

ORAL PROFICIENCY OF GRADE THREE AND GRADE SIX
EARLY FRENCH IMMERSION STUDENTS FROM SELECTED
SCHOOLS IN THE ST. JOHN'S AREA

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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SUSAN THOMAS



Oral Proficiency of Grade Three and Grade Six Early
French Immersion Students from Selected
Schools in the St. John's Area

by
Susan Thomas

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the level of oral proficiency of grade six and grade three early French immersion (EFI) students. Entire classes from elementary EFI schools in the St. John's area participated. The sample consisted of sixty-two students: thirty grade three students and thirty-two grade six students.

The interviewer conducted fifteen minute taped interviews with each student and gave him/her a global rating based on the following five components of oral proficiency: comprehension, fluency, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. The interview is based on the oral interview procedure used in Newfoundland's French 3200 course. Upon completion of each interview, the interviewer assigned a score. After completing all interviews, eleven French 3200 teachers, who were trained to conduct the interview also evaluated a sample of the taped interviews. While grade six students tended to perform better on the interview than grade three students, it is not possible to establish definitively the degree of difference due to the low inter-rater reliability. Furthermore, inter-rater reliability was higher with grade six students than with grade three students.

A majority of ratings from the French 3200 teachers demonstrated considerable variability when compared to scores assigned by the interviewer.

Further research is needed to develop instruments that will yield valid and reliable oral proficiency scores for young EFI learners.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Early French immersion (EFI) first began in 1965 in St. Lambert, Quebec. A group of concerned parents organized and decided that their children needed to learn French more effectively than the French core program that was currently being offered. They felt that the easiest way to achieve this goal was by immersing the students in the second language in school.

Since the inception of this program type, researchers have conducted various types of evaluations to determine whether the program is meeting students' needs. These evaluations indicate that the program is generally successful and that the students are becoming fluent speakers in the French language.

In recent years test results conclude that the EFI program produces fluent but not native-like speakers. Many evaluations report that students tend to exhibit weaknesses of oral production (Pellerin & Hammerly, 1986; Pawley, 1985).

Throughout the years EFI has spread throughout Canada with all provinces and territories currently offering the

program. EFI in Newfoundland began in Cape St. George on the Port au Port Peninsula in September 1975. It was then introduced to St. John's and Gander in the late 1970s. By 1979-80 there were two hundred ninety-two students enrolled in EFI in the province (Netten, 1990). In 1994-95, there were four thousand two hundred eighty-five children enrolled in the Newfoundland EFI program.

Because EFI is being offered in many different centers, the clientele is variable. Students were once largely cognitively and socially an elite group, but are now from every walk of life.

It is normal practice to take students with learning difficulties out of EFI and put them into the English stream (Bruck, 1985; Genesee, 1976). Therefore, by third or sixth grade EFI students would generally be children achieving above average (Wakeham, 1988; Bruck, 1985; Genesee, 1976).

In St. Lambert the students lived in a partially French milieu. In Newfoundland there are only a few communities where French is spoken as the mother tongue. Because of this environmental factor students rarely get to practice their French outside the classroom.

1.1 Background of the Study

For many years the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education has had a testing program for EFI to help the province monitor the students' progress. The students take norm-referenced standardized tests. None of these tests indicate directly the level of oral proficiency of Newfoundland students.

Newfoundland has adapted an oral proficiency testing tool (an interview) for high school French core students. The interview is an adaptation of the New Brunswick Department of Education Assessment of Oral Proficiency that tests overall oral proficiency as opposed to individual components. The interview was first used throughout the province in 1986 for evaluating students in French 3200. The oral proficiency interview comprises 25% of the total public examination mark for the course.

Teachers were trained to administer the interviews through a training process conducted by the Department of Education. Flynn (1991) demonstrated that the interview procedure yields valid and reliable global scores for that student population.

Although the interview is used to rate high school French core students, it can theoretically also be used

with EFI students. EFI students, as well as French core students, are taught with the intent of achieving communicative competence. With this being the case, one ought to be able to use an interview tool to determine the level of oral proficiency of any student learning French, using a communicative approach.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

Educators have administered many instruments designed to test EFI students' reading and comprehension skills, but little research has been conducted in this province on their oral skills. One of the goals of the EFI program is to produce students who are orally proficient in the French language. Currently teachers tend to estimate the level of oral proficiency of each student based on intuition or reported correlations between listening, reading and speaking skills. An oral proficiency test with a widely accepted rating scale would more objectively monitor the level of oral proficiency.

This study is intended to establish a proficiency level for grade three and grade six EFI students in five different schools in the St. John's area. This would provide a basis for further proficiency level testing in

Newfoundland and Labrador.

The questions to be answered for this study are:

1. What is the overall proficiency level for grade three and grade six students in this study? Is there a significant difference between the two?
2. What is the proficiency level of the grade three and grade six students in each school on the French 3200 OPI rating scale?
3. What is the range in proficiency level of each grade, both between schools and overall?
4. Is there a significant difference between the level of oral proficiency between boys and girls?

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study will indicate the level of oral proficiency of grade three and grade six EFI students in five schools in the St. John's area. It will introduce into the provincial EFI evaluation program an instrument that has already been deemed to be reliable and valid when used with level three students and teachers (Flynn, 1991) to help in objectively determining EFI students' oral proficiency level.

Information concerning the oral proficiency of EFI

children (grades three and six) would be of interest to other teachers throughout Canada who may wish to compare the oral proficiency level of their students to those in this study.

The study will also be of value as a contribution to overall research in EFI.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

With the onset of EFI in 1965, parents and researchers began to study the achievement of students in the program. Many studies have reported on the effectiveness of the program as well as the need for change in teaching and/or evaluation in certain areas. This chapter will describe the concepts of communicative competence and proficiency, provide results of second language proficiency testing, and give an overview of selected research on immersion programs.

2.1 Communicative Competence

Communication is generally viewed as a purposive activity. Brown (1987) describes communication

... as a combination of acts, a series of elements with purpose and intent. Communication is not merely an event, something that happens; it is functional, purposive, and designed to bring about some effect-some change, however subtle or unobservable-on the environment of hearers and speakers... Second language learners need to understand the purpose of communication, developing an awareness of what the purpose of a communicative act is and how to achieve that purpose through linguistic forms. (p. 202)

Communicative competence (CC) is a term first used by Hymes (1972) as a reaction to Chomsky's linguistic

competence (Stern, 1990). Hymes views CC as linguistic competence with its focus on social and cultural rules and meanings that are carried out by utterances. He focuses on students learning to communicate appropriately with socio-linguistic and grammatical correctness.

With regard to Chomsky's theory, Widdowson (1989) states:

For Chomsky, then, competence is grammatical knowledge as a deep-seated mental state below the level of language. It is not the ability to do anything. It is not even the ability to compose or comprehend sentences, for knowledge may exist without its being accessible and, as Chomsky insists, actual behavior is only one kind of evidence and not a criterion for the existence of knowledge. For Hymes, on the other hand, competence is the ability to do something: to use language. For him, grammatical knowledge is a resource, not an abstract cognitive configuration existing in its own right as a mental structure. How such knowledge gets realized as use is therefore a central issue, and it is necessarily a component of communicative competence. (p. 129)

Canale & Swain (1983) put forward the position that CC comprises four components. The first is the grammatical competence component. This component deals with the teaching of the rules of grammar, phonology and vocabulary. It "focuses directly on the knowledge and skill required to understand and express accurately the literal meaning of utterances...". (Canale, 1983, p. 7) The second component,

sociolinguistic competence, is the mastery of appropriate language use (meaning and form). Discourse competence, the third component of CC, was not included in Canale and Swain's original version. This component includes the mastery of how to combine utterances. Learners listen to meaningful output, internalize it, then at some point communicate with cohesion, "a relational concept concerned with how propositions are linked structurally in a text and how the literal meaning of a text is interpreted" (p. 20) and coherence, "the relationships among the communicative values (or contextual meanings) of utterances" (p. 20). The last component, namely strategic competence, refers to the effective use of coping strategies to sustain or enhance communication. When a learner is tired, distracted, or does not have the words to convey a message, he/she needs different strategies to succeed in communication. (Canale & Swain, 1980). Communication strategies have frequently been categorized as reduction strategies and achievement strategies. Reduction strategies include:

1. avoidance
2. message abandonment
3. meaning replacement

while achievement strategies include:

1. facial expressions
2. borrowing
3. literal translation
4. foreignizing
5. approximation
6. word coinage
7. paraphrase
8. smurfing
9. self repair
10. appeals for assistance
11. initiating repair (Willems, 1987, p. 355)

This list is similar to the ones provided by Faerch & Kasper (1983) and Tarone (1981), in Brown (1987).

In discussing CC, Spolsky (1978) states:

We are interested not just in the fact that someone knows language, but that he knows how to use it. The full range of communicative competence involves not just the semantics, grammar and phonology of linguistic competence, but sets of rules governing the appropriateness of various forms to topics, setting, and audience. (pp. 122-123)

As the preceding indicates, usage is of prime importance in the CC theory.

According to Hornberger (1989), to be communicating competently one must be able to communicate in terms of a specific topic, setting, and cultural context.

Communicative competence describes the knowledge and ability of individuals for appropriate language use on the communicative events in which they find themselves in any particular speech community. This competence is by definition

variable within individuals (from event to event), across individuals, and across speech communities, and includes rules of use as well as rules of grammar. (Hornberger, 1989, pp. 217-218.)

To improve their communicative competence, students must be provided with information, practice and enough experience to meet their communication needs. (Canale & Swain, 1980)

2.2 Proficiency

Writers such as Stern (1990) view proficiency as an important aspect of CC. More proficient second language learners reportedly have higher levels of CC.

2.2.1 Oral Proficiency

The EFI classroom is intended to promote oral and written communication in the second language. Kramsch (1986) refers to proficiency in terms of "language [being] a functional tool, one for communication". (p. 366) One goal of second language teaching is to develop students' proficiency in the target language, and "in achieving oral proficiency, the teacher wants his/her students to have the ability to get a message across to an interlocutor with a

specified ease and effect" (Clark, 1972, p. 119). However, proficiency does not necessarily mean speaking like a native speaker of the language.

Different notions of the "language proficiency" concept exist. According to Fallen (1986), students are proficient if they can memorize passages, change sentences from the present to the past and generate grammatically accurate language. Toukomaa (1976) termed this as "surface fluency". On the other hand, Allen (1985) stated that language proficiency is the use of the language for real purposes, with real purposes meaning conversational language skills and cognitive/academic language skills. Liskin-Gasparro (1984) defined oral proficiency as "the ability to function effectively in the language in real-life contexts". (p. 12)

Clark (1972) discusses a proficiency that is "socially acceptable", meaning that communication is occurring, but the learner is making many errors that do not impede the listener's understanding of the language. The learner may communicate at ease with native speakers but makes linguistic errors which are termed "acceptable" by the target language speakers.

According to Stern (1990) a student is proficient if he/she has:

1. the intuitive mastery of the forms of the language,
2. the intuitive mastery of the linguistic, cognitive, affective and socio-cultural meanings, expressed by the language forms,
3. the capacity to use the language with maximum attention to communication and minimum attention to form, and
4. the creativity of language use. (p. 34)

Proficiency in a second language consists of oral, reading, writing and listening components. As seen in Appendix A, ACTFL has written guidelines for each. These guidelines have been used as the basis for developing instruments designed to measure proficiency levels.

2.2.2 Proficiency Testing

Proficiency testing is "any test that is based on a theory of the abilities required to use language." (Savignon, 1986, p. 308) It is a criterion-referenced test, that is, a "goal referenced test; the evaluation of test takers in relation to their ability to achieve a particular level of performance, that is, a criterion". (Savignon, 1986, p. 303) A proficiency test is not based solely on course material. It does not "attempt to provide

information about the student's achievement in a given course of instruction but rather to measure his ability to use the language for real-life purposes without regard to the manner in which that competence was acquired." (Clark, 1972, p. 5) The student is not being tested on how much he/she has learned but how well he/she can perform in terms of overall language proficiency.

Proficiency testing must not be confused with achievement testing. Achievement testing is "a test based on the instructional content of a particular course or curriculum". (Savignon, 1986, p. 301) This test may be norm-referenced, meaning "a standardized test that compares the performance of a test taker with the performance of a normative group and is designed to maximize individual differences." (Savignon, 1986, p. 308)

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the Educational Testing Service have conducted several studies pertaining to proficiency testing. As a result of these studies, proficiency guidelines have been produced for the four language skills: speaking, reading, writing, and listening. Landolf and Frawley (1985) report that in proficiency testing, the level of proficiency of the tester affects the given level

of proficiency of the individual being tested. This could be due to the acceptance of grammatical errors, lexical errors or mispronounced words. Similarly, Bachman & Savignon (1986) discuss the variety of norms of language use deemed as correct by the interviewer. This, too would affect the judgment of the level of oral proficiency.

The ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) has been shown to be a useful proficiency measure in that "1) (it) would provide a standard for defining and measuring language proficiency that would be independent of specific languages, contexts, and domains of discourse; and 2) scores from these tests would be comparable across different languages and contexts." (Bachman, 1986, p. 380)

Byrnes (1987) discusses the testing of students using an oral interview. She disputes the fact that the interview is natural language use. She states that its use could result in one of two things, either the student being interviewed does better than normal because he/she is concentrating harder and is being more precise or he/she becomes nervous and cannot produce as effectively as in a real-life conversation. Bachman and Savignon (1986) also state that the interview is simply a sample of the student's performance under certain conditions.

The validity of oral proficiency testing has also been questioned because "there is at present no uniform or widely agreed-upon theoretical structure to guide the specification and development of testing procedures intended to measure this competence objectively" (Landolf and Frawley, 1985, p.338). Furthermore, studies of oral proficiency levels (e.g. Day, Shapson and O'Shea, 1987) raise questions with respect to validity of scores. While researchers such as Bachman (1986) did achieve valid and reliable scores in all components of oral proficiency, except strategic competence, Day, Shapson and O'Shea (1987) achieved valid results in only one of the four components.

Dandonoli (1990) conducted a test of the validity of the ACTFL guidelines. She demonstrated a high validity in terms of oral proficiency testing conducted on university students. She identifies the need to have a specific purpose in the testing procedure.

2.2.3 Proficiency Testing Research

Flynn (1991) tested the validity of the French 3200 oral interview currently in use in Newfoundland and Labrador. He stated that it "allows for the multifaceted

communicative approach by the use of global rating factor" (p. 120). Flynn found that different interviewers had significant differences in the individual ratings of items of vocabulary, grammar and fluency. However, the overall global ratings of the student were more consistent.

Using the ACTFL oral proficiency guidelines, Meredith (1990) conducted an experiment on 231 first year students at Brigham Young University. Results showed that the range in the scale was adequate, that students with previous language experience rated higher on the scale and that the OPI is a feasible tool to be used in testing beginning language courses at the university level.

Henning (1992) conducted a study on 59 learners of English and 60 learners of French (at the university level) using the ACTFL OPI. All students scored within the rating level of the test, showing that the rating scale was an appropriate tool. Dandonoli (1990) also conducted interviews on English and French learners at the university level and deemed the rating scale to be appropriate. Results were not dependant on the training of the interviewer. Henning found no significant differences in the given ratings between trained and untrained interviewers.

Magnan (1988) found that a relationship exists between the ACTFL OPI rating and the percentage of grammatical errors. As proficiency increased, errors decreased. This was true for all except for the novice-mid to the novice-high. The reason given for the exception is the fact that the learner is leaving a stage of memorized speech.

In Canada, development of a proficiency test for younger children coincided with the implementation of EFI. Students from St. Lambert were rated from 0 to 5 in the following categories:

- "1. overall, that is to say general fluency, hesitation, false starts, silence and general flow of speech;
2. grammar, which covered errors on gender, tense, choice of auxiliary, word order, as well as vocabulary;
3. rhythm and intonation, this category was meant to reveal deviation from French patterns of stress (accentuation) and rising-falling pitch (intonation);
4. pronunciation included phonemic and phonetic accuracy, and deviant sounds were noted;
5. liaisons, pattern of consonant-vowel linking specific to French." (Spilka, 1976, p. 543)

Students' performance was rated highly on most areas, but not native-like. The categories which were least native-like were grammar, vocabulary and phonology. (Day 1987)

Spilka (1976) also studied students from the original St. Lambert school and found many speech errors. (Hammerly, 1987) Similarly, Pellerin & Hammerly (1986) studied grade twelve EFI students using tape recorded oral interviews, with results similar to those found in the Spilka (1976) study.

Using the British Columbia French Speaking Test for Grade Three EFI, British Columbia assessed the oral proficiency of grade three EFI students. They concluded that at grade three students "could organize and retell a story clearly and on par with native French-speaking children". (Shapson and Day, 1984, p.11) The students were notably lower on measures of fluency and pronunciation.

British Columbia also used the above instrument to assess the communicative skills of Grade seven EFI students (Day & Shapson, 1985). The instrument was adapted to accommodate both a group discussion and a one-on-one interview. The rating scale for this test ranged from 0 to 4. The students were ranked for quality of discussion, quality of information, quality of description, fluency and pronunciation/intonation. (See Appendix B.) As shown in Table 2.1, the majority of EFI grade seven students

received a score of three or higher in all categories (Day, Shapson & O'Shea, 1988).

Table 2.1

**Distribution of Student Scores on the Rating Scales
of the French Speaking Test in British Columbia**

Number of Students/ Category	Rating	Grade Seven EFI Scores (%)
(n= 50) Quality of Discussion	4	2
	3	60
	2	30
	1	8
(n= 147) Quality of Information	4	5
	3	46
	2	46
	1	3
(n= 146) Quality of Description	4	4
	3	44
	2	44
	1	8
(n= 150) Fluency	4	1
	3	81
	2	18
	1	0
(n= 144) Pronunciation/ Intonation	4	0
	3	83
	2	16
	1	1

(Day, Shapson & O'Shea, 1988, p. 104)

The Manitoba Department of Education (1984) assessed the oral production skills of grade six and grade nine EFI students. Data was collected by individual oral interviews. Students were first asked questions about school, hobbies, sports, camping, etc. Secondly they were asked to narrate a story shown on a pictorial strip. The interviews were recorded and ranked in five categories: comprehension, pronunciation, grammar and syntax, vocabulary and communication. As shown in Appendix C, the rating scale ranged from 1 to 5. (Ilavsky, 1984) Grade six students' scores ranged from 3.22 to 4.99 out of 5 on their oral communication tasks while the scores of grade nine students ranged from 3.7 to 4.99 (See Table 2.2).

Table 2.2
Average Scores on Oral Production Test
for Manitoba Grades 6 and 9 (EFI)

	Grade Six	Grade Nine
	(n= 27)	(n= 20)
Comprehension	4.66	4.85
Pronunciation	3.9	4.17
Grammar and Syntax	3.24	3.7
Vocabulary	3.22	3.83
Communication	4.99	4.99

Day & Shapson (1987) conducted a comparison test of oral proficiency of grade three EFI students from British Columbia and native francophone students from Quebec. The test consisted of a group oral interview as well as a one-on-one interview. The results of the interviews indicated that the grade three EFI children in British Columbia rate highly on oral communication skills. The British Columbia students did poorly on the linguistic aspects of their speech (i.e. pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary) and in their fluency in comparison to the native francophone students.

A study by Pawley (1985) examined grade eleven students from both early and late French immersion. Pawley discovered that the students did not perform well on the Foreign type institute-type interviews. They rated between 2 and 2+ out of 5.

There has been little oral proficiency testing conducted on students from kindergarten to grade six. Yet, Savignon & Burns (1984) have outlined the need to evaluate the young second language learner (SLL) in terms of oral proficiency.

2.3 Early French Immersion Research

2.3.1 Research on Achievement in EFI

In early studies conducted on EFI students positive results were attained in almost all areas tested. (Lambert, 1972) Students reportedly did not suffer academically because of instruction in the second language. The major difficulty documented in the early literature was the inability of learners to perform well in English in early grades. This was quickly overcome with the onset of English instruction. (Swain and Barik, 1976; Barik and Swain, 1975)

Other studies reported that instruction in French does not negatively affect achievement of EFI students in English (Warren, 1977) or mathematics (Ilavsky, 1984; Swain & Barik, 1976). Carey & Cummins (1984) report that EFI students who perform well in French also perform well in courses taught in English, and vice versa. However, students who have difficulties in the French program still tend to develop reasonable fluency in French.

Reports indicate that EFI students generally do not obtain as high a level of proficiency in speaking and writing in French as their native francophone peers. However, their measured level of reading and listening is

comparable to that of native francophone students of the same age. (Swain & Lapkin, 1982)

Day & Shapson (1987) report that EFI students do not rate as high in comparison to native francophone students on the linguistic aspects of their speech: pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. EFI students perform on a comparable level to native francophone students in the organization of a story.

Oral French has proven to be the weakest of the four communication skills, with listening comprehension the strongest. (Pawley, 1985) Pellerin and Hammerly (1986) also found a high level of errors in the spoken French of EFI students. After completing thirteen years of school, Pellerin and Hammerly (1986) state that EFI students are not comfortable in speaking French outside of the classroom. These students tend not speak French in their non-school environment even when given the occasion.

In recent years, reports on EFI achievement have been less glowing than in the early years of immersion. Lyster (1987) describes the language that EFI students speak as faulty interlanguage. Students have developed a language of their own. This is attributed to the fact that they are placed with a group of students who are learning a new

language at the same time with generally only one person (the teacher) in the classroom able to speak the language accurately. Lyster questions whether or not their French is really communication. Hammerly (1987) describes this French as "Franglais", stating that "it cannot be called a language-...instead a very defective and probably terminal classroom pidgin" (p.397)

In a comparison study by Swain & Lapkin (1982), reported in Scarcella (1990), of late and early French immersion students' language, it was found that the EFI group was more like native francophones in terms of sociolinguistic performance than late French immersion students. In other words, EFI students were more capable of communicating appropriately in different social contexts than late French immersion students.

While the emphasis in evaluation was on program outcomes of the early years of EFI, the research agenda for the 1990s included research on classroom processes, teaching/learning processes and teacher education (Lapkin, Swain & Shapson, 1990). Research on group work has shown that in terms of negotiation of meaning, students benefit more through interaction amongst themselves than with a native speaker. The task at hand will determine the extent

to which students will be involved. In group work, the teacher must insure that each student is accountable. The teacher must make students become their harshest critics. (Swain, 1985)

In order to attain the ability to be able to communicate in a second language, students must experiment with the language. They must be given the opportunity to experiment with the function of the language rather than always using the same register. Students need to be challenged to express themselves in complex language use. In teaching content, teachers should not ask questions that require short, specific answers, rather they should be asking questions to obtain answers that require much language use. (Lapkin, Swain & Shapson, 1990)

While most EFI research has focused on the students who remain in the program, there have been several articles published on students who transfer out of EFI. (Bruck, 1985) Many of these students have transferred out due to difficulties in the program. (Lewis, 1989) This trend has led to the question of whether or not EFI is really for all children. (Buxton, 1984) In trying to answer this question studies have been conducted to determine factors that impact on students' achievement in EFI. (Lewis, 1989;

Bruck, 1985; Genesee, 1976)

Trites (1976) argues that certain students do not do well in EFI due to a maturational lag. He reports that students who were having difficulties in EFI and were switched to the English stream did better academically than students who were having difficulties and stayed in EFI. Bruck (1985) reported that students who had poor attitudes, little motivation and poor nonacademic behavior did not do well in the program.

Bruck (1982) found that "after two years of education in a second language environment, the language impaired children's linguistic and cognitive skills were similar to those of language impaired children who had been totally schooled in their first language." (p.54)

2.3.2 Newfoundland Research on EFI

For some years, studies have been conducted on EFI in Newfoundland. Noonan (1991) developed speech profiles of primary EFI students in Newfoundland. She found that there was a clear progression in speech from grade one to grade three. She also found that with the increase in ability to speak French there was also an increase in errors made by the students. She accounted for these errors by the fact

that as the students progressed in using French they were using more difficult structures; therefore the number of errors was higher.

Similarly, using taped interviews, O'Reilly (1993) developed a speech profile of eighteen grade 4 to 6 students in schools in the St. John's area. O'Reilly found that these students rated moderate on most of her eight categories. O'Reilly concluded that the students had improved control of the language yet there was no measurable difference in the linguistic abilities of the students from grades four to six. Students continued to have difficulties with many aspects of grammar.

In O'Reilly's study, teachers were asked to rate students as low, medium or high in terms of oral communicative ability. In response to a teacher in the study who was surprised that an academically strong student did not speak as well as was thought, O'Reilly concluded that there was a need for an evaluative instrument to measure oral proficiency level.

Greene (1991) studied the communication strategies of eight children from one class in a St. John's school. Speech samples were collected using picture description activities at the end of grade two and again at

the end of grade five. It was found that the students generally used fewer communication strategies at the grade two level than at the grade five level. Greene also divided her students into two categories: successful language learners (SLL) and less-successful language learners (LLL). She discovered that overall both groups of students used more second language (L2) based strategies in grade five than in grade two. She did find that within each category, all of the LLL's increased their usage of intra-lingual strategies between grade two and grade five, yet only two of the students from the SLL group increased their usage of these strategies.

Marrie (1988) studied the communication strategies of ten grade three students from an EFI classroom. When she compared effective and less-effective communicators, she found that effective communicators used achievement strategies more often than the less-effective communicators:

1. approximation,
2. word coinage,
3. literal translation,
4. language mix, and
5. retrieval.

