

Some Aspects in Aural Comprehension and Aural Perception Tests in English.

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Preface :

The aim and significance of these tests : When this college installed LL in 1965, there were only two booths, each containing two-paired recording systems and until next year, 1966, when the number of the booths became twelve, the period might as well be called the experimental one. Now the number of them increased to fifty four with a control system with the completion of the new school building. As it is almost three years since the booths were installed in this college, it is considered quite natural that we should be expected to deduce some kinds of systematic and analytical data of the language learning efficiency from the utilization of L. L.

It goes without saying that language laboratory is a very exciting and promising installation and heralds for many teachers an end to the frustration which has dogged them for so long on an oral side of language teaching. Out of the enthusiasm and interest of those teachers fortunate enough to have access to a language laboratory will come new and unique methods, ideas and teaching material, which if widely disseminated will greatly improve the teaching of language as a means of oral communication. There are, however, also dangers inherent in this situation: considerable capital outlay on accommodation and equipment may well be incurred in some instances. At the same time it is not always certain, initially at any rate, that the know-

how of applying the appropriate method is available.

This may be due to lack of information on the basic principles involved, and on the nature, facilities and limitation of the equipment. It is not perhaps appreciated that the supply of material available is limited and that for teachers to produce their own material satisfactorily involves very considerable expenditure of time, effort and ingenuity. It has been unanimously asserted that the essential purpose behind learning a language is to communicate, to convey real ideas in real situation and that, although printed symbols are also a vehicle of communication, the primary medium must be the spoken word. Thus the aim of modern language teaching must be primarily to enable people to understand the language as spoken normally by a native speaker and to speak the language with native accent and intonation and at normal speed. To achieve this, the traditional methods must be replaced by others. However, it can't be too strongly emphasized that the language laboratory, in itself, does not constitute a 'method' of teaching or learning a foreign language. Nevertheless, once the system of priorities inherent in the "new" approach is accepted, and it is agreed that hearing and speaking take precedence in time and in importance over reading and writing, then language laboratory facilities and techniques provide the indispensable conditions for the success of the 'method'. The laboratory makes possible relatively prolonged exposure of the

students to the spoken language, and provide them with extensive practice in speaking it under the best conditions for both teachers and students.

In order to further our research in the direction mentioned before, we have decided to utilize Sony's E.P.L (English Proficiency Level). In this E.P.L, the examinees are scheduled to be tested three times a year under the possibly same condition respectively.

I. Conditions for these tests.

1. Students: Those who take tests are the first year students of English department (125). Some difference in abilities in understanding English spoken by a native speaker of English is recognized between those from private high schools and those from public highschools. (Those from public highschools are rarely exposed to hearing English spoken by a native speaker of English.) These students take a 50 minute pre-lab session a week in

addition to a lab and also take one English conversation lesson by an American teacher.

2. The teaching materials of a lab lesson: Sony Language Tape Series E-4.

Lesson proceeding speed, from May to June~one lesson a week

Lesson proceeding speed, from June to July~two lessons a week

Lesson proceeding speed, the latter half of the term~one and a half lesson a week

Study by tape~20 minutes

Study by playback~the rest of the hour.

3. The time of the tests:

The first time~April

The second time~July

The third time~February

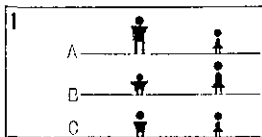
4. Tests:

Aural Comprehension Test; 50 questions with three pictures respectively and selection of the right corresponding one.

Aural Perception Test; three similar sentences and selection of the same sentence.

AC Test example.

1. The man is fat and short, but the woman is tall and skinny.



Answer
1. A **B** C

2. Nineteen and six would make this number.

2	
A	96
B	84
C	25

Answer
2. A B **C**

AP Test example.

1) It's a boat Answer.
It's a boat → 1) 0 ① ② 3
It's a coat

2) It's a pair
It's a hair → 2) ① 1 2 3
It's a chair

3) It's a desk
It's a desk → 3) 0 ① ② ③
It's a desk

II. General Analysis of the tests.

1. General Score.

Test No.		I	II	III
AC	Total Score	8010	8412	9080
	Number of the Students	125	115	124
AP	Total Score	5710	6604	7340
	Number of the Students	125	115	124

※ There is a slight difference in the number of the students each time because of absence.

