The English Institute of 1943-1949
under the Leadership of Lewis C. Richardson

Alicia Pousada
Richardson Seminar Room
English Department
College of Humanities
University of Puerto Rico – Río Piedras
pousada.a@gmail.com

RESUMEN
Este artículo analiza el trabajo del Instituto de Inglés (1943-1949) de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Río Piedras, bajo la dirección de Lewis C. Richardson. Después de discutir la historia de la enseñanza del inglés en Puerto Rico de 1898 a 1949, describe la incepción del Instituto de Inglés, sus dirigentes y agentes principales, así como sus objetivos. Escudriña la estructura del proyecto piloto para la enseñanza del inglés en los grados 1-4, los materiales producidos y el progreso logrado por los estudiantes. Finalmente, aclara por qué el programa fue abandonado por el Departamento de Educación y considera las implicaciones de esta decisión.

Palabras clave: enseñanza del inglés, Instituto de Inglés, Lewis C. Richardson, Puerto Rico

ABSTRACT
This article analyzes the work of the English Institute (1943-1949) of the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras, under the leadership of Lewis C. Richardson. After discussing the history of English teaching in Puerto Rico from 1898 to 1949, it describes the inception of the English Institute, its key leaders and agents, as well as its objectives. It scrutinizes the structure of the pilot project for teaching English in grades 1-4, the materials produced, and the progress made by the students. Finally, it clarifies why the program was abandoned by the Department of Education and considers the implications of this decision.

Keywords: English Institute, English teaching, Lewis C. Richardson, Puerto Rico

PEDAGOGÍA
ISSN 0031-3769
VOLUMEN 47, NÚMERO 1 • DICIEMBRE DE 2014 • PP. 51-75

Introduction

In 1943, Dr. Lewis C. Richardson, of the English Department of the College of Humanities at the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras, was invited by Dr. Pedro Cebollero, Acting Dean of the College of Education, to devise an English Institute to study the problems related to teaching English in Puerto Rico and produce a curriculum geared to Puerto Rican society (Mohr, 1988, p. 43). The result was a carefully crafted English pilot program for grades 1-4 based on locally created materials and culturally-relevant themes. The yellowed materials and curricular framework were discovered in the files of the Lewis C. Richardson Seminar Room. The overall goal of this article is to restore them to their rightful place in the history of Puerto Rican language education.

History of English teaching in Puerto Rico from 1898 to 1949

Prior to the United States' invasion of Puerto Rico, Spain had granted partial autonomy to Puerto Rico. Local elections had been held, and a school system had been established. However, only about 17 percent of the island's residents could read and write, and 92 percent of school-aged children were not enrolled in school (Osuna, 1949, p. 341).

In 1898, the U.S. military government instituted English as the medium of instruction, and the Puerto Rican public school system was revamped following a U.S. model. Among the many changes were the use of English as the sole language of instruction from the third grade on and the requirement that teachers be able to teach in English (Chardón, 1998, pp. 207-209). Hundreds of schools were built, many bearing the names of leading American figures. These Americanization measures were solidified and extended during Martin Brumbaugh's term as the first civilian Commissioner of Education (1900-1901). Between 1901 and 1917, enrollment in public schools went from 30,000 students to 150,000, approximately a third of the school-aged children on the island (Ayala & Bernabe, 2007, p. 78).

In 1900, the Foraker Act established a civil government whose governor, upper house of representatives, and six commissioners were all appointed by the U.S. president. In 1902, the Official Languages Act established that English and Spanish were to be used indistinguishably for official functions, primarily for the convenience of the American officials, who firmly believed that English would be critical to Puerto Rico's future. At this time, Commissioner of Education Samuel McCune Lindsay (1902-1905) approved emergency certification of individuals

with only a 6th grade education plus one pedagogy course in order to fill the great demand for teachers (Chardón, 1998, p. 211).

The twelve Commissioners of Education appointed by the U.S. federal government between 1900 and 1948[1] based their language policies on directives from Washington to Americanize the islanders via the English language at all costs (Negrón de Montilla, 1971; Torres González, 2002). Pedagogical evaluations like the 1925 Columbia University study had minimal impact, even though they recommended that English not be utilized as the medium of instruction until the seventh grade (International Institute of Teachers College, 1926).

English was officially the sole medium of instruction from 1905 to 1916 under the Falkner Policy,[2] and after that, the proportion of English to Spanish in the elementary and intermediate curricula vacillated until 1949. The one consistency was that English was always the medium of instruction at the high school level. As a result, those who graduated from high school had a good command of the language; however, few people stayed in school that long (Chardón, 1998, p. 215). Cebollero (1945) described the push to learn English as follows:

> During the years 1905-1913 all the resources of the Department of Education were mobilized to further the aims of the Falkner policy. Native teachers were feverishly trained in English under the threat of losing their certificates; an additional salary was paid to those teachers who qualified to teach English; pupils and teachers were required to answer in English examinations prepared by the Department of Education; and extraordinary emphasis was given in the annual reports of the commissioners of education to the progress made in adopting English as the medium of instruction. (p. 11)

In 1915, José de Diego, poet and statesman, introduced an unsuccessful bill in the Puerto Rican legislature to make Spanish the sole official language of Puerto Rico. That same year, Commissioner Paul G. Miller (1915-1921) reinstated Spanish as the medium of instruction in the first four grades and stipulated fifth grade as a transitional level at which both languages were used. Grades 6-12 were taught in English. Miller's policy was maintained by Juan B. Huyke (1921-1930).

After Huyke came José Padín (1930-1936), who in 1934 instituted Spanish as the language of schooling in grades 1-8 and emphasized oral training in English classes. He was forced to resign in 1936 because of his position on Spanish, and in 1937, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt wrote to José Gallardo to appoint him to replace Padín,

stating that: "It is an indispensable part of American policy that the coming generation of American citizens in Puerto Rico grow up with complete facility in the English tongue" (Roosevelt, 1937). Although the president never specified a mechanism for achieving "complete facility," Gallardo established a gradual increase in English during grades 3-8. By 1942, it was clear that the plan had been unsuccessful, and Spanish was returned as the medium of instruction in grades 1-6, with both languages utilized for teaching grades 7-8 and English retained in high school.