Less-effective communicators used abandonment strategies more often than the effective communicators:

1. message adjustment,
2. topic avoidance, and
3. message abandonment.

Both the less-effective and the effective communicators used circumlocution to approximately the same degree.

Netten and Spain (1989) discussed the variance in levels of achievement in French language proficiency. They have noted that a number of Newfoundland studies indicate a great variety of achievement levels amongst individual students within the same grade. They studied grade one, two and three students in various regions of Newfoundland. Three grade three classes (A-constantly using and experimenting in language use, B-average language use, and C-formal learning atmosphere) were chosen to compare oral comprehension. Students were also categorized in terms of high and low achievers. The researchers reported that teachers treated students differently according to achievement levels. In classroom A, low achievers received more messages from the teacher than the high achievers. Yet in classrooms B and C low achievers received fewer messages than high achievers. Classroom A had the greatest number of messages, doubling classrooms B and C. The researchers conclude that speaking opportunities are dependent on the classroom structure; student achievement

is dependent upon opportunities to use the language (i.e. to speak).

2.4 Summary

A major goal of the EFI program is the development of the ability to speak effectively, with ease, in the French language. Research cited above indicates that immersion students have particular strengths and deficits in their second language skills.

CHAPTER THREE

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This chapter describes the collection and the analysis of data. Also given are the questions to be answered by this study.

3.1 Data Collection

3.1.1 Procedure

Using the French 3200 Oral Interview Procedure, which has five proficiency levels and is derived from the ACTFL Oral Interview Guidelines, sample interviews were conducted with students not included in the study in January 1995 to insure the appropriateness of the interview topics and the range of the rating scale. The topics were those suggested in the French 3200 interview guide (family and home, leisure, school and holidays and travel) as they were deemed to be generic and therefore applicable to any age group. It was found unnecessary to adjust the topics of the rating scale (see Appendix D) to accommodate the range of all students.

The interviewer briefly visited the classrooms of students participating in the study before the oral testing took place in order to gain a rapport with the students.

Subsequently, audio-taped interviews of approximately fifteen minutes were conducted in the school with each student. The interviews took place in January 1995, with each interview taking approximately 15 minutes.

Taped interviews were conducted by a single trained interviewer following the procedure described in the French 3200 oral testing manual. (See Appendix E.) The interview was a conversation between the interviewer and the student, which consisted of a warmup, level check, probes and wind-down, in accordance with the directions in the Department of Education document, **French 3200 Oral Testing: A Manual for Interviews** (1992). The interviewer gave a rating immediately following each interview.

Each interview was assessed in that "consideration is given to pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension: however, these factors are not scrutinized individually. Instead, the assignment of a mark involves a global rating of the student's overall performance." (Government of Nfld. & Labrador, 1992, p. 2) A complete description of the French 3200 rating scale (i.e. the rating scale used for this study) is given in Appendix D.

Upon completion of the taped interviews for the study, eleven French 3200 teachers in the province were asked to

independently rate a sample of the interviews as well as write short comments to support their mark. (See Appendix F for a sample score sheet.)

Another individual rated ten interviews previously rated by both the interviewer and a French 3200 teacher. Five of the interviews were rated identically by both the interviewer and the French 3200 teacher, the other five had significantly different ratings.

3.1.2 Sample

The subjects for this study were sixty-three students from five different schools in the St. John's area. All students in each class, for whom the interviewer received parental/guardian permission to conduct the interview, were interviewed.

School	Grade	# of Students
#1	3	22
#1	6	4
#2	3	8
#3	6	10
#4	6	12
#5	6	6

All grade three students (ages eight and nine except for #16) were in their fourth year of the EFI program. The program began in kindergarten with all instruction in French except for music and physical education. Students began English instruction, which encompasses English language arts, in grade three. All of the grade six students (ages eleven and twelve) were in their seventh year of the EFI program which also began in kindergarten. Grades four to six include only music, physical education and language arts in English.

Grade three students would have completed approximately 3200 hours of instruction in the French language while grade six students would have completed approximately 5500 hours in the French language.

3.1.3 Interviewer

The interviewer, a grade two EFI teacher with experience teaching grade three and grade six EFI, was trained to conduct the oral interview for the purpose of this study. She had previously taught French core from grade six to ten.

3.1.4 Raters

The eleven raters had been trained to conduct the French 3200 oral interview. They are currently teaching French 3200 at the high school level in four separate school boards.

Four of the raters were male and eight were female. One of the raters was also teaching in the EFI program at the high school level (teacher #5), while another has previously taught EFI at the elementary level (teacher #6).

Subsequently another trained interviewer was chosen to rate ten interviews previously rated by both the interviewer and a teacher. This individual had taught EFI at the elementary level and French 3200.

3.2 Level Descriptors

Once each interview was completed, the interviewer provided a proficiency level according to the description provided below. The descriptors were originally developed by the provincial Department of Education to rate the French 3200 students' oral interviews (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1992).

Level 1

- *The student speaks in isolated words.
- *The student uses memorized expressions.
- *The student has non-productive pauses.
- *The interviewer must rephrase or repeat questions for comprehension.

CANNOT SURVIVE

Level 2

- *The student cannot create in the language.
- *The student has memorized expressions and stock phrases.
- *Occasional sentences occur.
- *The student has some concept of present tense and some common irregular verbs.
- *The student has non-productive pauses.

CANNOT SURVIVE

Level 3

- *The student can create in the language.
- *Sentences emerge.
- *The student pauses but they are usually productive.
- *The student can maintain simple face-to-face

conversation

*The student can speak in simple sentences.

CAN SURVIVE

Level 4

*The student can initiate and sustain routine conversation.

*The student can describe and give detailed information.

*The student is able to produce some narration in past, present and/or future but cannot sustain performance. Many errors occur.

*The student can use most question forms.

*The student speaks in paragraphs.

*The student uses connectors to maintain flow.

*The student can handle a simple situation.

CAN SURVIVE

Level 5

*The student can handle most social situations related to school.

*The student can narrate, describe and explain in present, past and future although errors still occur.

*The student can communicate facts: who, what, when, where, and how much.

*The student's performance shows a high degree of fluency and ease of speech.

*The student can give an opinion but cannot support it.

*The student can make factual comparisons.

*The student can handle situations with a complication.

FLUENT

3.3 Data Analysis

Once the speech samples were collected, the ratings from each class and grade were analyzed in terms of the average score and range. The range of proficiency levels in each class and grade level was analyzed and a comparison was conducted between scores awarded by the interviewer and those provided by each French 3200 teacher.

3.4 Comparison of Interview Ratings

Subsequently, correlation coefficients were conducted between the interviewer's and the teachers' scores, with the Pearson r equal to .57.

3.5 Research Questions

1. What is the overall proficiency level for grade three and grade six students in this study? Is there a significant difference between the two?
2. What is the proficiency level of grade three and grade six students in each school on the French 3200 OPI rating scale?
3. What is the range in proficiency level of each grade, both between schools and overall?
4. Is there a significant difference in the level of oral proficiency between boys and girls?

3.6 Limitations of the study

The study is being conducted in only five schools, involving only sixty-three subjects in Newfoundland from the St. John's area. The achievement level may be different in rural and urban parts of Newfoundland or in other schools in the St. John's area.

Since the teaching methods of all the teachers in this study are not known for certain, it is not possible to establish a relationship between proficiency level and method of teaching.

The instrument used to elicit speech samples was the

OPI. Other elicitation tools might yield different results.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

This chapter presents an analysis of the data collected in the study. Each interview was rated on a five point scale, with a plus or minus for each level, by at least two raters. The rating scale is identical to the Newfoundland French 3200 oral interview scale adapted from New Brunswick.

Each level has a plus or a minus and a corresponding score out of 25, beginning at 11. The scale begins at 11 (level 1-) because a student in French 3200 is assumed to have a certain degree of proficiency before he/she enters the course. The same numbers were kept for this study to be consistent with French 3200. (See Appendix E.)

4.1 Profile of Each Level (5+ to 4-)

A profile of student speech at each level on the interview scale is given in accordance with the scores obtained by the original interviewer. Since the interviewer rated **all** student speech (with eleven other raters evaluating portions of the sample), it was felt that this would be an appropriate means of organizing the ratings.

The profiles include the range 5+ to 4- because the interviewer did not give any results below that level.

As discussed below, there was often variation between the scores given by the original interviewer and the French 3200 teacher in individual interviews. However, even when scores were different, the comments provided by French 3200 teachers indicated that both the interviewer and other raters were generally in agreement with respect to the characteristics of the speech samples.

4.1.1 5+ or 25

Students who rated 5+ demonstrated correct pronunciation, were fluent, and spoke in paragraphs. They had consistently accurate usage of masculine and feminine gender (e.g. **Mon papa est chauve**); they demonstrated correct usage of present tense with some errors, (e.g. **Je va à MacDonald Drive**); they had excellent usage of the future, (e.g. When asked **Qu'est-ce que tu vas faire pendant le Pâques?** the student answered with, **On va aller à Londres pendant le Pâques**; when asked to describe what the class will be like the student answered, **Il y aura plus de personnes dans la classe**).

These students correctly used past tense with a few errors using 'avoir' or 'être' (e.g. when asked **Qu'est-ce que tu as fait l'été passé?** a student answered, **J'ai fait l'équitation**; when asked **Où est-ce que tu es allé l'été passé?** a student answered **Je suis allé à Nouvelle Écosse**; when describing in the past, a student stated, **Il n'y avait pas beaucoup de personnes**, and **On était très très petit**).

While the conditional was not used often, students demonstrated an ability to use this tense form, (e.g. When asked **Si tu pouvais changer ta chambre, comment la changerais-tu?** the student answered with, **J'aurais une grande télévision**).

Pronominal verbs were generally used correctly (e.g. **Les bébés se forment**).

Level 5+ students were able to circumlocute effectively (e.g. when faced with the situation of not remembering the word for **une infirmière** the student used **un assistant de docteur**).

They generally used prepositions correctly (e.g. **Il y a en Amérique du sud**).

Liaisons were correctly pronounced (e.g. **Mon cousin est allé avec moi à St. Anthony** and **Je vais aller à la**

maison et manger un peu).

The students easily made comparisons (e.g. when discussing hockey, the student stated, **J'ai le plus de buts de tout le monde**; when a student spoke of his brother trying to pay the student rate at the movies, he said, **Les personnes doivent être convaincre qu'il n'est pas plus âgé que quatorze**; when a student was describing the difference between two grades, he said, **Tu apprends les choses plus vite**; and in making a comparison between two objects, the student said, **C'est beaucoup plus grand**).

English was rarely used in each speech sample.

Comprehension was excellent.

In order for a student to achieve a 5+, he/she was quite comfortable with all levels of oral production. Errors were infrequent and fluency level was very high.

4.1.2 5 or 24

The basic difference between a level 5+ and a level 5 student was their usage of grammar. At level 5, students spoke in paragraphs and were fluent. Their pronunciation was accurate and their comprehension level was high.

Students generally used the present tense correctly

with a few common errors (e.g. Students tended to use **Je va dans Mount Pearl** instead of **Je vais à Mount Pearl**). These students sometimes used the infinitive of the correct form (e.g. **Je juste aller à l'école** instead of **Je vais à l'école**).

Elisions were sometimes not used, (e.g. instead of saying **J'aime ça** or **J'aime mon tourne-disque**, the students did not drop the 'e' in **Je, Je aime ça** or **Je écoute mon tourne-disque**).

In the passé composé students generally used 'avoir' for all auxiliary verbs (e.g. when asked what the student did last summer, the student replied with **J'ai allé nager beaucoup** instead of **Je suis allé nager** and when another was asked where she went she answered with **On a resté là avec ma tante et on a revenu** instead of **On est resté là avec ma tante et on est revenu**).

The imparfait was generally used correctly (e.g. when asked what the student did on the stormy day that school was closed she answered with, **J'étais malade alors j'ai rien fait**; when asked to describe past events a student correctly stated, **On ne pouvait pas manger**, and **Il y avait quelqu'un qui voulait tuer elle**).

The futur proche was usually formed correctly but there were errors with the verb '**aller**' (e.g. when asked to describe school next year a student answered with, **Je ya avoir plus que deux classes** instead of **Je vais avoir plus que deux classes** and **On vais être là** instead of **On va être là**). The infinitive was generally used correctly in the futur proche form (e.g. **On va aller à Wonderland** and **Les tests vont être plus difficiles**).

Comparisons were often well constructed (e.g. when asked to describe the room that he would like to have in comparison to what he has now a student responded with, **Peut-être ça va être plus grand que maintenant**; when asked to compare his previous school to his current school the student answered, **Il y a plus de personnes ici que à Bishop Feild**; and when asked to describe his/her family a student said, **Mon frère est moins âgé que moi**).