2. Average Score. (100 Full Marks)

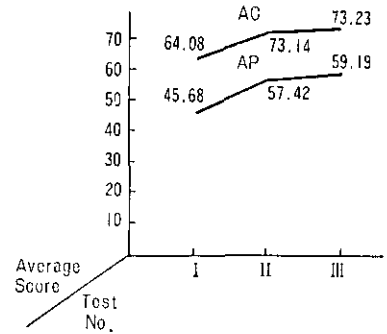
Test No.	I	II	III
AC	64.08	73.14	73.23
AP	45.68	57.42	59.19

3. Difference of Score.

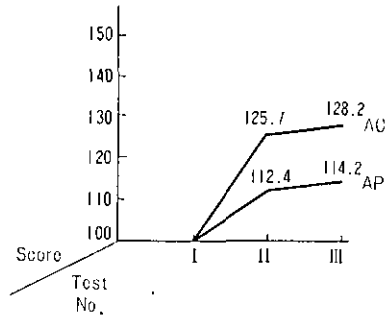
Test No.	I~II	II~III
AC	9.06	0.09
AP	11.74	1.77

4. Improvement Index. (The first test is 100)

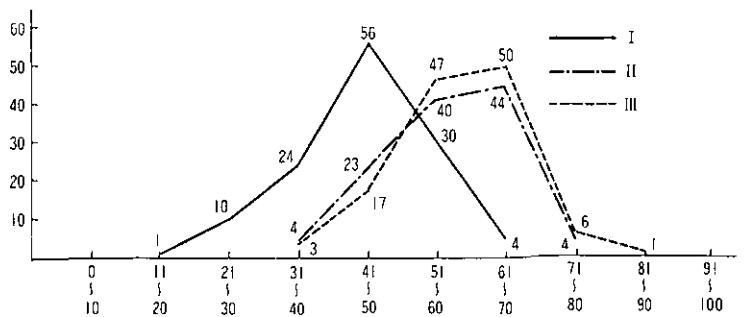
Test No.	I	II	III
AC	100	112.4	114.2
AP	100	125.7	128.2
AC~AP	—	13.3AP	12.0AP



5. AC, AP Average Score Graph.



6. AC, AP Improvement Index Graph.



7. AP Score Graph.

8. Analysis of Scoring.

	Test No.	I	II	III
AC	Score	80~100	80~100	80~100
	The number of scorers	9	33	35
AP	Score	60~100	60~100	60~100
	The number of scorers	5	52	65

	Test NO.	I		II		III	
AC		Highest	Lowest	Highest	Lowest	Highest	Lowest
	Score	82	42	92	52	90	44
AP		Highest	Lowest	Highest	Lowest	Highest	Lowest
	Score	66	20	74	34	72	32

※ As far as 'Highest Score' is concerned, both AC and AP tests results show the remarkable progress from I to II but in III they show a little retrogression. These results may well be attributed not to the lower and stagnant efficiency of Lab work but to the fact that the students are at the stage of so-called 'Plateau' in language learning.

9. Analysis of each question.

AC.

The table of right answer percentage.

Question No.	I (Student No. 125)		II (115)		III (124)	
	No. of right answerers	Right answer percentage	No. of right answerers	Right answer percentage	No. of right answerers	Right answer percentage
(1)	106	85%	104	90%	111	90%
(2)	40	32	43	37	30	24
(3)	124	99	114	99	124	100
(4)	122	99	111	97	119	96
(5)	93	74	102	89	117	94
(6)	6	5	6	5	2	2
(7)	47	38	53	49	72	58
(8)	63	50	84	73	81	65
(9)	93	74	100	87	110	81
(10)	114	91	113	98	124	100
(11)	46	37	54	47	48	39
(12)	112	90	113	98	108	87
(13)	70	56	79	69	87	70
(14)	99	71	105	91	115	93
(15)	86	69	88	76	102	82
(16)	53	42	83	72	81	65
(17)	120	96	113	98	121	98
(18)	95	76	103	90	114	92
(19)	69	55	83	72	96	77
(20)	57	46	82	71	85	69

