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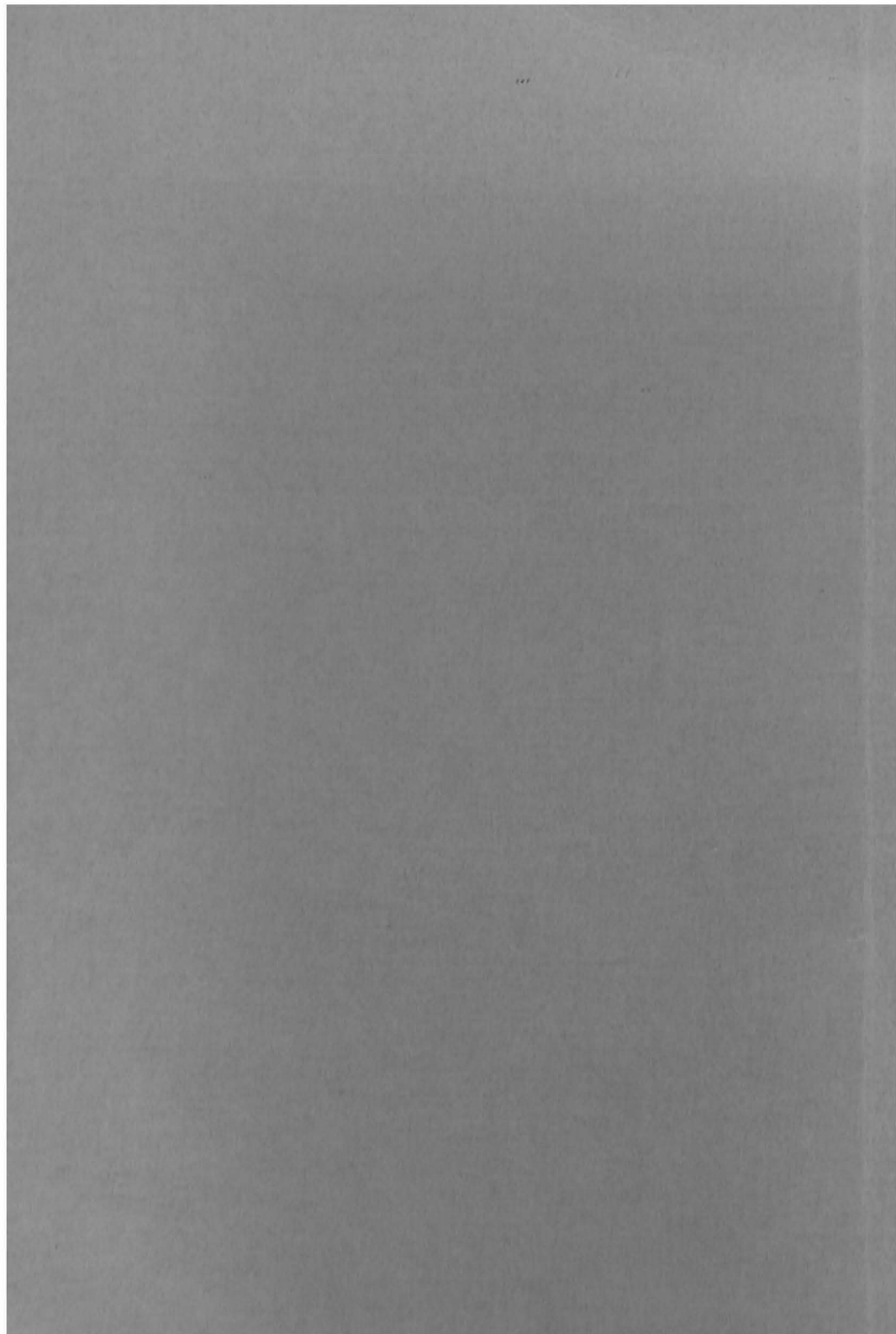
Elizabeth Bowman

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CORPUS OF SPOKEN ENGLISH**

by

ELIZABETH BOWMAN

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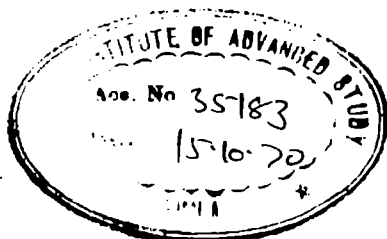
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For the encouragement and attention given me by my advisors, Professors Raven I. McDavid, Jr., and Arthur Norman, of the University of Chicago, I express my heartfelt appreciation.

Much more interesting than anything I have to say about them are the utterances which constitute the many examples used in this study. Therefore, my greatest thanks are due my informants, who let themselves be recorded in spite of their feeling rather uncomfortable about the 'monstrosity' in the middle of the room forever listening to their lightest remarks.

They feared that they were sounding ridiculous, or at best, unbearably trivial:

2517 6-407 R ²hàve you gòt thîs^{2/1}uh^{1/2}mònstrôcity
²wôrking^{2/1}||

2518-19 6-407 E ³yéah^{2/3}it's ²wôrking^{2/}

2520 6-408 M ²you mēan^{2/2}thât thîng has been lîstening
to ³âll thîs^{2/2}con³fúsiôn abòut^{2/3}Elstôn^{3/}
²and ³Kéystòn^{3/2}and^{2/}

2521 6-410 E ³cértainly^{2/2}finds it ³fáscinàting^{1/}#

2522 6-412 M ²hàve yòu ³pláyed^{3/2}any of thât jûnk ²báck^{3/}||

Very early in the proceedings they began asking:

248 1-296 M ²hòw mǎny mòre ³hóurs^{2/2}of thât thîng dò we
³hǎve^{1/}#

and

812 2-550 M ²dò you thînk you hǎve e³nóugh^{3/}||²nów^{2/}

The answer was discouraging:

813 2-550 E ³òh ²nó^{1/}#³I've gòt ³twò ³réels hère^{2/} (reels
still unrecorded)

- 814 2-550 E ³Î wànt a ³whôle^{2/2}lôt of stûff¹#
 815 2-554 R ³wéll^{2/3}wê've ²been gîv³ing ²yôu a lô²t of
 high grâde mìscellâneous bà³loney¹#

The prospects became ominous:

- 816 2-555 E ²Fries did ³hîs ²with ùh^{2/2}whàt ³wás it²/
²fifty uh^{2/4}hòurs^{1/1}ôf ¹stûff¹#
 817 2-558 R ³fif²ty hòurs of cònver³sátion³||
 818 2-560 E ²fifty hòurs of cònver³sátion¹#

There was anxiety as to who might hear the recordings:

- 395 2-11 M ²is your ³téacher gôing to^{3/3}lîsten to thîs ³tôo³||

Reassurances were given:

- 397 2-13 E ²there's nò rêason why ²á³nybòdy should
 lîsten tô it¹#

At another point, the children began acting up, and then:

- 3575 8-561 R ²is thîs ma³chîne^{3/2}rê³córding^{3/2}thêse
³déathless^{3/2}re²márks³/
 3576 8-563 E ²yês^{2/2}it cêrtain³ly ³ís^{2/2}côming ôver
 jùst ³fîne²/
 3577 8-565 K ²whô ³héars thêse thîngs¹#²ânybòdy that
 wê dòn't ²knów³/
 3578 8-656 E ³nô¹#³nôbody's gòing to hêar them excêpt²/
 3579 8-567 K ²jùst dòn't gîve your ³áddrêss¹#
 3580 8-567 K ²gîve a fâke ²náme²/
 3581 8-567 K ²thîs is ³Jôhn ³Smíth³/
 3582 8-568 E ³nôbody is gòing to hêar them excêpt ²mé¹#

On another occasion:

- 861 3-23 K ²for whôm àre you gòing to plây this
 rê³córding¹#²your³sélf^{3/1}I ²hópe¹#
 862 3-23 E ²to mý³sélf¹#²Î trânscribê ³it^{3/2}and uh²/
 863 3-23 K ²nôt a clâssroom of ³stúdents¹#
 864 3-25 E ³nô¹#²why a clâssroom of ³stúdents¹#³cóurse
 nôt¹#

For obliging me to the extent of putting up with four hours of 'that thing,' in spite of these feelings of unease and apprehension, and in spite of the fact that the recording constitutes a real invasion of their privacy, I tender the informants my affectionate gratitude.

Chicago, Illinois
August, 1963

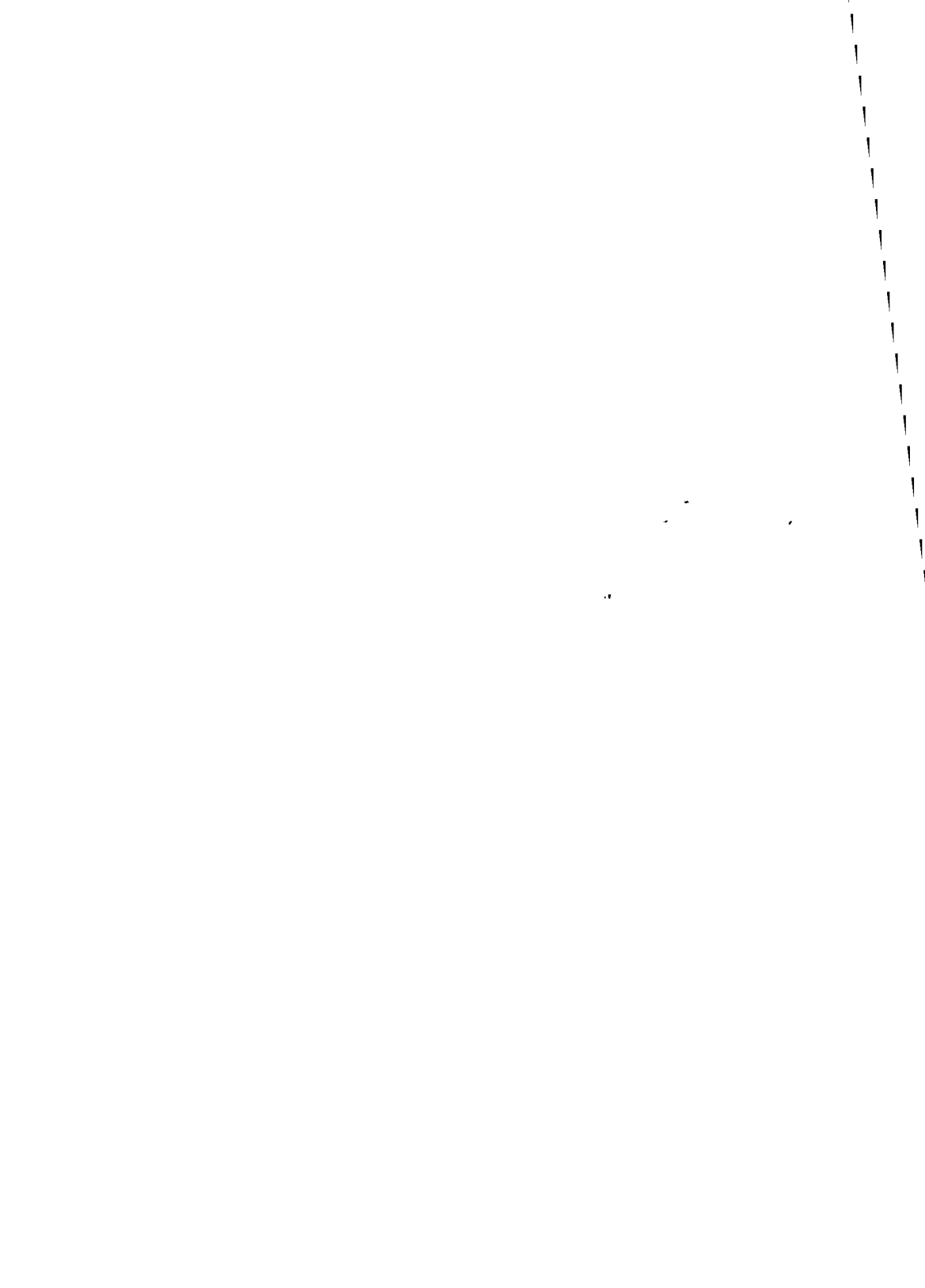


TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
1. Need for the Study	1
2. Nature of the Corpus	5
3. Transcription of the Corpus and Citation of Examples	6
I. SUPRASEGMENTAL PHENOMENA	9
1. Intonation	9
2. Terminal Juncture	13
2.1 Absence of terminal juncture where expected. . .	13
2.2 Hesitation breaks, probably non-phonemic . . .	13
2.3 Terminal junctures that do not coincide with the boundaries of syntactic units	14
II. SEGMENTATION OF THE CORPUS INTO FRAGMENTS AND SENTENCES.	16
1. Identification and Classification of Sentences	16
2. Segmentation of the Corpus	18
2.1 Types of phonological linkage	19
2.2 Phonological indications of separation occurring with secondary indications of linkage	21
2.21 Between syntactic units	21
2.22 Within syntactic units.	25
2.3 Further considerations in the counting of major and minor sentences.	25
2.4 <u>Fragment</u> defined and illustrated.	32
III. COUNT OF SENTENCES AND TYPES OF SENTENCE IN THE CORPUS	37
IV. CLASSIFICATION OF MINOR SENTENCES.	38

1. Dependent Minor Sentences	39
1.1 Class A	39
1.2 Class B	44
1.3 Class C	48
1.4 Class D	48
1.5 Class E	49
2. Independent Minor Sentences and Fragments.	50
2.1 Sentences abandoned before completion.	50
2.2 Subjectless sentences	51
2.21 Imperative sentences	51
2.22 Elliptical sentences	51
2.23 The problem of distinguishing between imperative sentences and those which have undergone ellipsis of the subject.	56
2.24 A third class of subjectless sentence	56
2.3 Other types of independent minor sentence	59
V. CONCLUSION	63
BIBLIOGRAPHY	67

INTRODUCTION

1. Need for the Study

Some of the handbooks on general linguistics and many grammars of English distinguish two basic types of sentence.

Leonard Bloomfield asserts that probably all languages have favorite sentence-forms as against other forms, and that this is the case in English. He calls the favorite sentence-forms in any language full sentences, and those less favored, minor sentences.¹ Robert A. Hall, Jr., speaks of clauses rather than sentences and asserts that a certain type of clause is, in English, statistically the most common of all. This most common type he calls a major clause, and the others are minor clauses.² Charles F. Hockett distinguishes between the favorite sentence-type in English and minor types.³

Of the older grammarians, Otto Jespersen finds that in addition to 'the fully articulate sentences,' there are others not fully articulate;⁴ and George O. Curme declares that a certain type is 'normal' for English, but that there are other types which are nevertheless complete sentences.⁵

Among the newer grammars, that of Archibald A. Hill speaks of elementless sentences as against those which are composed of elements, stating that one of the types of the latter is 'the favorite... pattern, much more frequent in our structure than any other.'⁶ Harold Whitehall mentions an 'overwhelmingly popular' pattern, which has almost banished 'other sentence types' from educational recognition.⁷

Bloomfield's full sentences in English are of two kinds, one consisting of an 'actor-action phrase': John ran away. Who ran away? Did John run away? and the other consisting of a 'command': Come! Be good!⁸ Hall's major clause is 'one of those whose structure is noun or pronoun + verb.'⁹ Sentences which 'center on a predicative constitute' are of Hockett's favorite sentence-type.¹⁰

Jespersen's 'fully articulate sentences' are those which contain 'a subject and a finite verb,'¹¹ while Curme's 'normal' sentence has a subject and a predicate: Lead sinks.¹²

According to Hill, it is 'the typical three-element sentence, ... the favorite subject-predicator-complement pattern,' which is 'much more frequent in our structure than any other.'¹³ For Whitehall, 'the subject-predicate sentence, which is the subject-predicate word-group accompanied by the declarative high-low tone-pause pattern,' is the one which is so 'overwhelmingly popular.'¹⁴

It may be said that, in general, these scholars agree that the English full sentence, major clause, favorite sentence-type, fully articulate sentence, normal sentence, frequent pattern, or overwhelmingly-popular sentence is distinguished from other patterns by having a subject and a predicate. Bloomfield differs by including the command, which does not have a subject, among his full sentences, and Hill differs by limiting the 'much more frequent' sentences to those which also have a complement.