There was some usage of English (e.g. instead of describing or saying **la doubleur** a student said, **J'étais le understudy pour Jordon**; instead of saying **un apprentis** or describing it a student said, **On devait faire un lean-to**; instead of using **cool** when describing his mother one student put in the English word, **Elle est cool**; when

forgetting the word **infirmière**, another student said, **Elle est un school nurse** instead of circumlocuting as was done with the 5+ student; when asked about future prospects the student used English, **Tu peux être un stand-up comedian**, instead of simply stating **Tu peux être comédien**; **Il a fait le suicide** was pronounced in English and not in French; when describing his father's trips abroad, one student used **Il est allé sur un business trip** instead of **Il est allé faire un voyage d'affaires**; when describing the type of television that the student prefers he used, **J'aime les sitcoms** instead of describing them or saying, **J'aime les comédies de situation**; and in describing her closet one student used English instead of **une penderie**, **Il y a un petit closet**.

Some common errors included incorrect formation of partitive article (e.g. **On fait les choses à propos de les avions** instead of **On fait les choses à propos des avions** and **Ce n'est pas un bon fin de le**...instead of **Ce n'est pas un bon fin du...**; errors with gender **Mon mère est un medecin** instead of **Ma mère est un medecin**; incorrect placement of the direct object, **On a fait le deux fois**, instead of **On l'a fait deux fois**; incorrect usage of the

superlative, **la plus bonne chose** instead of **la meilleure chose**; direct English translation, **Je suis onze ans** instead of **J'ai onze ans**, and **Elle regardait comme un garçon** instead of **Elle ressemblait à un garçon**).

Level 5 students had excellent comprehension. They made more errors than a level 5+ student, however they were at ease in speaking French.

4.1.3 5- or 23

Level 5- students were fluent and spoke in paragraphs. They had excellent comprehension and generally correct pronunciation. Some students had difficulties pronouncing the letter 'r'. Students sometimes pronounced the 'r' as an English letter as opposed to the French pronunciation (e.g. **On ne reste pas là, Mon soeur fait le** and **Je joue dehors**).

Students generally used the present tense accurately (e.g. **On fait la science, On regarde les ressources**) with a few common errors (e.g. the student used the incorrect conjugation of the verb '**aller**' and used the infinitive instead of the correct tense form of the verb '**écrire**', **Je va à Deep River** instead of **Je vais à Deep River**; or **On**

écrire dans les journaux instead of **On écrit dans les journaux**).

In the passé composé students generally used only 'avoir' as the auxiliary verb (e.g. instead of saying **Je suis allé beaucoup au parc** when asked what the student did last summer he said, **J'ai allé beaucoup au parc**). Students often used the past participle incorrectly (e.g. instead of saying **avec mon ami qui est allé à Cape Bréton**...one student used the present tense form of the verb 'aller' saying, **avec mon ami qui a va à Cape Bréton**; and the student used the infinitive of the verb 'construire' instead of the past participle 'construit', **Ils ont construire**).

The future had limited usage but was generally correct. There was no usage of the futur simple; rather students tended to employ the futur proche (e.g. When asked, **Que feras-tu l'été prochain**, a student answered, **Je va jouer avec mes amis**).

Some common errors included incorrect placement of the direct object (e.g. **Il va chercher la** instead of **Il va le chercher**; incorrect gender, often using a masculine article instead of feminine; **Mon tante est un infirmière** instead of

Ma tante est une infirmière; English translation, On va l'écrire dans anglais instead of On va l'écrire en anglais; Il est 9 instead of Il a 9 ans; Dans l'été c'est toujours soleil instead of En été il fait toujours soleil; and On pratique sur lundi instead of On pratique lundi).

Level 5- students used a few more English words than level 5 (e.g. when asked about courses that the student would be doing next year he said On va faire woodwork instead of On va suivre la menuiserie or using the circumlocution strategy in describing the subject; when asked where the student would be going this summer the student answered On va aller à Nova Scotia instead of On va aller en Nouvelle Écosse; Je mets ça dans le laundry was used instead of Je mets ça avec le linge sale; when describing the fair a student used On peut avoir un free ride instead of saying On peut avoir un tour gratuit sur le manège or On ne devrait pas payer pour un tour sur le manège; circumlocution was infrequent e.g. for the word "broke", the student could have said Parce que ma mère n'a pas d'argent instead of Parce que mon maman est broke; and one student said J'étais là pour le wedding de ma tante instead of J'étais là pour le mariage de ma tante.

Comprehension was very good.

Overall a level 5- student was fluent and had no difficulty in comprehension. However, errors were more frequent than level 5 students.

4.1.4 4+ or 22

While level 4+ students comprehended well, they tended to use short paragraphs, simple sentences and their speech was broken. They exhibited many pauses because they lacked vocabulary.

The present tense was generally well constructed with some errors (e.g. the present tense **Il habite dans la maison** was correctly formed; students frequently used the infinitive of the verb for the appropriate tense form, e.g. **Je lire beaucoup de Archie**).

Students generally did not make the elision (e.g. with **je** and **oublie**. It should have become **J'oublie le titre** instead of **Je oublie le titre**).

The futur simple form was used sporadically sometimes changing to the present (e.g. when a student was describing what he will do after school he said, **Je fera... aller au toboggan** instead of **Je ferai... j'irai faire du toboggan**)

When a student was asked, **Cet après-midi après l'école, que feras-tu?** the student answered in the present tense **Je fais mes devoirs** instead of the future tense **Je ferai mes devoirs**).

When students spoke in the futur proche, they tended to form it correctly, but with some difficulty with the correct form of the verb 'aller'; e.g. **On va faire la pièce encore** was correctly used when describing what the student does during her recess break each day; when asked to describe what a student will do during the summer, the infinitive of the verb 'aller', (**J'aller nager**) was used instead of **Je vais nager**.

The passé composé was generally formed using 'avoir' as the auxiliary verb (e.g. **On a fait l'addition...Il a marché sur mon chien, J'ai joué au piano and J'ai fait les invitations**; 'avoir' was used as the auxiliary verb instead of 'être' for the verb 'aller', **On a allé à ma tante** instead of **On est allé chez ma tante** and **Elle a allé encore** instead of **Elle est allée encore**). The past participle was generally well constructed.

Level 4+ students generally did not use the imparfait or the conditional.

Other common errors included incorrect formation of the partitive article (e.g. when asked what the student was doing in math the answer was **On fait la soustraction et l'addition de les nombres decimaux** instead of **On fait la soustraction et l'addition des nombres decimaux**), direct translation of an English structure (e.g. **Il est 37 ans** instead of **Il a 37 ans**), incorrect gender use (e.g. **Mon mère et mon père l'a acheté** instead of **Ma mère et mon père l'ont acheté**) and incorrect usage of indirect object (e.g. **Il donne son main à moi** instead of **Il me donne sa main**).

Level 4+ students frequently used English for words they did not know in French rather than circumlocute (e.g. when asked what the student did at recess, the student answered, **On a fait un play** instead of **On a fait une pièce de théâtre**; **Il avait un pool table** was used instead of **Il avait une table de billard**; when asked about the snow storm one student used **On va pas être stuck dans la maison** instead of **On ne va pas être cloué à la maison**; and **J'ai avait mon baby sitter** instead of **J'avais mon gardien**).

Students at level 4+ had no difficulty with comprehension. However they tended to be less fluent than a level 5 student and used more English.

4.1.5 4 or 21

While level 4 students comprehended most of the conversation, their speech was often broken, with choppy sentences and often incorrect intonation. Students tended to speak in short paragraphs.

Students' usage of the present tense was comprehensible; however, there were many errors (e.g. when asked what a student was doing in class, she correctly answered, **On fait une histoire**; students had difficulty with the verb '**aller**' frequently using the infinitive instead of the correct verb form, **...il aller à Labrador** instead of **...il va à Labrador**; the infinitive '**lire**' was also used instead of the third person singular form, **On lit**; a student used the first person singular conjugation of the verb '**avoir**' by incorrectly adding the word '**a**', **J'ai a beaucoup de jeux de sega** instead of **J'ai beaucoup de jeux de sega**). Students were sometimes inconsistent in the types of mistakes made when attempting to use the present tense.

In the passé composé the past participle was generally well constructed. However, '**avoir**' was the auxiliary verb normally used. When asked what a student did yesterday he

answered correctly, **J'ai mangé à la maison de mon ami**; another student answered, **j'ai joué au sega**; when discussing money one student said, **Il a donné half de la argent**; when describing the student's holiday due to the snow storm he used the auxiliary verb 'avoir' for both the verb 'parler' and 'aller', **j'ai parlé et j'ai allé dehors** instead of **j'ai parlé et je suis allé dehors**; and another student also used the auxiliary 'avoir' with the verb 'aller', **Mon frère a allé faire du ski**.

The imparfait was used only with the verbs 'être' and 'avoir' (e.g. the student was describing, **C'était la fin** and **Il y avait un fête et Goldberg était triste**).

The future tenses were seldom used and consisted only of the futur proche form (e.g. when using the verb 'aller' in the futur one student said, **Je va aller** for **Je vais aller**). However, the verb formation for the futur proche frequently had two infinitives (e.g. when asked what the student is going to do, the student responded using the infinitive of the verb 'aller' instead of the conjugation of the first person singular, **Je aller chercher une carte** instead of **Je vais chercher une carte**).

Translations of English structure were often evident

(e.g. **Parce que c'est froid dehors** instead of **Parce qu'il fait froid dehors**).

English was frequently used (e.g. **Il y a beaucoup de stores** instead of **Il y a beaucoup de magasins**; **Il a un contract pour deux million de dollars** instead of **Il a un contrat pour deux million dollars**; when asked about money one student said, **Il a déjà spend** instead of **Il l'a déjà dépensé**; and when describing his father, a student used, **Il est très silly** instead of **Il est très bête**).

Level 4 students tended to make more grammatical errors and use more English than a level 4+ student. Level 4 students typically also translated more English structures while speaking French. In addition their speech was often broken and sometimes difficult to understand.

4.1.6 4- or 20

The level 4- student spoke slowly, with much hesitation. English was frequently used due to the lack of French vocabulary.

The present tense was generally constructed correctly (e.g. **Ils sont les mauvais, Mon papa habite dans Portugal Cove et ma maman habite ici, Elle est gentille, and Je lire**

which is subsequently self-corrected from the infinitive to the correct first person singular form ...**je lis des livres à chapitres**). Some incorrect usage of the present tense consisted of giving a regular verb formation for irregular verbs (e.g. ... **les places où on dormi** instead of **les places où on dort**), incorrect subject-verb agreement **il n'aime pas quand les choses est ...** instead of **il n'aime pas quand les choses sont...**), and use of the infinitive instead of the present tense form of the verb (e.g. **On lire une histoire** instead of **On lit une histoire**).

The future tense was not used (e.g. when asked to discuss in the future the student said, **C'est pas un problème** for **Ça ne va pas être un problème**).

The passé composé consisted of 'avoir' as the auxiliary verb in all cases (e.g. when asked if the student was ever on a plane the student replied, **Quand j'étais un bébé j'ai allé sur un avion** instead of **Quand j'étais un bébé je suis allé en avion**; when describing the previous summer the student correctly used the auxiliary verb 'avoir' with the verb 'faire', **J'ai fait un château de neige**).

Incorrect placement of the direct object was quite

evident (e.g. when asked what a student gave her mother for Christmas she replied, *J'ai donné elle un coffee maker* instead of *Je lui ai donné une cafetière*).

English usage was extensive (e.g. *Ils lie* instead of *ils mentent*; *J'ai donné un blanket* instead of *J'ai donné une couverture*; when describing a sibling a student stated, *il bug moi* instead of *il me dérange*; while describing the student's room the student said, *J'ai des bunk beds* instead of *J'ai un lit superposé*; when asking what a student does in his spare time he said, *Je juste mets le balle dans le hoop* instead of *J'ai mis la balle seulement dans le panier* and *J'ai shovelled* instead of *J'ai pelleté la neige*). The English usage included mainly verbs and nouns. The student had little difficulty with the other parts of speech.

The level 4- student (only one student received this rating) made numerous errors of speech. English was used extensively making the students' speech difficult to understand. The student had difficulty speaking in long sentences. However, the comprehension level was generally acceptable.

4.2 Analysis of Ratings

An analysis of the interview ratings indicate that grade six students tended to perform better than grade three students (see Appendix J). For each grade the scores provided by the interviewer for grade three and grade six students were highly consistent between schools. As shown in table 4.1 the average range of scores for grade three classes was between 22.78 and 22.00 while the average range of scores for grade six classes was between 24.30 and 23.20.