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(21)	107	86%	107	93%	120	97%
(22)	119	95	108	94	118	95
(23)	95	76	102	81	111	90
(24)	3	2	3	3	6	5
(25)	95	76	105	91	113	91
(26)	111	89	114	99	118	95
(27)	74	59	65	56	96	77
(28)	37	30	43	37	57	46
(29)	45	36	32	28	50	40
(30)	112	90	107	93	112	90
(31)	84	67	93	81	105	85
(32)	92	74	103	90	90	73
(33)	84	67	95	83	108	87
(34)	94	75	109	95	119	96
(35)	31	25	45	39	47	38
(36)	117	94	111	97	119	96
(37)	42	37	51	44	55	44
(38)	76	61	88	76	102	82
(39)	109	87	108	94	115	93
(40)	41	33	53	49	46	37
(41)	66	53	71	62	80	65
(42)	81	65	91	79	103	83
(43)	121	97	114	99	121	98
(44)	31	25	38	33	30	24
(45)	53	42	40	35	39	32
(46)	104	83	105	91	107	86
(47)	111	89	107	93	118	95
(48)	120	96	114	99	124	100
(49)	92	74	98	35	107	86
(50)	27	22	44	38	45	36

※ Rather difficult questions (30) (36) (43) (46) (50)
Rather easy questions (3) (5) (10) (13) (16)

10. Wrong Answer Analysis.

We picked up the questions to which less than fifty students gave the right answers throughout the I. II. III tests, and also we compared and examined how each one of the

question was answered in what improvement degree. As the I test shows the common tendency of the following two tests, we have decided to generalize the tendency from the I test.

(No. 24) Q—Nineteen and six would make this number.

Test No.	I	II	III
Percentage of wrong answer	98%	97%	95%
Percentage of right answer	2%	3%	5%
Analytical comments	The right answer is 25 but most of them mistook 19 for 90 and answered 96. Those who answered 96 numbered 109. (From the I Test)		

(No. 6) Q—He is too busy to play golf now.

Test No.	I	II	III
Percentage of wrong Answer	95%	95%	98%
Percentage of right answer	5%	5%	2%
Analytical comments	Wrong comprehension of 'too ~to' construction is presumed to be the strongest reason. Those who chose 'He is playing golf,' numbered 112. (From the I Test)		

(No. 50) Q—This man isn't as fat as that man.

Test No.	I	II	III
Percentage of wrong answer	78%	62%	64%
Percentage of right answer	22%	38%	36%
Analytical comments	Wrong comprehension of 'as ~as' construction and inaudibility of 'isn't'. Those who picked up 'This man is fatter than that man,' numbered 39. Those who chose 'This man is as fat as that man,' numbered 56. (From the I Test)		

(No. 44) Q—None of the children are boys.

Test No.	I	II	III
Percentage of wrong answer	75%	62%	76%
Percentage of right answer	25%	38%	24%

Analytical comments	Wrong comprehension of 'None of ~' phrase. Those who chose 'One of the children is a girl, and three of them are boys,' numbered 15. Those who chose 'All the children are boys,' numbered 78. (From the I Test)
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(No. 35) Q—If you take one from thirty, you will get this number.

Test No.	I	II	III
Percentage of wrong answer	75%	61%	63%
Percentage of right answer	25%	39%	37%
Analytical comments	Wrong comprehension of 'take ~from'. Those who chose 12 numbered 27. Those who chose 31 numbered 58. (From the I Test)		

(No. 28) Q—There is a triangle without any mark.

Test No.	I	II	III
Percentage of wrong answer	70%	63%	54%
Percentage of right answer	30%	37%	46%
Analytical comments	Those who chose 'There is a triangle with mark,' numbered 24. Those who selected 'There are some triangles without any mark,' numbered 54. Inaudibility of 'without,' is a. (From the I Test)		

(No. 2) Q—He is walking behind a man.

Test No.	I	II	III
Percentage of wrong answer	68%	63%	76%
Percentage of right answer	32%	37%	24%
Analytical comments	Those who chose 'She is walking behind a man,' numbered 33. Those who chose 'They are walking hand in hand,' numbered 51. Inaudibility of 'behind,' (From the I Test)		

(No. 37) Q—The man is standing without his coat on.

Test No.	I	II	III
Percentage of wrong answer	63%	56%	56%
Percentage of right answer	37%	44%	44%
Analytical comments	Those who chose 'The man standing with his coat on,' numbered 69. Those who chose 'The woman is standing with her coat on,' numbered 13. Inaudibility of 'without' and mistaking man for woman. (From the I Test)		

(No. 29) Q—The child is putting her hand up.

