it is the first person singular pronoun. If a person speaks the sentence

shí naashnish,

he is claiming that he himself is performing the act of working.

In the last sentence, the subject is the person being spoken to -- the second person singular pronoun /ni/ refers to the person to whom the sentence is addressed, so that if a person says

ni nanilnish

to another person, he is stating that this second person is performing the act of working.

We have pointed out already that there is a rule in Navajo which provides that a verb must agree with its subject in person. So, if the subject is /shi/ 'I', the verb must have the first person singular marker /-sh-/ immediately before the classifier:

\[
\text{shí} \quad \text{na-sh-1-nish.}
\]

**(pronounced: shí naashnish)**

'I am working'

And if the subject is /ni/ 'you', the verb must have the second person singular marker /-ni-/ immediately before the classifier:

\[
\text{ni} \quad \text{na-ni-1-nish}
\]

**(pronounced: ni nanilnish)**

'you are working'
But if the subject is third person (i.e., refers not to the speaker or person being addressed but rather to a third person), then the verb must have zero in the person marker slot in front of the classifier. Third person subjects can be any noun, like /'ashkii/ 'boy', /dibé/ 'sheep', /dinê/ 'person', or it can be the third person pronoun /bí/ 'he, she, it':

/'ashkii na-Ø-1-nish.\hline
(pronounced: /'ashkii naalnish)\hline
'The boy is working.'\hline

/bí na-Ø-1-nish.\hline
(pronounced: bí naalnish)\hline
'He (or she) is working.'\hline

(I use the symbol Ø to represent zero -- i.e., no prefix at all.)

The first and second nonsingular forms work the same way. Actually, the pronouns are the same in both cases -- thus, /nihi/ means 'we' or 'you (more than one)'. The pronoun /nihi/, in the meaning 'we' (i.e., the first person nonsingular pronoun), requires that the verb have the first person nonsingular subject marker /-ii-/ before the classifier. Thus:

/nihi na-ii-1-nish.\hline
(pronounced: nihi neiiilnish)\hline
'We are working.'\hline
And the pronoun /nihi/ in the meaning 'you (more than one)' (i.e., the second person nonsingular pronoun) requires that the verb have the second person nonsingular subject marker /-oh-/ before the classifier:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{nihi} \\
\text{na-oh-1-nish} \\
\hline
\text{requires} \\
\text{(pronounced: nihi naaínish)}
\end{array}
\]

'You (more than one) are working.'

All verbs in Navajo can occur in sentences with a subject. But some verbs can also take an object. The verb /...-tał/ 'to kick' is one of these. Thus, /...-tał/ appears in sentences like the following:

'ashkii žééchą́ą́'í yiztał.
'The boy kicked the dog.'

įįį dzaanééz yiztał.
'The horse kicked the mule.'

In these sentences, the first word is the subject. Thus, in the first sentence, /'ashkii/ 'the boy' is performing the act of kicking; and in the second sentence, /įįί/ 'the horse' is performing the act of kicking.

The second word in these sentences is the object. By object we mean the one that is affected by the action -- in this case, the one that gets kicked. In the first sentence, /žééchą́ą́'í/
'the dog' is the object because it is the one which is affected by the act of kicking; and in the second sentence, it is /dzaanééz/ 'the mule' that is affected by the action.

Now there is another rule in Navajo which states that when both the subject and object are third person, the verb form must have a prefix in it referring to the object. In the sentences just examined, this prefix is /yi-/:

'ashkii lééchą́ʼi yi-z-táą́.  

'The boy kicked the dog.'

/ifí/ dzaanééz yi-z-táą́.  

'The horse kicked the mule.'

We can call this prefix /yi-/ the third person object marker.

Now, if the subject of a sentence is first or second person and the object is third person, the third person object marker is not used:

(shí) lééchą́ʼi šé-táą́.  

'I kicked the dog.'

(ní) lééchą́ʼi šéiní-táą́.  

'You kicked the dog.'

(I use the symbol ø here to indicate that no object person marker appears at the beginning of the verb.)
The prefix /yi-/ is not the only object person marker in Navajo. If the object of a verb is first or second person, then the verb must have a prefix referring to it. Consider now, the sentence:

'ashkii (shí) si-z-taƚ

'The boy kicked me.'

The prefix /si-/ is the **first person singular object** marker, and it is required in the verb if the object is first person singular — i.e., if it is the speaker that is affected by the action which the verb describes:

'ashkii (shí) \[\underline{\text{si-z-taƚ}}\]

\[\underline{\text{requires}}\]

'The boy kicked me.'

Actually, the abstract representation of this prefix is /shi-/ but there is a phonological rule which turns sh to s if one of the sounds s, z, ts, or dz appears later in the word. This rule converts the underlying abstract form

shi-z-taƚ

to

si-z-taƚ

because of the z. If there is no s, z, ts, dz, then the first
person singular object marker remains as /shi-/ -- for example:

'ashkii shidootaɫ.

'The boy will kick me.'

The object person markers for the other persons are as follows:

ni- second person singular object
nihi- first person nonsingular object
nihi- second person nonsingular object

I would like now to present another fact about Navajo grammar. Let us consider again the sentence

\[\text{'dzaanéez yi-z-taɬ.}\]

'The horse kicked the mule.'

Notice that the words of this sentence are in the following order:

SUBJECT OBJECT VERB.

That is, first comes the Subject /dzaanéez/ 'horse', then comes the Object /dzaanéez/ 'mule', and finally the Verb /yi-z-taɬ/ 'he kicked him'.

Now, there is a rule in Navajo which states that the order of the subject and the object can be reversed -- i.e., you can switch the subject and object so that they appear in the following order:

OBJECT SUBJECT VERB
Let us call this rule **subject-object switch**. When this rule is applied, the **third person object marker** /yi-/ must change to /bi-/. If we apply this rule to the sentence

```plaintext
dff dzaanéez yi-z-tañ
'The horse kicked the mule.'
```

we get:

```plaintext
dzaanéez dff bi-z-tañ.
```

This sentence means the same thing -- it is still the horse that does the kicking and the mule that gets kicked. But notice one important thing -- the object marker /yi-/ must be changed to /bi-/ when the subject and object are switched. If this is not done, the sentence will have a different meaning. Thus, the sentence

```plaintext
dzaanéez dff yi-z-tañ.
```

means that the mule kicked the horse.