The term major sentence will be used in the present study for the type which has a subject and a predicate. The term minor sentence will cover the other types.

Not all handbooks and grammars make a distinction between major and minor sentences. Among them one may cite the handbook of H. A. Gleason, Jr.,¹⁵ which does not classify sentences in this way. One of the older grammarians, Harold E. Palmer, states, 'Grammatically a sentence must have a subject and a predicate.' In this work, expressions regarded by other scholars as minor sentences are, consequently, not accorded sentence status but are treated, very briefly, under 'Parts of Speech' as 'Interjections and Exclamations,' some of which are actually in major-sentence form.¹⁶

Of the later grammarians, Charles C. Fries¹⁷ and W. Nelson Francis,¹⁸ who adopts Fries' classification of sentences, do not group them into classes comparable to the major and minor categories as understood here.

Although these scholars do not treat the minor sentence as a separate entity, the mere fact that so many others do set it up as such an entity invites attention to it as an object of study. Furthermore, we are assured that the minor sentence is by no means unimportant or insignificant. Curme is rather eloquent on the subject; because they are expressive, he insists that such forms have the status of sentences:

In a normal sentence both subject and predicate are present, but sometimes the one or the other or both may be absent and yet the sentence may be a complete expression of thought. See a below.

a. SENTENCES LACKING THE ONE OR THE OTHER OR BOTH OF THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS. In accurate thinking we often need a large vocabulary and intricate grammatical form; but language also adapts itself readily to the simpler needs of practical life, where action, tone, and the situation are often more expressive than words and grammatical form.... A single word in connection with proper tone or the situation conveys our meaning and thus constitutes a complete sentence: O! Ouch! Yes. No. 'Glass. Handle with care.' Beautiful! Hurry! If we call out 'Fred!' to indicate that he should come, we pronounce in loud, prolonged tones Fred as a disyllable. If we scold him we pronounce Fred as a monosyllable and raise the tone of the voice. Short, terse expression... is... widely used. In all such cases the expression of thought is perfect. The sentences, though brief, are complete. In the setting in which they appear, in a word, not a syllable is lacking.... Fuller expression would be incomplete expression, for it would mar the thought, take something vital away from it.¹⁹

Hall points out the frequency of occurrence of minor sentences and their contribution to 'clear understanding':

Most ordinary conversation contains, in the give-and-take of speech, a large proportion of minor clauses, which is quite correct and as it should be for clear understanding: Hello! Where're you going? — To eat. — What for? It's not time yet. — How so? It's noon. — No kidding? In that brief dialogue, there is a total of eight clauses, three major and five minor.²⁰

The minor sentence, then, must be worthy of scholarly attention. Nevertheless, it has been treated very cursorily by the more recent authorities who notice it at all, including those who have been mentioned here. Almost all their attention is devoted to the major sentences; the minor sentences are classified into a small number of categories, and, in each book, are disposed of in hardly more than two pages. The older grammarians have given much fuller treatment to the minor sentence. Jespersen refers²¹ to the places in his work where the various types are described. Curme also discusses them at various points. It is, however, the minor sentence as it occurs in written, literary English that these scholars have studied. The remarks of Curme and Hall concerning the minor sentence, just quoted, clearly refer to the minor sentence as it occurs in speech — speech as it serves 'the simpler needs of practical life,' speech as it occurs

in 'ordinary conversation.' To be treated fully, therefore, the minor sentence must be studied as it occurs in everyday talk.

The basis of such a study then must be a corpus consisting of spontaneous conversation. The only extensive treatment of English based on such a corpus is the work of Fries, but, as already stated, he does not treat minor sentences separately. The information concerning minor sentences per se that can be abstracted from his work is comparatively little. He calls attention to "response utterance units" that differed completely from any sentence patterns found among the "situation utterance units." The bulk, but not all, of the examples given are in minor sentence form.²² These response units are mostly answers to questions. They are classified on the basis of their grammatical components, and a correlation is found between the types of answer and the kinds of question. The proportion of the 'response utterance units' to the total number of utterance units is not given in the mention of percentage of occurrence of the various types of utterance unit.²³ Presumably, they are examined merely with a view to using them as a basis for the classification of the utterance units to which they are a response, and they are left out of the count. In addition to the minor sentences found among the 'response utterance units,' many examples of 'greetings' and 'calls' and some of the responses to these are also in minor sentence form,²⁴ as are many, but by no means all, of the 'signals of attention' which are noted.²⁵ Thus one may glean a few indications concerning the forms and functions of the minor sentence here and there, but the work does not systematically treat this kind of sentence. Fries has shown us that the study of the minor sentence as a separate formal entity is not strictly necessary to an interesting and enlightening investigation of the nature of conversation. Nevertheless, there is nothing in his work to discourage us from studying the minor sentence as an object of interest for its own sake.

The present work is based on a corpus of spontaneous conversation. It lays no claim to saying all that can be said about the minor sentence, but is to be taken as an approach to the subject. The corpus employed is a comparatively small one, and no attempt is made to go outside it. The minor sentences in it are investigated as to their frequency in proportion to that of the major sentences, their form, and their relation to the rest of the discourse and the situation. Other possible approaches will undoubtedly arise in the mind of the reader.

A study such as this may very likely prove to have practical applications. One such that occurs to the writer is its possible use to

the composition teacher, one of whose tasks is to keep students from writing 'incomplete,' i. e. minor, sentences. This study also includes a brief look at phonological phenomena which may account for other departures from the conventions of writing which are common in students' papers. No attempt is made in the present work to make a systematic application of the findings to these problems, but the possibility of such an application is pointed out from time to time.

The major sentences in the corpus have not been studied at all except in connection with the segmentation of the corpus into sentences. It is the writer's impression that study of such sentences would not add very much that was new to the study of English grammar, although there are a few colloquial patterns such as

2584 6-486 R ²whât do you ³sáy^{2/2} wé^{2/1}ûh^{1/2}en³trúst
ôursêlves^{2/2} to the dîffîcùlties of the ³rôad¹#

that deserve more attention than they have heretofore received. Fuller study of how a major sentence pattern is finally achieved in speech — the process is not always smoothly carried out — might also be helpful to the composition teacher. For practical reasons such a study has had to be ruled out of the scope of the present investigation.

2. Nature of the Corpus

The corpus is on tapes which run for about four hours. It consists of informal conversation among members of the same family speaking under circumstances and in a locale familiar to them. The speakers are the writer (E), her father (R), her sister (M), her sister's husband (K), and the couple's two children, girls aged nine (L) and thirteen (P). All speakers except the writer's father, who was born in New York City, were born in Chicago or environs, and all, including the father, grew up and have spent most of their lives in the Chicago area. The writer's mother was born in Kansas but grew up in northern Indiana, whence she moved to Chicago at the time of her marriage, where she remained for the rest of her life. The ancestry of all speakers is American for many generations, for the most part ultimately stemming from England. The writer has a German great-grandfather, who married an American, and the remote background of her brother-in-law also includes German elements.

All but the children are high-school graduates. The sister's husband has graduated from law school but did not attend college. The father had two years of college. The writer was for many years a legal secretary and has had some university training. The educational level of the speakers may, then, be said to be a little above average. The speech may be said to represent the local standard.

The recordings were all made in the sister's living room on the occasion of several visits of the writer and her father to the sister and her family, a custom of many years' standing. The tape recorder is the property of the sister's husband and was used with his permission and with the full knowledge of all speakers. The microphone remained stationary in the middle of the room and was not handed around from person to person. The machine was not kept recording at all times, and the speakers evinced only slight interest as to whether it was recording at any given moment. Whenever they pleased speakers entered and left the room. The only instructions to the speakers were to 'start talking' and to 'speak up, you're not getting on the tape.' There were a few jokes about 'I hope everyone watches their grammar,' and 'Don't say "lay" instead of "lie,"' but the speakers seemed to have had no idea of the use to which the material was going to be put, nor any notion of how to distort their natural way of talking in order to appear more acceptable. In the writer's opinion, no distortion occurred.

3. Transcription of the Corpus and Citation of Examples

The material was transcribed from the tapes into notebooks and then typed on cards, the number of cards being 3,600. In the citation of examples here, the first number given is that of the card, the second that of the tape, and the third, connected to the second by a hyphen, is the number of revolutions from the beginning of the tape to the point at which the utterance cited begins. These numbers are given mostly for the convenience of the writer, but they would be indispensable for anyone who wished to check the data, and will be of some use to the reader as a means of identification. The letter following the number designates the speaker. In the transcription a row of x's — xxxxxx — indicates material that is unintelligible. Since the recordings were not made under laboratory conditions, there is a great deal of background noise.

The transcription of the examples is given here in conventional spelling, but indications (which replace conventional punctuation) of the stress, intonation, and juncture are also given, following the Trager-Smith system.²⁶

Notes

1. Leonard Bloomfield, Language (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1933), pp. 171f.
2. Robert A. Hall, Jr., Linguistics and Your Language (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1960), pp. 112f.
3. Charles F. Hockett, A Course in Modern Linguistics (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1958), pp. 200f.
4. Otto Jespersen, A Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles (Copenhagen: Einar Munksgaard, 1959), VII, p. 53.
5. George O. Curme, Syntax (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1931), p. 1.
6. Archibald A. Hill, Introduction to Linguistic Structures (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1958), p. 347.
7. Harold Whitehall, Structural Essentials of English (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1951), p. 36.
8. Loc. cit.
9. Loc. cit.
10. Loc. cit.
11. Loc. cit.
12. Loc. cit.
13. Loc. cit.
14. Loc. cit.
15. H. A. Gleason, Jr., An Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics (rev. ed.; New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961).
16. Harold E. Palmer, A Grammar of Spoken English On a Strictly Phonetic Basis (2d ed., rev. with the assistance of F. G.

Blandford; Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons Ltd., 1939), pp. 218 f.

17. Charles Carpenter Fries, The Structure of English (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1952).

18. W. Nelson Francis, The Structure of American English (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1958).

19. Loc. cit.

20. Loc. cit.

21. Loc. cit.

22. Op. cit., pp. 165ff.

23. Ibid., p. 51.

24. Ibid., p. 44.

25. Ibid., p. 49ff.

26. As described in George L. Trager and Henry Lee Smith, Jr., An Outline of English Structure (Norman, Oklahoma: Battenburg Press, 1951).

I. SUPRASEGMENTAL PHENOMENA

It should not be a surprise that utterances transcribed from living speech will not always look like the examples found in textbooks. In the first place, some textbooks note only the commonest intonation patterns, and the less common may appear strange to some readers. In the second place, speakers do not always follow the 'rules,' particularly as to the placement of terminal junctures. In the third place, in this study the transcriber has chosen to err on the side of over-recording, in an attempt to avoid the risk of under-recording where there are cases of doubt. Over-recording can do no harm, and under-recording might obscure significant data. The aim, of course, is to present rather than to withhold data.

1. Intonation

Among the intonation patterns that might appear strange to some readers are those which do not follow the general rule that the strongest stress coincides with the highest pitch. Several patterns of this type have been described by Hill or by Kenneth L. Pike. In the corpus occur what seem to be one or two new patterns not mentioned by either. Unusual intonation patterns are always interesting, and the fresh examples afforded by the corpus of those already recognized, as well as examples of what may turn out to be new patterns, should be welcome. Since our notation is the same as Hill's, and that of Pike is quite different, in the discussion which follows, where a pattern is described by both Hill and Pike, only Hill's treatment will be referred to. Pike's treatment will be mentioned only in the case of patterns not mentioned by Hill.

Highest pitch may occur on the weak-stressed syllable following the primary stress. This pattern was noticed by James Sledd and is reported by Hill,¹ Sledd's example being

²wón³derful¹#

In the corpus, among many other instances, we have:

781 2-466 M ²the ²hín³terlânds¹#

and

3505 8-452 E ²cól³lege êntrance²/

Hill mentions a pre-middle pitch pattern, where the pattern is 'that of a peak, with the highest point falling on the pre-middle,' as in

/²sòw+³dòwnt+²róš+mly²||/

Pre-middle pitch, Hill states, falls always on a secondary stress which occurs before the primary.² Examples from the corpus are:

3417 8-339 R ²it was e³ xâctly lîke the bìg ²Rólleiflèx¹||

3470 8-395 R ²A ³Tâle of Twô ²Cíties¹#

3520 8-475 M ²wê hàd a rêgular ³prînted ²bóok¹#

Hill also mentions a falling pattern, where the highest pitch is initial.³ His examples is:

/³àym+²kómin²||/

Examples from the corpus are:

945 3-76 L ³I wasn't gîving thât to ²yóu²||

824 2-579 M ³hè's a gòdod friend of ²Kén's²||

895 3-42 E ³I ²álwàys gòt gòdod repòrt càrds¹#

901 3-47 R ³I sêe hère ²B^{2/2}and ²C¹#

There are other examples where the highest pitch is initial, but the initial syllable has secondary stress.⁴ Consequently, these could be regarded as having the 'peak' intonation pattern, or the 'falling' pattern, indifferently:

3415 8-338 R ³cûtest lîttle thîng you êver ²sáw¹#

3582 8-568 E ³nôbòdy is gòding to hêar them excêpt ²mé¹#

Hill describes a pattern where 'the highest pitch is not a peak but, so to speak, a plateau which begins on a syllable with secondary

stress which occurs before the primary, and extends through the primary.⁵ His example is:

/²hìyz+³gôwîŋ+təðə+³múwviyz¹#/

In the corpus occur:

- 821 2-564 E ²he ³bûgged ³téléphòne cònvèrsàtions¹#
 2168 6-28 R ²I ³dôn't ³thínk sò¹#
 2198 6-47 M ²and he ³hâsn't ³cóme¹#
 2324 6-144 R ³hōw còuld thât ³bé¹#
 2319 6-140 M ³thêre was sômething ³wróng²/
 593 2-195 M ²sômebody dòn at ³Grâce's ³óffice²/
 1921 5-224 R ²the mōtor dârn nèar jùmped ³òut of the ³cár¹#
 244 1-286 R ²but ³whêre you jùst lōok at it ònce a ³yéar²/

There are numerous occurrences of the highest pitch on a second-ary followed by a drop to normal and recurrence of the highest pitch on the primary. If at least a single-bar juncture were present at some point between the two high pitches, there would be two intonation contours, but nothing indicating such a juncture can be heard. Examples are:

- 2596 6-502 E ²it's ³wôrse ²than an ³áutomobìle¹#
 3589 8-589 M ²of ³pêo²ple's ³spéech¹#
 2842 7-22 R ²or wàs it ³thrêe dòllars ²and a ³hálf¹#

This pattern is noted in Pike,⁶ where it is described as 'one complex rhythm unit with a syllable in double function between.' An example given is:

a 'book of 'stories
 3- 2- -3- 2-4//

This example was transcribed from Pike's own utterance of it on the record made to accompany the book, in Trager-Smith notation, by R. B. Lees in an unpublished paper as:

²èy + bûk + əv + ³stóriyz¹#

been recorded here, following the principle of over-recording, if indeed it is over-recording, in cases of doubt.

2. Terminal Juncture

Some peculiarities in the location of terminal junctures are very interesting.

2.1 Absence of terminal juncture where expected

Often there is a succession of primary stresses, each with highest pitch, with no indication of terminal juncture between, e.g.:

2815 7-194 K ³twêlve ³fíft²y is ³nórmal ²for a ³chârged
³báttery¹#

2100 5-464 M ²she's bèing ³már²ried todây in De³cátur²/

Very likely there is more than one contour here, but the writer has hesitated to mark single bars where there seems to be no audible indication of them.