Test No.	I	II	III
Wrong answer percentage	65%	72%	60%
Right answer percentage	35%	28%	40%
Analytical comments	Those who chose 'The child is putting his hand up,' numbered 32. Those who chose 'The children is putting their hands up,' numbered 47. (From the I Test)		

(No. 11) Q—He doesn't like to have many pictures in his room.

Test No.	I	II	III
Wrong answer percentage	63%	53%	61%
Right answer percentage	37%	47%	39%
Analytical comments	Those who chose 'He likes to have many pictures in his room,' numbered 37. Those who chose 'He doesn't like to have no pictures in his room,' numbered 41. Inaudibility of 'doesn't' or 'many'. (From the I Test)		

(No. 7) Q—It looks like rain.

Test No.	I	II	III
Wrong answer percentage	62%	51%	42%

Right answer percentage	38%	49%	58%
Analytical comments	Those who chose 'It is raining,' numbered 75. Those who chose 'It cleared up,' numbered 3. Miscomprehension of 'look like' phrase. Paying too much attention to 'rain'. (From the I Test)		

(No. 45) Q—The girl is hitting the car.

Test No.	I	II	III
Wrong answer percentage	58%	65%	69%
Right answer percentage	42%	35%	31%
Analytical comments	Those who chose 'The girl is running before the car,' numbered 5. Those who chose 'The girl is run over by the car,' numbered 70. (From the II Test)		

It is a clear and easily noticeable fact that careful comparison of the I, II, III tests reveals similar points in inaudibility and miscomprehension of questions. The typical weak points of those who were tested consist in their lack of training in number-when the question comes to the number, for example, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, they exhibit a remarkable idiocy more or less common to them all. Another noticeable weakpoint is that they have a strong tendency to fallibility in distinguishing almost inaudible sounds like the definite and indefinite articles. The reason for this is assumed to be their lack of training in comprehending the current and flow of the sentence. The other weakpoints also consist of their weakness in understanding the following constructions —'too~to' (No. 6), 'as~as' (No. 50), 'take~from' (No. 35), 'look like' (No. 7).

Judging by the improvement degree of the questions used here, those which showed the improvement were No. 24, No. 28, No. 7, while most of the others showed improve-

ment in the II test but showed retrogression rogressive tendency each time.
in the III test. Especially No. 45 showed ret-

11. AP Test Analysis.
Phoneme contrast

Question No.	contents	Right answer percentage		
		I	II	III
1	thirteen /i:/: thirty /i/	52%	75%	83%
2	wrong /r-/: long /l-/	50	49	39
3	leave /i:/: live /i-/	57	79	82
4	vat /v-/: bat /b-/	17	30	15
5	cooed /-uw-/: could /-u-/	92	100	93
6	ram /-m/: rang /-ŋ/	65	83	84
7	heals /h-/: feels /f-/	8	17	22
8	balked /-ɔ-/: backed /-æ-/: bucked /-ʌ-/	28	33	48
9	sinner /-n-/: singer /-ŋ-/	33	56	65
10	teeter /t-/: cheater /tʃ-/	34	48	51
11	bit /-i-/: bet /-c-/	32	55	64
12	putt /-ʌ-/: pot /-a-/	43	58	48
13	path /-θ/: pass /-s/: pad /-d/	66	78	83
14	did it /-d + i-/: digit /-dʒi-/	90	95	82
15	facets:fasts, Consonant Cluster	83	90	85
16	batter /-æ-/: butter /-ʌ-/	3	6	6
17	tongue /-ŋ/: tug /-g/	30	67	65
18	clothing /-ð-/: closing /-z-/	26	51	61
19	pleasure /-ʒ-/: pledger /-dʒ-/	14	22	19
20	lived:livid, Consonant Cluster	83	89	79
21	hum /-m/: hung /-ŋ/	30	43	41
22	wind was /-d/: window was /-dlow/	56	63	71
23	sought /s-/: thought /θ-/	26	51	58
24	Andy /-d-/: Angie /-dʒ-/	77	92	94
25	sip /s-/: ship /ʃ-/	71	83	90
26	hairy /h-/: fairy /f-/	32	67	54
27	spitting /-t-/: spilling /-l-/	22	43	53
28	blow:bellow, Consonant Cluster	86	87	96
29	pin /-i-/: pen /-e-/	16	31	30
30	bagging /-g-/: hanging /-ŋ-/	18	23	39
31	course /-rs/: chorus /-rəs/: corset /-rsit/	15	10	10
32	seizing /-z-/: sieging /-dʒ-/	82	93	90
33	battle /-æ-/: bottle /-a-/	4	9	18
34	hat /-æ-/: hut /-ʌ-/: hit /-i-/	53	66	77
35	bend /-e-/: band /-æ-/	22	32	48
36	caught /-ɔ-/: cut /-ʌ-/	44	53	69
37	match /-tʃ/: mat /-ʌ/	99	100	98
38	run /-n/: rung /-ŋ/	50	89	56
39	she-lion /f-/: sea lion /s-/	43	76	89
40	cup /-ʌ-/: cop /-a-/	24	29	26
41	fish story:fishy story, Consonant Combination	86	90	86
42	teasing /-z-/:teething /-ð-/	48	47	81
43	lesion /-ʒ-/: legion /-dʒ-/	12	22	19
44	caddy /-d-/: carry /-r-/	41	58	73

