put on themselves or that came from others to find a place to belong. Those negotiations never became fixed though they appeared to be in given circumstances. Parts of their identity became connected to places but the world around them continued to move. As it did, the boundaries they set for themselves also moved, as they did for those around them as well. Those fixed ethnic regions shifted and overlapped. Even the people who dwelt within those lines defined the community and its limits differently. As that happened to a people, so it happened to their language. We chose our speech style. (Finegan & Kryatzis, 2004).

All languages seemed to have some similar points, and all had a way to specify a formal and an informal relationship through their speech. Further, all seemed to have some type of pronouns to reduce redundancy in the noun use. Languages had various ways to show emphasis of certain points, but all seemed to be able to. Commands were given in much simpler

form than narratives, universally. Finally, all languages had key words that signaled order, though not all were in the forward direction (Cartwright & Brent, 1997). Most languages seemed to have had a structure of narration that followed a beginning, middle, and an ending. However, there were capabilities within some that were lacking in others. One of the jobs of the sociolinguist was to discover those voids and help add structures that could allow for them. One such shift was evident, as America saw many people try to suppress standard expressions of power and respect, and use more inclusive language. Westernization of societies seemed to equalize relationships, and unreciprocated addresses of politeness were beginning to be viewed as acceptable. Using new words or allowing new usages of old words actually seemed to unite a people. The ability to convey emotions or sympathy was an example of that. What was acceptable speech in one culture was not in another. Even compliments could have been negative, if the one receiving them felt it showed the addressor had superiority over them and was flaunting it by showing they already perfected that area. Titles of honor to the aged were not always respectful as well, if it pointed out differences and the receiver wanted to be included. Speech acceptable with men, may not have been acceptable when women were present. Most cultures allowed more personal talk among women, and more informal subjects brought up among men. Studies of language have revealed

inequalities between the roles of the sexes. The question raised was: If we corrected a linguistic problem, were we changing a culture and was that our right, as listening to speech did not always reveal the intent of the speaker? Likewise, the effects of speech that we observed may not have been the real effect that was experienced. Directness could have been appropriate and honest, or it could have been rude. Indirectness could also have been taken as appropriate and considered to have been honest in some cultures.

Silence, also, showed both power and powerlessness (Romaine, 1994).

Mendoza-Denton (1999), conducted research focused on the Pidgin and Creole languages. According to this authority, all languages used norming as the agreed upon model of correct language usage and what should have been taught to others. Pidgins and Creoles lacked some of the qualifiers that would make them languages, although these speech forms had been around for a long time, and lacked grammar and structure. Though Pidgins were not a shared language, they were used to communicate when two parties had no other means. Pidgins were a mixture of languages that changed constantly, and may have used the grammar of one language but the words from another. Creoles were birthed by Pidgins that were used and agreed upon for a while. Both Creoles and Pidgins were rarely respected, and linguists viewed them as they would slang.

The Job of the Sociolinguist

According to Sociolinguistics International & Sociolinguistics International: Language Development, 2006, sociolinguists worked with less developed languages to help them meet their goals linguistically and accomplished this through language planning and intercultural work. Often, this work led to the birth of written language. As languages developed, new needs arose and new technologies were introduced to meet those challenges, through implementation of short or long range goals.

Another area of study by sociolinguists was dialects. Among some language peoples, dialects could have given clues to social variables like age, gender, race, or class. This was also one area that was changing constantly. Accents might have revealed something to the listener. The usage of nonstandard forms, longer sentences, clauses, bigger vocabularies, and even the use of speaking in the first person, signified social class (Mendoza-Denton, N., 1999).

Romaine found direct correlation between first language loyalty and the size of that minority's population and its' proximity to their homeland. Often people were comfortable with monolingualism, and saw bilingualism or multilingualism as divisive. Opponents to dual language or bi-lingual instruction feared "that instruction in the native language delayed or interfered with the development of English fluency, thereby relegation

ELL's to a lower status and separate position in both the school and society" (Slavin & Cheung, 2003, p. 28). Another criticism was the cost and large number of resources needed for those types of programs. On the other side of the debate were those that believed bilingual education was rooted in the idea that the more familiar the ELL was with his first language rules of syntax, the easier literary skills transferred to English (Krashen, 1997).

The diversity of a given nation though, may have necessitated the stretching outside of ones' comfort zones. Two languages were never so similar that onlookers could have said they had the same social reality. Each culture and each language was distinct. No one could have studied a language apart from its culture, nor studied culture in exclusion of language. The more versed one was in diverse cultures, the better prepared he was to help others acquire language (Xiaoqian, 2005).

Realia

Language had little benefit apart from the realities of life. Realia was then a sub-discipline of sociolinguistics (Schwartz, 1996). Instruction should have been reflective and sensitive to the ELL's background of experiences and needs (Tompkins, 2005). As children created, they playfully transformed and resisted cultural categories, and when language was seen as social action that helped to shape reality (Gasking et al., 1992). Children built rituals to become a part of a peer group through games and

conflict, and were not incomplete adults, but rather in the process of reforming a part of social categories within their needed contexts and agendas (Kyratzis, 2004). Language helped to create reality, not merely reflect it (Gaskins et al. 1992). People have tapped into their worlds by modeling, collaborating, and by simulating. This provided the mirrors of how the skills could have been used. Not only did they provide knowledge scaffolding for them, they helped stimulate and develop their ability to think with higher levels of thinking and new applications to their language study (Byerly, 2001).

English speakers were provided with instruction that helped make connections between different subjects and life experiences while ELL's were often grouped together and still concentrating on aspects of the reading process itself. Iddings' study (2005), helped to shed light on the inequality of this problem.

Code Switching

As people spoke, they unconsciously considered their audience (how familiar they were and the type of relationship they had). Speakers also considered their setting, purpose, and the topic being discussed to lead them into code switches (Smitherman, 1997). Though speaking only one language, it may have appeared almost a different language when dialect, stress and word choice came into play. Multilingual nations also accepted

words from other languages for their own (loan words) as people began to become familiar with them, (Sociolinguistics International: Language Development).

The social climate also dictated high and low varieties of speech. Women tended to be more formally correct in grammar usage than men. This may have been because women had a greater concern for being polite or perhaps maintaining a status level. Men may have appeared to be more direct and to use less colorful language or filler words. The use of silence has also indicated differences among the different genders. As people spoke, they did not merely accept feedback from their listeners, they interpreted it and created meaning from it to gain acceptance and respect. There was no difference in children who played games in an attempt to attract social contacts or to fit in. Teasing, gossiping, and arguing also had their place as kids negotiated position within their peer groups. Children wanted to get control over a world that was very confusing to them, and they wanted to overcome the limits that their language bound them within. Code switching was one way to gain that (Kryatzis).