Because of growing concern in Washington regarding the apparent failure of English teaching in Puerto Rico, researchers H. Fife and H. T. Manuel were commissioned by the Department of Education to carry out an exhaustive study of English instruction on the island from 1940-1944. At the time, Puerto Rican children were supposedly exposed to English in the first grade primarily through oral means, with pictorial aids and word lists. In the third grade, more time was dedicated to reading and writing via the use of U.S. textbooks intended for lower grades. The curriculum (when carried out) was appropriate for native English speakers, but unsuitable for second language learners in Puerto Rico.

Fife and Manuel assessed students via the Inter-American achievement tests devised by Educational Testing Service in Princeton, a battery of parallel English and Spanish instruments devised to determine the degree of mastery in both languages. The machine-scored examinations were administered at all levels and included verbal and nonverbal tests of comprehension and association, general and specialized reading tests, and speaking tests. The most reliable ones were those that dealt with vocabulary comprehension, and the least reliable, those that attempted to measure speaking ability. The tests were normed for Mexican and American students, and the 20,000 Puerto Rican students who took them did not fare well. Their understanding of written Spanish appeared to be less than that of the Mexican school children, and their comprehension of written English was two to three years behind that of U.S. students. Only 15 percent read English as well as they did Spanish, and only 20 percent read English as well as their U.S. counterparts (Mackey, 1953, p.14). Fife and Manuel (1951) concluded that most Puerto Rican children had little hope of true bilingualism, and only a small percent would profit from English medium instruction. They recommended better materials, improved libraries, more exposure to oral English, and more experimentation.

Richardson at Johns Hopkins, about 1939.

In response, the Puerto Rico Department of Education created an English Section to revise curriculum and cooperated with the English Institute in carrying out pedagogical experimentation. It also established a cadre of English teacher trainers, special language projects, and a School of the Air to expose Puerto Rican students to native speakers of English via radio. A committee was formed to select appropriate English vocabulary to be used and taught in the classrooms.

Despite these efforts, in 1943, U.S. Senate Committee hearings chaired by New Mexico Senator Dennis Chávez found the island's schools still lacking. The Committee (which favored increased English instruction) summoned leading educators to testify, and most argued vigorously for Spanish as the medium of education. Among them were José Gallardo, later Commissioner of Education, and Lewis C. Richardson, director of the English Institute and representative of the Puerto Rico Teachers Association. Richardson's position was reported in *El Mundo* on February 20, 1943:

> El inglés debe enseñarse en Puerto Rico y debe enseñarse bien, pero la sabiduría de dedicar una gran parte del limitado tiempo escolar al inglés […] es muy discutible desde el punto de vista del inglés mismo, desde el punto de vista de otras asignaturas y desde el punto de vista de la economía.[3]

Richardson firmly believed that Spanish was the most pedagogically sound vehicle for instruction and that teaching in Spanish would facilitate English acquisition. The only reasonable method of creating more English speakers in Puerto Rico was by intensifying the English classes, rather than by giving all instruction via English.

Despite Richardson's impassioned words, the Chávez Committee concluded that Puerto Rican teachers had failed to teach English and that Puerto Rico would never became a state if the populace did not learn English. The Puerto Rican public reacted with deep indignation, and the papers were full of rebuttals by professors, teachers, student leaders, legislators, and intellectuals who were sorely offended by the lack of respect shown to the island.

In 1945, the Puerto Rican legislature passed Law Number 51 (*Proyecto del Idioma*) to designate Spanish as the language of instruction in the public schools. This was later amended in 1946 to add that English should be a required subject from the fifth grade on. However, the law was vetoed by Governor Tugwell in 1945 and again vetoed by interim Governor Manuel A. Pérez in 1946. The veto was overturned by the Puerto Rico legislature, and the law was sent to President Harry Truman, who rejected it out of hand as "untimely" since Puerto Rico's political status was under consideration. The President's actions were heavily criticized in Puerto Rico. *El Mundo* reported on November 9, 1946 that University of Puerto Rico students organized a peaceful protest of more than 100,000 students, professors, and local political figures across the island.

That same year, President Truman named Jesus Piñero as governor, and Mariano Villaronga, Commissioner of Education. However, since Villaronga favored teaching in Spanish, Congress prolonged his confirmation proceedings, and he finally withdrew. Later in 1946, ironically, Congress finally agreed to permit gubernatorial elections and locally-appointed Commissioners of Education in Puerto Rico (Torres González, 2002).

In 1948, Luis Muñoz Marín was elected governor. Fulfilling a campaign promise to appoint a Commissioner of Education who would make the Puerto Rican vernacular the vehicle of education at all levels, he appointed Mariano Villaronga. In August of 1949, Spanish became the medium of instruction in all Puerto Rican public schools at all levels, with English as a required subject.

There were many reasons for the return to Spanish. Mackey (1953, pp. 12-13) identifies the teachers' lack of training and knowledge of

English, the decrease in recruitment of U.S. teachers, the large number of Puerto Ricans who did not know much English (70 percent), the negative effects of poverty and over-population, and the generally part-time nature of schooling (only a third of the children were enrolled in all-day school programs). We should add to this the active and vehement resistance on the part of the Puerto Rico Teachers Association (Muñiz Souffront, 1950), students, political figures, and common citizens to the continuing imposition of English.

Creation of the English Institute at UPR-RP

Leadership

Richardson had an excellent track record as an able leader with a holistic view of the problems of English education on the island. He had taught in the public high school of Utuado (1924-1926) and worked as a high school principal in Yabucoa (1926-1928). He was very active in the Puerto Rico Teachers Association throughout all of his life. He joined the University of Puerto Rico in August 1928 and worked as an instructor in English-teaching methodology in the College of Education (1928-1929). In August of 1929, he began teaching English literature and language in the College of Arts and Sciences (which later bifurcated into the Colleges of Humanities and Natural Sciences). In December 1934, he was asked by José Padín, Commissioner of Education, to create a new English curriculum for grades 1 through 12. During the following year, he worked for the Department of Education and visited schools all over the island to explain the new English curriculum to the teachers.

