

Title: Programmed teaching of the Thai language

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Objective The evaluation, application, and further development of a Thai language teaching program.

Introduction An experimental course in programmed Thai developed by Heidi B. Hughes, Ph.D., at the Institute for Behavioral Research, Silver Spring, Maryland, under Grant No. DADA 17-67-C-0013, U.S. Army Medical R & D Command, OTSG has been brought to Thailand for evaluation and further development. This program employs the principle of successive approximation and is presented by means of a self-instructional, automated, audio-visual device. It allows the student to proceed at his own pace; its initial phase will not require an instructor. The student need only operate the audio-visual device according to standard instructions and the language material will be presented to him in a manner which theoretically maximizes learning. (A complete review of the development of the program is available in: AN EXPERIMENT IN THE TECHNOLOGY OF PROGRAMMING A SECOND LANGUAGE (THAI), FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT, October 15, 1967, Heidi B. Hughes, Ph.D., Institute for Behavioral Research, Inc., 2426 Linden Lane, Silver Spring, Maryland, 20910, a copy of which is on file in the Department of Neuropsychiatry, SMRL.)

Method The program will initially be administered to approximately five subjects to test the integrity of the equipment, the materials, and the method of administration of the program. An appropriate environment will be created for the students using the program, including the development of acoustically satisfactory booths, which will prevent unnecessary distraction and focus the subject's attention on the audio-visual device. During the same period that the teaching tools are being checked, a set of tests will be developed, evaluating overall language aptitude, pre-knowledge of the Thai language (aural comprehension, reading and tone discrimination), achievement of Thai language skills at the completion of the program, and retention of learned material after three months. Wherever possible, language tests developed by agencies such as the Defense Language Institute will be utilized; e.g., the Army Language Aptitude Test (ALAT), and the Army Language Test (ALT). Resources of local agencies involved in language teaching will also be exploited when appropriate.

In its second phase, the program will be administered to a population of 20 volunteers from the USA Component, SEATO Medical Research Project. All subjects will be pre-tested and interviewed to evaluate non-language contingencies which might possibly alter their responses to the program. All subjects will be closely observed for difficulties in manipulation of the audio-visual device, but will be allowed to proceed at their own pace, without interruption or comment. All persons completing the program will be evaluated for acquisition of language skills immediately and again after three months. Scores on the Army Language Test and other available standard tests will be compared with the performance of students who have completed the Defense Language Institute and other courses in the Thai language.

Data obtained in the course of this experiment will be used:

- a. to assess the value of the program as an effective method of teaching the Thai language;
- b. to modify the techniques and content of the program;

- c. to evaluate basic language aptitude, educational experience, and environmental contingencies as potential influences upon performance in the program and retention of learned material thereafter. At the completion of the research outlined above, a report will be rendered concerning appropriate future utilization of the program.

Time Phasing :

- Phase I:** Preparation of equipment, environment, testing materials and personnel, distribution and sorting of applications, administration of pre-tests, and other administrative procedures: 29 January-4 April, 1968.
- Phase II:** Administration of program to first five selected subjects, for purpose of testing integrity of equipment and materials, and the method of administration of the program: 5 April, 1968.
- Phase III:** Phasing-in of first group of population of 20 volunteers, 21 April, 1968.
- Phase IV:** Phasing-in of second group of total population: 5 May, 1968.
- Phase V:** Phasing-in of third group of total population: 21 May, 1968.
- Phase VI:** Phasing-in of fourth group of total population: 5 June, 1968.

Completion of all groups followed by individual testing, and processing of data by 5 August, 1968.

Completion of final report on assessment of the value of the program as an effective method of teaching the Thai language: 31 August, 1968. Presentation of report to Director, WRAIR, and Director, Division of Neuropsychiatry, WRAIR, by principal investigator, in Washington, D.C., for purpose of discussing and planning for appropriate future modification and/or utilization of the program: 15 September, 1968.