Other Sociolinguistic Strategies

Though not birthed in the field of sociolinguistics, other strategies have been discussed and added to the following repertoire of acceptable sociolinguistic strategies:

1. Building Background – Readers form meaning by reviewing past experiences that given images and sounds evoke. Diverse backgrounds may have left a student without the experiences to attach meaning to the subjects presented. Having provided those students with experiences, whether they were first hand or via others, readied them to have received the new subject matter (Huey, 1948).
2. Cognitive Strategies – Cognitive strategies were taught to children so they could have organized their information and developed their own processes of self-regulation in reference to it. Students used those strategies with their learning tasks (Paulston & Tucker, 2003).
3. Comprehensible Input – This technique involved making adjustments in speech patterns to make messages more understandable for students. Teachers should have taught above the level of a student to provide a challenge but not so far above that he was lost and gave up. That technique could have also been called “code switching”. Often teachers found easier ways to say the same thing their texts or resources said. A teacher could have scaled down the vocabulary without compromising the content (Krashen, 1985).

4. ESL Standards and Strategies – The awareness of standards in the field of language acquisition helped focus a teacher on their presentation of materials. Strategies recommended by ESL specialists to promote teacher effectiveness include:
Comprehension Strategies (used to summarize or predict);
Getting The Gist (GIST); Graphic Organizers (a type of outline);
Mnemonics (a visualization method); Preview, Explore, Note, See (PENS); and Surveying, Questioning, Predicting, Reading, Responding, and Summarizing (SQP2PRS) (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994).
5. Interaction – Instead of the old method of direct instruction students passively listening, sheltered content classes should have been structured so that students were interacting in their collaborative investigations of a body of knowledge. Interaction techniques included structures with the classroom for different groupings, analyzing key concepts, structuring student opportunities, and the use of sufficient wait time between utterances (Diaz, 1989).
6. Metacognitive Strategies – Metacognition was characterized by (1) matching thinking and problem-solving strategies to particular learning situations, (2) clarifying purposes for learning,

- (3) monitoring one's own comprehension through self-questioning, and (4) taking corrective action if understanding fails. Once presented with information, the child was allowed to organize it in his mind and was given time for self-reflection before application was made (Chamot & O'Malley).
7. Scaffolding Techniques – This strategy focused on supporting a learner at the introduction to a concept and having provided him with help through many practice opportunities until he becomes successful on his own. Pre-reading strategies were seen to provide the child with an introduction to the text to be read, and also filled in some lacking background knowledge and vocabulary (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002).
 8. Family Involvement – Having brought in the family of the ELL student was a powerful way to support his/her culture, and provide enriching activities and rich accessible instruction that benefited all children. Open communication with the home proved to bring great resources for new learning (Coltrane, 2003).
 9. Thematic Units – When teachers ceased isolating subjects and began to run threads of themes throughout all subjects in a student's day,

ELL students were provided more practice time on similar skills. The thematic approach organized language arts and content-area subjects around broad concepts aligned with specific learning goals. Teachers were faced with the dual responsibility of teaching literacy and other skills simultaneously with the second language. Theming was a way to do both at the same time. That was also a way to support relevance and realia, while valuing the child's cultural identity (Soltero, 2004).

10. Culturally Appropriate Literature – Another way to have shown support for a diverse culture was to provide culturally supportive materials that met the instructional objectives. Not only did this support the learners culture, it was seen to open up 2-way communication between student and teacher (Chamot & O'Malley).
11. Relationships – According to Nieto (1999), it was essential that teachers made positive connections with their students both academically and personally. Students needed to feel safe, respected and valued in the environment they were to learn in, to see optimum success. When teachers valued a child's differences, it contributed to a more positive culture in the classroom besides breaking down barriers of silence and

withdrawal. Children listened more attentively when their self-esteem was high, and relationships aided in building that (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez).

Summary

The review of selected literature presented in Chapter 2 supported the following research themes:

1. Sociolinguistics have focused on basic structural similarities in all languages as seen through the eyes of all humanity to include the particular viewpoint of a culture.
2. Studying a culture has provided clues to the ways one should interpret a discourse and has helped to avoid hindrances in understanding or the making of ambiguous messages.
3. Ethnic identity was formed as different cultures negotiated with the community around them in given situations to choose their speech style.
4. Sociolinguists worked with less developed languages to help them meet their goals linguistically and accomplished this through language planning and intercultural work.
5. Language had little benefit apart from the realities of life.
6. As people speak, they unconsciously consider their audience and make verbal adjustments.

7. Significant instructional strategies in the field of sociolinguistics included: Building background, cognitive strategies, comprehensive input, ESL standards and strategies, Interaction, Metacognitive strategies, Scaffolding techniques, Family involvement, Thematic units, Culturally appropriate literature, and Relationships.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Treatment of Data

Introduction

The purpose of this experimental study was to determine whether ELL students would improve their acquisition of the English language from the use of selected sociolinguistic instructional techniques and methods. To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected literature was conducted, essential baseline data were obtained and analyzed, and related conclusions and recommendations were formulated.

Chapter 3 contains a description of the methods used in the study. The researcher included information about the participants, instruments and designs used, the procedures and treatments of the data, and a summarization.

Methodology

The researcher used a method of research with dependent and independent variables. Observation was done on one or more dependent variables and was observed by the researcher in order to obtain support or non-support for a hypothesis. This descriptive study utilized inferential statistics to analyze data needed to determine any significant improvement in English language acquisition by participating students. The research was conducted during the 2006-2007 school year. Students were selected to

participate from a convenient sampling of Level I ELL children in the researchers school.

Participants

Participants in the study were part of a student cohort that contained multi-aged Level I and Level II English Language Learners at Washington Middle School, Yakima, Washington. The study consisted of 48 participants, including 27 males and 21 females. Students were all enrolled in the investigator's (Sandra W. Rowan) Health class. Two class periods were set aside to administer two selected English language acquisition tests (APPENDIX).

Instruments

Selected English language acquisition tests were designed by the experimenter (Sandra W. Rowan) to measure student performance on pre and post tests. For the code-switching experiment, both control and experimental groups were read Goldilocks and The Three Bears as retold by Lorinda Bryan Cauley (1981). The Yakima School District had assigned a reading equivalency grade level of 4.0 to the book. The experimental group was also presented with the same story as retold by Betty Miles (1998). That book had been assigned a reading equivalency grade level of 0.8. Both books were written in the English language. The pre and posttest was designed to covered material and vocabulary common to both books. The

experimenter attempted to write the test on a first grade level and in a multiple-choice format. Both the books and the test were presented orally by the experimenter.

