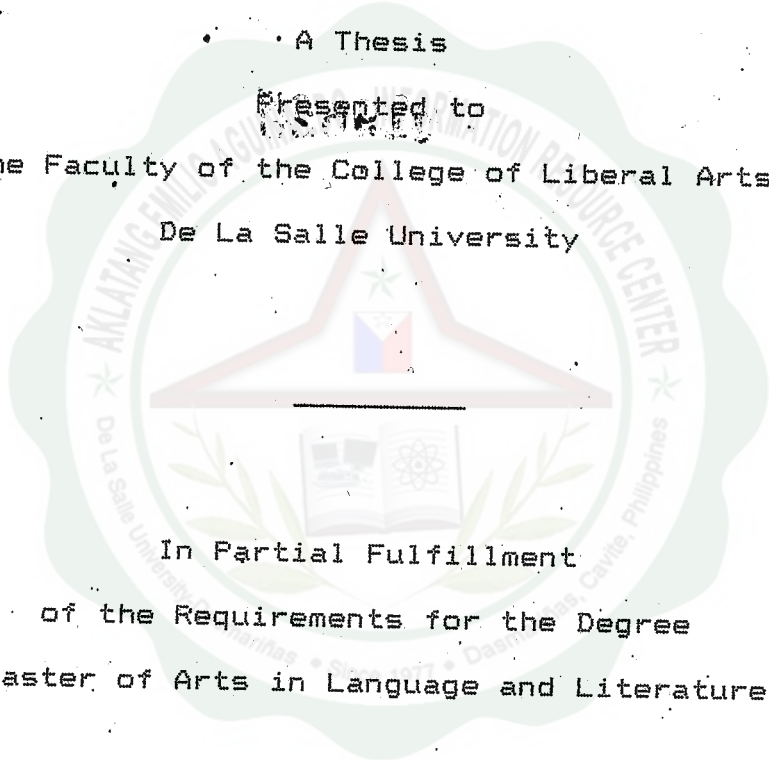


THRESHOLD LEVEL ENGLISH AND PUBLIC SCHOOL PUPILS:
A SEMI-URBAN SAMPLING

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ABSTRACT

Investigation on whether or not public elementary graders attain the "lowest general foreign language ability" or T-level English was done by testing 180 semi-urban pupils equally taken by random sampling from grades four, five and six. Two equal sets of pupils, namely, the Bright and the Ordinary, composed each grade level group. A set of two written tests, one on comprehension and the other on language production, using a comics illustration was utilized in data gathering and tested for effectiveness in measuring indirectly basically oral skill.

Item analysis revealed a reliability coefficient of .6773 for the comprehension test, and .9585 for the language production test. Meanwhile, the Performance Accuracy Percentage (PAP) of each subject was obtained by combining the weighted percentage of correct answers in both tests and then multiplied by 100. A PAP of at least 64.50 indicated attainment of T-level by individual subjects. On the other hand, a group was considered to have attained T-level if at least 80% of the members reached T-level.

Findings indicate that only bright pupils attain T-

level English competence even as early as grade four, but their number is too small for T-level attainment as a group. However, an even smaller number of ordinary pupils can reach individual T-level only at grade five. The only subjects found to have attained the required competence as a group were the bright sixth graders. Among their ordinary counterparts, performance on the tests was found to be even below that of the bright fourth graders.

A very significant difference was found between the PAP means of bright and ordinary subject groups on the same grade levels. This indicates the strong influence of intelligence in second language learning in the formal classroom. A significant difference was also noted between the PAP means of grades four and five but no significant difference was revealed between those of the fifth and sixth grade subjects except in their ordinary subject groupings.

Meanwhile, oral data were collected from each of the grade six ordinary subjects via an oral communication activity. The mean rating obtained by each from three independent raters of the activity was tested against the respective PAP. The test revealed a significant correlation at the .001 level indicating that those who obtained a relatively higher PAP also got a relatively

higher oral rating mean. In other words, the correlation test results affirmed the validity of the data obtained from the written tests thus confirming the effectiveness of the research instrument in measuring, even indirectly, the oral ability in English of public elementary pupils.

Meanwhile, the subjects' reactions to the two written tests showed the tests' strong appeal to children. Evidently less threatening than ordinary written ones, the tests also provided an easy means of eliciting the desired amount of data for the study.