Unexpectedly, in 1937, Richardson's publically expressed criticisms of U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico were found to be "incompatible" with his position as UPR professor, and his contract was not renewed. He then went to Baltimore, obtained his doctoral degree at Johns Hopkins University, and taught English there for a while. In 1941, when the political tides had shifted, Richardson returned to the island, and in 1942, UPR Chancellor Jaime Benítez asked for his reinstatement. As a result, the invitation from Cebollero in 1943 to direct the English Institute was a triumph at many levels for Richardson.

The English Institute began teaching in 1947. However, active planning and curriculum design occurred during a series of English Workshops in the summer of 1945, on Saturdays during the 1945-46 school year, and during the summer of 1946.

Participants

Richardson organized a diverse team to carry out the English Institute project. Among the participants were UPR professors from the Department of Methodology and Practice in the College of Education (especially Ángeles Pastor), professors from the English Department in the College of Humanities (in particular, Joseph Kavetsky, who created the grade 3 workbooks), and many teachers and supervisors from the Puerto Rico Department of Education, including Aida Torregrosa and Angelita Richardson (Richardson's wife), both English Field Assistants of the Rio Piedras-Carolina-Trujillo Alto District, and María García, of the García Zepeda School in Sabana Llana, who permitted the English Institute to observe classrooms in action. Clare Schwabe, of the English Institute, illustrated the teaching materials. Teachers Magdalena Andino and Lydia Morales, of the Bayamón district, were involved in creating the second grade curriculum, along with Providencia García de la Noceda, Manuela R. de la O, Pura Trillas, and Palmira A. Díaz.

Goals and objectives

The original mission of the English Institute was: (a) to study the problems related to the teaching of English in Puerto Rico and (b) to formulate courses and produce textbooks adapted to the needs of the island. Richardson felt that one of the fundamental objectives should be to put the students in intimate contact with the lifestyle and way of thinking of the North American people. He clarified that this was not "Americanization," which generally implied either pro-American propaganda or the presentation of only the positive aspects of American culture. What he had in mind was the development of cultural understanding.

The English Workshops had specific objectives. The first, held during the summer of 1945, sought to address three issues: the tentative determination of when English reading should begin, the preparation of reading material for that level, and the creation of an oral program to precede and prepare for the readings.

The third grade was determined to be the best moment to introduce English reading, and work began on the preparation of reading materials and oral lessons that would prepare students for the readings. Much of the oral English planning was based on materials developed by Ángeles Pastor, of the Department of Methodology and Practice of the College of Education, when she taught first grade at the UPR elementary school. The work of the first workshop was continued and

expanded by the other two, and the English Institute then gave the final touches to the curriculum.

Pilot project

Schools that participated

The first grade materials were tried out during the 1947-48 year with 20 urban classes and 18 rural classes distributed among 15 school districts. The third grade materials were also tried out during the 1947-48 school year with 9 urban and 10 rural classes distributed among 15 school districts. Though the material was designed to be used after two years of preparatory study, it was decided to test it out with pupils who had gone through the regular two years of oral English to see how they would do. According to a mimeographed report titled "Reading achievement of try-out and regular-course groups, Grade III," the materials were used out of expediency with full knowledge that the results would not necessarily be indicative of the results achievable with the preliminary preparation originally intended.

Curricular goals and philosophy

A coherent and unified curriculum was prepared for grades 1 through 4 with the joint collaboration of teachers, supervisors, and university professors.

In the first grade, the primary aim was "to make communication in English an enjoyable activity for the pupils." Secondary goals were: "developing in the pupils the ability to understand simple spoken English and to express themselves correctly in simple English" (*Guide for the teaching of oral English in the first grade*, p. 2). The basic philosophy was that children should not be forced to talk but rather allowed to listen before attempting oral production, much as they did when acquiring their native language as infants. Listening practice would come via songs sung by the teacher, games in which only the teacher spoke, commands given by the teacher, and comments made by the teacher. Speaking readiness would be indicated by the child's desire to speak, and not all children would develop this readiness at the same time.[4] Meaningful, interesting, and varied repetition over an extended period of time was the key to effective teaching and learning.[5]

Teachers would correct all errors in pronunciation, intonation, or rhythm by stating expressions correctly and having pupils repeat them. Corrections would be made in "a cordial and friendly tone" (p. 5). Teachers would create an English-speaking environment in the

classroom and permit children to use Spanish to ask for vocabulary or structures in English. As the first grade oral English guide explains:

> English and Spanish are not and cannot be two water-tight compartments in the child's mind. Both are vehicles of thought and means of communication; and the child will naturally think and speak in whichever seems easier or more appropriate to him at the moment. Our task, as teachers of English, is to provide situations that will make English speech seem appropriate to the child and to make these situations frequent and enjoyable enough so that they will eventually lead to thinking in English." (pp. 5-6)

Creating an English environment would be done by using greetings and commands in English and by referring to classroom items, pictures of objects, and easily demonstrated actions in that language. More abstract concepts would be explained first in Spanish, but English would be used once the children understood the concept. "The 'English atmosphere' is important, but the teacher should not worship it to the extent of sacrificing the children's understanding of words and expressions used in the classroom" (p. 6).

English could be introduced in other classes once students mastered the concepts and terms in Spanish. Simple questions regarding how to say something in English would serve to further stimulate curiosity regarding the English language. Games taught in English class could be played during recess for practice and enjoyment. Pictorial materials produced by children for use in one language could be used for the other as well. While using some Spanish in the English class was encouraged, "it would not be appropriate to mix Spanish and English indiscriminately in the same sentence in any class" (p. 7). Common nursery rhymes could be adapted to the working vocabulary and needs of the children (e.g. "Jack be nimble, Jack, be quick, Jack, jump over the candlestick" could be changed to: "Juan, come here. Juan, go there. Juan, jump over the little chair"). At all times, teachers would use gestures and enunciate slowly and clearly without distorting the words.

