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Despite its importance and increasing cost, interactive software is rarely considered a suitable subject for the development of metrics or standards of performance beyond those traditionally used for hardware: speed, response time, etc. This article examines and extends a specific set of criteria first recommended by Louis Fried as a possible basis for evaluating such software rigorously. This approach is based on the concepts of ergonomics, which focus directly on the reaction of the user to the system rather than the system to the user. It is then possible to be much more specific in identifying effects of system messages, prompts, formats and a wide range of other characteristics of the user's *milieu*. Examples are given, and the authors conclude that such approaches make it possible to be rigorous and exact in specifying the characteristics of the interactive language of the system.