Table 4.1

Comparison of Grade Three and Grade Six Average Scores

	Grade Three		Grade Six	
	Teacher	Inter.	Teacher	Inter.
School #1	19.86	22.78	23.25	24.00
School #2	20.88	22.00		
School #3			22.60	24.30
School #4			19.67	23.50
School #5			19.00	23.20
Average	20.47	22.39	21.14	23.75

Only eleven of the sixty-two interviews received the same score by both the interviewer and the teacher rater.

As mentioned above, variation often existed between scores assigned by the interviewer and the French 3200 teachers.

Table 4.2

Comparison of Interviewer and Mean Teacher Scores

Interviewer Score	Mean Teacher Score
25	23.4
24	22.6
23	20.6
22	18.9
21	17
20	20

As Table 4.2 indicates, the averages for the teachers' scores are generally lower than those provided by the interviewer.

Subsequent analysis revealed considerable variation between scores assigned by the interviewer and those given by French 3200 teachers. Table 4.3 compares the scores assigned by the interviewer and each of the eleven teachers.

Table 4.3**Comparison of Individual Teacher and Interviewer Scores**

Interviewer versus Teacher #1		
Interviewer's Rating	Teacher #1's Rating	Difference
24	25	+1
23	23	0
23	24	+1
23	23	0
22	22	0
22	23	+1
20	20	0

Interviewer versus Teacher #2		
Interviewer's Rating	Teacher #2's Rating	Difference
24	20	-4
23	21	-2
23	22	-1
23	20	-3
23	19	-4
23	17	-5
22	18	-4
22	20	-2

Interviewer versus Teacher #3		
Interviewer's Ratings	Teacher #3's Ratings	Difference
25	24	-1
24	25	+1
24	22	-2
24	22	-2
23	23	0
23	23	0
23	22	-1
22	18	-4

Interviewer versus Teacher #4		
Interviewer's Ratings	Teacher #4's Ratings	Difference
24	23	-1
24	24	0
24	21	-3
23	18	-5
23	22	-1
22	19	-3

Interviewer versus Teacher #5		
Interviewer's Rating	Teacher #5's Rating	Difference
23	19	-4
23	20	-3
23	16	-7
22	16	-6
21	17	-4
21	17	-4

Interviewer versus Teacher #6		
Interviewer's Rating	Teacher #6's Rating	Difference
25	24	-1
25	25	0
24	22	-2
23	23	0

Interviewer versus Teacher #7		
Interviewer's Rating	Teacher #7's Rating	Difference
24	24	0
24	24	0
23	24	+1
22	20	-2

Interviewer versus Teacher #8		
Interviewer's Rating	Teacher #8's Rating	Difference
24	25	+1
24	23	-1
23	20	-3

Interviewer versus Teacher #9		
Interviewer's Rating	Teacher #9's Rating	Difference
25	24	-1
25	20	-5
24	23	-1
24	22	-2
24	18	-6
23	17	-6
22	17	-5
22	17	-5

Interviewer versus Teacher #10		
Interviewer's Rating	Teacher #10's Rating	Difference
24	20	-4
24	23	-1
23	18	-5
23	18	-5
23	18	-5
22	17	-5

Interviewer versus Teacher #11		
Interviewer's Rating	Teacher #11's Rating	Difference
24	23	-1
24	21	-3

An analysis of Table 4.2 indicates that seven of the teachers (Teachers #2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11) tended to rate students lower than the interviewer and four (Teachers #1, 3, 6, and 7) tended to rate them similarly to the interviewer.

After observing discrepancies in the scores, another trained interviewer who had taught both EFI and French core was asked to rate ten previously rated interviews. They included five interviews in which the interviewer and the

teacher rater gave identical scores and five interviews in which the scores were substantially different. The results are shown in Table 4.3 and Figure 4.2.

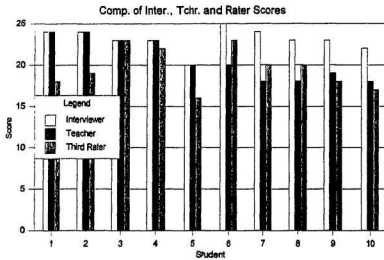
Table 4.4

Comparison of Interviewer, Teacher and Third Rater Scores

Interviewer's Scores	Teacher's Scores	Third Rater's Scores
24	24	18
24	24	19
23	23	23
23	23	22
20	20	16
25	20	23
24	18	20
23	18	20
23	19	18
22	18	17

As Table 4.4 above and Figure 4.1 below indicate, the scores given by the third rater tended to differ from those awarded by both the interviewer and the French 3200 teachers.

FIGURE 4.1



As was indicated earlier, the French 3200 teachers who rated student interviews include three males and eight females. The mean score awarded by the three male teachers was 18.8, whereas the mean score given by female teachers was 21.8.

The original interviewer gave grade three students a mean score of 22.75 and the grade six students a mean score of 23.75 (see Table 4.5). The mean score awarded by French 3200 teachers was 20.13 and 21.69 for grade three and grade six students respectively. According to the table below the greatest inter-rater variance was with the younger students. With the grade three scores, the Pearson r was 0.44 and with the grade six scores, the Pearson r was 0.62, i.e. the inter-rater reliability was higher with the older students.

Table 4.5

Comparison of Grade Three and Grade Six Mean Scores

	Grade Three	Grade Six
Interviewer	22.75	23.75
Teachers	20.13	21.69
Difference	2.44	2.06

As Table 4.6 indicates, in comparing interview scores of boys and girls in grades three and six, there are no significant gender differences.

Table 4.6**Comparison of Grade Three and Grade Six Mean Scores by Sex**

	Grade Three		Grade Six	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Inter.	22.28	22.65	23.79	23.64
Teacher	20.57	20.00	22.10	21.00

On the given score sheet each French 3200 teacher was asked to provide a short explanation for the given mark. This explanation helped the researcher identify possible factors that might account for some of the discrepancies in the scores. One frequent comment by French 3200 teachers was the students' overuse of English. Some teachers reportedly deducted one level or more for students' use of English, while others deducted only one mark (out of 25). Some of the rating differences may be related to reported differences in the oral interview training with respect to directions on how to treat students' use of English. During the training sessions some teachers had an extensive discussion on the use of English during the interview and were told to be severe in the marking whereas during other training seminars other teachers did not encounter English

to the same degree and did not deduct marks as severely.

One comment about a grade three student was that s/he could not describe in the abstract. The teacher felt that the student could not adequately describe an imaginary concept. This teacher rated students at an average of minus 4.16 in comparison to the interviewer.

Another teacher noted that there was "a little English towards the end" (but understandable, given the length of the interview and the age of the child). This teacher rated the scores at an average of -0.75 in comparison to the interviewer's scores. Although both teachers currently teach high school, the second teacher once taught EFI in the elementary grades. Teacher experiences with younger students may be a factor related to assigned oral proficiency score.

4.3 Summary

The results of this study did not enable the interviewer to give a definitive overall oral proficiency score for grade three and grade six students. While all raters tended to give higher scores for grade six students, the variance in scores for both groups was high (Pearson $r =$

Students generally rated on the higher end of the scale, with no student at a level one and only two students receiving a 2+ by a teacher rater. These findings are consistent with other similar studies.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study included a total of sixty-two grade three and grade six EFI students. Students were not selected, rather entire classes were asked to participate. The standard procedure of the French 3200 oral interview was followed. All interviews were taped on audio-cassette. The original interviewer and a French 3200 teacher (a total of eleven participated) rated each oral interview. A third rater subsequently rated a sample of ten interviews, five in which teacher and interviewer scores were identical and five in which they were different.

An analysis of the speech samples indicated that, while the students' speech was not error free, they tended to be able to communicate quite well. Consequently, the students' interview scores tended to be toward the higher end of the rating scale. In addition, the scores received by male and female students at each grade level tended to be similar. Further analysis of the scores revealed considerable differences in the ratings provided by the interviewer and the French 3200 teachers. Inter-rater reliability was Pearson $r = 0.62$.

The variations of interview ratings did not allow one to establish a clear distinction in proficiency levels between the grades. An analysis of the taped interviews and comments provided by French 3200 teachers, indicated that fluency was distinctly different between grade three and grade six students. In comparison to grade six students, grade three students were tentative with many words, were often more hesitant and were not as good at circumlocution.

The average grade six student was at level five (by the interviewer) of the oral proficiency scale. This compares favorably with the results of the 1987 British Columbia grade seven EFI French speaking test which showed a high percentage of students at level three on their scale, which means "relatively smooth and effortless, but rate of speech is slower than native (or perceptibly non-native)" (Day, Shapson & O'Shea, 1987, p. 105). This is similar to the description of a level five student on the French 3200 oral proficiency scale, showing that the grade six students in this study would be on approximately the same level as the grade seven students in the Day, Shapson and O'Shea study.

In the Day, Shapson and O'Shea (1987) study, eighteen students were interviewed and rated on quality of information, quality of description, fluency, and pronunciation/ intonation. With the exception of quality of description, inter-rater reliability was low, similar to this study.

The scores received by grade six students in this study also compare favorably with those received by grade six students in a Manitoba study. (Ilavsky, 1984) In that study, grade six students' scores ranged from 3.22 to 4.99 out of five in their oral communication tasks; in this study the scores ranged from 20 to 25 out of 25 (by the interviewer).

Conclusions

The questions to be answered in this thesis were as follows:

1. What is the overall proficiency level for grade three and grade six students in this study? Is there a significant difference between the two?
2. What is the proficiency level of grade three and grade six students in each school on the French 3200 OPI rating scale?

3. What is the range in proficiency level of each grade, both between schools and overall?
4. Is there a significant difference between the level of oral proficiency between boys and girls?

Not all the questions can be answered definitively due to the low level of inter-rater reliability (Pearson $r=0.62$) between the interviewer's ratings and those provided by the French 3200 teacher.

1. On the original interviewer's ratings, grade six students had an average mark of 23.75 (Level 5-) while grade three students had an average mark of 22.75 (Level 4+). On the French 3200 teacher ratings, the grade six students had an average of 21.69 (Level 4) and the grade three students had an average of 20.13 (Level 4-). However, due to the low inter-rater reliability (Pearson $r=0.62$), it is not possible to state that these differences actually exist. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the inter-rater reliability was higher for ratings given to grade six students.

2. The intraschool proficiency level cannot be determined because of the low inter-rater reliability. There was also a variance in the number of students in each

class, ranging from four to twenty-two, making the comparisons unreliable. The thirty grade three students came from two schools (school #1 with 22 students and school #3 with eight students). The thirty-two grade six students came from four different schools (ten from school #2, twelve from school #3, four from school #4 and six from school #5, for a total of thirty-two grade six students). (See Appendix H.)

3. As seen in Figure 5.1, in grade three the highest mark given to a student by the interviewer and the French 3200 teacher was 24. The lowest mark given by the interviewer was 20 and the lowest mark given by the French 3200 teacher was 16. Consequently, the range was from 20 to 24 out of 25 for the interviewer and from 16 to 24 for the French 3200 teachers.

As Figure 5.2 indicates, in grade six the highest mark given by the interviewer and French 3200 teacher was 25. The lowest mark given by the interviewer was 22 and the lowest mark given by a French 3200 teacher was 17.

4. There was no significant difference in the level of proficiency between boys and girls in this study. Grade three boys averaged was 21.4 and grade three girls averaged 21.3. Grade six boys averaged 22.9 while grade six girls

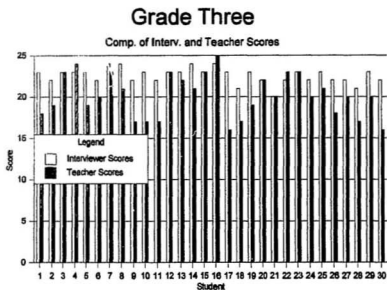
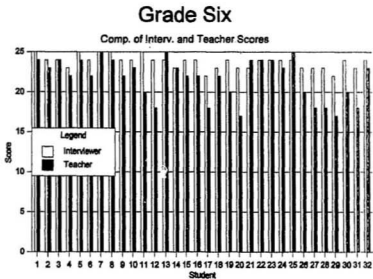
Figure 5.1

FIGURE 5.2

averaged 22.3. The low inter-rater reliability limits the confidence one may place on these scores (See Appendix I).

From the comments on the information sheets completed by the French 3200 teachers, a number of factors may have contributed to the inconsistencies of scores:

1. Some EFI students made significant use of English without seeming to pay much attention to the fact. This is consistent with Greene (1991). This use of English made it difficult to grade an interview because the student projected a false sense of fluency.

The use of English was interpreted differently by the different raters. Some teachers reduced the ratings an entire level or more, whereas other teachers deducted only one mark for use of English. Some of this discrepancy seems to be related to the differing instructions provided to French 3200 teachers during their interview training sessions.

2. All of the raters were (or had been) French 3200 teachers. Most of these teachers were not familiar with grade three and grade six EFI students' cognitive level. This created a discrepancy with the definition of a paragraph. Some French 3200 teachers indicated that a

student did not speak in paragraphs; however, the interviewer felt that the same student did.