2.2 Hesitation breaks, probably non-phonemic

On the other hand, there are many hesitation breaks which are probably not phonemic at all and should not be indicated. Nevertheless, the location of these breaks, although not important for the purpose of this study, are interesting. They have been indicated as the type of terminal they most resemble, usually single bar. A problem arises as to whether the loudest stress in the material between these breaks, or between a true terminal juncture or a pause and a break should be automatically marked as primary, even though, in comparison with the material on the other side of the break, it is not primary. In the interest of giving, rather than withholding, information, such syllables have been marked with the degree of stress they actually seem to have in relation to the rest of the utterance, e.g.:

600 2-204 R ²thât^{2/2} Irrespônsible bûnch of ³gángsters
in the¹/³Krémlin¹#

797 2-486 E ²bùt^{2/2}the i³dêa ²was to kêep pèople ³ín and²/

The break often marks the end of a 'false start' of an utterance; the speaker breaks off and begins anew. The loud stress on these fragments has not been marked as primary when it is not very loud, and particularly where it seemed, had the utterance continued, that a primary would have followed, e. g.:

1417 4-143 M ²well she ³jüst^{2/2}I don't knôw^{2/2}if she êver
³hás pèeled a tàngerîne¹#

The first single bar in the above example marks the end of a 'false start,' and the second marks a probably non-phonemic hesitation.

2.3 Terminal junctures that do not coincide with the boundaries of syntactic units

Terminal junctures do not invariably coincide with the boundaries of the syntactic units of a sentence. Sometimes the speaker runs over this boundary and puts his single bar, as the terminal in these cases usually is, somewhere within the next syntactic unit, as in the example on card 600, cited above, or as in the following example:

2194 6-46 R ²I ³dòn't ²mînd the ³nóise it^{2/2}sôunds ³góod¹#

At other times he may put his terminal within his first syntactic unit and run the latter part of this unit together with the next, e. g.:

2115 5-483 M ³réal^{2/3}/³górgeous and I begàn to thînk^{2/}

There seems to be enough redundancy in the language to keep such a 'misplacement' of terminal juncture from preventing intelligibility. The reader is referred to Hill⁹ for an interesting discussion of such junctural phenomena.

Further examples of junctures which do not coincide with the boundaries of syntactic units are given in II.2.22.

Notes

1. Archibald A. Hill, Introduction to Linguistic Structures (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1958), pp. 110f.

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 109.
4. Examples (b) and (j) on pp. 50f. of Trager and Smith, op. cit., seem to be instances of this pattern.
5. Ibid., p. 110.
6. Kenneth L. Pike, The Intonation of American English (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1946), p. 37.
7. Op. cit., p. 159, lines 5, 14, 16, 38, e.g.
8. Op. cit., p. 68.
9. Op. cit., pp. 34lf.

II. SEGMENTATION OF THE CORPUS INTO FRAGMENTS AND SENTENCES

1. Identification and Classification of Sentences

The first task is to find criteria whereby the sentences in the corpus may be identified and classified.

Linguistic scholars have been long at work in attempting to formulate a definition of the sentence, but not one has achieved a definition which satisfies everyone. The sentence may well be an entity which is incapable of true definition. Just as such concepts as 'point' and 'line' are taken as undefined terms, the 'primitives of the system,' in Euclidean geometry, it may in the future be agreed that 'sentence' is one of the primitives of the system of linguistics. However, among the definitions which have been offered, there is much that will help in the identification of sentences in the present corpus.

A. Meillet's definition is quite general:

Au point de vue linguistique, et abstraction faite de toute considération de logique ou de psychologie, la phrase peut être définie: un ensemble d'articulations liées entre elles par des rapports grammaticaux et qui, ne dépendant grammaticalement d'aucun autre ensemble, se suffisent à elles-mêmes.¹

Bloomfield's definition is virtually the last part of Meillet's:

It is evident that the sentences in any utterance are marked off by the mere fact that each sentence is an independent linguistic form, not included by virtue of any grammatical construction in any larger linguistic form.²

Bloomfield goes on to say that in most, or possibly all languages, various taxemes also mark off the sentence, and that 'in English, as well as in many other languages, sentences are marked off by modulation, the use of secondary phonemes,' and that in English the secondary phonemes which mark the end of sentences are those of pitch.

Bloomfield thus introduces phonological signals as significant in determining the boundaries of sentences, in addition to the 'mere fact that each sentence is an independent linguistic form.' He also mentions the converse of this: 'two forms united by no other construction' may be 'united by the use of only one sentence-pitch.' Thus, the 'rapports grammaticaux' mentioned by Meillet may, according to Bloomfield, include phonological signals.

Many of the more recent definitions use only phonological criteria to determine the limits of the sentence. Whitehall finds it 'practical to define the spoken sentence' as

a word-group, or more seldom a single word, the end of
of which is marked by a final tone-pause pattern.³

This tells us where a sentence ends. In addition, Francis tells us where a sentence begins:

A sentence is as much of the uninterrupted utterance of a single speaker as is included either between the beginning of the utterance and the pause which ends a sentence-final contour or between two such pauses.⁴

Hill's definition mentions the constituent parts of the sentence:

A sentence... is a sequence of segmental material occurring under a single pitch superfix. The superfix may or may not contain more than one pitch morpheme, but if there is more than one pitch morpheme, the pitch morphemes must be linked. A sentence must also have a stress superfix, which also may consist of several stress morphemes. Obviously, also a sentence must contain one or several segmental morphemes.⁵

It is clear that in saying that the pitch morphemes must be linked, Hill is saying that parts of a sentence must be phonologically linked. He has isolated several patterns or devices of phonological linkage, which are referred to, with examples from the corpus, in II.2.1. Hill also states, 'Phonological linking may be accompanied by other devices, which are secondary.' The secondary devices are morphological, lexical and syntactic.⁶

Bloomfield states that the end of a sentence is marked by a secondary phoneme of pitch; Whitehall, that it is marked by a final tone-pause pattern; Francis says that a pause ends a sentence-final contour — in other words, a sentence ends with a characteristic contour and is followed by a pause — and Hill declares that the material

forming a sentence occurs under a single pitch superfix. These all seem to be slightly different ways of saying the same thing, which is, to put it in Trager-Smith terms, that a sentence ends with the end of an intonation contour and a terminal juncture. There are utterances in the corpus which do not end with a terminal juncture. These utterances will be called fragments. Examples and further discussion are given in II.2.4 and IV.2.1. All other utterances are sentences.

The next task is to define the major sentence more narrowly. We have already stated that this term will be used for the type which has a subject and predicate. This rules out the subjectless command and all other subjectless sentences, which will be included among the minor sentences. In addition, we shall have to require that the major sentence be free of any elements which would cause it to depend grammatically on some other construction and not be sufficient unto itself, to paraphrase Meillet, or be 'included... in any larger linguistic form,' to quote Bloomfield. All other constructions, with the exception of the fragments, will be counted as minor sentences.

2. Segmentation of the Corpus

The data consists of a stream of spoken discourse. The next problem is to segment this stream into sentences and fragments.

We may most conveniently take as the basic unit the phonological phrase, as defined by Hill,⁷ 'a unit bounded by terminal junctures.' The data then, first of all, is segmented into phonological phrases, with a number of fragments left over which end phonetically, rather than phonemically, in that phonation ceases before a terminal pattern has been achieved.

The problem is to determine when phonological phrases should be counted as separate sentences and when they should be regarded as linked together to form one sentence. It must also be determined whether a phonological phrase in minor sentence form should be regarded as constituting a minor sentence or whether it should be regarded as part of an adjacent major sentence.

If only phonological criteria were used, the task would be quite simple; all phonological phrases which were phonologically linked would be taken together as one sentence. If they were not phonologically linked, they would be regarded as separate sentences. This procedure would no doubt yield interesting and useful results. On the other hand, there are signals of linkage other than phonological. These

also must be among Meillet's 'rapports grammaticaux'; Bloomfield certainly had them in mind as entering into the grammatical constructions by virtue of which a linguistic form may be included in a larger linguistic form; and though for Hill the phonological indications of linkage are primary, he by no means refuses to give value to the secondary indications. Phonological and other indications of linkage do not necessarily go hand in hand. Bloomfield calls attention to 'a construction known as parataxis, in which two forms united by no other construction are united by the use of only one sentence-pitch.'⁸ There are numerous examples of parataxis in the corpus. Conversely, there are many 'articulations liées entre elles par des rapports grammaticaux' which are nevertheless phonologically disjoint because one or more before the last one in a series ends with a sentence-final terminal juncture.

As mentioned in the Introduction, one of the practical applications of the present study could be to show the composition teacher something of his students' speech habits — if the speech habits of the very small and homogeneous group under investigation can be regarded as representative of those of students in general. It seems this end will be better served if the study shows how close people come to forming major sentences in casual discourse. If only the phonological signals of linkage were considered, it would appear that they are quite wide of the mark, but this would be an unfair conclusion in view of the fact that they do make use of secondary signals. Besides, it is only the secondary signals that are used in writing, except for the few clues to phonology which punctuation affords, and a student's ability to use the secondary signals in speech ought to facilitate his writing. We will therefore give our speakers credit for their use of secondary signals and count together as constituting one sentence those phonological phrases which have secondary indications of linkage, even though the phonological indications may be contrary.

2.1 Types of phonological linkage

Even though they are to be regarded as overridden by the secondary indications of linkage, it will be of interest to examine the types of phonological linkage. They have been described by Hill,⁹ and his description will be briefly given here, with examples from the corpus.

The first type of linkage 'can be called extension of contour by addition of a monotone morpheme in which the monotone level is the same as the level of the final pitch phoneme of the preceding morpheme.'¹⁰ There are many examples of this type of linkage in the corpus, e. g.:

- 3522 8-479 M ²ôh¹#¹î dôn't thînk you ¹wére¹#
 2755 7-141 K ²nôt ³this trîp¹#¹yôu ¹wôn't¹#
 2757 7-142 M ²whère do the ³Gránstroms gô¹#¹if they dôn't
 gô to the ¹gárbage dûmp¹#
 1621 4-432 K ²the ³bónes can gô on thère¹#¹Hôney and ¹stúff¹#
 3479 8-405 K ²I ³míssed some impôrtant pârts²/²ap²párently²/
 2551 6-440 R ²there àren't âny dèad Assÿrians in ³Hólland²/
 ²àre thère²||
 2590 6-497 R ²yôu've bēen in ³béd³/³hàven't yôu³/
 3259 8-128 E ³it's fàirly ²éasy²/²isn't it³/³to síng³/
 3207 8-68 K ²it was ³hárd³/³yôu ³méan³||
 3416 8-338 K ²thàt's yēars a³gô³/³thèy ³máde thàt³/³you
 ³méan³||
 2619 6-535 K ²it's a ³sháft¹#¹is àll there is ¹thère¹||

The second type of linkage described by Hill,¹¹ is what he calls linkage by complex contour, which 'can be described by saying that a pitch morpheme whose peak is /4/ is linked to a preceding morpheme whose peak is /3/. This pattern is relatively rare in the corpus. A thorough search of about 1,000 cards turns up only the following possible examples of it:

- 1942 5-246 K ²the sâme plûgs you hâd in the câr when you
 ³bóught it²/²were ìn the câr whèn you ⁴sóld it¹#
 568 2-168 E ²the ³báre rûg²/⁴jítterbùg²/
 2627 7-8 K ²thàt ³quárt³/²ùh²/⁴gráduate ì ùse¹#
 2863 7-244 M ²the ³hóg²/²with ⁴péanùts¹#
 1415 4-143 E ²the àrt of ³péeling²/²you can wìn ⁴péeling
 còntests¹#

The third type of linkage is by far the most common in the corpus. It is called minimal linkage by Hill, who says that it 'occurs when the final pitch phoneme of the preceding morpheme is identical with the initial pitch phoneme of the following morpheme.'¹² Examples are abundant in the corpus, e. g.:

- 632 2-260 R ²and ì ³héard it²/²on the ³rádio¹#
 734 2-408 K ²thàt was the ³álibì²/²thèy ³gáve²/²for not
 ³séeing each òther¹#
 2696 7-71 M ³míne àren't fàlling apàrt²||² whÿ should ³í bôther²/
 2641 7-19 K ³Hàrold ³Áhbe ²gòt a nèw Māgnavòx²||²has ³it
 gôt gôrgeous ³tóne¹#

- 2790 7-168 R ³ī ²dōn't ²knōw^{2/2}it mûst have bēen sīx ³wēeks
agō¹#
- 960 3-88 R ²yēs ³hè ³is^{2/2}he's a ³wārm blōded ²ānimal¹#
- 3385 8-306 R ²ī sàid hōw ³múch^{3/3}twēnty fīve ²dóllars¹#

In the examples on cards 2619, 2696, 2641, 2790, 960 and 3385, the phonological signals of linkage are not accompanied by secondary indications. Therefore, the two phonological phrases of which each example consists are counted as two sentences. The fact that a series of phonological phrases constituting more than one major sentence may be phonologically linked might account for some of the 'comma splices' which are found in composition papers.

2.2 Phonological indications of separation occurring with secondary indications of linkage

Conversely, secondary indications of linkage are not always accompanied by phonological indications. It may be interesting to examine some examples of utterances which, according to the secondary indications of linkage, constitute single sentences but which are nevertheless divided by a phonological indication of separation, that is, a pitch and juncture pattern which normally terminates a sentence. There is no point in describing all of these final pitch and juncture patterns and giving examples of them. Let it suffice to take the one that is the most conclusively and spectacularly final, the one where the last pitch is /1/ and the terminal is /#/. The location of these breaks will be of particular interest. A sampling of them will be given, first where they occur between the syntactic units of sentences, and then where they occur within such units.

2.21 Between syntactic units

The break on /1#/ may come between a main clause and a following subordinate clause introduced by a relative pronoun, the subordinate clause modifying the entire main clause:

- 3342 8-245 M ²Līnda èven a²gréed^{2/2}that shè'd wālk as fār
as the ³Méthodist Chûrch¹#²whīch wôuld mākē
it ônly ³ōne blōck strāight ahēad^{1/1}and ³ōne
blōck to the lēft¹#
- 3561 8-533 M ²wē've jûst abòut gīven ûp ³hōpe of^{2/2}gétting
āny of yòu ûp hère^{2/2}to ³sée ùs¹#²whīch mākēs
us vèry un²hāppy¹#

It is remarkable that in the last example the speaker is reading from a letter, which had a comma after us, not a period.