We have mentioned many kinds of rules in this discussion. Some of the rules have to do with pronunciation; they are used to convert the abstract representations of words into the forms which are actually spoken -- these are the phonological rules. But there is another kind of rule which we have also seen. For example, there is the rule which states that a verb must agree in person with its subject. We call this a **syntactic rule** -- it is a rule of the **syntax**. Syntax is the part of grammar which has to do with
how morphemes are put together to construct correct sentences.

Another syntactic rule is **subject-object switch**. This is also a rule having to do with the arrangement of morphemes in sentences -- it reorders the words in a sentence and changes the third person object marker from /yi-/ to /bi-/.

The rule which provides that a verb agrees in person with its subject is an **obligatory rule** -- that is to say, it must apply. If it does not apply, then a sentence is bad. Thus, if the subject of a sentence is /shí/, the verb **must** contain a first person marker:

```
shí
  na-sh-l-nish.
```

(pronounced: shí naashnish)

'I am working.'

If not, the sentence is incorrect:

```
*shí
  na-Ø-l-nish
```

(pronounced: *shí naalnish)

Now the rule of **subject-object switch** is different. It is not always obligatory. Normally you can apply it or not, as you wish -- it is **optional**. It does not matter whether you say

```
ifi dzaanééz yíztaľ
```

or

```
dzaanééz ifi biztaľ.
```
Both are good sentences, and both mean that the mule was kicked by the horse.

Sometimes, however, the rule appears to be obligatory. Consider, for example, the way one says 'to drown' in Navajo. One says that the water kills someone. But you cannot say:

\[ *\text{tó} \ '\text{ashkii yiyiisxį́.} \]

'Water killed the boy.'

You must apply the rule of subject-object switch. This gives the correct form:

\[ '\text{ashkii tó biisxį́.} \]

'The boy was drowned (by water).'</n

There are also cases in which the rule cannot apply. Consider, for example, the sentence

\[ '\text{ashkii 'atsį́ 'yilghai.} \]

'The boy is eating the meat.'

Here, the subject is '/ashkii/ 'the boy', since it is the boy that is doing the act of eating; and the object is '/atsį́/ 'meat' - i.e., the meat is being affected by the action described in the verb; it is being eaten. The verb of this sentence is '/yilghai/ 'he is eating it', and it begins with the third person object marker /yi-/.

Now, if you try to apply subject-object switch in this case, the result is a sentence which does not sound very good:

\[ *\text{'atsį́ 'ashkii bilghai.} \]
We can see, therefore, that the ways in which the rule of subject-object switch is used in Navajo are somewhat complicated -- under some conditions it is optional, under other conditions it is obligatory, and under still other conditions it cannot apply at all. The question is, what are these conditions? This is another interesting problem in Navajo grammar which is not completely understood yet.

Recall my mentioning that one of the things a linguist does is what we might call abstracting. He tries to look below the surface of linguistic forms in order to see the structure which is hidden underneath. We have seen many examples of this in our study of the few Navajo verb forms we have considered. For example, we proposed that the underlying abstract representation of the verb form

naashnish

'I am working'

is something like

na-sh-l-nish.

The reason why we did this is an important one in linguistics. One of the most important tasks of the linguistic scientist is to discover the most general statements possible concerning the linguistic forms which exist in the language he studies. By proposing that there is an l-classifier in

naashnish

even though it is not pronounced when the word is spoken, the
are actually spoken with the words in that order:

SUBJECT OBJECT VERB

' dzaanéez yiztał
(horse mule he-kicked-him)

'The horse kicked the mule.'

But this sentence can also be said as follows, with the object first:

OBJECT SUBJECT VERB

dzaanéez ' t' biztał
(mule horse he-was-kicked-by-him)

'The mule was kicked by the horse.'

We say, however, that both sentences have an abstract structure in which the subject precedes the object:

SUBJECT OBJECT VERB

This is the most general statement about the structure of Navajo sentences -- this general statement is universally true, however, only at the most abstract level. This abstract structure can be modified by syntactic rules like subject-object switch which convert abstract structures (or deep structures, they are often called) into actual structures (or surface structures). The rule of subject-object switch belongs to a class of syntactic rules which are known as transformations. Transformations are rules which convert deep structures into surface structures. The deep structures of both of the sentences
linguist is able to make a very general statement about the forms of the verb 'to work' in Navajo -- it always takes the l-classifier.

The same thing is true of all of the other cases in which we have proposed abstract forms. Altogether, these abstractions we have made permit us to make a number of general statements about the structure of the Navajo verb. Some of these are:

(1) All Navajo verb forms have a stem. The stem is the final element in the verb form.

(2) The position directly in front of the stem is occupied by the classifier.

(3) The position directly in front of the classifier is occupied by the subject person marker.

(4) The position directly in front of the person marker is occupied by the morpheme indicating the mode of the verb.

This is, of course, not the whole story of the Navajo verb, but it is a good beginning toward an understanding of it.

The study of the Navajo verb will continue for many years before all of the general statements which can be made about it are discovered. The verb is not the only area of Navajo grammar in which generalizations must be discovered. Consider, for example, the structure of simple sentences which have both subjects and objects in them. We would like to be able to make a general statement about their structure. We might say, for instance, that they always have the basic structure.

SUBJECT OBJECT VERB.

Now we are able to do this only if we mean that abstractly every such sentence has that structure. We know that many sentences
have the subject before the object. In the first sentence, the subject-object switch rule has not applied -- that is to say, the words of the sentence have remained in the order which they had in the deep structure. But in the second sentence, the rule of subject-object switch has applied to change the order of words from the deep structure order (SUBJECT OBJECT VERB) to the surface structure order (OBJECT SUBJECT VERB). At the same time, the rule changes the third person object person marker from /yi-/ to /bi-/

By theorizing that the rule of subject-object switch exists in the grammar of Navajo, we are able to make the following generalization (i.e., statement which holds generally) about word-order in Navajo sentences:

"At the most abstract level of representation, a sentence which has both a subject and an object exhibits the word order:
SUBJECT OBJECT VERB."

Another generalization which we have implied all along is that:

"All sentences in Navajo have a subject."

However, we have seen many sentences which have no subjects in them -- in fact some sentences consist only of a verb form. The verb form
naashnish

'I am working'

can stand alone as a perfectly good sentence in Navajo. We know that the subject is first person singular, because of the prefix /-sh-/ which appears in the word, but there is no separate word functioning as subject in the sentence. However, when we imply that there is a subject in every Navajo sentence, we mean that there is some separate element in the sentence which functions as the subject. When we say this, though, we are speaking of the abstract representation of sentences. In the case of the sentence

naashnish

'I am working.'

we claim that the subject is /shi/, and that there is a more abstract representation of the sentence in which the pronoun /shi/ actually appears:

shi naashnish

'I am working.'