A paragraph is not as complex for a grade three as a level three student. The understanding of the development of speech is critical in grading a student on oral proficiency. (Broman, 1982)

3. During the interview, students sometimes did not use complete sentences, yet it was a natural conversation. In French core programs, students are generally taught to speak in full sentences. EFI students, because of the extent of French usage, often converse in partial sentences. The use of incomplete sentences was rated differently by teachers.

4. Attention paid by raters to grammatical accuracy seems to have played a role in determining the given level. Some teachers seem to have placed considerably more emphasis on grammatical accuracy than others.

5. There were differing opinions on the appropriate usage of verbs. Some teachers stated on the oral interview information sheet provided that the student could not use the past tense because of the singular use of the "avoir" (instead of "être") as the auxiliary verb. Other teachers stated that the child could use the past tense but with

errors.

6. A Level II teacher deals with older students and a more grammatical method of teaching than the interviewer's communicative method of teaching. This may account for some discrepancy.

5.3 Recommendations for Further Research

1. In this study, students were rated according to a standard scale for French 3200 students. Although the OPI scale was developed originally for second language learners, this study has shown a need to develop a more appropriate elicitation instrument for use with younger EFI learners.

2. The variance of teachers' ratings show a need to conduct further research to achieve a rating scale where results will be similar amongst different raters. A tool such as the Manitoba rating scale (see Appendix C) might serve as a useful starting point for the development of a reliable rating instrument.

3. In written comments by teachers, there were many issues raised that may provide partial explanations for some of the findings. When the interviewer referred to a student talking in a paragraph, a teacher stated that the

student did not. Upon listening again to the interview, the interviewer realized that individuals define a paragraph differently. An eight year old's paragraph is shorter than a level II student's. This points to the need to ensure that child language development is built into a rating scale.

4. It is recommended that similar interviews be conducted with EFI students in grades nine and twelve to determine their level of oral proficiency in comparison to grade three and grade six.

5. It is recommended that teachers who are familiar with the cognitive and language development of students in grades three and six rate the taped interviews as opposed to French 3200 teachers.

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Appendix A

ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines-Speaking

ACTFL LEVELS	FSI/ILR LEVELS

novice low	0
novice mid	0+
novice high	1
intermediate low	1+
intermediate mid	
intermediate high	2
advanced	2+
	3
	3+
superior	4
	4+
	5

Novice-low	Unable to function in the spoken language. Oral production is limited to occasional isolated words. Essentially no communicative ability.
Novice-mid	Able to operate in a very limited capacity within very predictable areas of need. Vocabulary limited to that necessary to express simple elementary needs and basic courtesy formulae. Syntax is fragmented, inflections and word endings frequently omitted, confused or distorted, and the majority of utterances consist of isolated words or short formulae. Utterances rarely consist of more than two or three words and are marked by frequent long pauses and repetition of an interlocutor's words. Pronunciation is frequently unintelligible and is strongly influenced by the first language. Can be understood only with difficulty, even by persons such as teachers who are used to speaking with non-native speakers or in interactions where the context strongly supports the utterance.
Novice-high	Able to satisfy immediate needs using learned utterances. Can ask questions to make statements with reasonable accuracy

only where this involves short memorized utterances or formulae. There is no real autonomy of expression, although there may be some emerging signs of spontaneity and flexibility. There is a slight increase in utterance length but frequent long pauses and repetition of interlocutor's words still occur. Most utterances are telegraphic and word endings are often omitted, confused or distorted. Vocabulary is limited to areas of immediate survival needs. Can differentiate most phonemes when produced in isolation but when they are combined in words or groups of words, errors are frequent and, even with repetition, may severely inhibit communication even with persons used to dealing with such learners. Little development in stress and intonation is evident.

Intermediate- Able to satisfy basic survival needs and
low minimum courtesy requirements. In areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics, can ask and answer simple questions, initiate and respond to simple statements, and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations. When asked to do so, is able to formulate some questions with limited constructions and much inaccuracy. Almost every utterance contains fractured syntax and other grammatical errors. Vocabulary inadequate to express anything but the most elementary needs. Strong interference from the native language occurs in articulation, stress and intonation. Misunderstandings frequently arise from limited vocabulary and grammar and erroneous phonology but, with repetition, can generally be understood by native speakers in regular contact with foreigners attempting to speak their language. Little precision in information conveyed owing to tentative state of grammatical development and little or no use of modifiers.

Intermediate- mid Able to satisfy some survival needs and some limited social demands. Is able to formulate some questions when asked to do so. Vocabulary permits discussion of topics beyond basic survival needs such as personal history and leisure time activities. Some evidence of grammatical accuracy in basic constructions, for example, subject-verb agreement, noun-adjective agreement, some notion of inflection.

Intermediate- high Able to satisfy most survival needs and limited high social demands. Shows some spontaneity in language production but fluency is very uneven. Can initiate and maintain a general conversation but has little understanding of the social conventions of conversation. Developing flexibility in a range of circumstances beyond immediate survival needs. The commoner tense forms occur but errors are frequent in formation and selection. Can use most question forms. While some word order is established, errors still occur in more complex patterns. Cannot sustain coherent structures in longer utterances of unfamiliar situations. Ability to describe and give precise information is limited. Aware of basic cohesive features such as pronouns and verb inflections, but many are unreliable, especially if less immediate in reference. Extended discourse is largely a series of short, discrete utterances. Articulation is comprehensible, but still has difficulty in producing certain sounds in certain positions, or in certain combinations, and speech will usually be labored. Still has to repeat utterances frequently to be understood by the general public. Able to produce some narration in either past or future.

- Advanced** Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements. Can handle with confidence but not with facility most social situations including introductions and casual conversations about current events, as well as work, family, and autobiographical information; can handle limited work requirements, needing help in handling any complications or difficulties. Has a speaking vocabulary sufficient to respond simply with some circumlocutions; assent, though often quite faulty, is intelligible; can usually handle elementary constructions quite accurately but does not have thorough or confident control of the grammar.
- Advanced-plus** Able to satisfy most work requirements and show some ability to communicate on concrete topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. Generally strong in either grammar or vocabulary, but not in both. Weakness or unevenness in one of the foregoing or in pronunciation result in occasional miscommunication. Areas of weakness range from simple constructions such as plurals, articles, prepositions, and negatives to more complex structures such as tense usage, passive constructions, word order, and relative clauses. Normally controls general vocabulary with some groping for everyday vocabulary still evident. Often shows remarkable fluency and ease of speech, but under tension or pressure language may break down.
- Superior** Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics. Can discuss particular interests and special fields of competence with reasonable ease. Vocabulary is broad enough that speaker rarely has to

grope for a word; accent may be obviously foreign, control of grammar good; errors virtually never interfere with understanding and rarely disturb the native speaker.

(Brown, 1978, 235-237)

Appendix B

Rating Scale for Grade Seven French Speaking
Test in British Columbia

 Quality of Description (Interview, Part 11)

Rating	Descriptor
4	The description is clear and you can easily understand what the child's occupation is. The level of language and vocabulary is very good; sentence structures are correct.
3	The description is clear and you can easily understand what the child's occupation is. The level of language and vocabulary is very good; sentence structures are generally correct.
2	The description is vague and the occupation is not really described. You can understand what the child's occupation is but only with some difficulty. The level of language and vocabulary are rather limited; sentence structures are sometimes correct.
1	The description is poor. You cannot understand what the child's occupation is. The language and vocabulary are quite limited; sentence structures are generally incorrect.

 Fluency

Rating	Descriptor
4	Relatively smooth and effortless, native-like rate of speech.
3	Relatively smooth and effortless, but rate of speech is slower than native (or perceptibly non-native).
2	Speech is uneven; seems to require effort occasionally halting and choppy.

- 1 Halting, slow speech; seems to require much effort; choppy.

Pronunciation/Intonation (Chain Story)

Rating	Descriptor
4	Native-speaker level or very close to native speaker.
3	Good or rather good pronunciation; light or rather light accent. Intonation sometimes good.
2	Adequate pronunciation; marked or rather marked accent. English intonation.
1	Poor pronunciation; very marked accent. Difficult to understand; some sounds may be distorted. Marked English intonation.

Quality of Discussion (Town Planning)

Rating	Descriptor
4	Very good discussion. There is very good interaction and good participation. Overall, the children develop and explain their ideas and opinions very well, and they express them fully and clearly. Control of language is very good.
3	Good discussion. There is good interaction and rather good participation. Overall, the children develop and explain their ideas and opinions well, although sometimes they do not develop them clearly and/or fully. Control of language is good.

- 2 Adequate discussion. There is little interaction and limited participation. The children make some attempt at developing and expressing their ideas. However, on the whole, their ideas are not elaborated to any great extent, and they tend to be vague and/or incomplete. Control of language is somewhat limited.
- 1 Inadequate discussion. There is little or no interaction and poor participation. The children have very few ideas, and they tend to be vague. Control of language is limited.

Quality of Information (Interview: Part 1)

Rating	Descriptor
4	The child answers the questions very well. His/her responses are very elaborated and clear. They tend to be very complete and superior in content, coherence, and logical ordering.
3	The child answers the questions well. His/her responses are generally complete and clear. Sometimes the child lacks a bit of coherence in what he/she says, but in general, the content and quality of the responses are of a good level.
2	The child answers the questions adequately, but the responses are not elaborated. They consist mainly of simple comments or remarks rather than explanations. In addition to the limited content, the responses may be vague and/or lack coherence.
1	The child does not answer the questions adequately. There is little information, irrelevant information, and/or too much English. You cannot understand the child's intent.

(Day, Shapson & O'Shea, 1987, 105-106)

Appendix C

Descriptors for the Oral Rating
Scale for Manitoba Grades 6 & 9

A) Comprehension during conversation

- 5- understands everything
- 4- very few repetitions needed for comprehension
- 3- several questions have to be repeated
- 2- several questions have to be translated
- 1- nearly all questions have to be translated

B) Pronunciation and fluency

- 5- native-like pronunciation and fluency
- 4- a few mispronounced words not affecting meaning
- 3- inconsistent pronunciation leading to confusions
- 2- serious pronunciations errors affecting communication
- 1- pronunciation difficulties prevent communication
- 0- sample too small for evaluation

C) Grammar and Syntax

- 5- native-like knowledge of grammar and syntax
- 4- a few grammatical and syntactic errors
- 3- numerous grammatical and syntactic errors leading to ambiguous speech
- 2- grammar and syntax insufficient leading to some incomprehensible speech
- 1- grammar and syntax so limited that understanding is greatly affected
- 0- sample too small to evaluate

D) Vocabulary

- 5- vocabulary equivalent to a native speaker of the age group
- 4- a few errors: sufficient vocabulary, rarely a borrowing or use of English words
- 3- basic vocabulary but sufficient: some use of borrowing and English words
- 2- very often the wrong word: many borrowings and English words
- 1- insufficient vocabulary for production
- 0- sample too small to evaluate

E) Communication

- 5- willingness to communicate in French
- 4- reticent but will communicate in French
- 3- very little desire to communicate in French
- 2- no desire to communicate in French.
- 1- refuses to speak in French

(Government of Manitoba, 1983,
Appendix 2)

Appendix D
French 3200 Rating Scale
Factors in Speaking Proficiency

Pronunciation**Level 1**

Often unintelligible

Level 2

Major and frequent errors often impeding understanding and requiring repetition of utterances.

Level 3

Few major errors, but frequent minor errors at times hamper understanding.

Level 4

Accent markedly foreign, but mispronunciations rarely leads to misunderstanding.

Level 5

Accent possibly foreign but mispronunciations are slight.

Grammar**Level 1**

Syntax fragmented. Inflections and word endings often omitted. Use of grammar almost always accurate.

Level 2

Has concept of present tense of regular and common irregular verbs. Use limited to first person singular and first and second person plural. Uses articles but errors are numerous.

Level 3

Reasonable accuracy in basic constructions (subject-verb agreement, noun and gender agreement). Present tense of regular and common irregular verbs. Some concept of past, but able to use only isolated forms learned as vocabulary. Syntax is generally accurate.

Level 4

Ability to describe often limited to present tense; other tenses occur but errors are frequent. Some narration in past, present and future but unable to sustain performance. Errors in complex sentences.

Cannot sustain use of relative clauses and conjunctions.
Uses some indirect and direct object pronouns.

Level 5

Errors are random and seldom interfere with comprehension. Can narrate, describe and explain in past, present and future though errors still occur. Weaknesses range from simple to complex. Able to use partitive (affirmative and negative), demonstrative, expressions of quantity, and adverbs.

Vocabulary

Level 1

Limited to basic courtesy words, basic objects, colors, clothing, family members, food, months, days, time, weather.