45	geal /g-/: zeal /z-/	66%	67%	51%
46	crew /r-/: clue /l-/	16	11	15
47	food /f-/: who's /h-/	14	23	27
48	Can't she /-tʃ-/: Can't he /-t-/	85	91	96
49	shield /ʃ-/: sealed /s-/:reeled /r-/	76	87	97
50	bedding /-d-/: bearing /-r-/	58	76	77

12. Phoneme contrast difficulty order
(Right answer percentage below 50 per cent—I, II, III.)

/-æ-/	: /-ʌ-/	(batter : butter)
/-æ-/	: /-a-/	(battle : bottle)
/-rs/	: /-rəs/ : /-rsit/	(course : chorus : corset)
/-r-/	: /-l-/	(crew : clue)
/h-/	: /f-/	(heals : feels)
/-ʒ-/	: /-dʒ-/	(lesion : legion)
/-ʒ-/	: /-dʒ-/	(pleasure : pledger)
/-uw-/	: /-u-/	(cooed : could)
/f-/	: /h-/	(food : who's)
/-i-/	: /-e-/	(pin : pen)
/-ʌ-/	: /-a-/	(cup : cop)
/-g-/	: /-ŋ-/	(bagging : banging)
/-e-/	: /-æ-/	(bend : band)
/-ɔ-/	: /-æ-/ : /-ʌ-/	(balked : backed : bucked)
/-m/	: /-ŋ/	(hum : hung)

13. General analytical comments.

Great difficulty for the students seems to lie in distinguishing /r/ : /l/, /m/ : /g/, any one of which is hardly found in their mother tongue. On the contrary, relatively good results are obtained in long vowels, short vowels, especially in consonant cluster.

14. Relation between AC and AP.

As is indicated in the next correlation table between AC and AP, both results do not necessarily go together. This may be partly because of the individual ability and partly because of the difference of contents between AC and AP. In AC test, a general and wide range of vocabulary, sound and structure

understanding ability is required, whereas in AP test, importance seems to be in sound distinction rather exclusive of vocabulary and structure. Rough estimation of AC, AP tells us that about 70 per cent shows tendency toward improvement in gradual degree and those who have improved in AC but have dropped in AP numbered about 9 per cent, those who have dropped in AC but improved in AP numbered about 4 per cent. Nobody has dropped in both AC and AP.