The break on /¹#/ may come between a main clause and a following subordinate clause introduced by a relative pronoun, the subordinate clause modifying a noun or noun phrase in the main one:

3520 8-475 M ²wê hâd a rêgular ³prînted ²bóok¹#²that hâd âll the ³côurses¹#

629 2-255 R ²his a ³pôlogists^{2/2}have âlmost withôut ex³céption^{2/}
²ig³nóred the fâct¹# ²thât hê ³díd^{2/2}âdd^{2/2}the
²phráse^{2/2} un²lêss^{2/2}we àre at ³tácked¹#

The break on /¹#/ may come between a main clause and a subordinate clause beginning with a subordinating conjunction:

2447 7-278 E ²whât would thèy ³sméll lîke¹#²if you ³búrned them¹#

2704 7-81 M ²when thèy clêan them it ³húrts¹#²if thèy dô it ³rîght^{2/}

2802 7-183 R ³you've gòt a nêw ³báttery¹#³í^{3/2}your ³tróuble wàs^{2/2}nóthing but ³súlphàting¹#

2137 6-3 R ²I dôn't ³dóubt it¹#²be²cáuse uh^{2/3}péople âfter âll^{2/2}have gòt ³sóme brâins¹||

2158 6-19 R ²I gòt it of còurse for sêven³téen¹#²becâuse thèy were chânging the ³módel¹#

2690 7-65 M ²well ³yòu hâve to ¹wáit¹#²untìl they ²knów ³whât^{3/2}whêther thèy ⁴néed it or nôt²||

838A 3-6 E ²I wânt the ìntonâtion pâtterns ²tóo¹#²whêther thère are ³wôrds or ²nót¹#

2114 5-482 M ²ì thought she'd pût a ³strîng aròund it^{1/}
¹instêad of just lêaving it in a ³bóx¹#²lîke she díd the ³óther òne¹#

31-1-34 R ²thât is whât we're gôing to fînd ³out¹#²when Khrúshchêv lèts ³gó^{3/2}with his ³rócket¹#

The break on /¹#/ may come between a main clause and a subordinate clause which is the object of a verb in the main clause:

217 1-245 R ²ì was ³tòtally at a ²lòss²||²to i³máginé¹#²whère thèy ²pícked òut thât^{2/2}húndred and thîrty-êight ³figure¹#

The break on /¹#/ may come between a clause beginning with a subordinating conjunction and the following main clause:

- 3451 8-375 M ²if you're lòoking for the ³éasiest¹#²thât would
bè the ³éasiest¹#
- 1098 3-212 E ²if Kên'll lîsten to a ³Môzart ³sýmphony¹#²wè
have to lîsten to ³Jâil Hôuse ⁴Róck¹#
- 2039 5-346 R ²as I ³sáy¹#²if you're êducàting a ³báby^{2/2}or a
³cát^{2/2}mâybe âll of this stûff would be âll
³ríght¹#

The break on /¹#/ separates a concluding prepositional phrase from the preceding sentence, of which it is semantically a part:

- 1663 5-4 L ²yéah¹#³Í cârved^{2/2}párt of it¹#³yéah^{2/2}for
²Móther²||
- 1566 4-310 R ²and hê màde us âll tâlk ²Spánish¹#²óut of thèse
uh^{2/3}bóoklets^{1/1}fòr a ¹whíle¹#
- 1162 3-294 R ²and hê wôn ³thát câse¹#³fór the ràilròad¹#
- 3097 7-496 K ²you ³âlways ³mímíc^{2/2}in ³frònt of the ³cámera¹#
³gòsh¹#²like a ⁴móròn¹#
- 1935 5-239 K ²and my bìll was thírty-twò dòllars and a ³hálf¹#
²fòr a ⁴túneùp¹#

The break on /¹#/ may separate a concluding participial phrase from the preceding sentence, of which it is semantically a part:

- 1795 5-111 K ²hè was a grêat poli³tícian^{2/2}in Illi³nóis^{2/}
²tèlling ùs abòut the stòry of the ²sálmón¹#
²gòing ùp the ²ríver¹#²gée¹#
- 3220 8-83 R ³thát is^{2/2}yòur ³láke wàter¹#²filtered thròugh^{2/}
²abòut fifty fêet of ³sánd¹#
- 2583 6-486 R ²it sòunded lìke a ³cát¹#²stèaling ³fóod^{2/2}òut of
a ³cán¹#
- 2372 6-189 K ²I've bèen dòn in the ³básement¹#²clèaning mỳ
³dárk ròom òut¹#
- 2157 6-18 R ²when ³Ì bòught thís ³Rámbler²||²the príce was
nìnetèen fòrty-²fíve¹#²làid dòn in yòur ²láp¹#

The break on /¹#/ may separate modificatory material — adjectival, adverbial, and other types — from the preceding sentence, of which it modifies a particular element:

- 291 1-340 E ²I want ³nàtive spèakers of ³Énglish¹#³ónly¹#
- 1430 4-152 R ³thèy're ²wríttén¹#²vèry ²símply¹#
- 3413 8-336 R ²the ³Ròlly màkes a twò and a ²quárter¹#³squáre¹#

The break on /'#/ may separate the subject and predicate of a sentence:

- 1852 5-157 R ²bùt êven this ³génius that was hândling uh²/
³Kélvínàtor¹#²côuldn't ùh²/²pùll the auto³móbile
 ênd òf it òut of the ³réd¹#
- 967 3-93 R ¹and the rêason he ³kêeps ²wárm¹#²is becâuse
 he hàs a lâyer of ⁴blúbber²/²àll ³óver him²/
 3045 7-411 K ²the gûy to the ²léft¹#²is his ¹fáther¹#

2.22 Within syntactic units

The break on /¹#/ may occur between an article, a possessive or demonstrative adjective and the following noun or remainder of the noun phrase:

- 3447 8-372 M ²wèll ³Í thínk this²/²pláce òut hêre is a¹#³nút
 hòuse²/
 360 1-419 K ²well Ì'm ²wátching the¹#³ámateur hòur¹#

The break may occur between an adjective and the following noun:

- 3485 8-414 R ²now ín the ³bóok³/²thère's ³ònly ²óne²/²fémale¹#
²chàracter¹#
- 2481 6-349 R ²thère's a³nóther²/²nôrth and ³sóuth¹#²álley¹#
- 2495 6-369 R ²but ³àll thòse hòuses²/²are òn nôrth and
²south¹#²stréets¹#

The break may occur between a preposition and the following noun phrase:

- 3504 8-450 M ²did ³wé hàve to tàke a lâboratòry sciéce for¹#
²cóllège êntrance¹#
- 3178 8-46 K ²but ³I just cân't²/²sée¹#²wèlls and sêptic tànk
 thàt ²clóse with¹#³fôrtý thòusand ³hómes thèy
 expêct to buíld dônw thère¹||

In spite of the phonological break in all these utterances, beginning on p. 21, each of them is counted as one major sentence.

The fact that /¹#/ can occur in so many places within a major sentence may account for a large number of misplaced periods in composition papers.

2.3 Further considerations in the counting of major and minor sentences

Two phonological phrases not forming a part of or composing a major sentence will be regarded as one minor sentence if they are phonologically linked, but as two minor sentences if they are not phonologically linked. This arbitrary procedure is considered better than having to argue in each case the question of whether two adjacent minor sentences are linked in other ways.

A sequence of phonological phrases which are linked and form a major sentence will nevertheless be regarded as a sequence of minor sentences if the same speaker does not utter them all. This is another arbitrary rule, but it is desirable to show when a major sentence is the result of one person's effort and when it is a joint composition, as in the following examples:

1185 3-343 M ²Sidney Hârris sàys pèople that dôn't ²spéak²/
E ²hâve nôthing to ³sáy¹#

However, in most cases where a sentence is finished by another speaker, it is already a major sentence in the mouth of the first speaker, and the second merely adds additional material, e.g.:

3526 8-480 E ²wè wênt to the ³sâme ³schóol¹#
P ²twô yèars ³láter¹#

Such a 'tag' by another speaker will be regarded as a separate minor sentence, a procedure which is necessary because of cases like the following:

3488 8-422 R ²that's ³âll you èver ⁴sée of her¹#
M ²in the ³móvie³/

where the tag is a question and not intended as a continuation of the preceding sentence.

If a speaker is interrupted by another but continues his sentence after the interruption, the two parts of the sentence, on either side of the interruption, will be considered as separate, unless the speaker's continuation of his utterance is not influenced by the interruption.

1498 4-218 M ²we àre gôing to gêt a bîg lông ³létter²/
²to³mórrôw¹/¹òr ²Mónday¹/¹de²scribing in
de³táil¹/
P ²rêad them ²óut¹#¹whât thèy ¹áre¹#
M ¹whât we're sup³pósed to dô²/²and ³nót dô¹#

Here the continuation of M's sentence is presumably the same as it would have been had there been no interruption. The two utterances of M are therefore counted as one major sentence.

1814 5-125 R ²dò you tâke ²báths²||
 M ³nów^{1/1}and ²thén¹#
 R ²in a ²túb²||

In a tub could be interpreted as a part of the major sentence do you take baths, but because of the intonation, both are obviously separate questions, and M's utterance is not an interruption but the answer to the first question. R's second utterance is almost certainly influenced by M's answer to his first; it would very likely have been different had M's answer been different. Therefore, R's second utterance is not counted as part of his first, a major sentence, but as a separate minor sentence.

Very often the second speaker's utterance can hardly be considered an interruption. It is often a continuation of the utterance of the first speaker, which it brings to completion as a major sentence. The first speaker then either confirms or denies the continuation. In such cases, the confirmation or denial, as well as the second speaker's continuation, is counted as a separate minor sentence, e. g.:

1640 4-465 L ³í^{3/2}had a whôle ³thíng ðf^{2/2}ôf^{1/1}uh^{1/}
 E ³whískey¹#²yéah¹#
 L ³yéah¹#³whískey^{2/}
 3380 8-301 R ³nó¹#²it's^{2/2}it's gô²à^{2/}uh^{1/}
 K ³ôh¹#³ôh ³yéah¹#³cúrtain¹#
 R ²a ³cúrtain¹#

The second and third utterances in each of these examples are each counted as separate minor sentences.

Sometimes the second speaker's utterance induces the first to add more to his original sentence. Both these utterances, that of the second speaker, and the continuation by the first speaker, if they are not major sentences each by itself, are counted as separate minor sentences, e. g.:

1614 4-424 K ²a smáll^{2/2}ône of thôse ùh^{1/3}cóck¹tàil tâbles
 beside mý ²cháir^{1/1}to pùt the^{1/1}a ³pláte ðn^{2/}
²to pùt the ³stúff ðn¹#

R ²a ³gárbage hōlder¹#

K ³yéah¹/¹for the ³bónes and thîngs¹#

3431 8-357 M ²what do ³yóu thînk she should tâke¹/¹Betty¹#

E ³whát¹#

M ²in her sênior ³yéar¹#

In these examples, both the utterance of the second speaker and the second utterance of the first speaker are counted as separate minor sentences.

There are a few sequences of two major sentences which, although they are not connected by a conjunction, seem to be semantically linked, and it is to be noted that they are also phonologically linked. Such sequences have been counted as one major sentence, e. g.:

1932 5-235 R ²they've cêased to bè a con²vénience¹/¹thèy're a ³núisance¹#

The same principle — that of semantic linkage — governs the counting of major sentences connected by conjunctions. There are a few monologues of some length in the corpus in which long strings of major sentences which have no close grammatical or semantic connection are connected by and, but, so, etc., e. g.:

1159 3-289 R ²and thère was a ³nóther ²sûch cêse còmîng ùp in the nêxt ³wéek or twô¹#

1160 3-291 R ²sò this gûy tùrns aróund²||²this of²fícial³/²and hîres²/²Uncle Hârry to²/²rèpresênt the ³râilrôad¹#¹whîch he ³díd¹#

1161 3-294 R ²and the cêse câme ùp befôre the sâme ³júdge¹#

1162 3-295 R ²and hè wôn ³thát cêse¹#¹fór the râilrôad¹#

1163 3-295 R ²and the júdge sàys it dðesn't mâtter to ³yóu ²vèry mùch Mîster Bôwman ³whóse côw is gôred²/³dôes ìt¹#

It seems grotesque to count all this material as one major sentence simply because of the conjunctions, which perhaps function merely as 'don't interrupt' signals. Consequently, the passage has been counted as five major sentences, one per card, as shown. It is connected sequences like

1390 4-122 M ²wéll I ³hâve to bè òn mỳ ²feet¹#²and mỳ ³fêet hâve to bè ²cómfortable¹#

1737 5-76 L ²the tēacher sàys ²bóyz¹#²but thèy're
³búwiyz¹#

that are counted as one major sentence, in spite of the break on /¹#/ before the conjunction.

There is a problem in the treatment of tags like aren't they? don't they? as in the following examples:

2762 7-145 M ²thēy gò to ³sléep²/³dón't thēy³/

2765 7-149 E ³thēy're smārter than ²húmans¹#²áren't thēy³/

and interpolations like the you know in the following example:

1129 3-245 E ²it'd be a lô² ³chéaper³/²jùst to bûy the
³récord¹/¹you ³knów³/²and ³pláy it¹#

which are formally major sentences. They are quite numerous and if included in the count of major sentences would greatly increase their number. One of the important points to result from this study is that major sentences considerably outnumber minor ones, even in this type of discourse. It seems to the writer that this point is more strongly made if the number of major sentences is not augmented by these tags and interpolations, and therefore they have been arbitrarily excluded from the count of major sentences; that is, they are regarded as part of the major sentence with which they occur and are not counted as separate sentences. Of course, they are not included with the minor sentences, either.

There are some minor sentences that are followed by a subject-predicate construction which is phonologically linked to the minor sentence by extension of contour by addition of a monotone morpheme, e. g.:

1100 3-215 R ³Tíme¹#¹I ¹thínk it wàs¹#

192 1-204 M ³dôllar sixty-³níne¹#¹you ¹sáid or sômething
like thât¹#

2392 6-209 M ³hálf²/²I ²guéss²||

3379 8-301 K ²the ³béllows³/³yòu ³méan³||

These could easily be interpreted as major sentences with a reversal of the position of the object or complement, but Hill states, 'In a superfix in which one of the morphemes is a monotone, the monotone morpheme characterizes the dependent sentence.'¹³ For this reason, and because of the position of the elements, it is the writer's pleasure

to consider the major sentence here as dependent on the minor one and to count the whole construction as one minor sentence. This has the advantage of not only characterizing the grammatical situation more accurately, in the opinion of the writer, but it again enhances the evidence in favor of the count of minor sentences in the corpus and makes the preponderance of major sentences more spectacular.

Interjections such as well, my gosh, sure, yeah, etc., are very frequent in the corpus. They often introduce an utterance and are included in the same intonation pattern with it, e. g.:

- 3300 8-188 E ²well ³why do thèy hâve to bè sò nârrôw ²mínded¹#
 3301 8-188 M ²wèll the còngre³gátion wòuldn't knòw the
 difference²/

Very often, introducing an utterance, they occur under a separate intonation pattern, e. g.:

- 3302 8-188 E ³nó¹#³sómetime^{2/2}whên yòu've gòt a còuple
 of ³sóloists^{2/2}Márgé²/xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
 795 2-482 E ³yéah¹#²wèll^{2/2}in ³this ²uh²/³cì²ty in ³Wýlie's
 stòry¹||
 790 2-478 E ²of ³cóurse^{3/2}well it wòuld bè^{2/4}hídeous¹#

Still others are spoken as a response to another person's utterance, their function being that of attention or 'message received' signal, e. g.:

- 753 2-432 E ³ì ²méan it was jùst líttle ³blóbs of stúff²/
 K ³yéah¹#
 3437 8-365 K ³whât was thât ²máde òf¹#²dîdn't ²búrn¹#
 R ³míca¹#
 K ²oh¹#

It seems to the writer that these interjections constitute a separate class of minor sentence, in that they do not consist of morphemes that have much lexical content, their grammatical functions is nil, or nearly so, and thus they add very little to the communication. Even their function as attention signals is very slight, since the speakers can see and are looking at each other. The considerable amount of breath spent in their utterance would seem, however, to indicate that the speakers attach some value to them; maybe they have a lubricating or cushioning effect.

On the other hand, there is a small number of interjections which have a certain amount of content or which further the discourse in some way. Some indicate an emotional attitude of the speaker, e. g.:

3371 8-284 M ²shè's mōre sèlf-suffìcient àròund ³hóme²/
²than ³thése kìds âre¹#
 L ³àll ²rìght²/

Speaker M then resumes. Speaker L is one of these kids.

3313 8-205 M ³òh ²déar¹#yôu knòw I'm òn the ³wágon Dèar²/

Speaker M is on a diet, which involves avoidance of alcohol. This oh dear is her reaction to being offered a drink, as she feels her resistance crumbling.

3355 8-264 M ²yôu knôw²/²whère Mâry ênded ²úp²||²àt the
 pò³líce stàtion¹#²whìch is ³cléar³/²acròss
 the ³ràilròad ²trâcks²/³thrêe ²blócks²/
²strâight a²héad¹#
 3356 8-275 R ³gòod ²gríef¹#

Other interjections are answers to questions, e. g.:

3135 8-16 M ²dìd you ²shóv³el it³/
 R ³súre¹#

In cases like the last four examples, where the interjection has some communication value, and particularly where, as in 3371, 3356 and 3135, it is the only utterance of the speaker at that time, i. e., it is not appended to more material from the same speaker, the interjection has been counted as a minor sentence. Where the interjection simply functions as a colorless attention signal or as a sentence starter, as in the other examples given, it has not been counted. To count all interjections as minor sentences, though the writer wishes to favor their count as far as possible, would, in her view, constitute an unfair overloading of their number.