Level 2

Handles with confidence vocabulary related to following areas: basic objects, colors, clothing, numbers, family members, food, months, days, time, and weather.

Level 3

Vocabulary permits discussion beyond survival needs; e.g., autobiographical details, leisure, daily schedule.

Level 4

Vocabulary beyond the survival level. Adequate to handle inquiries about self, family, friends, trips, studies and interests.

Level 5

Vocabulary sufficient with circumlocutions to speak in concrete topics relating to interests and familiar themes. Evidence of some idiomatic expression.

Fluency

Level 1

No evidence of creating with language. Limited to isolated words and phrases. Long pauses, unable to cope with simple situations.

Level 2

Can ask accurate questions and make statements only when it involves memorized material. Handles high-frequency utterances. Unable to cope with most simple survival situations.

Level 3

Can initiate and maintain simple face-to-face conversation. Speech is slow and uneven except in routine phrases.

Level 4

Initiates and sustains general conversations but accuracy is still uneven. Speaking is uneven.

Level 5

Can handle with considerable confidence most common situations. Shows some facility in handling complications. Can communicate facts. Can explain point of view in simple fashion, but has difficulty in supporting an opinion. Can make factual comparisons. Can communicate needs in situation with complications.

Comprehension**Level 1**

Repetition often necessary with slowed speech.

Level 2

Often limited enough to inhibit normal conversation.

Level 3

Good enough so as not to interfere with normal conversation. Some repetition required.

Level 4

Good comprehension of normal speech. Rarely asks for repetition or rephrasing.

Level 5

Comprehension of normal speech is nearly perfect and repetition is rarely required.

(Government of Newfoundland & Labrador, 1992, 8)

Appendix E
Interview Format

The interview should be friendly and relaxed; however, it is not simply a friendly conversation. Although it is as natural and relaxed as possible, it must maintain a structure and be purposeful. The task of the tester is to guide the student in performing functions which will clearly indicate his/her level of oral proficiency.

Questions should be posed in a normal tone of voice and at the normal pace for the language. However, at low-functioning levels it may be necessary to slow down, repeat, or paraphrase for the student.

Although the interview process remains consistent, the interview topics may vary. Interviews should develop two to three topics in detail; however, every interview must be flexible and develop in accordance with the interests and linguistic competency of the student. Once a topic is selected, it is important that the tester stay with it until a rateable sample can be obtained.

The task of the tester is to look for patterns which reflect the student's proficiency at a particular level. The principal procedure in rating a student is to compare the characteristics of the speech sample in the interview with the characteristics of the level descriptions and to find the closest match.

A well-conducted interview will involve different stages, each blending naturally into the text, and each bringing the tester closer to confirming the proficiency level of the student. Pardee Lowe Jr. systemized the structure, dividing the interview into four phases horizontally: (1) warmup, (2) level check, (3) probes, and (4) wind-down; and three planes vertically: (1) the psychological, (2) the linguistic, and (3) the evaluative. This general structure is shown in the table on page 7 and provides a useful framework for rating oral language proficiency.

Warmup

This phase includes the first few minutes of the interview. The questions asked during this phase should be natural, friendly, and easy to understand. The student is put at ease, and the tester gains a preliminary indication of the level of speech and understanding.

Level Check

Once the tester has determined the student's general proficiency level during the simple conversation of the warmup, the next phase is aimed at finding out more about student competence. In this phase the tester checks which functions and content the student performs with the greatest accuracy on a range of topics. Questions should naturally follow from the warmup phase. While the conversation is progressing, the tester will pay attention to such areas as pronunciation, extent of vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and comprehension.

Probes

While the level check phase lets the tester know the sustained level at which the student can comfortably function, the student may at times go beyond this level. The purpose of the "probes" phase is to bring the student to the uppermost level at which s/he can function. Probing on a range of topics enables the tester to find the level at which the student can no longer speak or understand accurately.

Wind-Down

Once the tester has determined the uppermost limit for the student on a range of topics, the next phase is the wind-down. It is during this phase that questions become easier, returning the student level at which s/he functions most accurately. It ends the interview on a positive note, giving the student a sense of accomplishment, and also giving the tester a chance to recheck the rating.

Using the interview structure previously outlined, the tester is able to guide the student to perform the functions that will indicate his/her sustained speaking level. Having obtained an adequate sample of the student's proficiency with the proficiency level descriptions and find the appropriate match. Once the tester finds the match, s/he is able to assign a rating to the student. Valid and efficient assignment of ratings demands that the tester have a thorough knowledge of the various characteristics of each of the proficiency levels.

(Government of Newfoundland and
Labrador, 1992, pp.6-7)

Appendix F

French 3200

Oral Interview Score Sheet

NAME _____

level 1

11 12 13

Level 2

14 15 16

Level 3

17 18 19

Level 4

20 21 22

Level 5

23 24 25

COMMENTS _____

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Appendix G
Overall Ratings

Student #	Interviewer Rating		French 3200 Teacher Rating		Diff. in Scores	Teacher
	Level	Score	Level	Score		
1	5-	23	3	18	-5	4
2	4+	22	3+	19	-3	4
3	5-	23	5-	23	0	1
4	5-	23	5	24	+1	1
14	5-	23	4-	20	-3	2
15	5-	23	3+	19	-4	2
16	4+	22	4-	20	-2	8
17	5	24	5-	23	-1	11
18	5	24	4	21	-3	11
19	4+	22	3	17	-5	9
20	5-	23	3	17	-6	9
21	4+	22	3	17	-5	9
22	5-	23	5-	23	0	3
23	5-	23	4+	22	-1	3
27	5+	25	5	24	-1	3
28	5	24	5-	23	-1	4
29	5	24	5	24	0	4
30	5-	23	4+	22	-1	4
31	5	24	4	21	-3	4
32	5-	23	5-	23	0	1
33	5	24	5+	25	+1	1
34	5-	23	2+	16	-7	5
35	4	21	3-	17	-4	5

36	5-	23	3+	19	-4	5
37	5+	25	5	24	-1	6
38	5	24	4+	22	-2	6
39	5+	25	5+	25	0	6
40	5+	25	5	24	-1	9
41	5	24	4+	22	-2	9
42	5	24	5-	23	-1	9
43	5+	25	4-	20	-5	9
44	5	24	3	18	-6	9
45	4+	22	4+	22	0	1
48	4-	20	4-	20	0	1
49	4+	22	5-	23	+1	1
51	5-	23	5-	23	0	6
52	4+	22	4-	20	-2	7
53	5-	23	4	21	-2	2
54	4+	22	3	18	-4	2
55	4+	22	4-	20	-2	2
56	4	21	3-	17	-4	5
57	5-	23	4-	20	-3	5
58	4+	22	2+	16	-6	5
59	5	24	5+	25	+1	3
60	5-	23	5-	23	0	3
61	5	24	4	22	-2	3
62	5	24	4	22	-2	3
63	4+	22	3	18	-4	3
64	5-	23	4+	22	-1	2

65	5	24	4-	20	-4	2
66	5-	23	3-	17	-6	2
67	5-	23	5	24	+1	7
68	5	24	5	24	0	7
69	5	24	5	24	0	7
70	5	24	5-	23	-1	8
71	5	24	5+	25	+1	8
72	5-	23	4-	20	-3	8
73	5-	23	3	18	-5	10
74	5-	23	3	18	-5	10
75	4+	22	3-	17	-5	10
76	5	24	4-	20	-4	10
77	5-	23	3	18	-5	10
78	5	24	5-	23	-1	10

Interviewer
Average
23.17

Teacher
Average
20.67

24= 20
23= 23
22= 12
21= 2
20= 1
19= 0
18= 0
17= 0
16= 0

24= 9
23= 11
22= 8
21= 3
20= 8
19= 3
18= 7
17= 7
16= 2

Total= 62

Overall Average= 21.92

Appendix H

Results by Grade Level and Class

Grade Three- School #1					
Student #	Interviewer Rating		French 3200 Teacher Rating		Diff. in Scores
	Level	Score	Level	Score	
1	5-	23	3	18	-5
2	4+	22	3+	19	-3
3	5-	23	5-	23	0
4	5-	23	5	24	+1
15	5-	23	3+	19	-4
16	4+	22	4-	20	-2
17	5	24	5-	23	-1
18	5	24	4	21	-3
19	4+	22	3	17	-5
20	5-	23	3	17	-6
21	4+	22	3	17	-5
22	5-	23	5-	23	0
23	5-	23	4+	22	-1
31	5	24	4	21	-3
32	5-	23	5-	23	0
33	5	24	5+	25	+1
34	5-	23	2+	16	-7
35	4	21	3-	17	-4
36	5-	23	3+	19	-4
56	4	21	3-	17	-4
57	5-	23	4-	20	-3
58	4+	22	2+	16	-6

Interviewer Average	Teacher Average
22.78	19.86
25= 0	25= 1
24= 4	24= 1
23= 11	23= 4
22= 5	22= 1
21= 2	21= 2
20= 0	20= 2
19= 0	19= 3
18= 0	18= 1
17= 0	17= 5
16= 0	16= 2

Total= 22

Grade Three - School #2					
Student #	Interviewer Rating		French 3200 Teacher Rating		Diff. in Scores
	Level	Score	Level	Score	
45	4+	22	4+	22	0
48	4-	20	4-	20	0
49	4+	22	5-	23	+1
51	5-	23	5-	23	0
52	4+	22	4-	20	-2
53	5-	23	4	21	-2
54	4+	22	3	18	-4
55	4+	22	4-	20	-2

Interviewer
Average
22.0

Teacher
Average
20.88

23= 2
22= 5
21= 0
20= 1
19= 0
18= 0

23= 2
22= 1
21= 1
20= 3
19= 0
18= 1

Total= 8

Grade Six- School #1					
Student #	Interviewer Rating		French 3200 Teacher Rating		Diff. in Scores
	Level	Score	Level	Score	
27	5+	25	5	24	-1
28	5	24	5-	23	-1
29	5	24	5	24	0
30	5-	23	4+	22	-1

Interviewer
Average
24.00

Teacher
Average
23.25

25= 1
24= 2
23= 1
22= 0

25= 0
24= 2
23= 1
22= 1

Total= 4

Grade Six- School #3					
Student #	Interviewer Rating		French 3200 Teacher Rating		Diff. in Scores
	Level	Score	Level	Score	
37	5+	25	5	24	-1
38	5	24	4+	22	-2
39	5+	25	5+	25	0
40	5+	25	5	24	-1
41	5	24	4+	22	-2
42	5	24	5-	23	-1
43	5+	25	4-	20	-5
44	5	24	3	18	-6
71	5	24	5+	25	+1
72	5-	23	5-	23	0

Interviewer
Average
24.3

Teacher
Average
22.6

25= 4
24= 5
23= 1
22= 0
21= 0
20= 0
19= 0
18= 0

25= 2
24= 2
23= 2
22= 2
21= 0
20= 1
19= 0
18= 1

Total= 10

Grade Six- School #4					
Student #	Interviewer Rating		French 3200 Teacher Rating		Diff. in Scores
	Level	Score	Level	Score	
61	5	24	4	22	-2
62	5	24	4	22	-2
63	4+	22	3	18	-4
64	5-	23	4+	22	-1
65	5	24	4-	20	-4
66	5-	23	3-	17	-6
67	5-	23	5	24	+1
68	5	24	5	24	0
69	5	24	5	24	0
70	5	24	5-	23	-1
71	5	24	5+	25	+1
72	5-	23	4-	20	-3

Interviewer
Average
23.5

Teacher
Average
19.67

25= 0
24= 7
23= 4
22= 1
20= 0
18= 0
17= 0

25= 1
24= 3
23= 1
22= 3
20= 2
18= 1
17= 1

Total= 12

Grade Six- School #5					
Student #	Interviewer Rating		French 3200 Teacher Rating		Diff. in Scores
	Level	Score	Level	Score	
73	5-	23	3	18	-5
74	5-	23	3	18	-5
75	4+	22	3-	17	-5
76	5	24	4-	20	-4
77	5-	23	3	18	-5
78	5	24	5-	23	-1

Interviewer
Average
23.2

Teacher
Average
19.0

25= 0
24= 2
23= 3
22= 1
21= 0
20= 0
19= 0
18= 0
17= 0

25= 0
24= 0
23= 1
22= 0
21= 0
20= 1
19= 0
18= 3
17= 1

Total= 6

Appendix I
Results by Grade Level and Sex

Grade Three (Boys)					
Student #	Interviewer Rating		French 3200 Teacher Rating		Diff. in Scores
	Level	Score	Level	Score	
4	5-	23	5	24	+1
16	4+	22	4-	20	-2
33	5	24	5+	25	+1
35	4	21	3-	17	-4
52	4+	22	4-	20	-2
53	5-	23	4	21	-2
56	4	21	3-	17	-4

Interviewer
Average
22.28

Teacher
Average
20.57

25= 0

25= 1

24= 1

24= 1

23= 2

23= 0

22= 2

22= 0

21= 2

21= 1

20= 0

20= 2

19= 0

19= 0

18= 0

18= 0

17= 0.