Design

Both experimental studies utilized Inferential Statistics to measure the extent to which students may have shown greater English language learning and acquisition when sociolinguistic methods were added to the instruction. In one experiment, students were provided a selected reading, using a sociolinguistic method called **code-switching**. The test measured whether students that were provided this method of teaching would outperform students who did not have that opportunity. The experimental design consisted of two independent groups:

Group X included students who were provided with a code-switched text during their second presentation of the material.

Group Y included students who were provided a second presentation of the material without language modifications.

The second experiment was designed to measure the effect that **realia**, another sociolinguistic teaching practice, had on enhancing students English language acquisition.

Procedure

Prior to the present study, during 2004-2005, the researcher undertook a pre-experiment/pilot study using a group of adults in her local church, to validate the existence of **code-switching**. That experiment had participants ask given responders the question, “What exactly did you have for breakfast today?” The participants represented diverse sexed, ages, and socioeconomic classes, but were all English speaking. Participants were asked to write down exactly what was said in response to the question. The experiment intended to measure to what extent responders answered the same question differently when they spoke to different audiences. The test was neither reliable nor valid but did help to direct the focus of the present study.

The procedure used in the present study involved several steps. In June of 2006, the researcher asked and was granted permission to undertake the study from Mr. Lorenzo Alvarado, principal at WMS. The researcher was then directed to Greg Day, Director of Assessment for the Yakima District. A ” Permission to Conduct a Study” form was issued essential for experiments using students within the school district. When permission was granted, the researcher proceeded.

After receiving permission to conduct the present study, two experimental groups were organized and experiments were designed around

(1) **Code-switching**, and (2) **Realia**. For the **code-switching** experiment, the researcher used two versions of the “Goldilocks and the Three Bears” story written on different grade equivalent levels. The two texts were reviewed to pull out common content in both versions. This content was used to design a posttest written at a lower reading level. All participants were read this version at the 4th grade level. Next, students were divided up into control and experiment groups. The control group received the same reading again, where the experimental group was read the 1st grade level version. Both groups were then administered the post-test.

The second experiment performed was in the area of **realia**. A picture dictionary was developed by the researcher that contained sixty entries. All the entries were words that would be typically introduced through content readings in post ESL classes. The dictionary was divided into three categories. The first category contained words that the experimenter considered of low interest subject-wise. They were primarily nouns that would be used infrequently in daily life. The other two categories contained similar, more obscure words only useful to those with specific interests. These two categories involved (1) sports and tools, and (2) kitchen objects and clothing. The researcher assumed most participants in the experiment would have an interest in at least one subject, and therefore would have taken more effort to remember those words.

During April 2007, essential baseline data were obtained and analyzed, and related conclusions and recommendations were formulated.

Treatment of Data

Inferential Statistics, as outlined in the textbook Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications (Gay & Airasian, 2003) were used for data evaluation. The researcher compared scores of the experimental and the control groups. A *t*-test for independent samples was also used to evaluate the data for the realia experiment. A Windows STATPAK statistical software program and charts contained in the textbook Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications (Gay & Airasian, 2003) were used to make those evaluations useful. The researcher compared scores of experimental and control groups. Significance was determined for $p \geq 0.05, 0.01, \text{ and } 0.001$. A *t*-test for independent samples was used to test for significance:

$$t = \frac{\overline{X}_1 - \overline{X}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{SS_1 + SS_2}{n_1 + n_2 - 2} \left(\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2} \right)}}$$

Summary

Chapter 3 contained a summary of the research methods used in the study. The researcher included information about the participants, instruments and designs used, the procedures and treatments of the data, and a summarization.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis of Data

Introduction

The study focused on the need to provide teachers with different strategies to help meet the needs of ELL's. Without the inclusion of sociolinguistic studies and methods, students would have continued to fall further behind the expectations of teachers, and furthermore, be unprepared to face situations society would have dealt them. To investigate possible solutions to address this need, the researcher did a descriptive study utilizing inferential statistics to analyze data needed to determine any significant improvement in English language acquisition by participating students. The implementation of a few selected sociolinguistic strategies (i.e. **code-switching** and **realia**) in ESL instruction was compared to similar instruction absent those strategies.

Description of the Environment

The study, which took place in the Yakima School District during the 2006-2007 school year, sought to determine whether ELL students would benefit from the use of selected sociolinguistic instructional techniques and methods. A sample of 42 students was used to test for significance. An approximately equal number of males and females included in the study were all students in a multi-age ESL class containing

Level I and Level II students assigned to the researcher. Forty-one students were administered the **code-switching** test (APPENDIX). Forty students were administered the **realia** test (APPENDIX). All student participants were native Spanish speakers which may have limited the application of any generalities toward other first-language groups.

Hypothesis

Students who received selected sociolinguistic methods in ELL instruction accelerated in English language acquisition.

Null Hypothesis

There was no significant difference in language acquisition for English Language Learners as seen in given tests after the implementation of certain best practices from the field of sociolinguistics.

Results of Study

Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4, presented on the following pages, have displayed descriptive data essential for drawing inferential conclusions central to the study. Table 1 has presented Code-Switching test results for the control group, and Table 2 presented the results for the experimental group. In Tables 3 and 4, the pre and posttest results for realia were included. Table 3 contained the data for students who identified more with vocabulary in the areas of kitchen and clothing, and Table 4 represented those who preferred sport and tool terms. The hypothesis and

null hypothesis' were tested for significance as well, in the realia experiment, using a *t*-test for independent samples (Table 5).

Table 1
Code-Switching Test Results for the Control Group
Goldilocks and the Three Bears Experiment

Student	Test 1	Test 2 - Control	%age of change
1	11	10	-9
2	7	8	9
3	9	10	9
4	7	8	9
5	8	7	-9
6	9	11	18
7	7	6	-9
8	10	10	0
9	10	9	-9
10	11	9	-18
11	4	5	9
12	6	9	7
13	6	8	18
14	10	8	-18
15	4	8	37
16	6	8	18
17	5	6	10
18	8	11	27
19	3	2	-9
20	10	10	0
21	5	5	0
22	4	6	19
23	3	6	28
24	8	11	27

Table 2
Code-Switching Test Results for the Experimental Group
 Goldilocks and the Three Bears Experiment

Student	Test 1	Test 2 - Experiment	%age Of Change
1	7	8	10
2	2	4	18
3	9	10	9
4	7	9	18
5	9	11	18
6	9	8	-9
7	5	6	10
8	5	6	10
9	8	10	18
10	5	5	0
11	4	4	0
12	9	9	0
13	6	5	10
14	11	11	0
15	10	11	9
16	6	6	0
17	4	5	9