Such sentences can be spoken this way in Navajo; but in normal, unemphatic speech, the pronoun is deleted. This involves another transformational rule, which we might call pronoun deletion. The rule of pronoun deletion applies to

shi naashnish

and converts it to:
naashnish.

The rule not only deletes subject pronouns, but object pronouns as well. Thus it converts

'ashkii shí siztaį.

'The boy kicked me.'

into

'ashkii siztaį.

And it converts

ni shí sisínitaį.

'You kicked me.'

into

sisínitaį.

by deleting both the subject pronoun /ni/ and the object pronoun /shí/.

By supposing that there is a rule of pronoun deletion in Navajo, we are able to make the general claim that all sentences have a subject -- that is, abstractly, they do. Thus, we can say that the abstract structure which underlies the sentence

naashnish.

'I am working.'
resembles that of a more "complete" sentence like

'ashkii naalnish.
 'The boy is working.'

in that both sentences have a subject:

SUBJECT VERB
(shí) naashnish.
 'ashkii naalnish.

A similar situation holds for sentences which take objects. We can say that the sentence

'ashkii siztał.
 'The boy kicked me'

has an abstract structure resembling that of the sentence

'ashkii šééçhàʾi yiztał
 'The boy kicked the dog.'

in that both sentences have an object:

SUBJECT OBJECT VERB
'ashkii (shí) siztał.
 'ashkii šééçhàʾi yiztał.
(Actually, the claim that all sentences have subjects may be wrong. We are relatively certain that there is a subject, abstractly speaking, in sentences like

(shí) naashnish.

'I am working.'

(níhí) k'i'dohlé.

'You (more than one) are planting.'

But for some kinds of sentences we are not sure that there is really a subject in the abstract underlying form. What, for example, are the subjects in the following sentences?

nahaítin.

'It is raining.'

deesk'aaž.

'It is cold.'

Perhaps the reader can suggest what the abstract subject should be in these cases, if there is one.)

3. The preceding section contains a rather long discussion of a few aspects of Navajo grammar. However, only a minute portion of the grammar was discussed; only a tiny number of facts about the Navajo language were touched upon. This will give you an idea of the richness of Navajo grammatical structure -- in fact, the wealth of structure in Navajo is virtually endless, and the study
of this wealth will probably never be complete. Actually, this is true of any language, but Navajo is particularly rich and intricate.

In the preceding section, my purpose was to illustrate two concepts -- the concept morpheme (i.e., meaningful element) and the concept rule of grammar. We are now in a position to give a more exact characterization of the knowledge which enables a person to speak and understand the sentences of his language:

"A person's knowledge of his language consists, in part, of:

(i) a knowledge of the morphemes of the language, and

(ii) a knowledge of the rules used to construct correct words, phrases and sentences in the language."

We refer to this knowledge all together as the grammar of the language. We also use the term grammar to refer to the theory which the linguist constructs to represent this knowledge.

So far, I have not indicated what a grammatical theory might look like. As in other sciences, so in linguistics, once we have an idea of the nature of our subject matter, we try to develop a formal representation of it. In the case of language, we know that rules are needed. Once we have an idea of what the rules in a language are, we try to find a formal expression of them.

In this section, I would like, very briefly, to give an idea of how some of the facts of Navajo grammar might be expressed formally. In the discussion, I will be using extremely simple examples, like

diné naalnish.

'The man is working.'
You might complain that these sentences are too simple to be interesting. You might be inclined to think that no one uses such simple sentences anyway, so why study the way they are constructed? The reply to this is as follows: we must know the structure of all the simple sentences of a language, because all complex sentences are formed by combining simple sentences in various ways. Consider, for example, the complex sentence

\[ \text{dine} \text{ naalnish} + \text{'z} \text{ dzaan} + \text{'z bizta} + \text{'z}. \]

'The man that was working was kicked by the mule.'

This sentence is built out of the two sentences:

\[ \text{dine} \text{ naalnish \text{ ('nt}'\text{'e}').} \]

'The man is \text{ (was) working}.'

\[ \text{dine} \text{ dzaan} + \text{'z bizta} + \text{'z}. \]

'The man was kicked by the mule.'

A lot of actual speech consists of complex sentences; but in all cases, those complex sentences are constructed by combining simple ones. Let us consider one more example to illustrate that fact:

\[ \text{dib}\text{'e yazi} + \text{'z' yiyaagi sizinigii} \text{ nahji} + \text{'z naa'oolyeed}. \]

'Chase that lamb off that is standing under the horse' (from: Young and Morgan, \textit{A Vocabulary of Colloquial Navaho}, p. 169)

This sentence is composed of the following two simpler sentences:
dibé yázhí hii' yiyaagi sizí.
'The lamb is standing under the horse.'

dibé yázhí nahji' naa'oolyedad.
'Chase the lamb off.'

There are many ways of combining simple sentences to construct complex sentences in Navajo, and we will not have time to examine them here. The point of this illustration is simply to demonstrate the importance of simple sentences in Navajo (or any language) -- they are the foundation of everything else.

One of the obvious facts about any sentence is that it has a structure. Consider again sentences of the following extremely simple type:

diné naalnish.
'The man is working.'

'awéé' yicha.
'The baby is crying.'

'at'ééd dilghosh.
'The girl is shouting.'

'ashkii naabé.
'The boy is swimming around.'

All of these sentences have a similar structure -- they consist of two parts. In each sentence, the first part is a noun (functioning
as the subject), and the second part is a verb.

Now let us make the sentences slightly more complicated by adding another element:

nagháí diné naalnish.

'That man is working.'

dií 'awée' yicha.

'This baby is crying.'

dií 'at'ééd dilghosh.

'This girl is shouting.'

nééi 'ashkii naabé.

'That boy (over there) is swimming around.'

These sentences still have a subject and a verb, but in this case, the subject is not just a noun by itself, but rather a noun phrase consisting of a determiner plus a noun. (The term determiner is used for words like /nagháí/ 'that', and /dií/ 'this'.) We can describe the structures of all of these sentences by saying that their primary parts are a noun phrase followed by a verb. Let us use the abbreviation NP for noun phrase, the abbreviation V for verb, and the abbreviation D for determiner. And we will use the abbreviation S for sentence.

One kind of rule which is needed in the description of any language is the kind that specifies the parts which structures have and what the relationship among the parts is. In this case, we want the rules of the grammar to provide the following structures for our sentences:
\[
S \\
\text{NP} \\
\text{N}
\]

'awéé' yicha
'The baby is crying.'

\[
S \\
\text{NP} \\
\text{D} \\
\text{N} \\
\text{V}
\]

díí 'awéé' yicha
'This baby is crying.'