Materials produced

Detailed teachers' guides for teaching oral English (grades 1 and 2) and for teaching reading (grades 3 and 4) were prepared, along with illustrated readers. The materials were tested in various classes, and teachers were asked to fill out report forms indicating "frank criticisms and constructive recommendations" (*Guide for the teaching of oral English*

English Institute readers

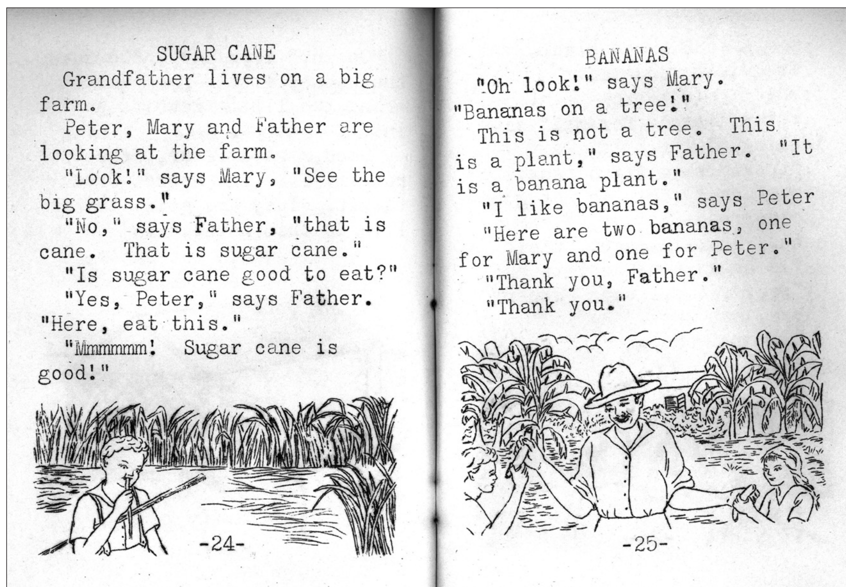
in the second grade, p. 1). Teachers were urged to contribute games, rhymes, songs, or other devices; suggest reorganization of materials; report on ease of use, and consider if material could be covered adequately in the allotted time.

The first grade oral English curriculum was carefully planned and sequenced with vocabulary built up gradually and recycled from lesson to lesson. There were seven units and 17 sample lessons. Unit 1 dealt with simple commands using a physical response methodology. Unit 2 addressed the use of *this* and *that*. Unit 3 taught present progressive verb forms in affirmative, negative, and interrogative modes. Unit 4 covered adjectives of color and size. Unit 5 explained prepositional phrases and the command *put*. Unit 6 dealt with questions with *where* and *who*. Unit 7 discussed the family. Detailed explanations of grammatical structures and vocabulary items were provided for teachers, as well as sample lesson plans stating specific aims and suggested procedures. Toward the end of the 1947-48 school year, an extra unit

(*The farm)* was sent to first grade teachers who had finished the work originally included in the curriculum. This unit (taught in more detail) became the first unit of the second grade.

The second grade oral English curriculum followed the same philosophy with regard to speaking readiness, meaningful repetition of interesting and varied content, utilization of games and songs, adaptation of nursery rhymes, immediate correction and modeling of grammatical English, teaching of words in context, and utilizing as much English or Spanish as was needed for comprehension. Vocabulary and grammatical structures were based on the first grade curriculum plus additional items required for the second grade units. The second grade guide provided a list of vocabulary, phrases, and constructions taught in the first grade to ensure that second grade teachers would review and build upon them. It also provided a comprehensive list of expressions commonly used in the classroom and in games (*Who's next? Who wants to play?*). The use of contractions was emphasized as being more natural in oral English. As one would expect, sentences generated in the second grade curriculum were longer and more complex than those in the first grade curriculum.

Unit 1 (*The farm)* taught the names of animals and structures on a farm, as well as natural features like lakes and rivers. Unit 2 (*Stores)* provided practice with store items plus phrases needed to request and

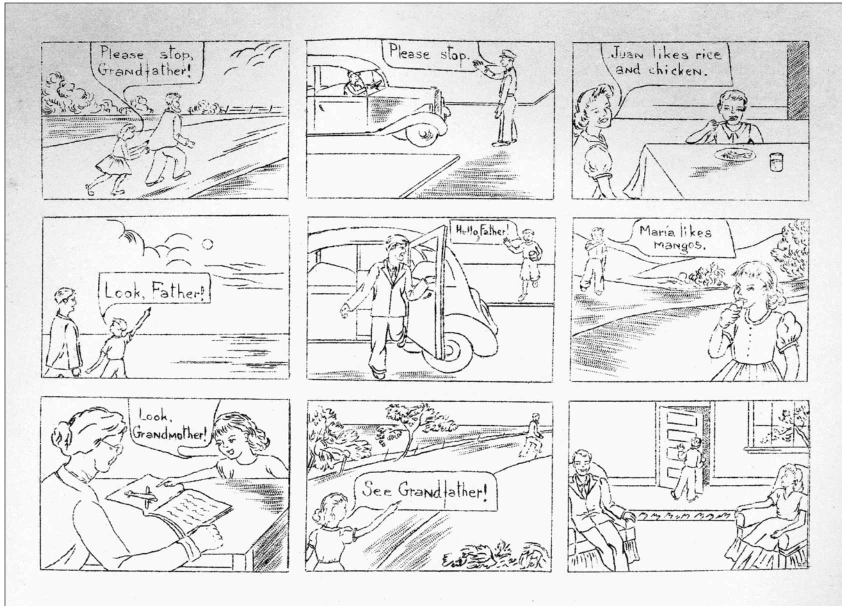


SUGAR CANE
Grandfather lives on a big farm.
Peter, Mary and Father are looking at the farm.
"Look!" says Mary, "See the big grass."
"No," says Father, "that is cane. That is sugar cane."
"Is sugar cane good to eat?"
"Yes, Peter," says Father. "Here, eat this."
"Mmmmmm! Sugar cane is good!"

-24-

BANANAS
"Oh look!" says Mary. "Bananas on a tree!"
"This is not a tree. This is a plant," says Father. "It is a banana plant."
"I like bananas," says Peter
"Here are two bananas, one for Mary and one for Peter."
"Thank you, Father."
"Thank you."

-25-



pay for them. Unit 3 (*The picnic*) reviewed and integrated vocabulary of *The family, The farm*, and *Stores*, adding additional food terms and phrases. Unit 4 (*Christmas)* addressed decorating Christmas trees, receiving presents, and having fun. Unit 5 (*A birthday party)* built upon the vocabulary learned in *Christmas,* along with terms like *birthday cake, ice cream, laugh,* among others. Unit 6 (*At school*) enlarged the students' existing school vocabulary while reviewing adjectives, present progressive verbs, interrogatives and negatives, time expressions, and lunchroom food terms. All vocabulary referred to typically Puerto Rican settings and activities.