Table 3**Realia – Picture/Word Recognition Experiment**

Student	General	Kitchen/Clothes	%age of Change
1	24	24	0
5	11	10	-4
11	6	7	4
14	5	24	79
18	1	8	32.96
19	21	24	12
22	24	8	-67
24	15	21	25
26	17	22	21
28	23	24	4
29	6	12	25
30	11	10	-4
31	9	14	49
32	21	15	-25
33	3	24	99.87
35	2	8	32.92
36	22	17	-21
37	5	7	8
38	15	13	-9
39	9	23	87

Table 4

Realia – Picture/Word Recognition Experiment

Student	General	Sports/Tools	%age of change
2	11	19	33
3	9	24	62
4	18	9	-37
6	11	22	46
7	4	23	79
8	21	23	8
9	21	24	12
10	13	21	34
12	0	21	88
13	23	14	-38
15	13	18	21
16	16	12	-17
17	20	24	77
20	20	20	0
21	22	16	-25
23	24	20	-17
25	15	18	12
27	17	20	12
34	15	24	37

Table 5

Null Hypothesis and Hypothesis Test for Significance

Realia Experiment

df*= 75	0.05	0.01	0.001
Null Hypothesis	Reject	Accept	Accept
Hypothesis	Support	No Support	No Support

*df=degrees of freedom

$t=2.42$

2.42
3.460
(0.001)

2.42
2.660
(0.01)

2.42
2.000
(0.05)

Findings – Code-Switching

Upon analysis of the data, the investigator found some areas from which inferences could be drawn for example. The study sought to determine if code-switching made a significant difference in the acquisition of a second language. Findings that supported this objective included:

1. Although 10 students in the control group performed the same or negatively after repeating the same process, 14 control group students exhibited positive growth. Six experimental group students performed the same or negatively with the intervention, while 11 students showed positive growth.
2. Improvement as high as 68% was seen in the experimental group, where as only 58% improvement in test scores was achieved by the control group.

Findings - Realia

Upon analysis of the data, the investigator found some areas from which inferences could be drawn. For example, the study sought to determine if realia made a significant difference in the acquisition of a second language. Findings that supported this objective included:

1. There was significant difference in language acquisition with the realia intervention at the 0.05 level.

2. Thirteen students showed higher scores after the realia intervention regardless of the area of study selected. Only 6 students remained consistent or performed lower on the second battery of tests.
3. The mean score for students before the realia intervention was 56, after the intervention, the mean score increased to 71.

Summary

The analysis of data presented in chapter 4 supported the hypothesis that students who received selected sociolinguistic methods in ELL instruction accelerated in English language acquisition. Additionally, chapter 4 provided an overview of the description of the environment, hypothesis, null hypothesis, results of the studies, and findings. Following was a discussion of the findings and a summary.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

The purpose of this research study was to determine whether ELL students would benefit from the use of selected sociolinguistic instructional techniques and methods. To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected literature was conducted, essential baseline data were obtained and analyzed, and related conclusions and recommendations were formulated.

Conclusions

Based on the review of the selected literature and major findings produced from the present study, the following conclusions were reached:

1. Sociolinguistics have focused on basic structural similarities in all languages as seen through the eyes of all humanity to include the particular viewpoint of a culture.
2. Studying a culture has provided clues to the ways one should interpret a discourse and has helped to avoid hindrances in understanding or the making of ambiguous messages.
3. Ethnic identity was formed as different cultures negotiated with the community around them in given situations to choose their speech style.

4. Sociolinguists worked with less developed languages to help them meet their goals linguistically and accomplished this through language planning and intercultural work.

5. Language had little benefit apart from the realities of life.

6. As people speak, they unconsciously consider their audience and make verbal adjustments.

7. Significant instructional strategies in the field of sociolinguistics included: Building background, cognitive strategies, comprehensive input, ESL standards and strategies, Interaction, Metacognitive strategies, Scaffolding techniques, Family involvement, Thematic units, Culturally appropriate literature, and Relationships.

8. Data analysis supported the hypothesis that students who received selected sociolinguistic methods in ELL instruction accelerated in English language acquisition.

Recommendations

As a result of the conclusions cited above, the following recommendations have been suggested:

1. To understand the viewpoint of a culture, sociolinguists should focus on basic structural similarities in the native language.

2. To avoid misunderstandings or the making of ambiguous messages, sociolinguists should be skilled at identifying cultural clues.

3. To understand cultural speech styles, sociolinguists should be familiar with the ethnic community from which the language has evolved.
4. Language planning and intercultural work should include professional input from sociolinguists.
5. Teachers working with ELL's should create learning activities based on real life situations unique to the specific culture.
6. Sociolinguists must be aware that verbal adjustments are made as one interacts with his/her audience.
7. ELL teachers should use a variety of instructional best practices to accelerate student English language acquisition.
8. To accelerate English language acquisition, students should receive benefits associated with a variety of sociolinguistic methods for ELL's.
9. Educators interested in understanding effective teaching methods for ELL's may wish to utilize information contained in this study, or, they may desire to undertake further related research more suited to their unique needs.

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APPENDIX

Two Selected English Language Acquisition Tests:

- a. Code Switching.....63-65
- b. Realia.....66-75

Code-Switching Test

Goldilocks - Quiz

1. What was wrong with one bed?
 - a. It was broken
 - b. It was too soft
 - c. The dog was on it
 - d. It was too tall

2. Why did the bears come home?
 - a. They wanted to eat
 - b. They wanted to sleep
 - c. It was raining
 - d. They found some berries

3. How much porridge did she eat?
 - a. One bite in each bowl
 - b. None of it in any bowl
 - c. All of it in one bowl

4. Where did the bears find the little girl?
 - a. Watching television
 - b. Playing with the dog
 - c. At the park
 - d. On a bed