In other words, we want the grammar to state that the sentence

'awéé' yicha.

consists of a noun phrase (NP) followed by a verb (V):

\[
S \\
\text{NP} \\
\text{V}
\]

and that the NP in this case consists of a noun (N) alone:

\[
\text{NP} \\
\text{N}
\]
And in the case of the sentence
díí 'awéé' yicha.

we want the grammar to state that it consists of a noun phrase followed by a verb:

```
  S
 /\  
NP V
```

and that the noun phrase in this case consists of a determiner (D) followed by a noun (N):

```
  NP
 /\  
D N
```

What we need, then, are rules that state these facts -- i.e., rules that provide these structures.

Let us propose, therefore, that Navajo has the following rules:

Rule-1: \[ S \rightarrow NP \ V \]

Rule-2: \[ NP \rightarrow (D) \ N \]

Rules of this kind are known as phrase structure rules (or PS-rules, for short). They provide the basic abstract structures of sentences. Rule-1 above states that a sentence consists of a noun phrase (NP) followed by a verb (V); and Rule-2 states that a noun phrase has a noun in it, and it may have a determiner. The symbol D appears in parentheses () to indicate that a determiner can appear in the noun phrase but doesn't have to.
The way these rules apply to develop sentence structures can be thought of in the following way. Start with the symbol S. Apply Rule-1 to this symbol by writing the sequence NP V underneath the S. This gives you

\[ S \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
  NP \\
  V 
\end{array} \]

Now draw lines connecting S to the elements it consists of. This gives

\[ S \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
  NP \\
  V 
\end{array} \]

Now apply Rule-2 to the symbol NP by writing either N alone or the sequence D N under the NP. Now, drawing the connecting lines as before, this will give you either

\[ S \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
  NP \\
  V \\
  N 
\end{array} \]

or (if you chose to take a determiner)

\[ S \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
  NP \\
  V \\
  D \\
  N 
\end{array} \]
Now these configurations (called trees in linguistic jargon) describe the most basic aspects of the structures of the sentences we have been considering. The tree structure

\[
\begin{array}{c}
S \\
NP \\
N
\end{array}
\]

describes the basic structure shared by the sentences

diné naalnish.
'awéé' yicha.
'at'ééd dilghosh.
'ashkii naabé.

And the tree structure

\[
\begin{array}{c}
S \\
NP \\
V \\
D \\
N
\end{array}
\]

describes the basic structure shared by the sentences

naghái diné naalnish.
díí 'awéé' yicha.
díí 'at'ééd dilghosh.
ñléí 'ashkii naabé.

The basic configurational structure of sentences is provided
by the phrase structure rules. However, we now have to have some way to get actual words into these structures. This is done by what we will refer to as a lexical rule. This rule will take items from the lexicon (this is the same as a dictionary) and insert them into the tree configurations in their proper places. We can think of the lexicon as being a list of nouns, verbs, determiners, and so forth. But it is a list of a special sort -- the items in the list are not just the words themselves -- i.e., not just /dine/, /'ashkii/, and so on -- but rather, they are more complex than this. For each item in the dictionary, there must be some way of telling what kind of word it is, i.e., what grammatical category it belongs to. That is, whether it is a N, a V, or a D, and so on.

Therefore, for example, each noun will be listed in the dictionary with (at least) two parts. One part will indicate its grammatical category (N), and the other part will be its spelling (i.e., the sequence of sounds it is composed of). Thus, nouns will be listed in the dictionary in roughly the following forms:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{N} & \quad \text{N} & \quad \text{N} & \quad \text{N} \\
\text{dine} & \quad \text{'awee} & \quad \text{'at'eed} & \quad \text{'ashkii} \\
\text{man} & \quad \text{baby} & \quad \text{girl} & \quad \text{boy} \\
\text{iili} & \quad \text{dzaaneez} & \quad \text{dibe} & \quad \text{to} \\
\text{horse} & \quad \text{mule} & \quad \text{sheep} & \quad \text{water} \\
\end{align*}
\]

In similar fashion, the determiners will be listed, each in two parts:
The verbs are somewhat more complicated. As we saw in the preceding section, the verb has a great deal of internal structure -- i.e., it has a stem, and a classifier; some verbs have an adverbial prefix, and so on. We must, therefore, list them with all of these parts. For example, the verb /na-...-l-nish/ will be listed roughly in the form:

(Here the abbreviation "adv" stands for adverbial prefix; and "cl" stands for classifier.) The verb /...-cha/ will be listed in the form

The verb /d-...-l-ghosh/ will be listed as
And the verb /na-...-bé/ will be listed in the form

(Note: the exact underlying form of the stem in this verb is probably different from this, since, like most Navajo verb stems, this one changed its shape depending on the mode of the verb.)

Now, as we said before, the lexical rule inserts lexical items into the tree configurations which are provided by the phrase structure rules -- it takes a lexical item of the category N and puts it in the tree in place of an 'empty' N which is there; if there is an 'empty' D in the tree, it puts a lexical item of the category D in place of it; and it places a lexical item of the category V in place of the 'empty' V symbol which appears in the tree.

To see how this works, let us run through the entire derivation of a sentence, starting with the symbol S.
First we apply Rule-1, which gives

```
S
   /
  NP V
```

Then we apply Rule-2, and suppose we choose to take a determiner in the noun phrase. This will give:

```
S
   /
  NP V
     /
    D N
```

Now, we are ready to apply the lexical rule to this tree. The lexical rule will insert a V-lexical item for the V in the tree, a N-lexical item for the N in the tree, and a D-lexical item for the D. One possible result is:

```
S
   /
  NP V
     /
    D N
```

```
dif 'at'éd
```

```
adv cl stem
```

```
na- -l- -nish
```

Now all we have to do is apply the late phonological rules (i.e., rules of pronunciation discussed in the preceding section) to this, and we have the sentence:
With just the rules we have presented and with just the few lexical items we have listed, we can construct a large number of sentences -- if we add more lexical items, we will be able to construct hundreds of sentences. To get all of the simple sentences of Navajo, however, we have to add many more rules to the grammar -- in fact years of work will be required on the part of many people before most of the rules are well enough understood to be stated formally. This kind of work has been underway on the English language for many decades now, and we are just beginning to acquire a linguistic understanding of English grammar.

I would like now to discuss the way in which we might formally state the rule of subject person agreement.