As stated in II.1, only subject-predicate sentences are counted as major ones. Therefore, such subjectless sentences as

2886 7-265 M ³gò and ²tûrn thàt ¹ôff³ off¹#
 703 2-359 K ²thínk ³sô³/

even though the first type is the common 'imperative,' usually accorded status as a principal sentence type, and the lack of subject in the second is due to ellipsis, are included in the count of minor sentences. There are a few other subjectless sentences, also counted as minor ones, which do not seem to be in either of these two classes. Subjectless sentences are given fuller treatment in IV.2.2.

2.4 Fragment defined and illustrated

As already mentioned, in addition to the major and minor sentences in the corpus, there are utterances which are here called fragments. A fragment is defined as an utterance which is broken off abruptly. Features which distinguish a fragment from a minor sentence are sudden cessation of phonation, often in the middle of a word, and an incomplete intonation and stress pattern. Further, the great majority of minor sentences consist of one or two sentence components — a noun phrase, a prepositional phrase, etc. — and the boundaries of an utterance consisting of a minor sentence will be the boundaries of the sentence component of which it consists, e. g.:

914A 3-59 K ²wōoden ²dúmbbèlls¹#
190 1-204 M ²in thìs quárter¹#

A fragment, however, will very often be broken off in the middle of such a component, e. g.:

1936A 5-242 R ³hé'll dō it for abòut²/
2970 7-340 R ²well ³thát is a²/
3461 8-385 M ²wè just gòt a ³smáttering of it¹#²alòng with
a lìttle ²Shákespêare²||²and a lìttle²/
735 2-410 R ²wéll²/²ì thínk they were ³drúnk¹#²·càuse
thát's the²/

The break-off is often so abrupt that many fragments cannot properly be said to end with a single-bar terminal, although they are so marked in this paper.

The distinction between a minor sentence and a fragment is not always clear. Where there is doubt, the utterance has been counted with the minor sentences.

There is a slight problem as to what fragments should be counted. When the utterance is abruptly broken off, as in the above examples, there is no problem; the utterance or the fragmentary part

of it is counted as a fragment. But the question arises as to whether to call a fragment every little hesitation that occurs in the delivery of a major or minor sentence. If all these were counted, it would make the number of fragments quite high and again, in the view of the writer, unfairly overload the count of fragments.

Following are some of the situations in which fragments are found in connection, mostly, with major sentences, with the writer's decision as to whether the fragments in certain situations should be counted or not.

Many major sentences are preceded by a fragment; the speaker begins a construction, changes his mind, breaks it off, and begins a new construction, which is generally carried to completion, e. g.:

- 2044 5-353 M ²wéll uh thōse^{2/2}thōse^{2/2}that mîmeographed
³shéet îs^{2/}
- 2697 7-71 P ³whêre's mỳ^{3/3}are yòu rêading mỳ
²pámph³let^{3/}
- 1000 3-125 L ³Móm^{2/2}do yòu ²knów whât a^{1/}³Pêggy didn't
knów when a fîsh was a ³fîsh^{1/}
- 2162 6-24 K ²Márgē^{3/2}sâid she'd lîke to hâve ³gótten a^{2/}
²whât's the lîttle òne we sâw to³dây^{1/}
- 3084 7-478 K ²hòw ³smáll you lôok Pêggy compâred to^{2/}
⁴hê's a grêat ³bíg brûiser^{1/}
- 3253 8-120 K ²it's ³ôn.the wâý to^{2/2}when wê tûrn êast on
³séventy^{2/2}we gò pâst the rôad that gðes to
³this plâce^{1/}
- 2960 7-331 R ³thât's^{3/2}the ³cólor in thât's^{2/3}éxcellent^{1/}
³isn't it^{1/}
- 336 1-392 E ²well Î dòn't ²thínk that^{2/2}the ³fáct îs^{1/}|| ³wére
thêre^{2/2}or ⁴wéren't thêre^{1/}

The more lengthy of these 'false starts' have been counted among the fragments, but the shorter ones have seemed so insignificant that they have not been counted, either as fragments or as minor sentences.

A speaker will often begin a sentence and then stop it abruptly but, instead of starting a new construction, will repeat some of the last of the utterance and then continue, e. g.:

- 296 1-343 E ³Î dòn't wânt a rêcord of whât hê's ²lêarned^{1/}
²whât ³hê's lêarned^{1/}||²às a sêcond ³lânguage^{1/}||
²I wânt a rêcord of whât ³wé've lêarned^{2/2}as
a ³fîrst lânguage^{1/}

1291 4-6 K ³I hàvè lûnch wìth a ³dôctor^{2/2}I don't knôw
 what kînd of a dôctor he ²ís^{1#} ²at Hèn³ríci's^{1#}

It would be a needless complication to count as a fragment and a minor sentence or as two minor sentences the two parts of a major sentence which is broken in one of the above ways. Consequently, the two parts are counted as one major sentence, as if, in the last example, e. g., the speaker had said:

³I hàvè lûnch wìth a ³dôctor^{2/2}at Hèn³ríci's^{1#}

The interpolation

²I don't knôw what kînd of a dôctor he ²ís^{1#}

is counted as another major sentence. Where a sentence is broken off and then resumed after a correction, there being no interpolation, the utterance is counted as one major sentence, and the fragment is not counted, as if on card 1280, e. g., the speaker had said:

²sôme òf them dòn't âspiràte inìtial vôi celess ²cónsonants^{2||}

Many major sentences have a conjunction trailing after them which concludes the utterance, e. g.:

2412 6-229 E ²and if I'd hâd the ³Brílliant^{3/3}gée^{3/2} Ì còuld
 have gòtten sòme ³réal nîce shòts and^{1/}
 3467 8-392 P ³èverybòdy hàd to rêad Tâle of Twò ²Cíties^{2||}
¹and^{1/}
 2691 7-65 E ²wèll if thèy're ³cróoked^{2/2}yòu knôw thèy
²néed it^{2||} ²or^{3/}
 2553 6-440 M ²wèll âre thèy gôing òn Assÿrian bûs^{2/}
³búsiness^{3/2}òr^{2/}
 3425 8-349 M ²yòu can tàke ²spéech^{2||} ²drâma and ³stágecràft^{1#}
²or^{2/}
 618 2-242 R ²he ³sìts ²dòwn and ùh^{2/}
 51 1-70 E ⁴súre^{2/2}it isn't the sâme as what thèy hêar
 fròm ⁴ús^{3/2}sð^{2/}

The major sentences have been included in the count of major sentences, but the conjunction has been counted as a fragment.

Notes

1. A. Meillet, Introduction à l'Étude Comparative des Langues Indo-Européennes (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1922), p. 355.

2. Loc. cit.

3. Loc. cit.

4. Op. cit., p. 372.

5. Op. cit., p. 336.

6. Ibid., p. 356.

7. Ibid., p. 256.

8. Loc. cit.

9. Op. cit., pp. 256ff.

10. Ibid., p. 257.

11. Ibid., p. 258.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., p. 355.

III. COUNT OF SENTENCES AND TYPES OF SENTENCE IN THE CORPUS

A count of the sentences and fragments in the corpus shows that there is a total of 4,245 sentences and fragments. Of these 1,258 have been counted as minor sentences and 157 as fragments. The number of minor sentences and fragments, therefore, totaling 1,415, constitutes exactly one-third of all the sentences in the corpus. If a generalization may be made from this body of material, it can be stated that while minor sentences constitute a significant proportion of the sentences in informal conversation and no doubt play a very important role in it, the major sentence is still the preponderant type, outnumbering the minor sentence — and the fragment — two to one.

As stated on p. 18, subjectless sentences, that is, the imperatives, also those which have no subjects due to ellipsis, and a few others to be discussed later, have been counted as minor sentences. There are 328 subjectless sentences, 140 of them imperatives. If these subjectless sentences were counted as major ones, the number of major sentences would be 3,158, as against 1,087 minor sentences and fragments. The major sentences then would constitute virtually 75 per cent of the total number of sentences in the corpus.

Of the minor sentences in the corpus, not excluding the subjectless sentences, which constitute 27 per cent of the total number of minor sentences, nearly half, or about 46 per cent, consist solely of nouns or nominal phrases. The next largest category, after the subjectless sentence, is the subordinate clause, a subject-predicate construction beginning with a subordinating pronoun or conjunction. These constitute about 10 per cent of the number of minor sentences. Prepositional phrases account for about 6 per cent, phrases with adjective head for about 4 per cent, and phrases with adverb head for about 3 per cent. The remaining 4 per cent consist of miscellaneous items, such as utterances consisting of interrogatives, e. g.: Where? Why? Why not? etc., and exclamations, e. g., Sure! Well! Gosh! when these are counted at all.

IV. CLASSIFICATION OF MINOR SENTENCES

The next matter of interest will be to classify the minor sentences and, in so doing, to discover the various kinds of their *raison d'être*, that is, to find what advantage the minor sentence affords the speakers. As we have seen, they are quite adept at forming major sentences. Why do they use minor sentences at all? How are minor sentences useful in this type of discourse?

Examining minor sentences in relation to the total discourse, one finds that they fall into two broad groups. The sentences in the first of these groups have a close connection with an adjacent — usually a preceding — major sentence; in fact, considered without the adjacent major sentence, they lose most of their significance. Such sentences will be called dependent minor sentences. The sentences in the second group have a looser connection with the adjacent major sentences, in that they do not depend on them for their significance; that is, they derive no more significance from the adjacent major sentences than any sentence does from its context. These sentences will be called independent minor sentences.

1. Dependent Minor Sentences

A little over half of the minor sentences are dependent, but if the subjectless sentences were counted as major rather than as minor sentences, the proportion of dependent minor sentences to the independent ones — all but a very few of the subjectless sentences having been classified as independent — would be nearly three to one.

Not all of these sentences are dependent upon an immediately preceding major sentence. Some of them are immediately dependent on an adjacent minor sentence which is, in turn, dependent on a major one, e. g.:

2722 7-111 M ²is she ³háp¹y# ²she wôn't even ⁴s²p²ák ²to
³mé²/
 2723 7-111 K ²whó¹#
 P ³Bóots¹#

- M ³Bóots¹#
 K ³húh³/
 2724 7-112 M ³Bóots¹#
 2747 7-133 K ²she ònly hàs ³óne gîrl¹#dón't ²she²/
 2748 7-134 P ²twó¹#
 M ²twó¹#
 2749 7-134 R ²twó²/²twó¹#²twô ²páir¹#
 2750 7-134 M ³twô ²bóys²||²and twô ³gírls¹#
 2832 7-212 R ³hōw mūch does a bāttery ³cóst²/²Kén²/
 2833 7-212 K ²thîrty-five ²dóllars³||
 2834 7-213 R ⁴thîr²ty-³fîve ³dóllars²/
 3297 8-186 M ²thāt's the wōrst ³párt of ìt¹#²trýing to sêparâte
 the ³wórds¹#
 3298 8-187 P ²sêparâte ³whát wōrds¹#
 3299 8-188 M ²the ³wórds to thîs thîng¹#

1.1 Class A

The minor sentences in this class could be expanded to major ones simply by repeating material from the preceding sentence, a procedure which would not change their function in the discourse. Under these circumstances, the fact that a sentence is in a minor form would have two principal advantages. The first is simple economy: the avoidance of repetition of work that has already been done. The second advantage is probably the most important: the avoidance of the monotony that would ensue from repetition. The avoidance of monotony would have two results, the first simply esthetic, and the second the more practical one of helping the speaker to hold his place in the conversational sun. The speakers here treat each other courteously and do not often flagrantly break in on one another, but one may imagine that a person hearing again what had just been uttered might not be able to overcome a temptation to interrupt.

The minor sentences which could be expanded to major ones by using material just uttered in a major sentence are called class A. This is the largest class of dependent minor sentences, comprising about 47 per cent of them.

In over half of the cases in class A, the material from the preceding major sentence could be repeated verbatim, e. g.: (both sentences are given in the citations which follow)

- 3519 8-474 M ²you mûst have²/²for³góttén²/², cause ì knōw
 they ³díd¹#

E ²mây³bé³/ (they did could be repeated after the minor sentence)

710 2-366 R ²wêll it was jùst ³múrder¹#

711 2-366 K ³cárelessness¹/¹thàt's áll¹# (it was could be repeated at the beginning of the minor sentence)

In the remaining cases the material from the preceding sentence that could be repeated would have to be changed as to grammatical form.

Sometimes there would have to be a change in the form of the verb, e. g.:

953 3-83 L ²whât does he ³bréathe wìth¹#

954 3-83 R ⁴lúngs¹# (breathe would have to be changed to breathes to make he breathes with lungs)

A change in the form of the noun would be necessary here.

2747 7-133 K ²shê ònly hàs ³óne gírl¹/²dón't ²she²/

2748 7-134 P ³twó¹# (girl would have to be changed to girls to make she has two girls)

Often a change in pronoun would be necessary, e. g.:

2463 6-318 M ²yôu don't hàve to ³gó òn àny sîde strèets¹#

2464 6-320 R ²hâlf a blòck on ²Grâce Strèet²/ (you would have to be changed to I, to make I have to go half a block on Grace Street)

When the major sentence is a question and the minor one the answer to it, a change in word order would often be required, e. g.:

499 2-102 M ³thèy've ²gôt it at ²áll²/²the êntrances of the ³cíty nôw²||³whât ²is it¹#

500 2-104 K ³spéed¹#²râdàr ²tímed¹# (This could be preceded by it is, a reversal of is it in the preceding sentence)

In a very few cases a contraction would have to be changed to a full form, e. g.:

563 2-160 K ³whd's wâtching ²télevìsion¹# ²ánybòdy²/ (this could be expanded to is anybody watching television? using the full form is)

In about twenty cases, more material in addition to that from the preceding sentence would have to be supplied, a form of do or be, or an article or a preposition, e. g.:

- 2911 7-286 E ²whêre was ³thát tâken¹#
 2912 7-287 K ³Hélen's hôuse¹# (at would have to be supplied to make that was taken at Helen's house)
 1106 3-218 K ²whô ³pláys it^{2/1}Péggy¹||²Présley^{3/3}húh^{3/} (does would have to be supplied to make does Presley play it?)
 1287 4-4 M ²hâving anôther fíght abòut relígon wíth her ³síster¹#
 1288 4-4 M ²âll they ²tálk abòut whên^{1/2}they gèt to¹gêther¹# (is would have to be supplied to make religion is all they talk about)

In about twenty cases the minor sentence is negative, while the preceding sentence is positive, or vice versa, which would necessitate various changes, e. g.:

- 2413 6-230 R ³wéll^{3/2}you ³díd gêt some gôod ònes¹#
 2414 6-232 E ²wéll nôthing yòu còuld blòw ³úp^{3/1}líke the ònes in ³Égypt¹# (several changes would have to be made to give I didn't get anything, etc.)

In a very few cases lexical items in the major sentence preceding the minor one would have to be changed, e. g.:

- 1073 3-190 R ²the ³mónôxide will gèt you^{2/3}vêry ²súddenly¹#
 1074 3-191 R ²and the ³díôxide^{2/2}a líttle ²lóngér¹# (will take could be inserted after dioxide, but not will get or will get you)

Of course, in many cases more than one of these changes would have to be made in the material from the preceding major sentence, e. g.:

- 1962 5-269 M ²whât are you ³sáying¹#
 1963 5-269 L ³dóg¹# (I am saying 'dog' would require change in word order, form of verb, and form of pronoun)

The minor sentences in class A seem to have been uttered for the following purposes:

With the intention of correcting an item in the preceding sentence, e. g.:

- 1829 5-136 M ³Chrýsler is the stôck to bûy¹#
 1830 5-136 K ³nó¹#²Amêrican ³Mótors¹#
 2486 6-362 R ²is ³Kíldàre the nêxt òne to ²Kêeler²||
 2487 6-363 E ³nó¹#³Tripp¹#
 1841 5-150 K ²mêrged with ²Páckard¹#¹díd'n't thèy²||
 1842 5-150 M ²Hú²/¹sòn¹#

Correction accounts for about 18 per cent of the minor sentences in class A.