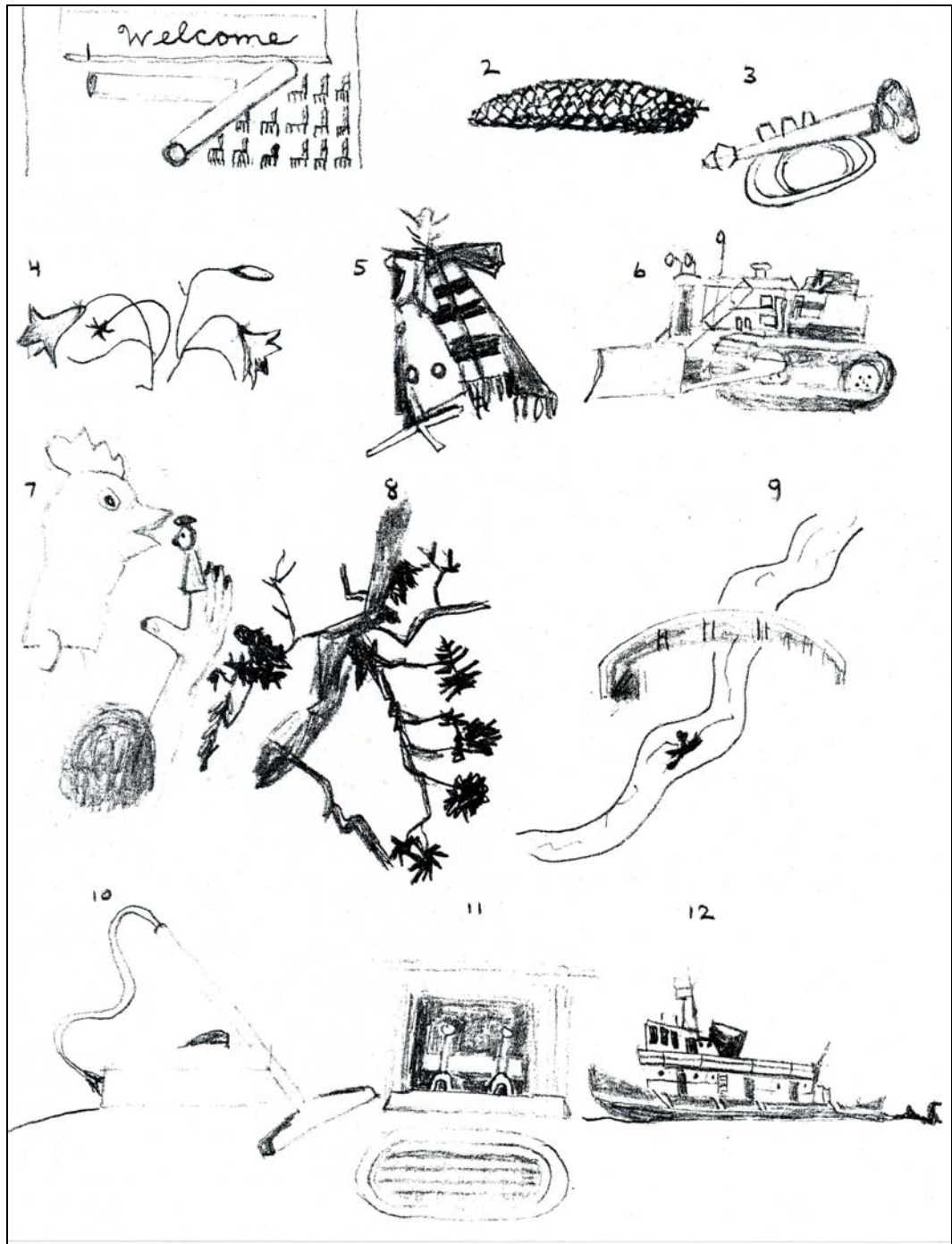
5. How long did she stay with the bears?
- a. All night
 - b. One hour
 - c. She did not stay
 - d. Twenty minutes
6. How many bears were there?
- a. 2
 - b. 3
 - c. 4
 - d. 5
7. When the little girl came to the house, who was home?
- a. cat
 - b. dog
 - c. no one
 - d. little bear
8. What did she try first?
- a. chairs
 - b. porridge
 - c. beds

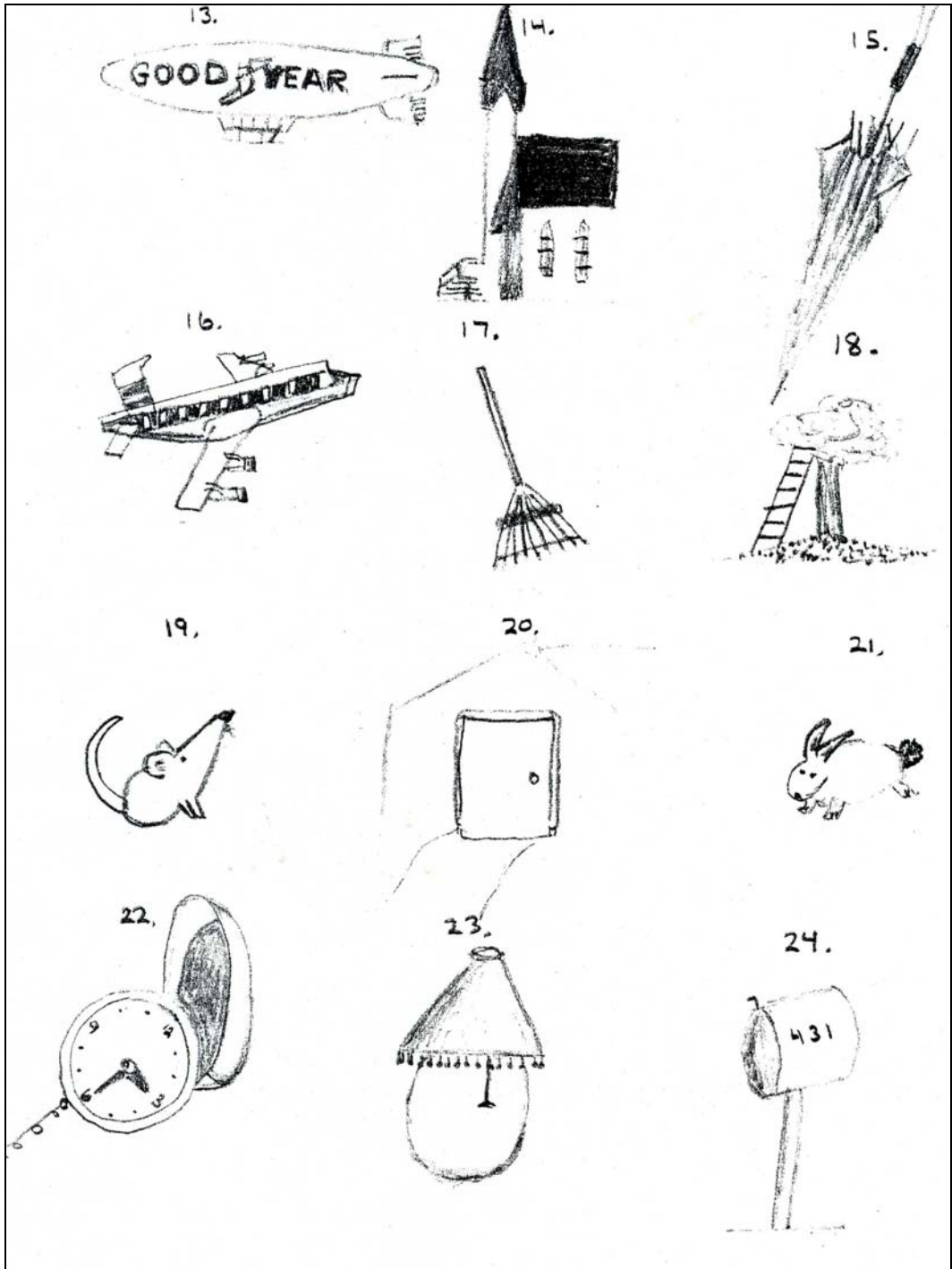
9. What was wrong with one chair?
- a. It was too big.
 - b. It was too small
 - c. It was too high.
 - d. It was too far away.
10. What happened to the chair that was just right?
- a. It broke
 - b. It was too hard
 - c. It fell over
 - d. It was crooked
11. What did she do with the porridge?
- a. Put it away
 - b. Eat it
 - c. Cooked it
 - e. Gave it to the cat