Richardson was extremely interested in developing locally-relevant reading materials for the teaching of English in Puerto Rican public schools. During the 1920s and 1930s, most schools utilized a series of readers written by Elizabeth Kniepple Van Deusen and published by Silver Burdett: *Stories of Puerto Rico* (1926), *Picturesque Porto Rico: Stories and poems* (1927), *Tales of Borinquen* (1928), and *Tropical tales: Porto Rico* (1929). Van Deusen was Special Supervisor for English for the Department of Education, and her books utilized "many Spanish names of persons and things which lend local atmosphere and heighten reality," as Commissioner Huyke said in the preface to *Stories of Porto Rico* (Van Deusen, 1926, p. vi). However, despite good intentions, the stories were subtly colonialist in nature, with American characters and

customs serving as role models for Puerto Rican children to emulate and U.S. culture promoted as more advanced than that of Puerto Rico. The vocabulary also tended to be too difficult for most Puerto Rican children to read.

The English Institute team wanted to present subject matter that would be interesting and valuable to Puerto Rican children, but adapted to their nascent linguistic abilities in English. They decided to utilize experiences of Puerto Rican children that had universal appeal in the early reading material and then move the children into the types of experiences directly associated with children of the U.S. Thus the first three books dealt with two children born in New York to Puerto Rican parents who were visiting their island cousins. The later books would have the Puerto Rican cousins travel to New York. As the *Guide for the teaching of English reading in the third grade* explains:

> …the more unfamiliar matter will be introduced against a background of the familiar. The known Puerto Rican environment is used in such a way that it will logically lead to and prepare for the unknown continental environment. (p. 3)

The vocabulary of the readers was not rigidly controlled, although there was consultation with a "basal list" used in the first two grades for oral English. In addition, the readers relied on the use of English names, imitations of sounds (onomatopoeia), and easily recognized cognates. Nine inexpensive graded readers, illustrated with drawings and printed locally, were produced (see Table 1).

The first four materials were designed to provide students with ample input of approximately 50 meaning items (words, phrases, or grammatical suffixes), discounting cognates, proper names, and onomatopoeia. The goal was to give students "an absolutely sound foundation in English reading at the very beginning of their work" and to develop "a sense of power and achievement that will attach a feeling of pleasure rather than one of strain, to English reading" (*Guide for the teaching of English reading in the third grade*, p. 5).

The basic philosophy of the reading curriculum was that for reading readiness in English to develop, the pupil must be able to read simple material in Spanish with relative fluency, enjoy reading in Spanish, and acquire oral-aural mastery of English vocabulary and constructions (*Guide for the teaching of English reading in the third grade*, p. 6). Other basic principles included the notions that (1) reading methods

Table 1
*Third Grade Reading Scope and Sequence**

Num.	Title	Vocabulary
1	Pre-book Reading	Variable, but minimum requirements include all important words of the first reader.
2	Binglish (vocabulary game)	Important words of the first reader, plus a number of other words easily recognized.
3	*To Puerto Rico* (first reader)	72 meaning items of which 16 are cognates, one is Spanish, four are proper names, and two are onomatopoeic.
4	Workbook to accompany *To Puerto Rico*	Important words of the first reader, *who?, up,* and a number of other words easily recognized.
5	25 Supplementary Stories	Important words of the first reader, *are* (aux), *are (ser),* and a number of other words easily recognized.
6	*On the farm* (second reader)	65 meaning items repeated from previous material, plus 64 new meaning items, of which eight are cognates, four are proper names, and seven are onomatopoeic.
7	25 Supplementary Stories	Important words of the second reader, plus words from first reader, and other easily recognized words.
8	*At school* (third reader)	139 meaning items repeated from previous material, plus 96 new items, of which 13 are cognates, 5 are proper names, and one is onomatopoeic.
9	25 Supplementary Stories	Important words of the third reader, plus words from first and second readers, *Mother's Day*, and other easily recognized words.

* Extracted from *Guide for the teaching of English reading in the third grade*, p. 5.

not resulting in enjoyment of the reading process were not successful and (2) children learned to read by reading.

The curricular guide explained that reading in both the native and foreign language necessitated subject matter that was relevant to pupils, aroused their curiosity, and repeated key vocabulary throughout (cf. Krashen's "meaningful input"). Once general reading skills were developed in the native language, they transferred over to the new language. However, teachers of English reading in Puerto Rico had to keep in mind that mastery of English vocabulary and construc-

tions could not be assumed unless they had been specifically taught or were similar to already known Spanish elements.

The reading curriculum emphasized the creation of textual materials by the children themselves, either via preparing illustrations that the teacher helped to put into words or by dictating stories to the teacher who wrote them down. These stories would be collected and put into book format. A reading environment was created by labeling classroom items so students associated word shapes with sounds they had already learned. Flashcards, games, song lyrics, calendars, and other common items provided further reading practice. Student mastery of new words and constructions in oral and written form was tracked via checklists.

The reader *To Puerto Rico* (like all the readers) was accompanied by a workbook. Guidance was given as to how to deal with pupils who did not yet have reading readiness, how to teach about cultural experiences like flying in a plane and living in New York, and how to interest students in the topic. The general procedure was to have two readings: the first, silent, and the second, silent or oral. If oral, it was linked to an interactive group activity or a game. Extremely detailed lesson plans were included, with suggested explanations to the class in English. The teacher was asked to use his/her judgment as to the use of Spanish:

> The use of Spanish should be reduced to the minimum necessary to insure comprehension. Any idea that at first has to be put into Spanish, should be repeated in English; and the next time the same idea is to be expressed, English should be used exclusively. (*Guide for the teaching of English reading in the third grade*, p. 27)

The third grade guide also contained 25 supplementary stories, which gave the students more repetition of the important vocabulary in *To Puerto Rico* and provided compelling material for independent reading. The goal was for every child to complete the entire set, and each student kept a record of the stories read. The stories also permitted the teacher to conduct a supervised reading session with one group while another group read silently. The stories were left on the library tables so that the children could read them whenever they had free time.