With the intention of stating in a different way an item in the preceding sentence. It may be a lexical item, usually, but not always, a noun, that is restated by another noun, a pronoun by a noun, a relative conjunction restated by a subordinate clause, or an item restated by an interrogative, e. g.:

- 1486 4-207 E ²shè's uh²/²allêrgic to ³éverythìng¹#²hrí²/
 1487 4-207 M ³hóuse dùst²/ (restates everything)
 1182 3-341 R ²sáfest wáy ìs²/¹nêver ¹spéak¹#
 1183 3-342 E ³nêver sày ³núttin¹# (restates never speak)
 976 3-98 R ²ànd thèy hàve à uh²/³blóod supplý¹||²thàt is abòut
 thrêe or fôur ³tímes²/²as mûch as thèy ³néed¹#
 K ²ôh²/
 977 3-100 R ²a ³húge a²môunt of ³êxtra ³blóod¹# (restates
a blood supply that is about three or four
times as much as they need)
 636 2-266 M ²wèll ³yôu ²knôw ³whý²/²they dôn't²/³méntion
 it¹#
 637 2-267 R ²becâuse hè²/³êgged ²the Jàpa³nése³/³ínto
 at⁴tácking us¹# (restates why)
 1518 4-243 R ²wèll thât ³hórse that you kêep in the bâsement²/
²thât wôuld mâke ³ánybôdy allêrgic¹#
 1520 4-243 M ²the ²whát²|| (restates that horse)
 1823 5-132 K ²they sày it's a gôod in³véstment rìght nów¹#
²Amêrican ³Mótors at sêven and a hâlf²||
 (restates it)

Nearly 50 per cent of the sentences in class A perform the function of restatement.

The remaining 35 per cent of the sentences in class A restate something in the preceding sentence, but they give more information about it, or add to it. Their function is one of supplementation, e.g.:

- 1435 4-158 R ²and ùh^{2/3} ònce ²yòu hàvè^{2/2} ²rèally^{2/2} ²ùnder² stóod¹ #
²the ³détails² || ²of the ³sólar sýstem¹ # ²whènévèr
 anybòdy ²télls yòu^{2/2} ²ánything abòut the ²ínflu-
 ence^{2/2} of the ²plánets² ||
- 1436 4-159 M ²the ²móon's^{2/2} ²gòing òvèr U³ ránus^{3/2} or
²sómethìng² ||
- 1435 4-159 R ²the ònfliúence of Dèlla ²Stélla^{2/2} ²yòu'll júst² /
²álmòst ²búst láughing¹ # (the two minor
 sentences, M's utterance and the influence
of Della Stella, restate and supplement the
influence of the planets)
- 57 1-76 M ³wéll^{2/2} but the thìng ⁴í sàw² || ²was ³únder^{3/2} a
⁴ráilròad tràck¹ # ²còuple of ³hóbòes¹ # (the
 minor sentence couple of hoboos supplements
under a railroad track)
- 3250 8-116 K ²yèah it's júst twò mìles fròm òur ⁴cóttage¹ #
- 3251 8-117 R ²m̃ ³h̃m̃^{3/3} rìght at the ènd of fòrty-²five¹ #
- 3260 8-129 R ³èverybòdy líkes a ²pícnic¹ #
- 3261 8-129 K ²but ²Grámpa¹ # (supplements everybody)

Many answers to questions beginning with who, what, when, etc., are included here, since the minor sentence restates the interrogative and adds supplementary information to the major sentence, e.g.:

- 2075 5-421 R ²whèreabòuts ²ís it¹ # ²òn ³Démpster yòu sây^{3/}
- 2076 5-421 K ²just èast of the ³hìgh schòol¹ #
- 2832 7-212 M ³hòw mùch dòes a bàttery ³cóst^{2/2} Kén^{2/}
- 2833 7-212 K ²thîrty-five ²dóllars² ||
- 316 1-369 M ²whère dòes shè ³líve¹ #
- 317 1-369 E ³nêar the ùni²vèrsity² ||

Answers to simple questions also often fall in this category, the function being purely one of supplementation, e.g.:

- 511 2-115 K ²dò yòu ³rèad Gàsoline Álley in the ²cómics² ||
- 512 2-115 R ²sómètìmes^{2/}

- 2634 7-13 K ²but wôn't ìt²/¹ûh¹/²de²gên³eràt³/
 2635 7-14 R ²nô¹#³ûh ûh²/²nòt in ³thát tîme¹#
 1814 5-125 R ²dò you tâke ²báths²||
 1815 5-125 M ³nów¹/¹and ³thén¹#
 2390 6-205 K ¹wàs it ²yóurs³/
 2391 6-207 M ²mîne and ²Rúth's²/

The line between supplementation and restatement is not always clear, so that some examples have been arbitrarily included in one category or the other.

1.2 Class B

Of the minor sentences dependent on a preceding major one, about 26 per cent are or contain a repetition of an item in the major sentence. These minor sentences, like the ones in class A, could be made major ones by repetition of more material from the preceding major sentence, but in that case the second utterance would be, for the most part, merely a verbatim repetition of the first. To repeat only part of the preceding material, and therefore to utter a minor sentence, has the function of extracting part of the preceding utterance from its surroundings and holding it up naked, so to speak, for inspection. This is apparently the *raison d'être* of the class B minor sentences.

The minor sentences in this class fall into two categories:

The minor sentence consists entirely of the repetition, or, if there is other material in the minor sentence, this is separated from the repetition by a terminal juncture, e. g.:

- 24 1-25 R ²thèy're ³ignorant²/²ìn ³English²/
 25 1-25 E ²ìn ⁴English¹#³yés²/²yés¹#

Two-thirds of the sentences in class B are of this type.

The minor sentence has other material besides the repetition, from which it is not separated by any kind of terminal juncture, e. g.:

- 1203 3-371 E ²he ⁴réally gèts the ³féel òf²/²òf thîs just
³slíghtly sùbstándard ²Énglish¹#
 1207 3-375 M ²hàrdly ³slíghtly²/²it's ³prétty¹#

The additional material, as in the above example, usually modifies the item repeated from the major sentence. In a few cases the new material is interrogative, e. g.:

- 2802 7-183 R ³you've gòt a nêw ³báttery^{1#} ³if^{3/2} your
³tróuble wàs^{2/2} nòthing but ³súlphàting^{1#}
 2803 7-185 K ¹was ²whát^{2/}
 3297 8-186 M ²thàt's the wòrst ³párt of ìt^{1#} ²tryìng to
 sêparàte the ³wórds^{1#}
 3298 8-187 P ²sêparàte ³whát wòrds^{1#}

In a very few cases, the additional material is of such minor importance as to be almost negligible — an article, an exclamation, or a conjunction tying the repetition to material across the single bar, e. g.:

- 2574 6-477 K ²pic³cólo's^{2/2} the ³náme òf ìt^{1||}
 2575 6-477 E ²a ³píccòld^{1#}
 1628 4-440 E ²sêe thàt ²túrkey's fùll of ²bónes^{1#}
 1629 4-440 K ²and ³féet^{1#}
 1631 4-442 R ²the ³bíll^{3/2} and the ³féet^{1#}

This class of minor sentence has several functions, as follows:

Where important material is added to the repetition, the repetition evidently has been made for the purpose of expressing this new material, that is, the repetition is something on which to hang the new material and give it a context, e. g.:

- 2767 7-150 R ²they've gòt ⁴fûr ³cóats^{1#} ³tóo^{1#}
 2769 7-152 E ²yèah thèse ³buílt-ín fûr ²cóats^{1#}
 1019 3-139 K ²whát do the ³gílls dò^{1#} ³stráin the^{2/3} ³ôxygen
²òut of the ³wáter^{3/}
 1021 3-141 R ²nót thè ùh^{1/2} ²â ² ³ôxygen^{1#}

Where no new material, or no important new material, is added, the repetitions have evidently been made, that is, the expressions have been pulled out of the preceding sentence and held up for the following purposes:

Simply to single out the expression and direct attention to it, e. g.:

- 34 1-41 R ³gée^{3/2} there were a ²búñch^{2/2} of ²Súnday^{2/}
²drívèrs^{2/2} óut^{2/2} this ²áfter^{2/2} nón^{2/}
 35 1-41 M ³oh ²wéll^{2/2} Súnday ²drívèrs^{2||}

In a couple of cases, the item is announced as the subject of further discourse, e. g.:

- 3469 8-392 E ²I rêad a Tâle of Twò Cíties bỳ my³sélf¹#
 3470 8-395 R ²A ³Tâle of Twò ²Cíties¹#³díd'n't Sídneý
 Cârtón gèt his ²héad chòpped ôff vèry nòbly¹#
 709 2-364 R ²it's ³júst lìke the Ti²tánic¹#²àll ²óver
 agâin¹#
 710 2-366 R ²nòw the Ti²tánic²/²wèll it was just ³múrder¹#

There are about ten examples of singling an item out for contemplation or as the subject of further discourse.

For the purpose of affirming what the preceding speaker has said, e. g.:

- 1013 3-135 R ¹thèy're còld ²blóoded¹#
 1014 3-135 M ²còld ³blóoded¹#
 1957 5-267 L ³pérro¹#
 1958 5-268 E ³thát's ríght¹#³pérro¹#

Some of these are answers to questions, e. g.:

- 3463 8-388 M ²you hàd Sîlas ²Márner²||²in yòur sêcond
 ²yéar²||
 3464 8-389 E ²yéah²/²Sîlas ²Márner¹#
 926 3-67 R ²whât in hêaven's nàme is gênerál ²scîence¹#
 927 3-67 L ³scîence¹#
 2057 5-387 K ²was my ³shrîne pîn òn thât³/
 2058 5-388 M ³wás²/²yèah¹#²nòt ³nów¹#

In a few cases the repetition is made by request:

- 568 2-168 E ²well ³yôu wèren't ⁴hére for the²/³bâre ²rûg
 ⁴jítterbùg²/²Mârgè²/
 569 2-168 M ²I've sêen e³nóugh³/²of ³thát²/
 570 2-169 K ²the ³whát³/
 571 2-169 E ²the ³bâre rûg ³jítter³/⁴jítterbùg¹#

About 26 per cent of the sentences in class B are for the purpose of affirmation.

There are seven pronunciation corrections, which, of course, are not exact repetitions, but they are repetitions of the same item as uttered previously, e. g.:

- 3147 8-24 K ²and I gôt a ³téléphòne câll ²from Mr.
³Néwman²/²wânted to ³sée mè²/
 3148 8-25 M ³Néhman¹#
 1732 5-73 L ²hòw do flòating bûwiyz ³hélp them¹#
 1733 5-74 R ²bóyz¹#

In about 20 per cent of the sentences in class B, the speaker registers an emotional reaction to an item by repeating it with a particular 'tone of voice,' among the most prominent components of which is the intonation. Surprise is registered, e.g.:

- 256 1-304 E ³I ²thóught²/²you ²sáid²/²you could ²dó it²/
²with sîx ⁴ínches²/²of ³tápe¹#
 257 1-306 E ³sîx ⁴ínches²/
 1050 3-163 R ²and if you lóok ìnto your ²òwn thròat²||²you
 can sêe the ârches whère ònce ³yóu had
 gílls like thàt¹#
 1051 3-166 L ³gílls²/

A few repetitions are made for emphasis, e.g.:

- 1134 3-249 M ²you get ³fíftèn mînutes of com²mércials²/
²and, fíve mînutes of ²récords¹#²Fíftèn
 mînutes of com²mércials²/²and fíve mînutes
 of ²récords¹#

There is an element of irony in some of the repetitions, e.g.:

- 3506A 8-454 E ²I tóok ⁴bótany²/³ónly¹#
 3507 8-454 M ²ôh²/²bótany¹#²thêy don't èven ⁴hâve bótany¹/
¹in thîs ¹óutfit¹#
 2111 5-480 M ²she sâid you mēan you wânt a fâncy ²wrâp²||
 2112 5-480 M ²and Î sâid ³yés¹#
 2113 5-480 M ²wéll²|| ³fâncy ²wrâp¹#

In a few cases something like contempt and scorn is registered, e.g.:

- 2659 7-43 E ²whât do thèy ³dó¹#²jùst lîve in the ²dórmítôry²||
 2660 7-43 M ²dórmítôry²/²thèy're in an a³pártment¹#
 1203 3-371 E ²he ⁴réally ²gèts the ³féel òf²/²òf thîs jùst
³síghtly sùbstândard ²Énglish¹# (More

conversation, plus reading from the author in question, the English being spectacularly substandard)

1221 3-403 M ³jùst ²slightly sūbstāndard¹#

1.3 Class C

In this class are minor sentences or fragments which are brought to completion as major sentences by material following uttered by a second speaker, or by the same speaker after an interruption or interpolation under the circumstances described at the beginning of the second paragraph of II.2.3. An example of the first speaker's completion of his own sentence is given at the bottom of p. 26. Examples of completion by a second speaker are:

3588 8-580 E ³nɔ¹#²it ³isn't abôut pēople²||²it's abôut ùh²/

3589 8-580 M ²pe³cùl²arities²/²of ³pēop²le's ³spēech¹#

1745 5-80 L ²in the bāck of the ³bóok it²/

1746 5-80 M ²sāys ²búwiyz¹#

3388 8-315 R ³yēah²/²it wīnds arôund à uh²/

3389 8-315 M ³spíndle¹#

Only a very small proportion, about 5 per cent, of the minor sentences and fragments which are dependent upon a major sentence (here they constitute part of it) are in class C.

1.4 Class D

In this class, the minor sentence forms the last part of a major sentence begun in the preceding utterance.

In 29 cases, where the previous utterance is not a major sentence, the following minor sentence makes it so. Examples are the final parts on cards 1640 and 3380 on p. 27 and of the last three examples above.

More often the previous utterance is a major sentence, and the following minor one fits right on to the end of it, extending it, e.g., card 3526 on p. 26. Sometimes the addition to the sentence is offered provisionally, on rising intonation, e.g., card 3488 on p. 26.

However, in one or two cases, the addition makes of a preceding major sentence a minor one, e.g.:

2153 6-15 K ²Ī dòn't ²knów of āny²/²do ³yóu³/
R ³nɔ¹#

2154 6-15 K ²unlēs thàt ³smáll²/²uh ³Rámbler²/

1.5 Class E

For about 6 per cent of the dependent minor sentences, those in class E, the connection is with the following, rather than the preceding, major sentence.