15. Corelation table between AC and AP.

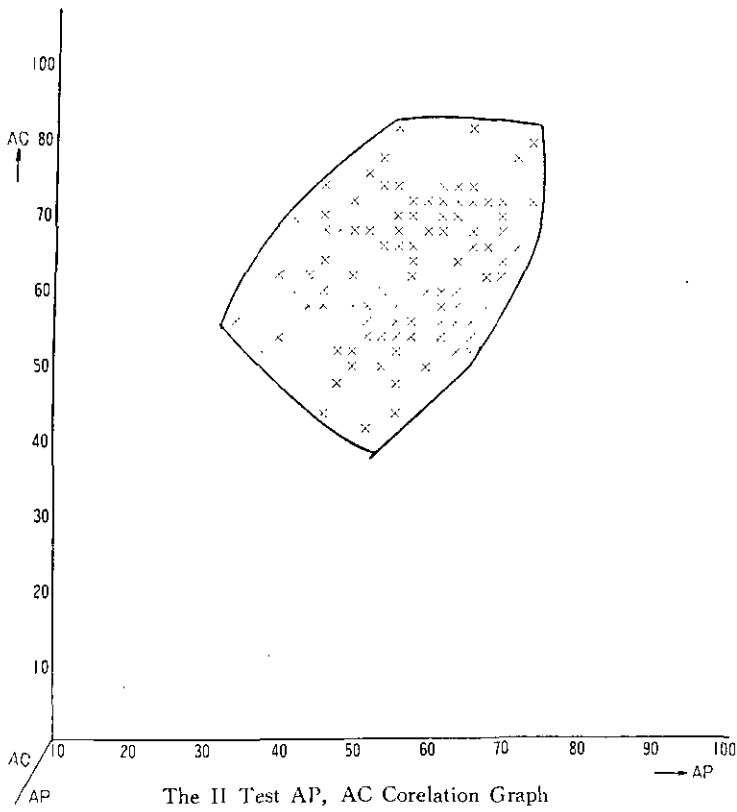
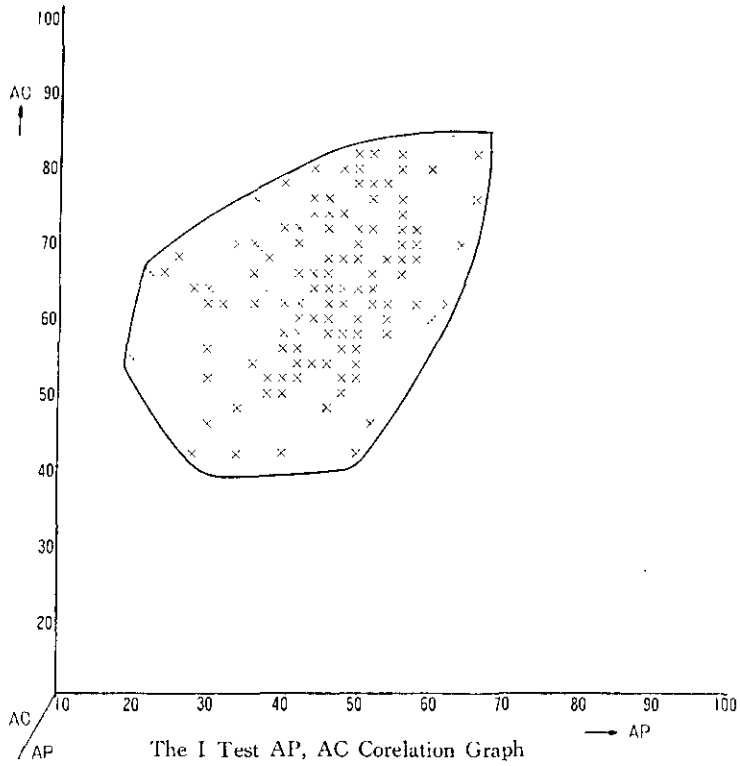
(Throughout the three tests, it shows 'about +0.3' which indicates plus corelation. Not a little corelation is detected by the examination of corelation coefficient.)