The second reader (*On the farm*) was taught in much the same manner, except that new vocabulary not in *To Puerto Rico*, the workbook, or the supplementary stories was introduced in context. The

third grade guide listed every new word, and indicated which were to be mastered at this time and which were incidental and would be reintroduced for mastery at a higher level. Some of the new words introduced in the second reader included: names of farm animals, verbs like *get up, run, ride*, and *play*, and agricultural terms like *farm*, *grass*, and *sugar cane*. Since the same people appeared in all the readers, the teacher would take time to make that connection in the children's minds, thus stimulating their curiosity about what would happen next to the familiar characters. The second reader was supplemented by a workbook and additional stories, and followed the same procedure as the first reader.

The third reader (*At school*) introduced more new vocabulary, including the verbs *get ready, let, laugh, give, ring, hear, speak, want, know,* and *drink,* the auxiliaries *can, do, have, may*, and all the forms of *be*, contractions, and words related to classrooms, lunchrooms, and birthday parties. Once again, the reader was connected to the preceding two readers, new vocabulary was introduced in context, and readings were carried out with increasingly interactive classroom activities. Students were constantly questioned in order to ascertain mastery of the vocabulary and its use. Drawings and pantomime were used extensively in presenting new vocabulary, and role playing was used to reinforce what was learned. The supplementary stories that accompanied the third reader followed the established procedure.

The third grade guide provided the teacher with a frequency distribution for all vocabulary items and where they appeared in the three readers, the workbooks, and the supplementary stories. The vocabulary list was marked for mastery or incidental use, and cognate words were indicated.

In 1948, the fourth grade reading materials were implemented, using the same groups that had tried out the third grade materials during the preceding year. In a letter dated July 29, 1948, Richardson addressed the supervisory officials and teachers, reminding them of the basic principles of the English Institute curriculum, namely:

1. Our most important aim is to make English reading a pleasurable activity for the pupils.
2. Children learn to read by reading. In introducing new words, use the blackboard as much as possible.
3. New words should be introduced in context rather than in isolation.
4. New constructions are just as important as new words.

5. The second reading of any passage should have a different motivation from the first reading.
6. Although oral reading should not be neglected, much more time should be given to silent reading.
7. Oral discussion should be used as a stimulus toward reading not as a substitution for it.

The fourth grade curriculum added a new reader titled *Flying to Miami* and written by Francisca Méndez, Providencia García de la Noceda, and María Príncipe from the Department of Education, as well as more supplementary stories and a page-by-page list of the new words introduced in the reader.

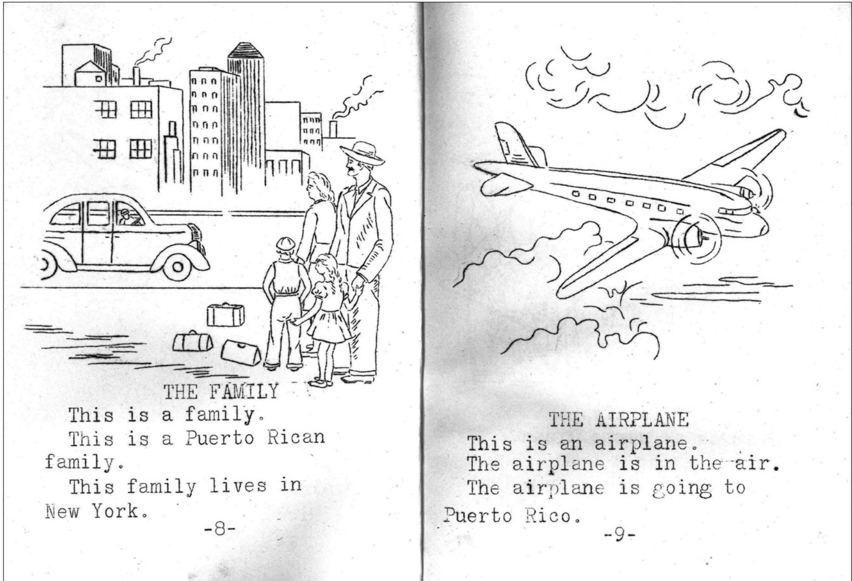
Other activities of the English Institute

The English Institute not only produced a curriculum and set of readers, but also designed teaching manuals, carried out linguistic studies (cf. Richardson, 1945), and functioned as a training organism for English teachers. The summer workshops held in 1945 and 1946 prepared English teachers and supervisors with instruction in the most recent second language teaching methodologies.

Evaluation of pilot project

A reading achievement test based on the third grade curriculum was given in May of 1948 to 9 urban and 10 rural classes which were trying out the grade three curriculum (674 students) and to 11 urban and 12 rural classes which were following the regular course of study (526 students). The urban try-out groups (298 students) were in Arroyo, Barranquitas, Cataño, Manatí, Ponce, Río Grande, Río Piedras, and San Juan, and the rural try-out groups (376 students) were in Aguas Buenas, Bayamón, Carolina, Coamo, Naguabo, San Sebastián, and Toa Baja. The regular course groups were located in urban areas of Camuy, Comerío, Mayagüez, and Trujillo Alto (267 students) and in rural areas of Camuy, Comerío, and Trujillo Alto (259 students).

The test was based on the 161 words included in the third grade experimental curriculum, 145 of which also appeared on the 600-word vocabulary list of the Department of Education for grades 1-3. It consisted of two parts: Section A, based on 95 words from the experimental curriculum, and Section B, based on 159 words from the regular curriculum, which included the 95 in the experimental curriculum. Each section contained 30 vocabulary items and 14 reading items. In the part titled "¿Qué quiere decir?" students had to give the Spanish



THE FAMILY

This is a family.
This is a Puerto Rican family.
This family lives in New York.