Realia – Vocabulary Words

CHALK	MAIL BOX	CHANDELIER	SHOVEL
PINE CONE	BLENDER	HAT RACK	PLIERS
TRUMPET	OVEN	WHEEL BARROW	AX
BLUE BELLS	CAN OPENER	BELT	
SCARF	ROLLING PIN	COWBOY HAT	
BULLDOZER	STRAINER	ROCKET	
PUPPET	MEASURING SPOONS	HOCKEY STICK	
BRANCH	OVEN MITTENS	BASEBALL BAT	
BRIDGE	FRYING PAN	SAIL BOAT	
VACUUM CLEANER	EGG BEATER	FISHING POLE	
FIREPLACE	MEAT BASTER	BAR BELLS	
TUG BOAT	SISSORS	BOW TIE	
BLIMP	THREAD	BARN	
STEEPLE	SAFETY PINS	BASEBALL	
UMBRELLA	BRUSH	UNIFORM	
AIRPLANE	COMB	FOOTBALL STANDARD	
RAKE	SLIPPERS	CLEATS	
LADDER	DRESS	BASKETBALL COURT	
MOUCE	SKIRT	ELECTRIC OUTLET	
DOOR	BRAIDS	HAMMER	
RABBIT	NIGHT GOWN	HAND DRILL	
POCKETWATCH	BASKET	HOSE	
LAMP SHADE	VASE	SCREWDRIVER	