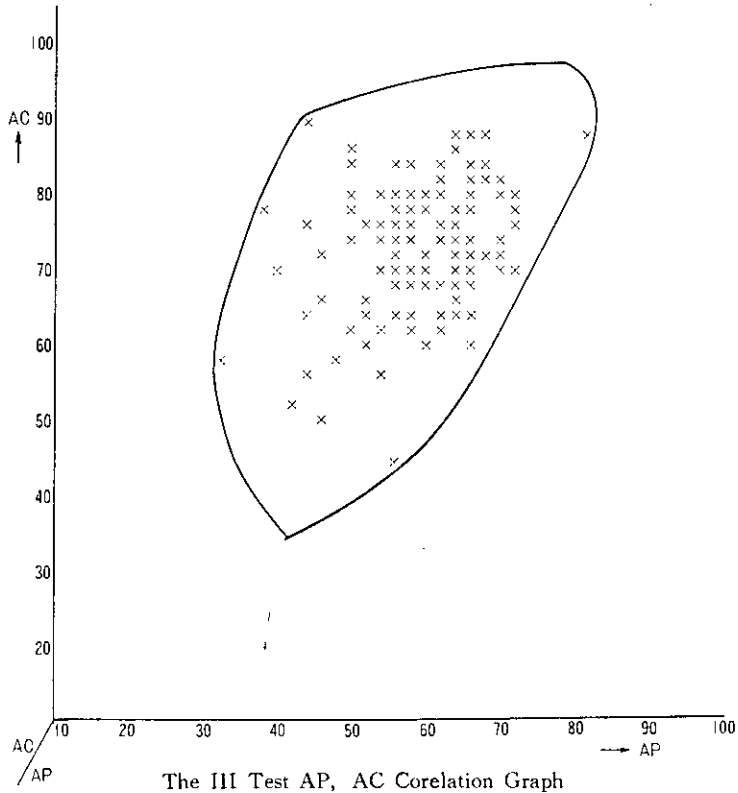
Corelation graph between I and II, II and III is as follows

Test No.	I and II	II and III
AC	+0.84	+0.52
AP	+0.94	+0.45

From the result above it can be said that those who obtained a good result in I, both in AC and AP shows also a good result and those who are good in II are also good in III and at the same time this high corelation coefficient shows a high validity of AC, AP tests.

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III. Conclusive comments.

I can now state quite clearly that professional answers to educational problems do not always come in ready-made packages and that in the case of language laboratory facilities, it is much more important to understand the basic principles involved, particularly for the new materials and methodology, so that useful criteria may be followed in judging whether a particular foreign language program is going in the desired direction. There is still some evidence, despite the tremendous improvements which schools have recently made in teaching of modern foreign languages with the aid of the language laboratory, that in some quarters the laboratory is being misused and its function misunderstood. This is not surprising for every new teaching aid goes through a period when some users persist in grasping

it as the final solution to their teaching problems and in trying to use it for purposes for which it is unsuited. It is needless to say that every new teaching tool undergoes a probationary period in which educators experiment with it to discover its potentialities, to define the objectives it can help them achieve, and to find the most productive methods of using it. For many colleges the language laboratory is still in this early period; we should say we have barely scratched the surface of its potentialities, and it is evident that like any other tool or instrument, the language laboratory is most useful in the hands of a craftsman who knows how to use it skillfully. And as every good teacher of a modern language knows, the effective use of the language laboratory is a composite of the effectiveness of at least five elements: (1) the

teacher, (2) the teaching materials, (3) the testing and grading programs, (4) the student practice session, and (5) the equipment. Each of these elements must meet certain criteria if the language laboratory is to produce the results expected of it. As is well known in this field, the practice sessions must be frequent enough and long enough to enable the students to develop the skills of listening and speaking. The successful language laboratory program provides the students with adequate practice sessions of developing skills.

And experienced teachers continue to report that students need more practice session before they can internalize the basic structure and sounds of the foreign language. Not only does the student need to know what the correct sounds are (discrimination), but also must be able to produce the sounds he intends to say (articulation). Even when students have achieved an acceptable pronunciation and understand the principles underlying grammatical structures, there still remains the goal of automaticity, which is one of the main objectives of pattern practice in the language laboratory. We need to steer away from extremist approaches and examine with an open mind what appear to be the mainstream and promising directions for the future in language teaching. Of course we should be fully aware that language is complex; language learning is complex. It takes a variety of organized activities to teach language successfully, for the art and science of teaching include the judicious selecting, timing, measuring, and blending of the many ingredients involved. It is a matter to be much congratulated that through research in colleges and universities and through practice and trials in the schools, the usefulness of the language laboratory concept has been

validated over and over again—and is constantly validated currently—in situations in which both teachers and administrators recognize the potentialities of the laboratory concept and plan together to find the best ways of integrating the new methods into the total foreign language curriculum. In spite of the many and variegated pending problems, however, this college has made tremendous strides toward the fully effective use of equipment and materials in foreign language classrooms. We already know that the language laboratory can be effective but what remains to be seen is to make still further research into how to use them more effectively. In the end I feel greatly elated and proud to mention that most of the data collection and their analyses have been done through strenuous effort and help of Miss YUKO INAGAWA who is the assistant of this language laboratory.

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