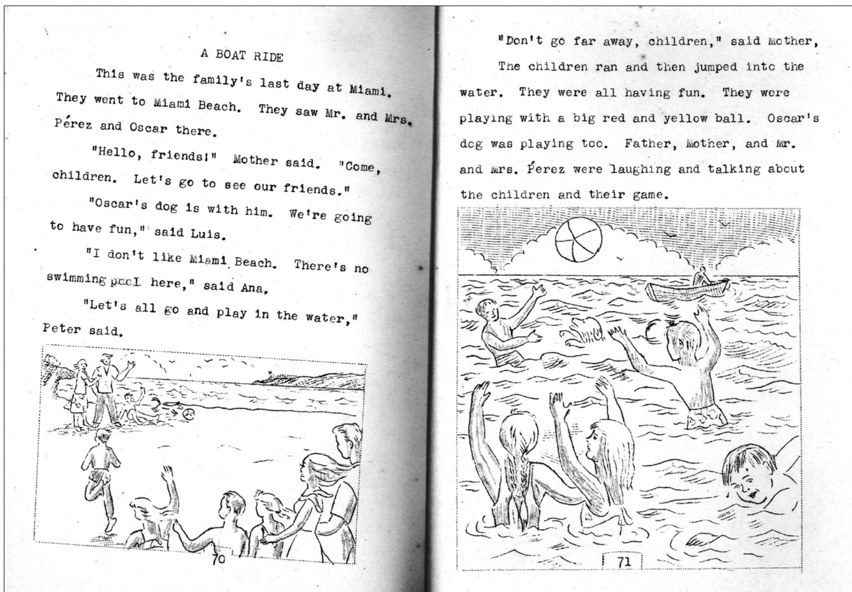
-8-

THE AIRPLANE

This is an airplane.
The airplane is in the air.
The airplane is going to Puerto Rico.

-9-

Flying to Miami reader



A BOAT RIDE

This was the family's last day at Miami. They went to Miami Beach. They saw Mr. and Mrs. Pérez and Oscar there.

"Hello, friends!" Mother said. "Come, children. Let's go to see our friends."

"Oscar's dog is with him. We're going to have fun," said Luis.

"I don't like Miami Beach. There's no swimming pool here," said Ana.

"Let's all go and play in the water," Peter said.

70

"Don't go far away, children," said Mother.

The children ran and then jumped into the water. They were all having fun. They were playing with a big red and yellow ball. Oscar's dog was playing too. Father, Mother, and Mr. and Mrs. Pérez were laughing and talking about the children and their game.

71

meaning of 60 English vocabulary items. In the parts titled "Cuentos para leer" and "Más cuentos para leer," students had to select Spanish sentences that were true according to the English selections read. All directions and all multiple-choice answers were in Spanish.

Tests were scored by the English Institute. A perfect paper received a score of 227, of which 115 points came from vocabulary items and 112 from reading items. Vocabulary, reading, and total scores were computed, and comparisons made between rural and urban and between try-out and regular-course pupils. The results indicated that the try-out groups did better than the regular-course groups in both urban and rural schools. In fact, the rural try-out groups out-performed the urban regular-course students. The evidence indicated the success of the third grade experimental curriculum in developing vocabulary skills.

Implementation efforts by the Department of Education

In 1949, the English Institute was transferred to the Department of Public Instruction (the new name of the Department of Education).[6] Richardson was asked to continue as director, but expert Charles Fries was invited to Puerto Rico as an educational consultant, and his highly successful and well-promoted approach to English developed at the University of Michigan's English Language Institute undercut the efforts of Richardson's English Institute.[7] The *Fries American English* series was produced by Paulina Rojas, Charles Fries, and Adrian Hull in 1952 and adopted as the official ESL text in Puerto Rico. It had teachers' guides and different levels, and was used continuously until the 1960s. There was intense pressure to purchase ESL textbooks from U.S. publishers, and the locally produced, rustic readers of Richardson's English Institute could not compete with the glossy commercial products of D. C. Heath & Company.

Aftermath

After the experience of the English Institute, Richardson felt quite let down. He had dedicated six years of work to the project, only to have the most creative aspect of it, the new curriculum, be passed over in favor of the Fries curriculum. He was asked to continue working with the English program at the Department of Public Instruction, but it appears to have been a *pro forma* offer, and he turned it down and dedicated himself to working as Vice President of the Puerto Rican Teachers Association until 1953. At that point, when it was clear that

his ascension to the presidency of the Association was blocked, he turned his attention again to his university duties.

Implications of the pilot program

The English Institute program had some very positive elements that curriculum planners today would do well to incorporate into their designs.

Cultural relevance — The readers and supplementary stories were all based on local Puerto Rican cultural references. For example, all characters, even animals, had Spanish names. There was constant reference to local food like *arroz con pollo*, *arroz con dulce*, rice and beans, mangos, and coconuts. All buildings pictured were of Puerto Rican architectural style, both rural and urban, and all flora and fauna were Puerto Rican. Common local experiences were referred to. For example, Lydia became sick with malaria, the children played in Muñoz Rivera Park, and Victor lived on Avenida Muñoz Rivera. Local practices like making kites of bamboo and paper dolls were featured. The stories also mentioned the ongoing war in Europe, since soldiers were garrisoned on the island. There was only one glaring cultural error in the readers — the use of an illustration of Taínos living in what appears to be a wigwam instead of a *bohío*.

Low cost — The materials produced by the English Institute were all hand-drawn, black and white, typed, and mimeographed with simple beige covers stapled by hand. The emphasis was on the quality of the teaching, not on a fancy presentation.

Teacher involvement — Teachers were involved from the very outset, first via English workshops and then throughout the project with materials testing, check lists regarding quality of materials and potential problems, and the final project evaluation. Without the constant participation of the teachers, the project would never have advanced as far as it did. This is in direct contrast to current practices, in which textbook selection and ordering are centralized and involve little teacher participation. Teachers basically learn about new materials when the Department of Education calls them in for an in-service training on how to use them.

Focus on oral English until third grade — A key aspect of the English Institute that the schools today would do well to imitate was the development of oral English in the first and second grades while the children were cementing their Spanish literacy skills, followed by the introduction of English reading in the third grade.

Richardson about 1957.

Interest in broader problem of English in Puerto Rico — The English Institute work group had a holistic view of the problem of English teaching in Puerto Rico. They understood that it was not enough to look at elementary school children, so they carried out a study titled *Factors associated with English illiteracy among the Puerto Rican draft* (circa 1945). They discovered that the school grade completed was the single most important factor in determining the English literacy score of the soldiers at Camp Reilly. Only three men with less than a 7th grade education passed both of the Army's English tests, underscoring the need to improve the methods and materials of the elementary school curriculum in Puerto Rico as well as to expand adult education.