17= 2

Total= 7

Grade Three (Girls)					
Student #	Interviewer Rating		French 3200 Teacher Rating		Diff. in Scores
	Level	Score	Level	Score	
1	5-	23	3	18	-5
2	4+	22	3+	19	-3
3	5-	23	5-	23	0
15	5-	23	3+	19	-4
17	5	24	5-	23	-1
18	5	24	4	21	-3
19	4+	22	3	17	-5
20	5-	23	3	17	-6
21	4+	22	3	17	-5
22	5-	23	5-	23	0
23	5-	23	4+	22	-1
31	5	24	4	21	-3
32	5-	23	5-	23	0
34	5-	23	2+	16	-7
36	5-	23	3+	19	-4
45	4+	22	4+	22	0
48	4-	20	4-	20	0
49	4+	22	5-	23	+1
51	5-	23	5-	23	0
54	4+	22	3	18	-4
55	4+	22	4-	20	-2
57	5-	23	4-	20	-3
58	4+	22	2+	16	-6

Interviewer Average	Teacher Average
22.65	20.00
25= 0	25= 0
24= 3	24= 0
23= 11	23= 6
22= 8	22= 2
21= 0	21= 2
20= 1	20= 3
19= 0	19= 3
18= 0	18= 2
17= 0	17= 3
16= 0	16= 2

Total= 23

Grade Six (Boys)					
Student #	Interviewer Rating		French 3200 Teacher Rating		Diff. in Scores
	Level	Score	Level	Score	
14	5-	23	4-	20	-3
27	5+	25	5	24	-1
29	5	24	5	24	0
30	5-	23	4+	22	-1
38	5	24	4+	22	-2
39	5+	25	5+	25	0
40	5+	25	5	24	-1
43	5+	25	4-	20	-5
59	5	24	5+	25	+1
60	5-	23	5-	23	0
62	5	24	4+	22	-2
63	4+	22	3	18	-4
65	5	24	4-	20	-4
67	5-	23	5	24	+1
68	5	24	5	24	0
69	5	24	5	24	0
70	5	24	5-	23	-1
74	5-	23	3	18	-5
77	5-	23	3	18	-5

Interviewer	Teacher
Average	Average
23.79	22.10
25= 4	25= 2
24= 8	24= 6
23= 6	23= 2
22= 1	22= 3
21= 0	21= 0
20= 0	20= 3
19= 0	19= 0
18= 0	18= 3

Total= 19

Grade Six (Girls)					
Student #	Interviewer Rating		French 3200 Teacher Rating		Diff. in Scores
	Level	Score	Level	Score	
28	5	24	5-	23	-1
37	5+	25	5	24	-1
41	5	24	4+	22	-2
42	5	24	5-	23	-1
44	5	24	3	18	-6
61	5	24	4	21	-3
64	5-	23	4+	22	-1
66	5-	23	3-	17	-6
71	5	24	5+	25	+1
72	5-	23	4-	20	-3
73	5-	23	3	18	-5
75	4+	22	3-	17	-5
76	5	24	4-	20	-4
78	5	24	5-	23	-1

Interviewer
Average
23.64

Teacher
Average
21.00

25= 1
24= 8
23= 4
22= 1
21= 0
20= 0
19= 0
18= 0
17= 0

25= 1
24= 1
23= 3
22= 3
21= 0
20= 2
19= 0
18= 2
17= 2

Total= 14

Appendix J
Ratings by Grade Level

Grade Three					
Student #	Interviewer Rating		French 3200 Teacher Rating		Diff. in Scores
	Level	Score	Level	Score	
1	5-	23	3	18	-5
2	4+	22	3+	19	-3
3	5-	23	5-	23	0
4	5-	23	5	24	+1
15	5-	23	3+	19	-4
16	4+	22	4-	20	-2
17	5	24	5-	23	-1
18	5	24	4	21	-3
19	4+	22	3	17	-5
20	5-	23	3	17	-6
21	4+	22	3	17	-5
22	5-	23	5-	23	0
23	5-	23	4+	22	-1
31	5	24	4	21	-3
32	5-	23	5-	23	0
33	5	24	5+	25	+1
34	5-	23	2+	16	-7
35	4	21	3-	17	-4
36	5-	23	3+	19	-4
45	4+	22	4+	22	0
48	4-	20	4-	20	0
49	4+	22	5-	23	+1

51	5-	23	5-	23	0
52	4+	22	4-	20	-2
53	5-	23	4	21	-2
54	4+	22	3	18	-4
55	4+	22	4-	20	-2
56	4	21	3-	17	-4
57	5-	23	4-	20	-3
58	4+	22	2+	16	-6

Interviewer
Average
22.75

25= 0
24= 4
23= 13
22= 10
21= 2
20= 1
19= 0
18= 0
17= 0
16= 0

Teacher
Average
20.13

25= 0
24= 1
23= 6
22= 2
21= 2
20= 5
19= 3
18= 2
17= 5
16= 2

Total= 30

Grade Six					
Student #	Interviewer Rating		French 3200 Teacher Rating		Diff. in Scores
	Level	Score	Level	Score	
27	5+	25	5	24	-1
28	5	24	5-	23	-1
29	5	24	5	24	0
30	5-	23	4+	22	-1
37	5+	25	5	24	-1
38	5	24	4+	22	-2
39	5+	25	5+	25	0
40	5+	25	5	24	-1
41	5	24	4+	22	-2
42	5	24	5-	23	-1
43	5+	25	4-	20	-5
44	5	24	3	18	-6
59	5	24	5+	25	+1
60	5-	23	5-	23	0
61	5	24	4+	22	-2
62	5	24	4+	22	-2
63	4+	22	3	18	-4
64	5-	23	4+	22	-1
65	5	24	4-	20	-4
66	5-	23	3-	17	-6
67	5-	23	5	24	+1
68	5	24	5	24	0
69	5	24	5	24	0

70	5	24	5-	23	-1
71	5	24	5+	25	+1
72	5-	23	4-	20	-3
73	5-	23	3	18	-5
74	5-	23	3	18	-5
75	4+	22	3-	17	-5
76	5	24	4-	20	-4
77	5-	23	3	18	-5
78	5	24	5-	23	-1

Interviewer
Average
23.75

Teacher
Average
21.69

25= 5
24= 16
23= 9
22= 2
21= 0
20= 0
19= 0
18= 0
17= 0

25= 3
24= 7
23= 5
22= 6
21= 0
20= 4
19= 0
18= 5
17= 2

Total= 32

Appendix K

Foreign Service Institute Rating Scale

Level	Description
0	Unable to function in the spoken language.
0+	Able to satisfy immediate needs using rehearsed utterances.
1	Able to satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics.
1+	Can initiate and maintain predictable face-to-face conversations and satisfy limited social demands.
2	Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements.
2+	Able to satisfy most work requirements with language usage that is often, but not always, acceptable and effective.
3	Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics.
3+	Often able to use the language to satisfy professional needs in a wide range of sophisticated and demanding tasks.
4	Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to professional needs.
4+	Speaking proficiency is regularly superior on all respects, usually equivalent to that of a well-educated highly articulate native speaker.
5	Speaking proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate well-educated native speaker and reflects the cultural standards of the country where the language is natively spoken.

(Brown, 1987, p. 234)

Appendix L

Sample letter to the School Board

Box 2623
Manuals, Newfoundland
January, 1995

Mr. Fred Rowe
Assistant Superintendent
Avalon Consolidated School Board
P.O. Box 1980
St. John's, Newfoundland
A1C 5R5

Dear Mr. Rowe,

I am presently working towards my Master's of Education in Curriculum and Instruction, Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland with an emphasis on French Immersion. I have completed all of my course work and I am currently working on my thesis, as a partial fulfillment of the requirements of my Masters degree, under the supervision of Dr. Glenn Loveless.

I am employed with your board as a grade two French Immersion teacher at Bishop Feild.

For my Master's thesis, I wish to study the oral proficiency of students in grades three and six in a number of your French Immersion schools. These would include Bishop Feild, Harrington, Park Avenue and Bishop Abraham, as well as a preinterview with four grade six students at Vanier Elementary. A summary of my results will be available to you and the schools, upon completion of the study.

I have discussed the details of my study with Mrs. Thelma Whalen and my study meets the ethical guidelines of the Faculty of Education and Memorial University. I am asking your permission to conduct interviews during the regular school day with all students from each class, for a total of 70 students. Each interview would last approximately fifteen minutes. They will be taped and rated by myself as well as another trained interviewer. You may also contact upon completion of the study, Dr. Patricia Canning, Associate Dean, Research and Development at the Faculty of Education to discuss this research project. The tapes will be erased if the parents/guardians wish. The study will not identify students or

schools. In closing, I wish to reiterate that all information is strictly confidential and no individual will be identified.

I am also requesting permission to send the attached letter to parents for permission in using their child in this study.

Thank-you for your consideration of this request. If there are any further questions, I can be reached at Bishop Feild Elementary at 722-3103 or at home at 781-0047.

Sincerely,

Susan Thomas
Grade two French Immersion teacher
Bishop Feild Elementary
Enclo.

c.c. Mr. Fred Rowe
Superintendent

Mr. Scott Crocker
Principal
Mme. Iris Mackay
Grade three teacher
Mme. Dominique Larocque
Grade six teacher
Bishop Feild Elementary

Ms. Marilyn Moore
Principal
Mme. Tina Clark
Grade six teacher
Bishop Abraham

Ms. Marie-Louise Greene
Principal
Mme. Jeannette Planchat
Grade three teacher
Harrington Elementary

Mr. Don White
Principal
Mme. Jillian Blackmore
Grade six teacher
Park Avenue Elementary

Appendix M

Sample Letter to Parents

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I, Susan Thomas, am a student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland currently working on my thesis with the assistance of my supervisor, Dr. Glenn Loveless. The thesis is a partial fulfillment of the requirements for my Master's degree in Education. I will be interviewing children at their school during regular class time to evaluate their level of oral production in French. I am requesting your permission for your child to take part in this study.

Your child's participation will consist of a conversation in French concerning topics of interest to a grade three and a grade six student. If your child decides during the interview that he/she no longer wishes to participate he/she may return to the classroom at any time without any prejudice. The interview will take approximately fifteen minutes.

All information gathered in this study is strictly confidential. The interview will be taped orally but no child or school will be identified by name. If you wish you may have your child's interview erased at the end of the study. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw your child at any time. The study has received approval of the Faculty of Education's Ethics Review Committee. The results of my research will be made available to you upon request.

If you are in agreement with having your child participate in this study please sign below and return one copy to the classroom teacher. The other is for you. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me at home at 781-0047. If at any time you wish to speak to a resource person not associated with the study, please contact Dr. Patricia Canning, Associate Dean, Research and Development at the Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

I would appreciate it if you would please return this sheet to your child's homeroom teacher as soon as possible as I wish to conduct the interviews this week.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Thomas

I _____ (parent/ guardian) hereby give permission for my child to take part in a study in oral production in French being undertaken by Susan Thomas. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that my child and/or I can withdraw permission at any time. All information is strictly confidential and no individual will be identified.

Date

Signature of parent or guardian

Appendix N

Sample Letter to Parents Regarding Pretesting

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I, Susan Thomas, am a student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland currently working on my thesis with the assistance of my supervisor, Dr. Glenn Loveless. The thesis is a partial fulfillment of the requirements for my Master's degree in Education. I will be interviewing children at their school during regular class time to evaluate their level of oral production in French. Before conducting the actual interviews I must test the interview rating scale. I am requesting your permission for your child to take part in this study.

Your child's participation will consist of a conversation in French concerning topics of interest to a grade three and a grade six student. If your child decides during the interview that he/she no longer wishes to participate he/she may return to the classroom at any time. The interview will take approximately fifteen minutes.

All information gathered in this study is strictly confidential. The interview will be taped orally but no child or school will be identified by name. You may if you wish, have your child's interview erased at the end of the study. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw your child at any time without any prejudice. The study has received approval of the Faculty of Education's Ethics Review Committee. The results of my research will be made available to you upon request.

If you are in agreement with having your child participate in this study please sign below and return one copy to the classroom teacher. The other is for you. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me at home at 781-0047. If at any time you wish to speak to a resource person not associated with the study, please contact Dr. Patricia Canning, Associate Dean, Research and Development at the Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

I would appreciate it if you would please return this sheet to your child's homeroom teacher as soon as possible as I wish to begin interviewing this week.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Thomas

I _____ (parent/ at) hereby give permission for my child to take part in a study in oral production in French being undertaken by _____. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that my child and/or I can withdraw permission at any time. All information is strictly confidential and no individual will be identified.

Date Signature of parent or guardian

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taped interviews