Realia – Test 1





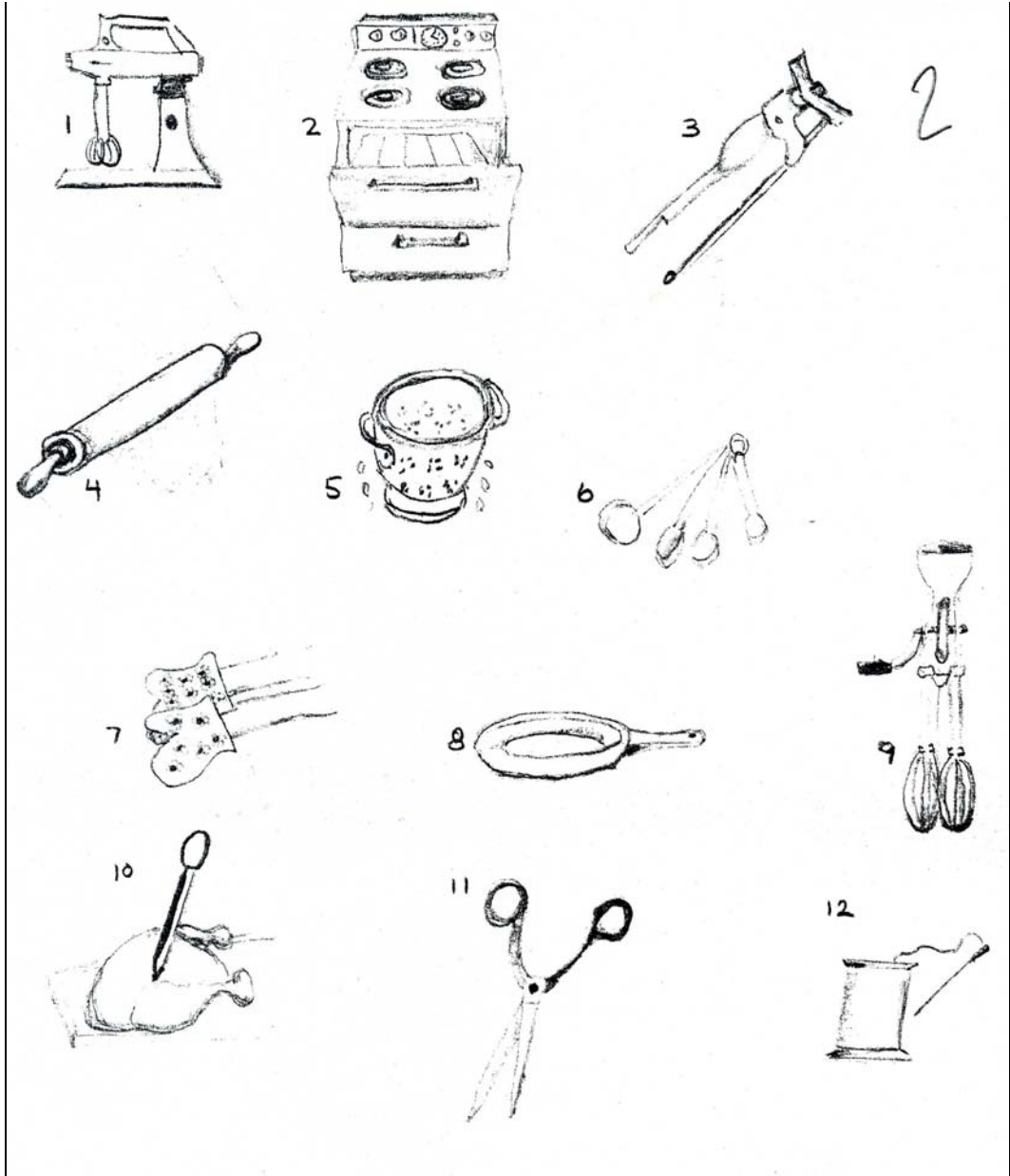
Realia – Final Test 1

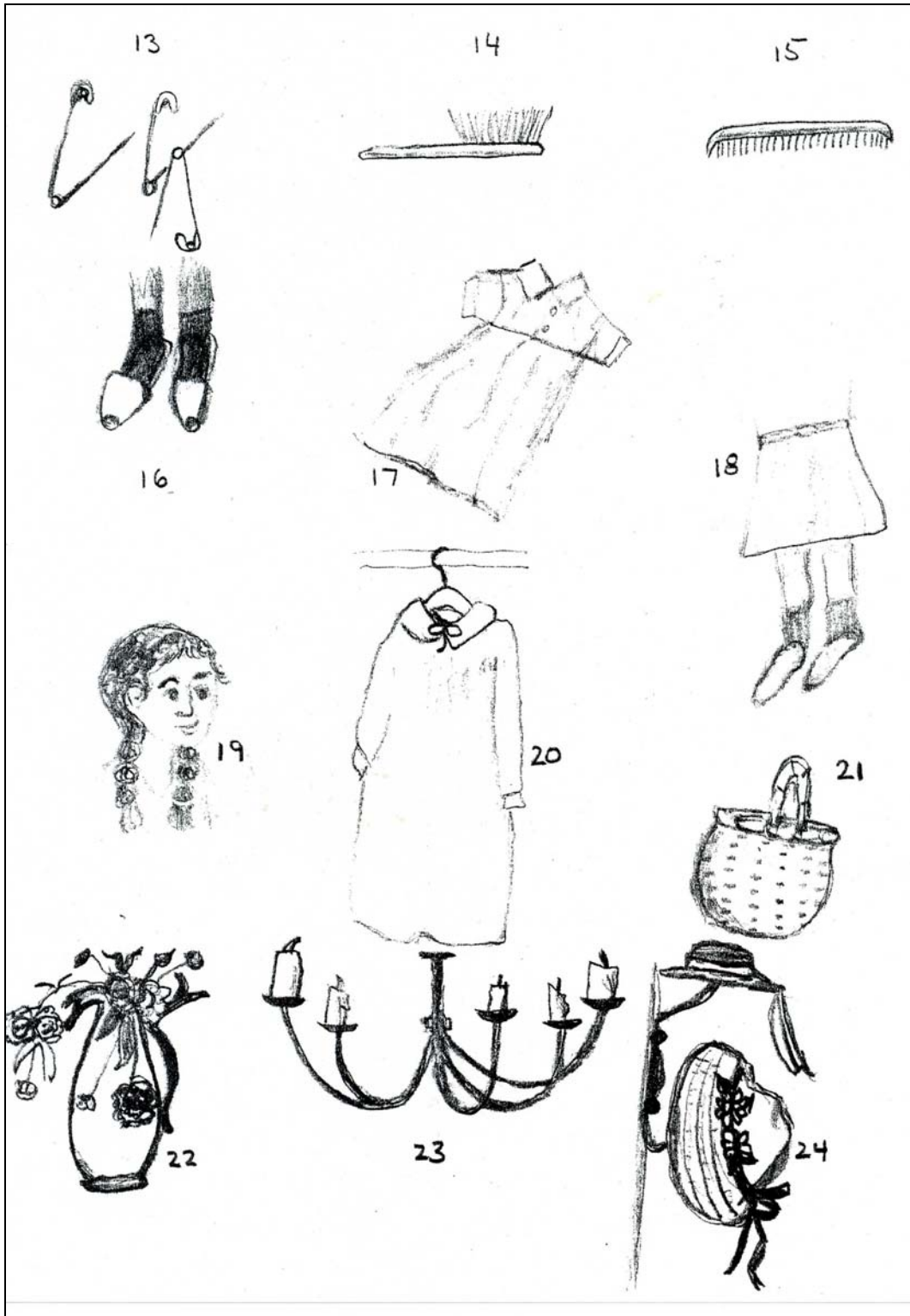
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- A. BRANCH
- B. UMBRELLA
- C. STEEPLE
- D. BLUEBELLS
- E. LAMPSHADE
- F. POCKETWATCH
- G. TRUMPET
- H. RABBIT
- I. FIREPLACE
- J. MAILBOX
- K. DOOR
- L. CHALK
- M. MOUSE
- N. VACUUM CLEANER
- O. BLIMP
- P. AIRPLANE
- Q. SCARF
- R. RAKE
- S. PINECONE
- T. LADDER
- U. BRIDGE
- V. TUG BOAT
- W. BULLDOZER
- X. PUPPET

Realia – Test 2





Realia – Final Test 2

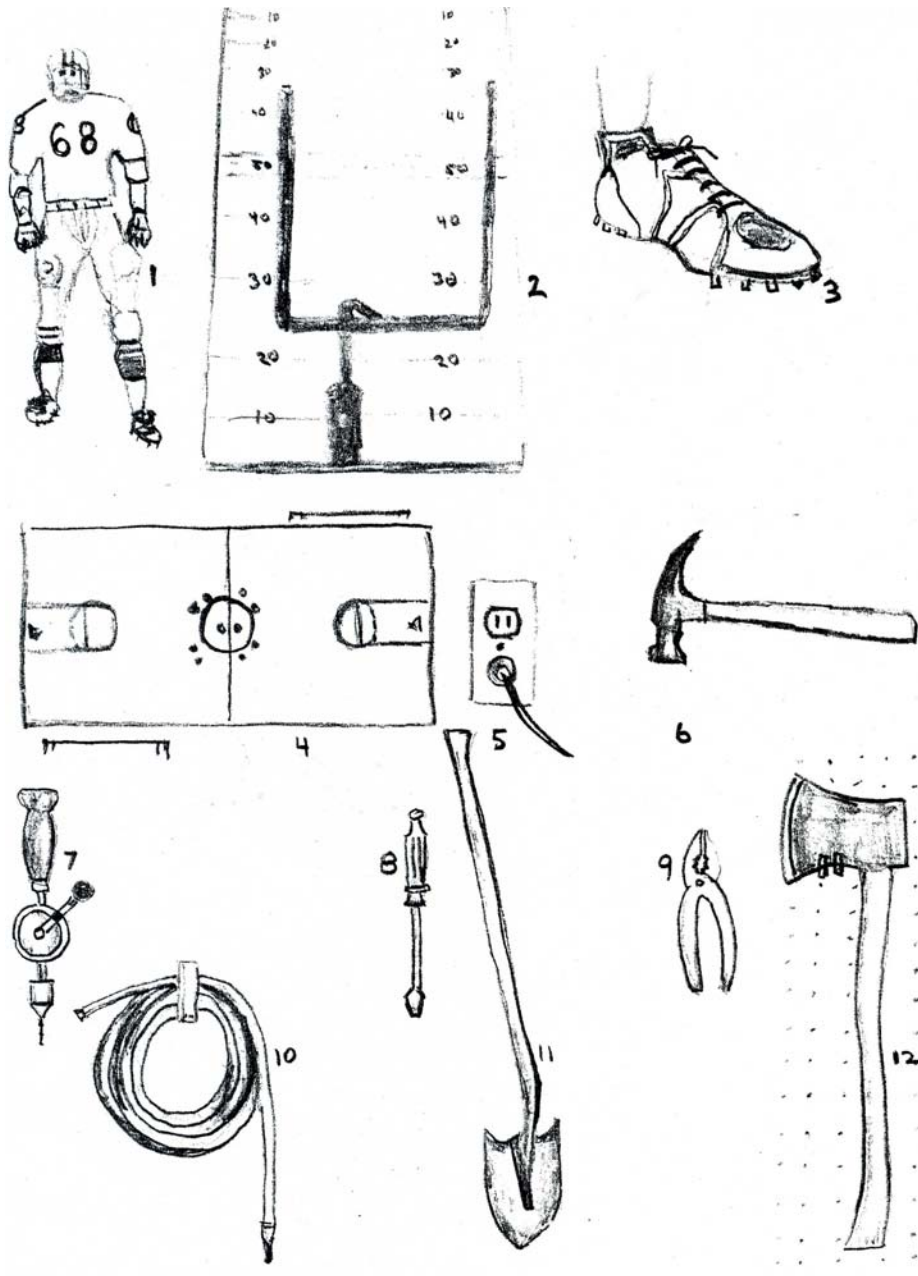
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- A. STRAINER
- B. HAT RACK
- C. THREAD
- D. SISSORS
- E. MEAT BASTER
- F. SLIPPERS
- G. SAFETY PINS
- H. BLENDER
- I. COMB
- J. EGG BEATER
- K. DRESS
- L. SKIRT
- M. CAN OPENER
- N. CHANDELIER
- O. BRUSH
- P. ROLLING PIN
- Q. BRAIDS
- R. BASKET
- S. OVEN MITTENS
- T. OVEN
- U. VASE
- V. NIGHT GOWN
- W. FRYING PAN
- X MEASURING SPOONS