Consider first the sentences

shí naashnish.
'I am working.'

ní nanilnish
'You are working.'

nihí neilnish
'We are working.'
nihi
naa̱ḻṉi̱sh

'You (more than one) are working.'

In these sentences, the subject is neither a noun nor a sequence consisting of a determiner plus noun. Rather it is a personal pronoun. We want to be able to say, however, that these sentences have the same basic structure as the sentences we looked at earlier -- both the earlier sentences and these new ones consist of a noun phrase (NP) followed by a verb (V). But in the new sentences, the NP is not a N but a pronoun. Let us use the abbreviation P for pronoun. And we will claim that the basic structure of the sentence like

shí
naašnísh.

'I am working.'

is closely similar to that of a sentence like

'ą́shkii
naalṉi̱sh.

'The boy is working.'

Both of these sentences share the basic structure

Both of these sentences share the basic structure

That is, both have a NP and a V; and the NP functions as the subject in both. They differ only in that the NP consists of a pronoun in the first sentence, while in the second it consists of a noun.
Now, in order to accommodate sentences with pronoun subjects, we have to modify one of our phrase structure rules, i.e., Rule-2, which states what a NP can consist of. I will reformulate Rule-2 as follows:

Rule-2: \[ NP \rightarrow \begin{cases} \{ (D) \ N \} \\ P \end{cases} \]

This rule now states that a NP can be any of the following:

a) a noun alone -- N
b) a determiner plus noun -- D N
c) a pronoun -- P

Now we must add some new items to the dictionary -- namely, the pronouns. These will be entered in the dictionary in roughly the following way:
Notice that I have not given these forms any phonological shape, or spelling -- i.e., I have not indicated what sound they have. The reason for this is that the pronouns have different shapes, depending on where they are in the sentence. Thus, if

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{P} \\
\text{1st person singular}
\end{array}
\]

is in a NP in the sentence, it appears as /shí/, but if it is in the verb word -- i.e., when it is a subject person marker in the verb -- it appears as /-sh-/. In other words, you cannot tell what shape the personal pronoun has until it is in the sentence. Therefore, in the lexicon, we represent them abstractly, without their spellings, but with the information which shows the category they belong to (P) and the meaning (1\text{st} person, 2\text{nd} person, singular, nonsingular).

Let us now run through the rules which will give the basic structure of

\[
\text{shí naashnish.}
\]

'I am working.'

As always, we start with
and apply Rule-1, giving:

```
S
/\    
NP   V
```

We then apply Rule-2, in its new form, choosing a pronoun. This gives:

```
S
/\    
NP   V
   /\  
P   V
```

We then apply the lexical rule, inserting the first person singular pronoun for the P which appears in the tree, and the verb /na-...-lish/ for the V which appears in the tree. This gives:

```
S
/\    
NP   V
   /\  
P   V
      /\ 
     adv cl stem
    [1st person] [singular] na- -1- -nish
```

This is the abstract or "deep" structure of the sentence

\textit{shí naa\textsuperscript{shnish}.}

But it is highly abstract -- we have to do something to it before we have the final form of the sentence.

At this point, we can state the rule of \underline{subject} \underline{person}
agreement. This rule places a copy of the pronoun directly in front of the classifier. It is in the class of rules which we call transformations, because it operates on a tree structure and modifies it. It is not a phrase structure rule, because its function is not to specify what a phrase consists of; rather, it applies to the trees which are developed by the phrase structure rules and modifies those trees -- i.e., changes their form. In this case, it changes the tree

```
S
   NP
     P
       [1st person] adv cl stem
          [singular] na- -l- -nish
```

into the new, slightly different tree

```
S
   NP
     P
       [1st person] adv P cl stem
          [singular] na- -l- -nish
```

by inserting an identical copy of the subject pronoun into the verb directly in front of the classifier.

We can state this rule formally as follows:
Subject Person Agreement:

\[ P \quad \ldots \quad \text{cl stem} \]
\[ l \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad \Rightarrow \]
\[ l \quad 2 \quad 1 + 3 \]

I will not go into the formalism too deeply here, but in essence, the way the rule is to be interpreted is as follows:

a) Look at the structural configuration (tree) and see if there is a P at the beginning of the tree -- that will be the subject pronoun.

b) For the purposes of the rule of subject person agreement, let P be part 1 of the sentence.

c) For the purposes of this rule, let the part of the sentence between the subject pronoun and the classifier be part 2 of the sentence.

d) For the purposes of this rule, let the sequence cl plus stem be part 3 of the sentence.

e) Having analyzed the sentence in the above manner, perform the following operation: place an identical copy of part 1 immediately in front of part 3.

To see exactly what this rule does in an actual case, let us look at the deep structure of another sentence:

\[ \text{ni nanilnish.} \]

'You are working.'

The deep structure is:
The rule of subject person agreement operates on this tree and converts it into

After the rule of subject person agreement has applied to a particular tree, we can apply the rules which spell the individual pronouns. I will characterize these rules very briefly here. In the case of

there is no problem at all -- the pronoun is /ni/ whether it is in the NP or in the V. If we apply this spelling rule to the above
tree, we get:

\[
S \\
| NP \\
| | V \\
| | | P \\
| | | | adv \\
| | | | | P \\
| | | | | | cl \\
| | | | | | | stem \\
| | | | | | | | ni \\
| | | | | | | | na- \\
| | | | | | | | | -ni- \\
| | | | | | | | | -l- \\
| | | | | | | | | -nish
\]

which is exactly the way the sentence is pronounced. But in the case of the other pronouns, it is a little more complicated. The pronoun

\[
P \\
| \frac{1^{st}}{1^{st}} \text{ person} \\
| singular
\]

appears as /shī/ when it is in the NP, but /sh/ when it appears as the subject person marker in the verb. And the pronoun

\[
P \\
| \frac{1^{st}}{1^{st}} \text{ person} \\
| nonsingular
\]

is /niḥī/ in the NP, but it appears as /ii/ when it is the subject person marker in the V. And finally, the pronoun
is /nihi/ in the NP, but /oh/ when it is the subject person marker in the verb.

If we apply the appropriate spelling rule to

we get

And if we apply (to the elements at the bottom of this tree) the
phonological rules discussed in the preceding section of this paper, we get finally

shí naashnish.
'I am working.'

In this discussion I have tried to show what the formal statement of the rules of Navajo grammar might be like. The formalism is not the most important thing, however. What is important for a linguist is to discover true generalizations about the language he studies. Once a generalization is known, it is always possible to determine an appropriate formal expression of it.