Twelve of the minor sentences in this class are nominal phrases which are incorporated into the following major sentence by being repeated therein, either verbatim or by reference by means of a pronoun, e. g.:

- 1678 5-19 R ³Côourage ²Côve¹#²whêre's Côourage ²Côve¹#
 1158 3-288 R ¹an ôld ²côw wôrth abôut¹/¹a ²dôllar and a
²hâlf³/²he gôt a hûndred ³dôllars fôr it¹#

Twenty are minor sentences or fragments evidently intended as the beginnings of sentences. They are repeated and ultimately completed as major sentences after an interruption, e. g.:

- 427 2-42 E ²when the ³lîght flâshes²||²thên²/
 428 2-42 R ²thêre's a ³búttôn on the¹/²frônt²/²mâybe
 if you pûsh ³thât³/
 429 2-43 E ²when the ³lîght flâshes²||²thên you're
 re³côrding¹#

In ten cases the minor sentence or fragment is not repeated verbatim at the beginning of the major sentence, as it was in the last example, but is represented by a substitute such as a pronoun, e. g.:

- 1335 4-47 M ²wéll²/²the ônly thing ³Í knôw abôut²/²thât²/
²is that ³Véesper ùsed to sây²/²and ²Véesper
 was a fanâtic²/²a grèat²/
 K xxxxxxxxxxxxxx
 1336 4-49 M ³shé ùsed to sây²/²thât²/²or at lêast she
 sàid ³xxxxxxx¹#

In some of these latter cases there is no interruption; the speaker simply repeats himself by giving a pronoun for part of the minor sentence or fragment, as in the first example below, or a noun instead of a pronoun which is in the minor sentence or fragment, as in the second example:

- 273 1-320 R ³réading wôuld bè²/²thât wôuld bè²/²lîke
²spéech²||
 2325 6-144 M ²they wêre²||²the bôlts wêre ùpsîde ³dôwn òn
 the wrông²/²sîde⁴/²or ³sômethîng²/²

The *raison d'être* of the minor sentence form of these last three classes of dependent minor sentences is quite different from that of the first two classes. The utterances in classes A and B were deliberately in minor sentence form; they were intended as minor sentences by their speakers. In contrast, those in class C were intended as the beginnings of major sentences, and they eventually do arrive at this condition. Many of those in class D are for the purpose of making those in class C major sentences or of adding to sentences already in major form. The utterances in class E are either for the purpose of introducing a major sentence, into which they are later incorporated, or they were intended, like those of class C, as the beginnings of major sentences. What happens to the sentences and fragments in classes C and E, and the fact that those in class D occur, is an indication that the impulse to form major sentences must be quite strong, even in casual discourse like this.

2. Independent Minor Sentences and Fragments

The minor sentences and fragments which have no connection with or dependence upon a major sentence are of the following types.

2.1 Sentences abandoned before completion

Sentences which are simply abandoned by the speaker before conclusion are all counted as fragments and have already been described under II.2.4, beginning on p. 32. As stated in III, on p. 37, 157 utterances have been counted as fragments. This is 11 per cent of the total number of minor sentences and fragments. To recapitulate what was said in II.2.4, and to give further examples, there are three main classes of fragments:

Those which are a false start, after which the speaker begins a new sentence, e.g.:

- 336 1-392 E ²well ¹î dôn't thînk that^{2/2}the ³fáct is¹||³wére
thère^{2/2}or ⁴wéren't thère¹#
- 697 2-353 E ³ôur ²grêat cîvil de³fénse whîch ùh^{2/2}our
³ôny ²defénse is to gêt òut of Chi³cágo¹#
²as ³fâst ²as wè ³cán¹#

Those which result when a sentence is broken off and never resumed. The speaker is either interrupted or merely quits, e.g.:

- 44 1-54 M ³thèy ²cân't put into a¹/
 53 1-71 E ⁴wéll²/²don't ³yóu³/²gêť a kînd of a²/
 204 1-220 R ²well ³hōw ²will it ³bóther you if thèy²/²if
 yòu just fill ²óut²/

Those which result when the speaker has uttered a major sentence and then utters a conjunction or a subordinator, e. g.:

- 717 2-373 R ²and ⁴one ²of thōse dîdn't hàve àny bi³nóculars¹#
²ánd ùh²/
 117 1-135 M ³shé'll nèver hēar àbòut it²||²or²/³ánythîng¹#
¹but¹/
 993 3-118 E ³nó²/³î can plây it at ²schóol³/²òr ùh²/
 3318 8-215 M ²tâke thàt ùh²/²Gêrman in yòur thîrd ³year¹#
²instêad of²/
 2420 6-237 K ²but ³î'm gònna ²wátch¹#²if it's rêal ³cóld²/
²the ³shútter spèed gòes wày dōwn¹#¹becâuse
 ùh¹/

Fragments which are not ultimately brought to completion as major sentences constitute 28 per cent of the independent minor sentences and fragments.

2.2 Subjectless sentences

As already mentioned, there is in the corpus a considerable number of sentences which have a verb focus but nothing that can be analyzed as the subject of the verb. These constitute 43 per cent of the independent minor sentences.

2.21 Imperative sentences

A little over a third of these sentences function as commands, imperatives, or requests, e. g.:

- 1368 4-87 R ²dôn't tâlk to âny of the hîgher-²úps¹#
 1802 5-118 M ³pût thēm ²báck¹#
 1701 5-36 L ²wáit a mînute¹#

2.22 Elliptical sentences

Nearly half of the subjectless sentences are in this form because a process of ellipsis of the first one or two weak or tertiary-stressed syllables has evidently taken away the subject, as well as, in many cases, other material.

It may be of interest to examine all the sentences which seem to have undergone ellipsis of this kind in order to discover what the grammatical elements are which may be thus removed. Following is a list of such elements, with examples. The item believed to have been 'lost' due to ellipsis is indicated in parentheses following the example.

An article, definite or indefinite:

- 3265 8-134 R ³têmpêrâtûrê's thîrty-²fôur¹# (the)
 1730 5-70 K ²a³lârm gôes ôff¹# (the)
 2017 5-313 K ²fêllow I ²knôw²/²câme ²báck³/ (a)
 1997 5-293 M ³nô²/²î't's ²úp thêrê²/³shôrt ône¹# (the)

In the entire corpus there are only 28 instances of the omission of an article.

A possessive adjective:

- 456 2-67 K ²house is ¹pàinted ³tôo³/ (their)

This is the only instance of the omission of a possessive adjective.

A conjunction:

- 3023 7-391 K ³yôu ²gúys go ³dôwnhîll with a²/²with a
³sléd ²or to³bôggan²/²for ³Gôd's sâkes
 mîss thât ³bénch¹# (if)
 943 3-79 L ²fâr as ³Í knòw hê's a ²mâmmal²|| (as)
 1075 3-193 K ²wânt to dò it ³quíck³/²stârt with a còld
³éngine¹# (if you)

These are the only cases in which there seems to have been omission of a conjunction.

A preposition:

- 238 1-275 M ²côurse the stûff thât ³hé dôes²/²is rêally
³cômplicàted¹# (of)
 2424 6-241 K ²wèll²/²there's ³sômethîng în thêrê²/²thât
 thêy ³sáy yôu²/²gôtta ³wáthch³/²or your
³shúttér ²spêed will be âlmost ⁴stôpped¹#
³réal còld wêather¹# (in)

There are three more instances of the omission of the of in of course. These and the examples above are the only instances of the omission of a preposition.

A verb or verbal auxiliary:

- 1883 5-181 M ²you gôt a re²táiner fêe²|| (have)
 1652 4-475 R ²yôu a ²búnny²|| (are)
 1111 3-223 K ²âll your ³hómewòrk dône Bútch³/ (is)
 2046 5-356 R ²shê thàt ²bíg²/²a ³fóol³/ (is)
 533 2-129 K ²péople living ìn them²|| (were)
 989 3-115 L ²yôu gònna plây it whîle wè're ²hêre²|| (are)
 2713 7-100 M ²ânybòdy wànt to bûy a ³tícket to the Shrîne
 cîrcus²|| (does)
 2339 6-159 P ²shê gò to ³béd³/²al² réa⁴dy⁴/ (did)

There are only ten of these. All of them are questions with rising intonation. The only main verb omitted is a present tense form of be, specifically is and are. There are only four unequivocal instances of the omission of a main verb.

There, alone or with a form of be, sometimes with an article:

- 2759 7-145 R ²ôught to bè a lôf of ³déer arôund thêre¹#
 (there)
 2423 6-241 R ²shôuldn't ³bé àny ôil²/ (there)
 1024 3-145 K ²no ôxygen ³thêre¹# (there is)
 1088 3-203 K ²tôo màny ³pêople in ône ²rôom¹# (there
were)
 1779 5-103 R ²môre¹/³fîsh¹# (there are)
 2845 7-225 K ²nó²|| ³bîg ²dífference¹# (there is a)
 2358 6-178 K ³twô ôf 'em brôken dôwn²stáirs¹# (there are)
 920 3-63 E ³âny ²cóm³mènts³/ (are there)

The subject of the sentence:

- 82 1-100 M ²côuldn't kêep him a³rôund àny môre¹# (they)
 382 1-464 R ²càn't kêep the twô ²línes²/²of thought
²séparate¹# (I)
 422 2-38 K ²sày you ³âre gòing ⁴ôff the wàgon²/ (you)
 690 2-347 K ²depènds on whêre the ³bómb lânds²/²I
 sup²póse²|| (it)

- 1317 4-26 R ³climbed ²úp^{2/2}ôn a ²híll^{2/3}àll drêssed in
whíte ²níghtgòwns^{2/} (they)
- 1512 4-236 L ²hâve to gèt rîd of àll ³our stúffed ²ánnimals^{1#}
(we)

There are 83 instances of the omission of the subject alone from the sentence.

The subject and an auxiliary verb:

- 1113 3-224 K ²shòw grâmpa yòur ²páintings^{2||} (did you)
- 1287 4-4 M ²hâving anòther fight about religiôn with
her ³síster^{1#} (she is)
- 1304 4-16 K ²gòt a fêw mòre ²úp thêre^{1#} (they have)
- 1333 4-45 K ²been in dêep frêeze for an ³hóur^{2/} (it has)
- 1509 4-235 L ²gòt to gèt rîd of ³àll our stúffed ²ánnimals^{||}
(we have)
- 1577 4-335 K ²wânt some ²hélp^{2||} (do you)
- 1020 3-139 K ³stráin the^{2/3}ôxygen òut of the ³wáter^{3/}
(do they)
- 2725 7-113 M ²so dis²gústed with her^{2/} (I was)
- 2059 5-388 K ²be bâck by ³Súnday^{3/2}or ³Sáturday^{3/} (will it)
- 478 2-89 K ³squêezed for ³rént^{1#} (they were being)

There are 101 sentences from which the subject and all or part of the verb are missing.

That the omission of weak-stressed syllables from the beginning of an utterance is a process which actually operates in the language seems clear enough from the above examples and particularly so in view of the fact that there are instances where the speaker supplies the missing material in a further utterance, usually phonologically dependent on the first, e.g.:

- 1973 5-265 K ²gêt some mònèy ²báck^{3/3}tóo^{2/2}we ²shóuld^{2/}
- 1841 5-150 K ²mêrged with ²Páckard^{1#}ídíd'n't ²thèy^{2/}

A response by another speaker sometimes clearly indicates his understanding that unuttered material was intended and of what it is, e.g.:

- 1885 5-182 M ²téll hìm^{2||}
- 1886 5-182 K ²I ³tóld hìm^{2/2}yéah^{1#}

As stated before, all the sentences which have no subjects are counted as minor sentences. Most of them are independent minor sentences, but a few do have a dependence on a nearby major sentence. Some of them are in class A of dependent minor sentences, e. g.:

- 946 3-76 R ²is the ²élephant a ²mámmal²||
 L ³yéah¹#
 947 3-79 R ²looks mōre lîke a ³hōse càrt²/
 381 1-463 R ³wèll I ³wíll¹#bùt I ²cán't¹#
 382 1-464 R ²cán't kèep the twô ²línes^{2/2}of thōught ²séparate¹#

In all of these cases subjects could be supplied from the preceding sentence. Several subjectless sentences are in class B, e. g.:

- 691 2-347 K ³mây²be òur ²cóttage^{2/2}bûy wàsn't tōo ³bád²/
²if wè can gèt ³óut^{3/2}gèt ³óut in tîme²||
 692 2-349 E ²gèt ³óut thêre^{3/3}yéah¹#
 250 1-299 M ²thèn you^{2/2}tûrn it ³óver¹#
 251 1-301 E ²tûrn it ²ó³ver³/

Here the material repeated from the preceding sentence is a verb phrase. Further examples are cards 2803 and 3298, quoted on p. 45. Several subjectless sentences are in class D, where the preceding class C sentence has stopped after the subject and the class D sentence supplies the predicate, e. g., card 1746, quoted on p. 48, and the following, which adds another verb to a predicate already present in the class C sentence:

- 618 2-242 R ²he ³sîts ²dówn and ùh²/
 619 2-243 K ²plàys ³gólf¹#

There are three or four independent subjectless sentences beginning with why or why not which are probably elliptical, i. e., capable of expansion with a subject, and an auxiliary verb, in most cases, e. g.:

- 146 1-175 M ²whý hàve a ³scéne abòut it¹#
 1393 4-125 L ²whý wèar thōse at ³áll¹#
 140 1-161 E ²whý nòt mākē a ³déal wìth her¹#

Should we would make a major sentence of the first example, and do you of the second. However, the speaker of the third would be more likely to say why don't you, rather than why do you not, so expansion of this example would involve further changes.

2.23 The problem of distinguishing between imperative sentences and those which have undergone ellipsis of the subject

A point of considerable interest to the writer is that, with the exception of the above sentences beginning with why, a sentence which has no subject and whose verb is in the simple form, with the possible exception also of those which have rising intonation, e. g.: cards 1113, 1577, 1020, 2059, 1885, on p. 54, and 251, on p. 55, are indistinguishable in form from the favorite type of imperative sentence, e. g., the examples given in IV.2.21 on p. 51 and the following:

398 2-14 M ²Kén²/²dɒn't tɛll any ³stɔːrɪz²/

This raises the question as to whether, in conversational English, at least, the imperative sentence should be regarded as a separate form class.

That many of the non-imperative sentences are elliptical does not offer much help. Because of the presence in the corpus of such sentences as:

3236 8-97 M ²you ³pɪk ʌp yɔːr²/³jʌŋk hɛrɛ^{1#2} wɪl you
plɛzɛz²||
1654 4-482 L ²ɛvɛrɪbɒdi ³cɒmɛ and ⁴sɪt ³dəʊn²/

which certainly have an imperative function, all of the subjectless sentences which have such a function may be said to be elliptical.

2.24 A third class of subjectless sentence

Of even more interest, however, is the presence in the corpus of a considerable number of subjectless sentences, with simple-form verbs, which have no imperative function whatever and which cannot, so it seems to this writer, be safely called elliptical. At least they are not elliptical in the sense that there is an unequivocal choice of material with which they could be expanded so as to become major sentences; further, in most cases, any material which might so expand them is much more lengthy than one or two weak-stressed syllables, as in all the examples of ellipsis given above.

Following are the most striking examples of these subjectless, simple-verb, non-imperative, non-elliptical sentences. Here the contexts, because most of them are quite long, are given in parentheses without the suprasegmental indications.

- 1711 5-56 (L — reading from a schoolbook — 'Would you like to spend a summer with the Pruitts?' What? With the fish, with fishing nets all cluttered all over the beach? No.)
E ²gê^t your fôod at the ⁴súpermàrket¹#²nòt òut of the ³séa²/
- 493 2-99 (K Could have used Community National Bank, or Northwest National Bank, Suburban North National Bank, something.)
K ²kèep the wôrd Des ³Pláines òut of it²/
- 537 2-131 (M We used to go in all of them. K People living in them? M No, not people living in them. E Where? M Empty houses. E Where?)
M ³óh¹ ²tâke the ³crýstal ôff^{3/3}the chânde³liers³||
³and ³stúff³/
- 529 2-125 (R We didn't peek in the windows, we went right into the house.)
M ²wâlk ³ín¹#
- 589 2-192 (R What do you want another Rambler for? K Not another one.)
K ²sêll the ³óld ône¹#
- 688 2-346 (R Well, what'll we do if we have a war?)
M ²jûmp in the ³láke³/
- 780 2-466 (E Where are they going to go?)
K ²just gèt a³wây from the bìg ³cítý²/
- 781 2-466 (M The hinterlands.)
M ²pitch a ³tént¹#
- 2915 7-290 K ²scâre little ³chíldren¹#¹Márgaret¹# (Comment on a picture of M, in which she looks a fright.)
- 2373 6-190 (K I got an old folding Kodak my father had. I've been down in the basement, cleaning my dark-room out.)
K ²gèt ³ríd of that dârn thîng¹#²pùt it ³rîght òn ³tóp¹#
- 2223 6-68 (K Oh, yeah, you can get a lot of work done if you want to pay for it, sure.)
²pùt òur ³píer ìn³/

From the presence of these sentences in the corpus, it seems to this writer, that in spoken English, at any rate, there is not a formal class of sentences that can be labeled 'imperative' (or 'command' or 'request,' as some grammars have it). There is a formal class of sentence, the one under discussion here, which has no subject and whose verb is in the simple form. It simply mentions an action, without specifying the doer of the action or saying anything about the action's tense or aspect. The hearer of the sentence receives information, not from the form of the sentence, but from its context or its lexical content as to whether he or anyone is to perform the action mentioned.