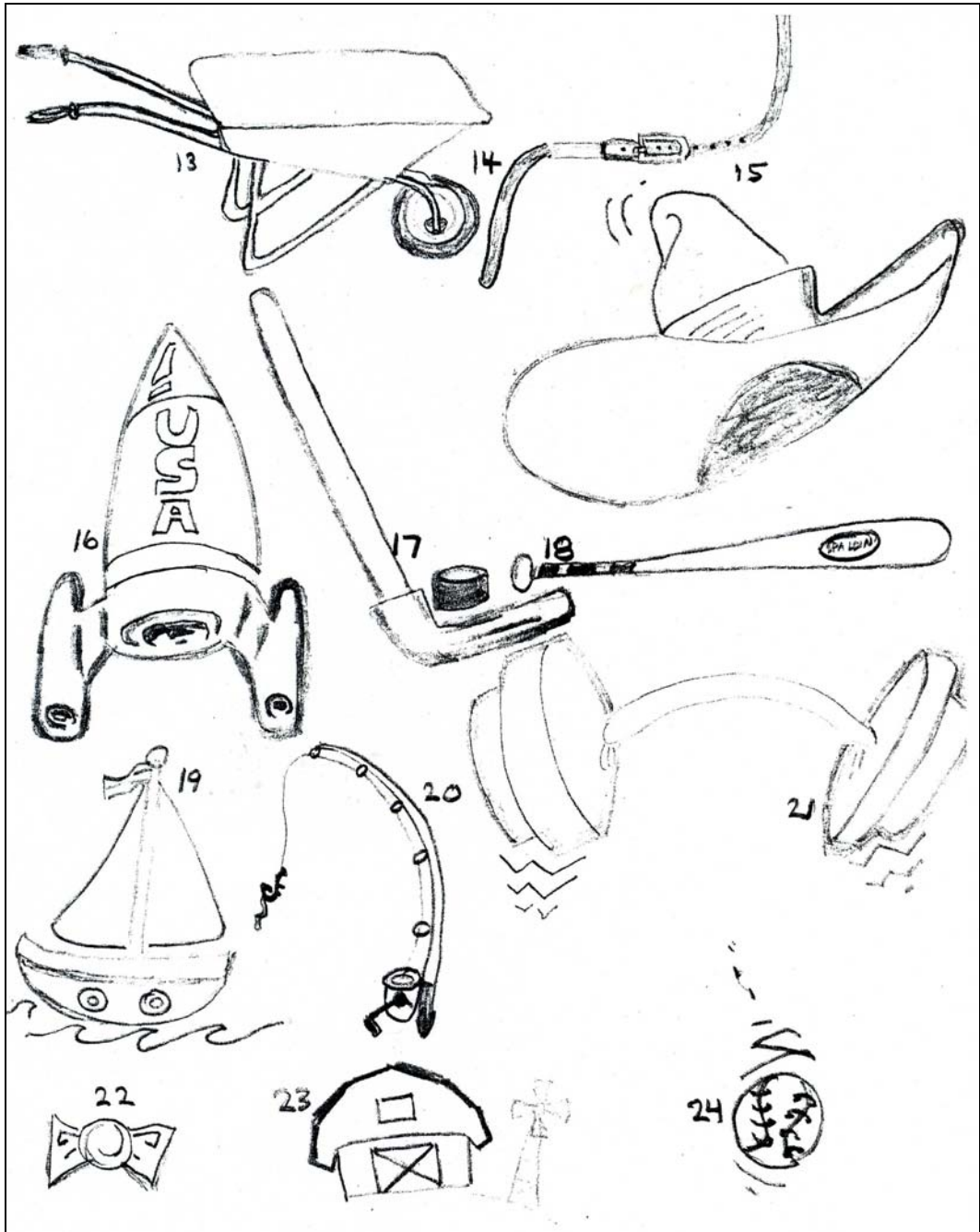
Realia Test

3



Realia – Test

3



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- A. HOCKEY STICK
- B. SCREWDRIVER
- C. UNIFORM
- D. BARN
- E. BASEBALL
- F. FOOTBALL
STANDARD
- G. BOW TIE
- H. FISHING POLE
- I. BASKETBALL COURT
- J. BAR BELLS
- K. SAIL BOAT
- L. WHEEL BARROW
- M. ELECTRIC OUTLET
- N. COWBOY HAT
- O. HOSE
- P. CLEATS
- Q. HAND DRILL
- R. PLIERS
- S. BELT
- T. AX
- U. HAMMER
- V. ROCKET
- W. SHOVEL
- X. BASEBALL BAT