In the case of subject person agreement the generalization is:

"The verb must agree in person with the subject."

Since it is a single fact about Navajo that the verb agrees in person with the subject of the sentence, we must construct our grammatical theory of Navajo in such a way that it will be possible to express this fact formally in a single rule. I have attempted to do this in the formal statements presented earlier.

Before leaving this topic, I would like briefly to discuss some of the ways in which the incipient grammar I have presented will have to be modified in order to accommodate transitive sentences -- i.e., sentences in which there is both a subject and an object. Consider, in this connection, sentences of the following type:
dzaanéez őééchaa'í yiztaí.
'The mule kicked the dog.'

'ashkii gah yiskah.
'The boy shot the rabbit (with an arrow).'

'ashkii 'asaa' yists'il.
'The boy broke the bowl.'

diné ʰʰʃʰ' yizloh.
'The man roped the horse.'

These sentences differ from the intransitive sentences of the type studied earlier. The earlier sentences had a single noun phrase (NP), which functioned as the subject. These new sentences have two noun phrases, one functioning as the subject and one functioning as the object.

In order to accommodate these sentences, we must provide that there be structures with two noun phrases in them, rather than just one. We do this by changing Rule-1 of the phrase structure rules to read as follows:

Rule-1: \[ S \rightarrow NP \ (NP) \ V \]

The rule now states that a sentence can consist of a single NP followed by a V or it can consist of two NP's followed by a verb. The basic structure of transitive sentences is:

```
          S
         /|
        / |
      NP  NP  V
```
Rule-2 will apply twice to this structure to give:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
S \\
| \\
NP \quad NP \\
| \\
N \quad N \\
| \\
V
\end{array}
\]

Next the lexical rule will insert lexical items. However, we have to make sure that the right kinds of verbs get into the tree. Thus, we cannot have an intransitive verb, like /...-cha/ 'to cry' in a transitive tree. A sentence like

\[
{'}awéé' \ 'at'ééd yicha.
\]

'The baby is crying the girl.'

is incorrect -- the point is, /...-cha/ cannot take an object. We can provide for this fact by adding a feature to the lexical entries for verbs which will state the type of tree a particular verb can be inserted into. Verbs like /...-cha/ 'to cry' and /na-...-l-nish/ 'to work' will have the feature

\[
[NP ___].
\]

This feature will be interpreted to mean:

"Insert this verb only into structural configurations which contain a single noun phrase."

Thus, the lexical entries for these verbs will now appear as:
Transitive verbs like /...-l-kah/ 'to shoot (with an arrow)', /...-taɪ/ 'to kick', and /...-l-ts'il/ 'to break, crack', on the other hand, will have the feature

\[\text{[NP} \quad \text{NP }]\]

This feature will be interpreted as:

"Insert this verb only into structural configurations which contain two noun phrases."

Therefore, the lexical entries for these verbs will appear as:

\[\text{[NP} \quad \text{NP }]\]

\[\text{[NP} \quad \text{NP }]\]

\[\text{[NP} \quad \text{NP }]\]

\[\text{[NP} \quad \text{NP }]\]

'kick' 'to shoot (with an arrow)' 'rope' 'break, crack'

Let us now consider the derivation of one of our transitive sentences. We begin with
and apply Rule-1, choosing two NP's. This gives:

```
S
NP NP V
```

We then apply Rule-2, choosing a N alone for each of the NP's:

```
S
NP NP V
  N  N
```

The lexical rule now inserts appropriate lexical items -- for the V it must pick a verb with the feature \[\text{NP} \to \text{NP } \_\_\_\] \(N\_\_\_\_\), because the tree has two noun phrases in it. One possible result of applying the lexical rule gives us:

```
S
NP NP V
  N  N
    [NP \to NP \_\_\_\_\]
      cl stem
     \_\_\_\_ ta\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
```

which is the deep structure underlying

```
dzaanéez \_ééčá\'á\'í yíztal.
      'The mule kicked the dog.'
```
To get this final form, however, we must apply a rule which inserts the third person object marker /yi-/ into the verb, and we must also insert the perfective mode prefix /s-/ into the verb in front of the classifier. I will not state these rules formally here, but will take them for granted. When this is done, we have:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{S} \\
\text{NP} \quad \text{NP} \\
\text{N} \quad \text{N} \\
\text{dzaanéez} \quad \text{liéechaa'i} \\
\text{obj} \quad \text{perf} \quad \text{cl} \quad \text{stem} \\
\text{yi-} \quad \text{-s-} \quad \emptyset \quad \text{-tal}
\end{array}
\]

(Note: "obj" abbreviates object person marker and "perf" abbreviates perfective mode prefix.) We now have the form to which the late phonological rules apply -- the only one necessary here is the one which turns the si-perfective prefix /s-/ to /z-/ before the zero-classifier, giving the final form:

\[
\text{dzaanéez liéechaa'i yiztał.}
\]

Recall that certain transitive sentences can optionally undergo the transformational rule of subject-object switch. Again, I will not state the rule formally, but its effect is to interchange the two NP's and to change the object person marker from /yi-/ to /bi-/ -- thus, it converts the above configuration into the following:
And the late phonological rules change the perfective prefix /-s-/ to /-z-/ giving us the final output:

iééchág'i dzaanééz biztal.

'The dog was kicked by the mule.'

As we mentioned earlier, the rule of subject-object switch can apply optionally only to certain transitive sentences; it cannot apply to certain others; and there are others to which it must apply. Thus, it sounds strange to apply the rule to

chidítsoh tsézéí yooghééí.

'The truck is hauling gravel along.'

to give

*tsézéí chidítsoh booghééí.

And in the sentence
shash yas bistin.

'The snow froze the bear.'

the rule has applied, as it must. If it had not applied in this case, we would have the sentence

*yas shash yistin.

which sounds wrong. What this all means is that conditions have to be placed on the rule of subject-object switch. I will not attempt to do that here, but will leave this as another problem for the reader to think about.

4. In this final section, I would like to consider very briefly how the subject of Navajo linguistics might be introduced in schools in which the students are speakers of Navajo.

To teach the technical aspects of linguistics, it will be necessary to have a well organized curriculum. Such a curriculum should be developed primarily by a Navajo-speaking linguist, or several Navajo-speaking linguists. In this connection, the best procedure might be for several Navajo-speaking teachers to take training in linguistics in a program designed with two goals in mind: linguistic training of the teachers, and concurrent development of a Navajo linguistics curriculum. When several teachers have obtained linguistics training and developed a curriculum, a series of workshops might be planned to teach the curriculum to other Navajo-speaking teachers and to train those teachers in the basic concepts of linguistics.