In the examples just given, it seems clear that the speaker does not intend the action mentioned to be performed at all. The following examples are descriptions of procedures, which somebody may perform, but certainly not the hearers:

2469 6-326 R ²Crâwford to ²Grâce²|| ²hâlf¹#³quâter of a
²blôck²/²wêst ôn Grâce tûrn ³léft³/²into an
²álley²|| ²for a quâter of²/²ðf a ²blôck²/²thên
tûrn ríght²/²into a³nóther âlley²/²ând ùh²/
²sêe if yòu can fínd òur gar¹âgé¹#

In the foregoing example the speaker is describing the route he will take to drive home. When the hearers visit him, they park their car in front in the street. If they found our garage, they would not be able to get their car in it.

1910 5-209 K ²it's gôt à²/²it's nôt ³nêw²/²they hâd it in
the môdel ³t²/²sêt your ³thróttle³/²and²/
²take your fôot òff the²/²pédal²|| ²and²/²gô
with²ôut âny²/²prêssure on your ³fôot to²/
²to ríde thèse ³túrnpîkes¹#

1975 5-271 R ³túne²/²mótor¹#²slúggish and ³rôugh²/²nîne
sèventy ²five¹#

In this last example the speaker is reading from an automobile repair bill, describing work which has already been done. The propriety of calling these sentences 'imperative' seems very dubious.

All these observations are prompted by the fact that the writer had at first intended to class imperative sentences, since they are so generally accepted as being 'complete,' as major sentences, but because of the border-line cases like the last three just cited,

found it difficult to draw the line between imperative and non-imperative sentences when they are thus formally indistinguishable.

A propos of the suggestion that the subjectless sentence, or verbal phrase, merely mentions an action, and that this action is not always to be performed by the hearer, it should be noted that the corpus also has nominal and adjectival phrases which request action, or abstention from action:

- 1330 4-42 R ²jüst a ¹dróp or twô Kên¹#
 1686 5-23 R ²jüst a ²sécond¹#
 3116 7-525 K ²lights¹# (after showing slides in a darkened room)
 3012 7-381 E ⁴nô ³fíghting plêase²||
 1124 3-232 E ²lóuder¹#

and, of course, not all nominal or adjectival phrases have an imperative function. Thus, there would seem to be some parallelism between verbal and other phrases in this respect.¹

2.3 Other types of independent minor sentence

The remaining 29 per cent of the independent minor sentences are uttered in a variety of situations and for a variety of purposes. The commands or requests consisting of nominal or adjectival phrases have just been noticed above. Another nominal phrase functions as an offer:

- 3328 8-223 K ²môre ³péanuts³/

Seven minor sentences are uttered as the speaker reads them from written matter, e.g.:

- 453 2-63 M ⁴Téxacô¹#³Cities ³Sérvice¹# (from a balloon)
 3257 8-126 R ³fâbulous stôry of Pòrt Châr²lôtte¹# (from a brochure)

A very few minor sentences are constructions which are accepted literary patterns, e.g.:

- 2651 7-27 R ³ôh³/³for ²súmmer agâin¹#
 261 1-312 E ²the lârger the ³córpus²/²the ³bétter¹#

There are about forty utterances consisting solely of exclamations generally consisting of items which occur only in this use (e.g., gosh), or of terms of address, e.g.:

- 1540 4-267 L ²Dáddy²/
 3187 8-51 P ³Línda²||
 2953 7-322 P ⁴Móther²/
 2148 6-11 K ³nó²/³nó¹#
 2866 7-249 M ²mý ³gósh¹#¹yòu ¹píg¹#
 908 3-52 E ³òh ²you ³bād ²gírl¹#
 2597 6-502 E ²óh¹#⁴óh⁴/²mý ³gósh²/

There are six uses of the expression thanks as the head of the construction or by itself.

Four minor sentences consist of constructions beginning with how about or what about:

- 1327 4-30 K ²hōw abòut your ³chícken lívers¹#
 1833 5-139 M ²yèah but whât abòut Chrýsler's bùying
 Amêrican ³Mótors²/
 1757 5-90 E ³yéah²/²and hōw abòut Mìster BÒWÌ ³É³/
²whò invènted this ³knífe¹#
 915 3-58 E ²hōw abòut thòse ³Índian clúbs¹#

A considerable number of minor sentences are uttered as slides are shown on a screen. The operator announces the subject of the picture usually with a noun or nominal phrase, e.g.:

- 3078 7-467 K ³hámbugers¹#²òut in the ²yárd thàt dāy¹||
 3026 7-395 K ³this òne²/²Kâren's ³wédding¹#
 3079 7-469 K ³márshmàllows¹#
 3057 7-245 K ²the ³gírls' yârd¹#³rí²ver in the ³báckgròund¹#

The viewers reply with adjectives or adjective phrases, e.g.:

- 2971 7-340 R ³lóvely¹#
 2908 7-283 R ⁴vêry ³níce¹#
 2954 7-324 E ²vê³ry ³níce¹#
 2932 7-302 E ²vêry ³góod¹# R ³vêry gōod¹#
 3109 7-516 R ³vêry ²góod¹#

There are a few exclamatory minor sentences beginning with what or how, e.g.:

- 1819 5-129 M ²hōw re²vólting¹#
 3272 8-157 R ²gée²/²whàt a ³hórrid lôoking²/²búnc̣h of¹#
²òctoge³nárians in¹/³xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx¹#

A few questions consist of an interrogative, e.g.:

- 1613 4-423 L ²whát²||
 853 3-18 L ³nó¹#⁴whý¹#

About thirty minor sentences are adjacent to major ones uttered by the same speaker and seem to be some sort of comment on it, but they are not dependent upon the major sentence in any of the ways described, e.g.:

- 3313 8-205 M ³òh ²déar¹#³yôu knòw I'm òn the ³wágon
 Déar²/²nôw ³î'm ³ôff²/²âll mý rêso³lú-
 tions¹#
 1545 4-279 R ³mûch ²gôod may it dô her²/³sêven ²ángels¹#
¹with sêven ²chúrches¹#

In the study of ellipsis above, only sentences were mentioned where a minor item could be supplied which would not change the construction, or there plus a form of be, or the subject, or the subject and part of the verb phrase. There are also in the corpus 45 minor sentences which could be expanded to major sentences, without in any way changing their function in the discourse, if they were supplied with both a subject and a complete verb. In every case the verb need be no more than a form of be, and the subject could be a pronoun. For instance, 23 of these minor sentences would be major ones if the speaker had troubled to begin them with it's or it's a, e.g.:

- 2301 6-129 M ²rîght ùp ³hére²/²at the ³córner¹#
 464 2-74 K ³pérfect¹#
 3325 8-221 M ²nôt tôo ³lâte²/

Preposed those are, that's (a), are they, etc., would make major sentences of the remaining 22.

The rest of the independent minor sentences, about 20, stand alone by themselves. They are not elliptical in the sense that the hearer can readily supply for himself one or two syllables of grammatical material, as in all the cases of minor sentences regarded

above as elliptical. Most of these are noun phrases. A topic is offered for consideration, without comment, e.g.:

- 321 1-374 E ²wèll^{2/2}bècause ³fîrst ²you hàve to bè a
Ca³nádian^{2/2}see^{2/3}quóta and stûff¹# (The
last phonological phrase here constitutes
the minor sentence which is the example.)
- 350 1-410 M ³âll ²thèse ³Swédes^{3/2}in Âlsàce-Lor³ráine^{2/}
(This follows a sentence which declares that
the Scandinavians really got around.)
- 75 1-91 E ³wéll¹#âll ²Hé³ming²wàÿ stôries^{2/} (This
follows a sentence which declares that a par-
ticular Hemingway story ended rather incon-
clusively.)
- 1323 4-34 M ²a hûndred ³yéars agò¹# (This follows a
description by the senior speaker of some-
thing his father had witnessed in his youth.)

Note

1. These remarks concerning subjectless sentences have already been presented, in a more condensed form, in the writer's 'The Classification of Imperative Sentences in English,' Studies in Linguistics, 17 (1963), p. 23.

V. CONCLUSION

How valid any conclusions may be as to the language practices of all the speakers of the English language, if such conclusions are based only on a comparatively small corpus of material taken from a very small, homogeneous group, may well be questioned. Even how representative these speakers are of any of the larger social groups to which they belong can only be guessed at. However, the totality of the speakers of a language is made up of just such small groups, and only a study of all of them can inform us of the habits of the speakers as a whole. A study of only one group, then, is at least a part of the beginning.

We have seen that for the present group of speakers, the major sentence is, indeed, the favorite type, but that the minor sentence does have the importance ascribed to it by Curme and Hall. However, popular notions that casual discourse consists almost entirely of minor sentences and fragments are disproved, as far as the casual discourse of this group of speakers is concerned. Hall's imaginary conversation, where the minor sentence outnumbers the major one in a proportion of five to three, seems to be far from representing the actual proportion of minor sentences in everyday speech.

The question has been raised as to whether degree of education would affect the frequency of one's use of minor sentences in casual discourse. Judging by the functions of the minor sentences as revealed in the present study, the writer is of the opinion that it would not, but only an investigation of the habits in this respect of groups of speakers, each group of a different level of education, could reliably answer this question.

How truly useful to the composition teacher the present investigation may be is open to doubt on two counts. One would think that more reliable results for this purpose could be obtained from a group of students who are actually taking composition courses or from a group of persons of the same age level and degree of education, if, indeed education is a factor influencing the use of the minor sentence in speech. The contributions of the two children in the present group does not constitute very much of the corpus and has not been studied separately. The other consideration is that conversation is

a dialogue, an interplay between at least two speakers, while the composition is a monologue. Since nearly half of the minor sentences are dependent on major ones and many of the latter are uttered by another speaker, one might expect that a monologue would contain fewer minor sentences. Fortunately, there are several monologues in the corpus consisting of narratives by a single speaker with only a few interruptions from the listeners. Examination of these monologues does indeed reveal very few minor sentences in them. One of the monologues, by M, begins at 8-233. It consists of 23 major sentences, most of them very long, and only three minor ones. There are also two fragments of the false-start type, where the item is immediately corrected and the sentence is then carried to conclusion. One of these has been cited, card 3335, on p. 34. At the beginning of this monologue there are several interruptions from another speaker, who is disputing the facts. One of the minor sentences is in response to this second speaker. Otherwise there are no utterances from other speakers, not even of the attention-signal type, except for the good grief on card 3356 on p. 31. which comes at a climactic moment in the narrative and is really more than an attention signal.

In another monologue by the same speaker, beginning at 5-462, there are twelve major sentences, many of them very long, one false-start fragment, and three minor sentences, two of which are subjectless sentences due to ellipsis, and one a comment on a preceding sentence. This last is on card 2113, cited on p. 47.

A monologue by R, beginning at 4-374, contains nine major sentences of great length. There is no minor sentence, unless a short passage of unintelligible material contains one. There is only one utterance from another speaker during this discourse, this utterance being a minor sentence of class D. The original speaker repeats this utterance, which is the conclusion he had intended to give to one of his own clauses, and continues.

In another monologue by the same speaker, beginning at 4-70, there are 13 major sentences and two minor ones, both subjectless sentences due to ellipsis. During this recitation there are no utterances from any other speaker.

A narrative by K, beginning at 4-58, contains nine major sentences and two minor sentences, of which one is subjectless due to ellipsis. A monologue by R, beginning at 3-274, contains eleven major sentences, and one minor sentence of class E, card 1158 on p. 49. There are no utterances from other speakers here. The series of sentences beginning on card 1159, cited on p. 28, is from this monologue.

If the spoken language habits of composition students are anything like those revealed by the present corpus, it would seem that, since major sentences constitute such a large proportion of their patterns, they are well prepared by their speaking habits to form such sentences in writing, particularly because the major sentence almost crowds out the minor one in monologue. The problem, then, would be one of relegating the minor sentence to the very limited use which is permitted in formal writing.

Of further use to the composition teacher would be a continuation of the study begun here of the frequency and kinds of non-coincidence of primary and secondary indications of linkage between phonological phrases. Habits in this sphere would affect the student's segmentation of his own written continuum into sentences. Another study of great interest, also useful to the composition teacher, which is hardly hinted at here, would be a study of the well-formedness, from the literary standpoint, of the major sentences in a corpus such as this one. Some, probably a relatively small proportion of the major sentences uttered here would not be acceptable constructions in formal writing, e. g.:

3531 8-485 M ²but ³wè ²gót thîs^{2/2} before we ever ³stârted
our frêshman ⁴yéar^{1#} this bôok we mâde ùp
our mînds abòut our ¹côurses^{1#}

Incidentally, this is a beautiful example of extension of contour by a monotone pitch morpheme, as described on p. 19. Description of the colloquial major-sentence patterns mentioned on p. 5 would also be useful.

To sum up briefly the actual results of the present study, it shows that the major sentences are major in two respects: the frequency of their occurrence, and the dependence of half the minor sentences on them. The major sentence can be said to be the backbone of spoken, as well as written, discourse in English. The examples given on p. 34f. of major sentences which are achieved in spite of being interrupted by other major sentences show a great urge on the part of speakers to form such sentences in spite of obstacles.

The minor sentences have all the importance in spoken communication which Curme and Hall ascribe to them. By being in minor form, the sentences in class A of dependent minor sentences, which could be made major sentences by repeating material already uttered, spare the hearer the ennui of hearing such repetition, and the lack of repetition makes the new idea stand out more clearly. The sentences in class B consist of repetition of material from the preceding

sentence. Repetition of more material from this sentence would make the class B sentence a major sentence. This major sentence would then simply be a verbatim repetition of the preceding sentence and the whole function of the class B sentence, which is to highlight by repetition only a small part of the preceding sentence, would be lost. The sentences in classes C and D combine to form major sentences, and some of those in class D are intended as the continuation of a major sentence. Some sentences in class E announce what the topic of the following major sentence is going to be. The minor sentence on card 1678, quoted on p. 49, for instance, could be expanded to a major sentence by putting it in the form, 'Now I am going to talk about Courage Cove,' which would scarcely be an improvement over its present form. It is true that some of the sentences in class E owe their existence to confusion of some type, as in the case of the one on card 427, where there is an interruption, and on card 1335, where the speaker got into too many intricacies, as well as suffering an interruption. Both of these sentences are also quoted on p. 49.

The greatest proportion of the independent minor sentences are the subjectless ones. Of these, the 'commands' are regarded as full sentences by Bloomfield and are perfectly acceptable in any kind of discourse. 'Commands' may also be uttered in major sentence form, as is the one on card 3236, cited on p. 56, and it seems there must be a certain advantage in having a variety of ways in which to tell people to do things. It has to be admitted that there is nothing much to say in favor of the sentence which is subjectless because of the elipsis of initial weak-stressed syllables. The amount of breath saved is negligible, but it seems to contribute a comfortable air of informality. Minor sentences of other types also serve as indicators of — or perhaps responses to — the degree of formality of the occasion: 'Thanks,' instead of 'I thank you,' 'More peanuts?' instead of 'Will you have more peanuts?' and so forth. The advantage of replies like 'yes' and 'no' instead of full repetitions of the statements affirmed or negated hardly needs mentioning, and, of course, there is hardly any other way to call a person than by uttering a minor sentence consisting of his name or appellation.

Apart from any practical applications one might see for it, it is hoped that this study has some value simply in showing the relative frequency of major and minor sentences and in what it has brought out concerning the various forms and functions of the minor sentence in living speech.

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