Conclusion

Richardson's English Institute represented an earnest and dedicated attempt to make the teaching of English to Puerto Rican children an enjoyable yet structured experience. The project was culturally relevant, low cost, and comprehensive, and involved teachers at every point in the planning and implementation. It is a pity that so few people know this story, because knowledge of the project, its materials,

and its methodologies would certainly have aided in the development of the English curriculum of Puerto Rico after the establishment of the *Estado Libre Asociado* and the implementation of Spanish as the medium of instruction at all levels in the public schools of the island.

It is hoped that the information which has been presented here both honors the historical legacy of the English Institute and informs the architects of future curricular projects in Puerto Rico. It is vital that language education projects such as this one do not disappear from public consciousness, since collective societal amnesia generally results in an erroneous conviction that the linguistic and educational issues have never been dealt with before and fosters a "reinvention of the wheel" syndrome that does not contribute to efficient progress in language education policy and practice.

REFERENCES

Ayala, C. J. & Bernabe, R. (2007). *Puerto Rico in the American century: A history since 1898.* Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Cebollero, P. (1945). *A school policy for Puerto Rico.* San Juan, Puerto Rico: Imprenta Baldrich.

Chardón, C. E. (1998). Education. In L. D. Bender. (Ed.), *The American presence in Puerto Rico* (pp. 206-225). Hato Rey, PR: Publicaciones Puertorriqueñas.

English Institute. (circa 1945). *Factors associated with English illiteracy among the Puerto Rican draft.* Unpublished mimeographed study. San Juan, PR: Author.

English Institute. (1946). *Guide for the teaching of oral English in the first grade* [Mimeo]. San Juan, PR: Author.

English Institute. (1947). *Guide for the teaching of oral English in the second grade* [Mimeo]. San Juan, PR: Author.

English Institute. (1947). *Guide for the teaching of English reading in the third grade* [Mimeo]. San Juan, PR: Author.

Fife, H. & Manuel, H. T. (1951). *The teaching of English in Puerto Rico.* San Juan, PR: Department of Education Press.

Fries, C. C. (1945). *Teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Giró sobre el inglés vista del Comité Chávez (1943, February 20). *El Mundo,* p. 2.

International Institute of Teachers College. (1926). *A survey of the public educational system of Porto Rico*. New York, NY: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Mackey, W. (1953). English teaching in Puerto Rico. *English Language Teaching Journal,* 8 (1), 12-15.

Mohr, E. V. (1988). *Lewis C. Richardson: A man of principle*. Rio Piedras, PR: University of Puerto Rico Press.

Muñiz Souffront, L. (1950). *El problema del idioma en Puerto Rico.* San Juan: Biblioteca de Autores Puertorriqueños.

Negrón de Montilla, M. (1970). *Americanization in Puerto Rico and the public school system, 19001930.* Río Piedras: Editorial Edil.

Osuna, J. J. (1949). *A history of education in Puerto Rico.* Rio Piedras: University of Puerto Rico Press.

Padín, J. (1916). *The problem of teaching English to the people of Puerto Rico.* San Juan: Bureau of Supplies, Printing and Transportation.

Padín, J. (1935). *English in Puerto Rico*. Reprinted from the *Puerto Rico School Review*.

Protesta por el veto de Truman fue ordenada (1946, November 9). *El Mundo.*

Richardson, L. C. (1945). *The English verb.* Unpublished manuscript.

Rojas, P. M., Fries, C. C., & Hull, A. L. (1952). *Fries American English series for the study of English as a Second Language, book one.* Boston: D. C. Heath & Co.

Roosevelt, F. D. (1937). Letter on teaching English in Puerto Rico. April 7, 1937. Retrieved from: http:/www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws?pid=15386

Torres González, R. (2002). *Idioma, bilingüismo y nacionalidad: La presencia del inglés en Puerto Rico.* San Juan, PR: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico.

University of Michigan, English Language Institute (ELI). (2006). *History: On the occasion of its 65th birthday, June 21, 2006.* Retrieved from: http://www.lsa.umich.edu/eli/aboutus/history

Van Deusen, E. K. (1926). *Stories of Porto Rico.* New York: Silver, Burdett & Company.

NOTES

1 Martín G. Brumbaugh (1900–1902), Samuel McCune Lindsay (1902–1904), Ronald R. Falkner (1904–1907), Edwin G. Dexter (1907–1912), Edward M. Bainter (1912–1915), Paul G. Miller (1915–1921), Juan B. Huyke (1921–1929), José Padín (1930–1936), H. A. Martin (1937–1937), José M. Gallardo (1937–1945), Mariano Villaronga (1946–1947), Francisco Collazo (1947–1948).

2 In actuality, Roland P. Falkner (Commissioner of Education 1904-1907) was only able to implement the English policy in about 47% of the schools. Another 27% had some instruction in English, and the remaining 25% (mostly rural) had all instruction in Spanish (Osuna, 1949, p. 345-347).

3 English should be taught in Puerto Rico, and it should be taught well, but the wisdom of dedicating a great part of the limited class time to English […] is debatable from the point of view of English itself, from the point of

view of other school subjects, and from the point of view of the economy [author's translation].

4 In this regard, the English Institute anticipated the "silent approach" created by Caleb Gattegno in 1963 and Stephen Krashen's "silent period" which was a cornerstone of the natural approach of the 1970s and 1980s.

5 Here we see the influence of the audiolingual approach dominant at the time.

6 The name would revert back to Department of Education in 1990.

7 The English Language Institute at the University of Michigan was founded by Charles C. Fries with a $3,000 Rockefeller Foundation grant in 1941 and 13 students from Latin America. In 1943, 45 students were enrolled, and by 1946, 750 students had passed through the ELI (University of Michigan, ELI, 2006). In 1945, Fries published *Teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language*, which established the theoretical basis for his later textbooks. In that decade, he also published *An intensive course in English for Latin American students*, which included oral pattern practice, lessons in vocabulary, and English sentence patterns. This became known as the Michigan Method and was imitated in universities all over the world.

Fecha de recepción: marzo 2014
Fecha de aceptación: mayo 2014