The type of program I have hastily sketched in the preceding paragraph is, of course, something which will require a great deal
of planning; the development of an adequate introductory curri-
culum will take several years. However, this does not mean that
the study of the Navajo language cannot begin right away in the
schools. In the preceding paragraphs, I was referring only to
the technical aspects of Navajo linguistics, i.e., the formal
aspects of a theory of Navajo grammar. As I mentioned earlier,
however, these aspects are by no means the most important part
of linguistic scholarship -- in fact, in some respects, they are the
least important. The most important thing for a potential linguist
to do is to get a feel for linguistic structure and to bring to
consciousness as much as possible of the knowledge which, as a
speaker of the language, he has in his subconscious. We have seen
many examples of this in the preceding sections -- thus, for ex-
ample, a speaker of Navajo knows how to apply the rule of subject-
person agreement; he does it every day. But as a linguist, his
interest is not only in how to speak sentences properly but also in
developing a conscious understanding of how the language works --
his interest is in gaining insights into his own knowledge of his
language. The way one does this is by practice in using one's
language in novel ways. Many gifted speakers of language actually
have a deep understanding of the structures of their languages
which they have gained in practice in language use -- they are not
necessarily linguists, but rather sensitive and insightful speakers
of their language. However, it is this kind of sensitivity which
lays a firm foundation for linguistic scholarship.

It is not necessary to have a formal curriculum to introduce
students to the study of the structure of their language -- there
are many ways in which students can be encouraged to use their
language in a manner which reveals its structure and internal rich-
ness. One of the best methods, for young students particularly, is
the use of language games. In the paragraphs to follow, I would
like to present some possible language games for Navajo and to
indicate the kinds of linguistic knowledge they explore.

(1) Making Generalizations

I have mentioned several times that an important task of the linguist is to discover generalizations about his language -- that is, to capsulize in a single statement something that is true about the way the language works. It is relatively easy to construct a language game which will bring out this ability in students, and Navajo is particularly well suited for this, because of its rich system of classificatory verb stems. The way this might work is as follows. The teacher might write on the blackboard a sentence like

beeldléi shaa niítsóós.

'Give me the blanket.'

The teacher might then erase the first word, replacing it with a blank:

_____ shaa niítsóós.

'Give me the _____.'

and then ask the students in the class to think of as many words as they can which could fit into this frame. The students might then give a list like the following:

naaltsoos

'paper'

naak'a'at'í:hi

'cloth'
'éé'
'clothes, shirt, etc.'

'akał
'leather'

 tí'akał
'skirt'

... Continue in this way until the list is relatively long, and then ask the students to make a generalization about the nouns in the list -- i.e., to state the property which is shared by all of the members of the list. The point, of course, is that the verb stem /...-1-tsóós/ requires that its object be a noun which names something which is flexible and flat, like paper, a blanket, and so on. It is important that the teacher not make the generalization for the students; rather, the students should try to figure it out for themselves. Another way to bring the generalization out is to ask the students why the sentence

*tsé shaa niitsóós.

sounds wrong (unless it is a sack of stones). This will help to refine the generalization and make it more accurate.

When the students have discovered the generalization, ask them to state it in Navajo and write it down. The reason for this is that it will give the students experience in actually making statements about language -- i.e., making a conscious statement of what they already know in a more or less subconscious way. It also helps the student think of ways of talking about language in
Navajo and to develop a Navajo vocabulary for linguistics.

It is quite easy to construct frames like the one above in Navajo, because so many verbs have the property that they require nouns denoting objects with specific characteristics. All of the verbs meaning 'to handle, give, etc.' are like this. Thus, many frames can be constructed:

____ shaa nitijih.

'Give me the ____ (slender stuff object).'</n

____ shaa nilé.

'Give me the ____ (slender flexible object).'</n

and so on. The verbs meaning 'to eat' are like this also:

____ deeshchosh.

'I will eat the ____ (anything like lettuce, herbs).'</n

____ deeshghai.

'I will eat the ____ (meat).'</n

____ deeshkii.

'I will eat the ____ (a bulky or roundish object).'</n

and so on. And similarly for the verb meaning 'to drop it':

____ nááidéél.

'I dropped the ____ (slender flexible object).'</n

____ nááine'.

'I dropped the ____ (bulky or roundish object).'
náá'ah.
'I dropped the ___ (flat flexible object).'

et cetera. Navajo is extremely rich in this area and, hence, provides an extremely useful tool for developing a student's ability to make generalizations. This ability is not only important in linguistics; it is important in all sciences. The study of Navajo, therefore, has far reaching implications in the primary (and later) education of Navajo-speaking students.

(2) What is wrong with this sentence?

The ability to speak a language means not only that you can speak and understand correct sentences, but you can also determine when a sentence is incorrect. Often incorrect sentences are perfectly understandable, but they are wrong for grammatical reasons. The study of why incorrect sentences are incorrect is another way to discover generalizations about a language. Thus, by noticing that sentences like

*ští naalnish

are incorrect helps us discover the rule according to which the verb of a sentence must agree in person with the subject of the sentence. This suggests another linguistic game. The teacher writes an incorrect sentence on the blackboard and asks the students why it is wrong. The students try to explain it and to express, in as general a way as possible, what general fact about the language is at work. It is very easy to construct ungrammatical sentences to focus on almost any area of grammar. For example, number agreement:
*'ashii'ke tált'éego na'nízhoozhigóó deeyá.
*'Three boys are going singularly to Gallup.'

in which the verb /deeyá/ is singular and the subject /'ashii'ke tált'éego/ 'three boys' is nonsingular. And tense agreement:

*'adą́ą́dą́ą́' na'nízhoozhigóó deeshááti.
*'Yesterday I will go to Gallup.'

in which the verb /deeshááti/ is in the future, but the adverb /'adą́ą́dą́ą́'/ 'yesterday' refers to a time in the past.

An interesting problem would be to have students try to explain why the sentence

*tséézá' chídítsoh booghééž

sounds bad, while the sentence

chídítsoh tséézá' yooghééž.

'The truck is hauling gravel along.'

is good.

Similarly, the classificatory verb stems of Navajo provide many opportunities for this game. Students might, for example, be asked to explain in general terms why sentences like

*dibé 'at'ą́ą' deilghááž.
*'Sheep eat leaves (as if they were meat).'</n

sound funny.
Again, the point of this game is to develop the ability to make general statements. The statements should be made in Navajo and written down; this will exercise the ability to talk about the language in the language, an ability which is crucial in linguistics.

(3) Defining words

One very good way to develop the ability to talk about language is to define words, i.e., state what they mean. This is something which is very natural for people to do. It is often necessary to explain the meaning of a word he has never heard before to a child. But his activity can become quite interesting when we try to define words whose meanings are so obvious that we take them for granted. Defining words, in Navajo, is, therefore, a useful game to use in teaching linguistic skills. The teacher would be advised to begin with words which are relatively easy, like /dibé/ 'sheep', /ifitifiti/ 'horse', and so on. Later, however, the students might be asked to define words like /shí/ 'I', /ni/ 'you', and even particles like /hanii/ which appear in sentences like:

   doo hanii yáñiiti' da.
   'Why don't you speak?'

This task is much more difficult. The way to go about it is first to construct as many sentences as you can using the word and then to try to figure out what meaning the word adds to the sentences; i.e., what is the difference in meaning when the word is in the sentence and when the word is not in the sentence.

Once the student is able to define these more difficult words, he is ready for the next game.
(4) Taking words apart

We pointed out that many Navajo words, verbs particularly, are composed of smaller elements which have meanings. Thus,

naashnish

'I am working.'

has a stem /-nish/ meaning roughly 'to work', a prefix /-sh-/ meaning 'speaker; first person', or the like, and a prefix /na-/ meaning roughly 'around, about'. The students might be asked to try to break words up into their meaningful parts and to state the meanings which these parts have. Again, this involves comparing words which share some part. The activity should start with simple words, like

shidibé

'my sheep'

Comparing this with the word

nidibé

'your sheep'

one sees that both words share the noun stem /dibé/ 'sheep', and the prefixes tell who the sheep belongs to.

All definitions should be given in Navajo for the same reasons we mentioned before -- to exercise the student's skill in talking about language in Navajo.

The teacher might also go on to a much more difficult problem --
i.e., the definition of classes of morphemes. For example, students might be asked to explain what kind of word /dibé/ is, and what kind of word /naalnish/ is. This will, hopefully, suggest ways of talking about nouns and verbs. Similarly for the other kinds of meaningful elements which appear in words -- person marking prefixes (as: naa-sh-nish), adverbial prefixes (as: naa-sh-nish), and so on. Eventually, it will be necessary to be able to talk about the classes of morphemes and about the parts of words, in Navajo. It might be wise to begin developing a suggestive technical linguistic vocabulary in the classroom itself -- the students will be thoroughly familiar with this way of talking when they go on to study Navajo grammar in a more formal way.

(5) Making up new words

An interesting way to make people aware of the structures of words is to invent totally new morphemes and to use them in sentences. The Navajo verb stem provides an excellent opportunity in this regard. The teacher might, for example, make a new verb stem, like /-bash/ for example, and give it a meaning like 'to walk around stooped over swinging one's arms from side to side'. The stem could be presented to the students in a sentence, like:

k'ad naashbash.

'Now I am walking around stooped over ...'

And the meaning of the new verb could be illustrated by the teacher actually performing the action in front of the students. The students could then be asked to say what the teacher is doing. This will require the students to use the verb in a new way -- i.e., in the second person:
nanibash.

'You are walking around stooped over swinging your arms from side to side.'

And the students could be asked to make up new sentences using this new verb, for example:

'adáádáá' kingóó nishébash.

'Yesterday I went to the store stooped over ...'

A lot could be done with this game. It would give the teacher an opportunity to point out that a verb has many forms, depending on how it is used, and that the verb has a stem -- it is only the stem which is new in this word, the prefixes are the same as those in a great many other Navajo verbs. The new verb could be compared with real verbs the students already know:

naashbash.

'I am walking around, stooped over...'

naashá

'I am walking around.'

naashbé

'I am swimming around.'

Many such verbs could be made up -- another example might be a transitive verb /...-i-jash/, and its meaning might be 'to grab someone by the cheek and twist.' The teacher might say
diff 'ashkii deeshjash.
'I will grab this boy by the cheek and twist.'

and actually do it to one of the students. Then the teacher might do it to herself (or himself) and ask the students to say what she (or he) is doing. They would then be required to use the verb in a new way:

'ádíljash.
'You are grabbing yourself by the cheek and twisting.'

This may not be exactly what they will say, but in any event, if they understand the game, they will use the new verb in one way or another to describe the action.

The students might then be asked to make up new verbs themselves, to illustrate them with an action (or by defining them verbally), and to make up new sentences using them.

(6) Analysing sentences

The next game is, in some ways, a much more advanced one. What the students are asked to do is to break sentences down into their main parts. For example the students might be given a sentence like

'awéé' yicha.
'The baby is crying.'

and asked to say what the major parts of the sentence are. It is quite easy in this case, because the two words are the two parts:
'awéé' / yicha.

But when the sentence has more than one word, it is harder. The sentence

díi 'awéé' yicha.

'This baby is crying.'

is probably to be analysed into parts as

díi 'awéé' / yicha.

And the students will probably do it correctly. But then the thing to do is to ask them why they do it this way -- why does the word /díi/ go with the word /'awéé'/; and why would it be wrong to break the sentence up in the following way

díi / 'awéé' yicha.

or

díi / 'awéé' / yicha.

This kind of exercise is very important in teaching certain linguistic skills. It is particularly important in teaching students how to talk about language -- when they explain their reasons for analyzing a sentence in a particular way, they are required to think of new names for things, namely, new names for the parts of sentences and for the relationships among the parts.

A related exercise is the analysis of complex sentences. Here the students are given a complex sentence like
dibé yázhí ḡíí' yiyaagi sizinííí nahjį'
naa'oolyeeed.

'Chase that lamb off that is standing
under the horse.'

and asked to state what simpler sentences it is composed of.

The exercise can be done in reverse, also. In this case,
the students are given pairs of sentences, and asked to make a
single sentence out of the two. For example, the students might
be given the sentences

dibé yóó' 'eelghod.

'The sheep ran away.'

dibé biya hodéhiz.

'I frightened the sheep.'

and asked to combine them into a single sentence in as many ways
as possible. Among the ways in which these sentences can be com-
bined are:

dibé biya hodéhizéé yóó' 'eelghod.

'The sheep that I frightened ran away.'

dibé biya hodéhizgo biniinaa yóó' 'eelghod.

'The sheep ran away because I frightened it.'

Familiarity with the ways in which simple sentences can be
combined to form complex sentences will be of great value to the
students when they go on to a formal linguistic study of Navajo